

DICKENSIANA

VOLUME I



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Version 2



THE DICKENSIANA

VOLUME I



Compiled by Fred Burwell

Introduction

In tribute to the bicentennial of the birth of Charles Dickens, Delphi Classics is pleased to introduce Dickensiana, a first of its kind e-compilation of period accounts of Dickens's life and works, rare 19th and early 20th century books and articles about Dickens and Dickensian locales, reminiscences by family, friends and colleagues, tribute poems, parodies, satires and sequels based on his works and much more, spiced with an abundance of vintage images. Delphi looks forward to publishing further volumes and welcomes suggestions for additional texts and images.

The Books



CHARLES DICKENS AND HIS FRIENDS by W.

Teignmouth Shore



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CHARLES DICKENS

TO
GEORGE SOMES LAYARD

I

THE STARTING-POINT

ON March 26, 1836, there appeared in *The Times* an advertisement announcing the immediate publication of the first part of "The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, edited by Boz," and within a few months of this date, Charles Dickens, aged twenty-four, was a famous man. Hitherto he had been known in his own immediate circle as an admirable parliamentary reporter, and the writer of amusing descriptive articles and facetious sketches, a selection of which had been brought out in volume form under the title "Sketches by Boz." He was then living in Furnival's Inn — the actual building, alas, destroyed, though the name of it remains — and was engaged to be married to Catherine Thomson Hogarth, eldest daughter of George Hogarth, one of his colleagues upon the *Morning Chronicle*. To Miss Hogarth he was married, two days after the appearance of the first part of "Pickwick," in Saint Luke's Church, Chelsea, of which Charles Kingsley's father was then rector. What more suitable starting-point could be selected for our adventure?

Once again may be told the story of the first meeting of Dickens and Thackeray, related by the latter at the Royal Academy Dinner in 1858. "I can remember," he said, "when Mr Dickens was a very young man, and had commenced delighting the world with some charming humorous works in covers which were coloured light green and came out once a month, that this young man wanted an artist to illustrate his writings; and I recollect walking up to his chambers in Furnival's Inn with two or three drawings in my hand, which, strange to say, he did not find suitable."

In March, 1837, Dickens moved from Furnival's Inn to Doughty Street, Bloomsbury, a street which has changed but little since those days, and which is connected with the names of several in Dickens's circle, such as Edmund Yates, Sydney Smith, and Shirley Brooks, who all at one time or another resided there. In 1837 there was a gate at each end of the short wide street, and a lodge wherein sheltered a stately porter, with gold-laced hat and mulberry-coloured coat with buttons that bore the Doughty arms. Yates

gives an amusing description of his residence there in the 'fifties; he found the neighbourhood both dull and noisy, painting an almost pathetic picture of "the hot summer Sunday afternoons, when the pavement would be red-hot, and the dust, and bits of straw, and scraps of paper would blow fitfully about with every little puff of air, and the always dull houses would look infinitely duller with their blinds down, and no sound would fall upon the ear save the distant hum of the cabs in Holborn, or the footfall of some young person in service going to afternoon church"; and indeed it is very much like that to-day. But it cannot be imagined that any place was ever dull while Charles Dickens was present.

Forster gives a striking portrait of Boz at this time; but it will be better to present one equally vivid and less well known. "Genial, bright, lively-spirited, pleasant toned," writes Mrs Cowden Clarke, "he entered into conversation with a grace and charm that made it feel perfectly natural to be chatting and laughing as if we had known each other from childhood. . . . Charles Dickens had that acute perception of the comic side of things which causes irrepressible brimming of the eyes; and what eyes his were! Large, dark blue, exquisitely shaped, fringed with magnificently long and thick lashes — they now swam in liquid, limpid suffusion, when tears started into them from a sense of humour or a sense of pathos, and now darted quick flashes of fire when some generous indignation at injustice, or some high-wrought feeling of admiration at magnanimity, or some sudden emotion of interest and excitement touched him. Swift-glancing, appreciative, rapidly observant, truly superb orbits they were, worthy of the other features in his manly, handsome face. The mouth was singularly mobile, full-lipped, well-shaped, and expressive; sensitive, nay restless, in its susceptibility to impression that swayed him, or sentiment that moved him. He, who saw into apparently slightest trifles that were fraught to his perception with deepest significance; he, who beheld human nature with insight almost superhuman, and who revered good and abhorred evil with intensity, showed instantaneously by his expressive countenance the kind of idea that possessed him." This would seem far too highly coloured a portrait, but that its essential truth is borne out by other and not so easily impressed observers.

II

JOHN FORSTER

THE name of John Forster has been mentioned, and before going farther it will be right to say somewhat of one who was so closely bound in ties of friendship to Dickens and who eventually at his friend's expressed desire became his biographer. It may be doubted whether Forster would be more than a shadowy name to this present generation were it not for his "Life of Charles Dickens," a work which lives by reason of its matter rather than its manner. Forster's other contributions to literature sleep solemnly upon our shelves - even the Life of Goldsmith, learned, ponderous, and lacking in insight. Of Forster the man it is possible to speak in terms almost warm, though it is difficult to form an exact estimate of his character. Mr Frith seems to hit the truth very fairly, "Forster was a gruff man with the kindest heart in the world." His rough, brusque manner gave a wrong impression of his character to those who were but slightly acquainted with him; he was a rough nut, but the outward shell hid a kernel kind and mellow. A "rough and uncompromising personage," Mr Percy Fitzgerald says of him. His voice was loud, so was his laugh; his face and cheeks broad; "if anyone desired to know what Dr Johnson was like, he could have found him in Forster," which is the worst ever said of him. By the way, Elia called him "Fooster," which is almost as quaint as some of Landor's pronunciations. A pleasanter view of him is given by Mrs Cowden Clarke, who speaks of his "somewhat stately bow . . . accompanied by an affable smile and a marked courtesy that were very winning."

It was in the office of the *True Sun*, when acting as the leader of a reporters' strike, that Dickens was first seen by John Forster, who records that his "keen animation of look would have arrested attention anywhere."

Dickens, so we are told in "Fifty Years of Fleet Street," was quite alive to Forster's peculiarities, and would mimic in the most amusing way his assumption of infallibility, sometimes even to his face. He told a story, too, of dining one night with him, and that boiled beef was set upon the table unadorned with carrots. Forster rang the bell, and said to the maid, "Mary!

Carrots!” Mary replied that there “weren’t none.” To which Forster, with a dignified wave of the hand, “Mary, *let there be carrots!*” Cheery parties were at any rate some of those given by Forster, notably one in 1833, of which Macready writes: “Forster called for me in a coach with Talfourd and Procter. I met at his lodgings Blanchard, a pleasing man, Abbott, Knowles and others. A pleasant but too indulging evening; toasts and commendations flying about. A great deal of heart, and when that is uppermost the head is generally subjected.”

He was fond of entertaining his friends to dinner on Saturdays; the parties were small, the menus not too lengthy, the food and wine of the best. It was a kindly trait in his hospitality that those who came to his table usually found he had provided for them one or other of their favourite dishes — James White with apple-pudding, Thackeray with three-cornered jam tarts, for examples; the host’s taste turning often toward tripe and to fried liver and bacon. “Fare which pleased everybody,” says Whitwell Elwin, “was not without its cheering influence on dinners which could not be excelled in social charm. There was no made conversation between men remarkable for genius, or talent, or knowledge, or experience, and who, for the most part, had the ease and freedom of old acquaintanceship. With an audience quick to understand whatever was uttered they spoke from the fullness of their minds, without rivalry, without ostentation, and without reserve. Forster, a consummate host, exerted his skill to put his guests on their happiest themes, and while the good fellowship was always uppermost, the observations on men, books, and things were not more sparkling and festive than they were instructive and acute.” Dickens writes in one of his letters to an American friend, “I’m told there is a sound in Lincoln’s Inn Fields at night, as of men laughing, together with a clinking of knives and forks and wine-glasses.”

Forster was looked upon by his intimates as a confirmed old bachelor, though he had once been engaged to marry no less a person than the famous Letitia Elizabeth Landon, the poetess L.E.L. But in 1856 he astonished them all by marrying. Dickens wrote when he had heard of his friend’s intention: “I have the most prodigious, overwhelming, crushing, astounding, blinding, deafening, pulverising, scarifying secret, of which Forster is the hero . . . after I knew it (from himself) this morning, I lay down flat as if an engine and tender had fallen upon me.” His wife was the widow of Colburn, the publisher, and owned a house in Montague Square,

to which Forster removed, retaining, however, his chambers in 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields, where so many interesting meetings took place, and which figure in "Bleak House" as those of Mr Tulkinghorn. Under the same roof lived also Alfred Tennyson.

Once when Forster was awaiting a call from Count d'Orsay, he was unexpectedly summoned to his printers. "Now," he said to his servant, "you will tell the Count that I have only just gone round to call on Messrs Spottiswoode, the printers — you will observe, Messrs Spot-iswode." However, he missed the Count, and when next he met him, his explanation was cut short by him saying, "Ah! I know, you had just gone round to *Ze Spotted Dog* — I understand." Forster worshipped almost at D'Orsay's shrine; he was heard shouting above the hub-bub of conversation at one of his dinners to his servant Henry, "Good heavens, sir, butter for the Count's flounders!"

An amusing and characteristic story of Forster was told by Dickens. When "Household Words" was sold by Messrs Bradbury and Evans, Boz was represented at the sale by Forster and Arthur Smith. When the sale was over, a friend, who had been present, hastened to Dickens to inform him of the result, adding, "I cannot resist telling you how admirable Forster was throughout; cool, prompt, and energetic, he won the day with his businesslike readiness." When Dickens met Forster, he repeated this to him, and the comment made by Forster was, "I am very sorry, my dear Dickens, that I cannot return the compliment, for a damner ass than your friend I never met in a business affair."

Douglas Jerrold once picked up a worn, thick stump of a pencil — belonging to Stanfield — and exclaimed, "Hullo, here is the exact counterpart of John Forster, short, thick, and full of lead."

The friendship between the two has been admirably summed up by Edmund Yates in his delightful "Recollections and Experiences" : — "Forster, partly owing to natural temperament, partly to harassing official work and ill-health, was almost as much over, as Dickens was under, their respective actual years; and though Forster's shrewd common sense, sound judgement, and deep affection for his friend commanded, as was right, Dickens's loving and grateful acceptance of his views, and though the communion between them was never for a moment weakened, it was not as a companion 'in his lighter hour' that Dickens in his latter days looked on Forster."

J. T. Fields makes a point: — ” For Dickens he had a love amounting to jealousy. He never quite relished anybody else whom the great novelist had a fondness for, and I have heard droll stories touching this weakness.”

Forster was born in the same year — 1812 — as was Dickens.

III

DOUGHTY STREET

THE success, almost overwhelming, of "Pickwick" at once brought Dickens into contact with a larger world than that in which he had been moving, or to which his birth and education gave him any right of entry. But before describing the circle into which he was so cordially welcomed and in which he maintained himself with such ease, it will be better to devote some space to his domestic and more intimate history.

Dickens's wife, as has been mentioned, was the eldest daughter of George Hogarth, who held a prominent position on the *Morning Chronicle*, a kind, accomplished man and a good musician. When the *Evening Chronicle* was started in 1837, he was appointed editor, and as such first made the personal acquaintance of his future son-in-law. Another valued friend was John Black, the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, of whom Dickens frequently said, "Dear old Black! My first hearty out-and-out appreciator." He spoke with a strong Border brogue, which he brought from his birthplace, Dunse, in Berwickshire, possessed a genial gift of humour, and was a fine linguist. He was always pleased to discover a young fellow with gifts and to give him a helping hand. He came to London with a few pence as his capital, walking all the way from Berwickshire, hospitably entertained on his way by farmers and their wives. He was every inch a journalist, as is well exemplified by the following story of an interview of his with Lord Melbourne. In the midst of their talk, his lordship said somewhat abruptly:

"Mr Black, I think you forget who I am!"

"I hope not, my lord," Black replied, somewhat taken aback and alarmed.

"Mr Black, you forget that I am the prime minister, and treat me in a manner that is, to say the least of it, somewhat uncommon. Here am I, as I have said, in the position of prime minister, in confidential intercourse with you, and always glad to see you. I have patronage at my disposal, and you never so much as hint to me that you would like me to give you a place.

And, Mr Black, there is no man living to whom I would sooner give a place than yourself.”

“I thank you, my lord,” said Black, “but I do not want a place. I am editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, and like my work and the influence it gives me, and do not desire to change places with anybody in the world — not even your lordship.”

“Mr Black, I envy you; and you’re the only man I ever did.”

Albany Fonblanque said of him: “Though rather rude himself in style, he had a delicate perception and appreciation of the style of others, and there was no better critic.”

But to return to the Hogarths. When Dickens married, there came to live with them his wife’s next youngest sister, Mary, whose terribly sudden death on the 7th of May, 1837, at the age of seventeen, deprived him of what had become to him an ideal friendship. The three of them had returned, full of high spirits, late one night from the theatre, when she was struck down with sudden illness, dying a few hours later in Dickens’s arms; “the dear girl whom I loved, after my wife, more deeply and fervently than anyone on earth.” The shock and the grief prostrated him; work was impossible to him for many weeks; he moved for a time to Hampstead, where Forster visited him, the first occasion that he was his guest. The two men drew so closely together in friendship that shortly afterward Dickens wrote: “I look back with unmingled pleasure to every link which each ensuing week has added to the chain of our attachment. It shall go hard, I hope, ere anything but death impairs the toughness of a bond now so firmly rivetted.”

“I wish you could know,” he writes to Mrs Hogarth, in the autumn of the year, “how I weary now for the three rooms in Furnival’s Inn, and how I miss that pleasant smile and those sweet words which, bestowed upon an evening’s work, in our merry banterings round the fire, were more precious to me than the applause of a whole world would be. I can recall everything she said and did in those happy days. . . .” Then in 1843, on May 8th, he wrote to Mrs Hogarth: “After she died, I dreamed of her every night for many months — I think the better part of a year — sometimes as a spirit, sometimes as a living creature, never with any of the bitterness of my real sorrow, but always with a kind of quiet happiness, which became so pleasant to me that I never lay down at night without a hope of the vision coming back in one shape or other. And so it did.” And to Forster, after Mrs

Hogarth's death five years after Mary's, he wrote: "I don't think there ever was love like that I bear her."

The story was best told in his own words, and is best left untouched.

IV

MACREADY

THE concluding number of "Pickwick" was published in November, 1837, and there is a letter from Dickens to Macready, inviting him to a little dinner, to celebrate the occasion, at the Prince of Wales, in Leicester Place, Leicester Square, on a Saturday afternoon, at five for half-past five precisely, at which there were also to be present Serjeant Talfourd, John Forster, Harrison Ainsworth, William Jerdan, a well-known Scottish journalist, and the publishers of "Pickwick," Messrs Chapman and Hall, which firm is still so notably connected with the works of Charles Dickens under the able guidance of Mr Arthur Waugh, an eloquent and enthusiastic Dickensian. Macready from this time on to the end was one of Dickens's dearest friends. In his diary, under date June 16, 1837, Macready records, "Forster came into my room," at Covent Garden Theatre, of which he was then manager, "with a gentleman, whom he introduced to me as Dickens, alias Boz — I was glad to see him." Forster he had first met at Richmond in 1833, in the drawing-room of the house in which Edmund Kean lay dead.

William Charles Macready was born in 1793, of theatrical stock, being the son of an Irish theatrical manager, and was, with the exception of Phelps, the last of the great school of actors of whom Garrick, Mrs Siddons, the Kembles and Kean were the most brilliant. He served a hard apprenticeship in the Provinces before he reached and made his name upon the London stage. He was a man of culture and wide reading, and of his character we should be inclined to say that he was a somewhat petulant, moody grumbler, but for the evidence to the contrary of those who knew him most intimately. He was pious in the best sense of the word, and his life long fought courageously to overcome the violent temper which more than once brought him into trouble. With his "calling" he never seems to have been thoroughly contented, and more than once we find him debating whether or not he should continue in it. "The only condition that could reconcile me to the profession . . . was to hold its highest walks. . . . My wish was to make the trial of my talents in some other profession, and the

Church offered me apparently facilities for the attempt,” so that, probably, a notable parson was lost to us. Contemporary evidence goes to show that he was an actor of impressive powers, and from his Diaries we gather that he certainly had the genius of taking pains, as in these two extracts: “1833. January 2nd. My performance this evening of Macbeth afforded me a striking evidence of the necessity there is for thinking over my characters previous to playing, and establishing by practice, if necessary, the particular modes of each scene and important passage. ... It was crude and uncertain, though spirited and earnest; but much thought is yet required to give an even energy and finished style to all the great scenes of the play, except, perhaps, the last, which is among the best things I am capable of.” Again, January 4th, “My acting was coarse and crude — no identification of myself with the scene, and, what increased my chagrin on the subject, some persons in the pit gave frequent vent to indulgent and misplaced admiration. The consciousness of unmerited applause makes it quite painful and even humiliating to me.” He was most certainly his own sternest critic.

Recording his impressions of Macready as King John, Frith speaks of “Macready’s fearful whisper — when, having placed his mouth close to Hubert’s ear, and dropping his half-hearted hints of his desire for Arthur’s death, he throws off the mask, and in two words, ‘the grave,’ he makes his wish unmistakable — was terrific: the two words were uttered in a whisper that could be heard at the back of Drury Lane gallery, and the effect was tremendous. You felt as if you were assisting at a terrible crime.”

It was not only as an actor but as a manager also that Macready rendered good service to the stage; it was by and through him that Lytton’s best plays, “The Lady of Lyons” and “Money” amongst them, were produced, and a very true friendship existed between author and actor. They first met at a party in October, 1834, and Macready describes Bulwer — as he then was — as very good-natured and intelligent. He also speaks with enthusiasm of a pretty Mrs Forster, “whom,” he quaintly says, “I should like very much as any other man’s wife, though not so well as my own.” He urged Bulwer to write a play, and was informed that one, on Cromwell, had already been written, but that the greater part of it had been lost. Lytton impresses us as very willing to take advice upon his work — an unusual virtue in dramatists.

“Ion” Talfourd was another crony of Macready, and once played a very pretty joke upon him, which he took in good part. In 1839 Dickens brought

Macready a play to read, named “Glencoe,” with which the actor was well pleased. Dining some few nights later with Talfourd, Dickens being absent on the score of ill-health and Forster completing the party, the conversation turned upon plays. Macready mentioned that one of striking character had recently come into his hands. The remainder of the tale he shall tell himself: — ” Talfourd asked me the title. I told him ‘Glencoe.’ He questioned me about its possible melodramatic tendency. I told him, that the treatment avoided the melodrama of the stage; that the style was an imitation of his writing, but without the point that terminated his speeches; that the story was well managed and dramatic; and that I intended to act it. At last to my utter astonishment, he pulled out two books from his pocket and said, ‘Well, I will no longer conceal it — it is my play’; and he gave each of us a copy! I never in my life experienced a greater surprise. . . . Forster affected great indignation, and really stormed; I laughed, loud and long; it was really a romance to me.”

After the first night of “Ion,” in May, 1836, there was an interesting gathering at Talfourd’s, among those present being Wordsworth, whom Macready held in high reverence, Walter Savage Landor, Stanfield, Robert Browning, Miss Mitford, Miss Ellen Tree, and others. Macready sat between Wordsworth and Landor, with Browning opposite, “happily placed,” as he says himself. He pointed out to Wordsworth the likeness between a passage in “Ion” and some lines the poet had once quoted to him from a MS. tragedy of his. “Yes, I noticed them,” said Wordsworth, and then quoted them again:

“Action is transitory — a step — a blow,
The motion of a muscle — this way or that —
‘Tis done; and in the after vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed.”

Landor talked of plays, admitting that he had not the constructive faculty. Macready in rash chaff challenged Miss Mitford to write a play; she quickly replied, “Will you act it?” Macready was silent.

Robert Browning’s health was proposed by Talfourd, who acclaimed him the youngest poet in England. On the way home Macready caught up Browning, and said to him, “Write a play, Browning, and keep me from going to America.” Said Browning, “Shall it be historical and English; what do you say to a drama on Strafford?” Later Macready brought to the footlights Browning’s “Strafford” and “The Blot on the ‘Scutcheon.’” He

describes Browning as “very popular with the whole party; his simple and enthusiastic manner engaged attention and won opinions from all present; he looks and speaks more like a youthful poet than any man I ever saw.”

In Macready’s Diaries there are notes of many memorable dinners, one of which may well be selected as typical and interesting. It was a meeting of the Shakespeare Club on March 30, 1839.

The Shakespeare Club held its nightly meetings in a large room in the Piazza Hotel, under the Colonnade in Covent Garden. Serjeant Ballantine asserts that Forster’s temper, which “was not a very comfortable one to deal with,” was mainly the cause of the club breaking up, or rather down. This is borne out by Charles Knight, who describes a meeting — a dinner — at which Dickens occupied the chair. Forster, while proposing a toast, lost his temper at some foolish interruptions; the evening was spoiled and the meeting broke up.

It was at the Piazza, which he designated as Cuttris’s Coffee Room, that Dickens put up in December, 1844, when he came from Italy for the reading of “The Chimes” at Forster’s chambers in Lincoln’s Inn Fields.

Dickens presided, and among others present at the Club meeting were Procter, Stanfield, Leigh Hunt, Maclise, Cattermole, Jerrold, Thackeray, Lever, Frank Stone, Forster — a wonderful gathering. The dinner was good, so were the songs and the speeches. Dickens spoke earnestly and eloquently in proposing Macready’s health, and Macready replied earnestly — but scarcely eloquently. Leigh Hunt spoke in a rambling, conversational style, something perhaps in the manner of Mr Skimpole. “All went off in the happiest spirit,” and home in boisterous spirits, there is no doubt.

Macready retired from the stage in 1851, playing Macbeth at the Haymarket to a vast and enthusiastic audience: “acted Macbeth as I never, never before acted it; with a reality, a vigour, a truth, a dignity that I never before threw into my delineation of this favourite character,” he writes in words which he did not mean for any other eyes than his own. The farewell performance was followed by a farewell dinner; the list of stewards and guests included many great names in art and literature. Bulwer was in the chair, and spoke felicitously in proposing the toast of the evening: “To-day let us only rejoice that he whom we so prize and admire is no worn-out veteran retiring to a rest he can no longer enjoy — that he leaves us in the prime of his powers, with many years to come, in the course of nature, of that dignified leisure for which every public man must have sighed in the

midst of his triumphs “ — and which so many are loth to seek. Forster, in proposing the toast of dramatic literature, read some lines addressed to Macready by Tennyson: —

“Farewell, Macready, since to-night we part;
Full-handed thunders often have confessed
Thy power, well-used to move the public breast.
We thank thee with our voice, and from the heart.
Farewell, Macready, since this night we part;
Go, take thine honours home; rank with the best,
Garrick and statelier Kemble, and the rest
Who made a nation purer through their Art.
Thine is it that our drama did not die.
Nor flicker down to brainless pantomime,
And those gilt gauds men-children swarm to see.
Farewell, Macready; moral, grave, sublime;
Our Shakespeare’s bland and universal eye
Dwells pleased, through twice a hundred years on thee.”
A well-meant but scarcely inspired tribute.

In responding, Macready wound up by saying, “With a heart more full than the glass I hold “ — his glass was empty!

He died at Cheltenham on April 27, 1873, and was buried at Kensal Green, beside many of the loved ones of his family who had “gone before.”

Lady Bancroft relates amusingly her first meeting with Macready, during his farewell appearances, when she did not find him so forbidding as she had been told that he often was. She was to act Fleance to his Macbeth: — ““ Well, I suppose you hope to be a great actress some day?’ I replied quickly, ‘ Yes, sir.’ He smiled. ‘And what do you intend to play?’ ‘Lady Macbeth, sir,’ upon which he laughed loudly . . . but he soon won my heart by saying: ‘Will you have a sovereign to buy a doll with, or a glass of wine?’ After a little hesitation, I answered, ‘I should like both, I think.’ He seemed to enjoy my frank reply, and said laughingly, ‘ Good! I am sure you will make a fine actress; I can see genius through those little windows,’ placing his hands over my eyes. ‘But do not play Lady Macbeth too soon; begin slowly, or you may end quickly.’“ Macready’s prophetic insight did not play him false; Lady Bancroft, then little Marie Wilton, did make a fine actress, though she never played Lady Macbeth.

Of his character and of his acting opinions naturally differed. Charlotte Bronte writes: "I twice saw Macready act — once in Macbeth and once in Othello. I astonished a dinner-party by honestly saying I did not like him. It is the fashion to rave about his splendid acting. Anything more false and artificial, less genuinely impressive than his whole style I could scarcely have imagined." But she rather detracts from the value of her criticism by going on to say, "The fact is, the stage system altogether is hollow nonsense. They act farces well enough; the actors comprehend their parts and do them justice. They comprehend nothing about tragedy or Shakespeare, and it is a failure. I said so; and by so saying produced a blank silence — a mute consternation." No wonder.

The rougher side of his character has been painted with some acerbity by George Augustus Sala, who never met him in private life: "he was altogether an odd person, this William Charles Macready: high-minded, generous, just; but the slave, on the stage, of a simply ungovernable temper."

But Browning said of him, "one of the most admirable and indeed fascinating characters I have ever known," and Lady Pollock records the worth of Dickens's friendship to the actor in his latter days : — "when the weight of time and sorrow pressed him down, Dickens was his most frequent visitor; he cheered him with narratives of bygone days; he poured some of his own abundant warmth into his heart; he led him into new channels of thought; he gave readings to rouse his interest; he waked up in him again by his vivid descriptions his sense of humour; he conjured back his smile and his laugh — Charles Dickens was and is to me the ideal of friendship."

Of two of the others who were to make up the Pickwick party we may say a few words here. Harrison Ainsworth, who started his business career as a publisher but found it more profitable to write and to permit others to issue his works, attained fame with his novel of "Rookwood," published in 1834, a fame which the progress of years has somewhat dimmed. It has been asserted, though no evidence has been brought forward in support of the accusation, that Turpin's famous ride to York in this novel was written by the facile Maginn and not by Ainsworth at all. On the face of things, and judging by his other works in a similar genre, we may take it that there is not any truth in the assertion. Ainsworth was a more able writer than many

of more lasting reputation; perhaps some day he will come by his own again.

He lived in a comfortable house in Kilburn, where he delighted to entertain his friends; here is a peep into his parlour: — ” the time is early summer, the hour about eight o’clock in the evening; dinner has been removed from the prettily decorated table, and the early fruits tempt the guests, to the number of twelve or so, who are grouped around it. At the head there sits a gentleman no longer in his first youth, but still strikingly handsome; there is something artistic about his dress, and there may be a little affectation in his manners, but even this may in some people be a not unpleasing element. He was our host, William Harrison Ainsworth, and, whatever may have been the claims of others, and in whatever circles they might move, no one was more genial, no one more popular.” In later days he made his home at Kemp Town, Brighton.

Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd was a distinguished man of law, who has strayed into fame as the author of the tragedy “Ion,” after the first night of which, as has been duly recorded in these pages, there was “a sound of revelry by night” in Russell Square, where the learned judge then resided. There among the guests would be men of letters and men of sciences, lawyers, painters, actors; Macready, one of whose best parts was “ Ion,” Lord Lytton, Dickens, Albert Smith, full of fun and frivolity, and last but not least, Lady Talfourd, cordial and kind, her charming daughters, her niece, and her son Frank, strikingly handsome and liberally endowed with brains. He was somewhat Bohemian in his habits: “He dined when most people were in bed,” says Hollingshead, “and when many were thinking of getting up, and though temperate in his habits as regards drinking, he was intemperate in this particular.”

Perhaps some of the Bohemianisms were inherited from his father. The distinguished American jurist and senator, Charles Sumner, notes that Talfourd used to take his negus at the Garrick Club, then in King Street, in the morning on his way to Westminster Hall, and also a night-cap on his way home from Parliament. He dubs him a night-bird, who does not put in an appearance at the club until midnight or thereabouts; and Mrs Lynn Linton says, “I remember how he kept up the tradition of the then past generation, and came into the drawingroom with a thick speech and unsteady legs.” “Those who knew him,” says Ballantine, “will never forget his kindly, genial face, the happiness radiating from it when imparting

pleasure to others, and his generous hospitality.” Edmund Yates greatly enjoyed going to his house, which he describes as genially presided over by the “kindly host, with short-cropped, iron-gray hair and beaming face.”

Talfourd was somewhat inordinately fond and proud of his dramatic offspring, as is evidenced by the following: —

Said Dickens to Rogers one day at Broadstairs,

“We shall have Talfourd here to-night.”

“Shall we? I am rejoiced to hear it. How did you know he was coming?”

“Because ‘ Ion ’ is to be acted at Margate, and he is never absent from any of its representations.”

Another claim he has to fame: that to him Jerrold once spoke a pun so appalling bad that it was really inspired, “Well, Talfourd,” he asked, “have you any more Ions in the fire?”

He died suddenly in 1854, while charging the grand jury in the courthouse at Stafford. Albany Fonblanque wrote of his death, “I observe in the announcement of his death that the hour is particularly named. You are aware that he was christened ‘ Noon ‘ because he was born about that hour, an unusual circumstance. His death took place about the same time, and removed him (I think kindly) before the waning lights of his fame and life.”

Dickens wrote after his death, “The chief delight of his life was to give delight to others. His nature was so exquisitely kind, that to be kind was its highest happiness.”

V

THE TIMES

IN order to gain a clear view of the period and the persons dealt with in these pages, it is advisable to grasp somewhat of the circumstances in which they lived and the difference between them and those of the present day. Roughly speaking, Dickens and his comrades began life in the dying days of horse traction and of illumination by candles and lamps; before their careers had ended, gas and steam had completely altered the conditions of commerce and society, and electricity, employed in telegraphy, had begun to give promise of the vast revolution which it is working to-day.

It was the age of tinder-boxes, as John Hollingshead puts it in an “illuminating” passage. “The ‘midnight oil’ was a tallow candle laboriously lighted with a combination of materials that showed the inventive ingenuity of mankind before science came down from its lofty pedestal, and gave up the duty of attending on the gods, to devote itself to the comfort and improvement of the common people — the multitude swinish or not swinish — the very necessary but vulgar tax-payers. . . . The tinder-box was the toy of my childhood. Without it there would have been no light or fire — with it there was (after a time) light and fire, and a certain amount of safety. . . . First of all, the rags had to be got, and burnt into tinder. This tinder was put into a large round tin box, big enough for a pie-dish. Then a piece of jagged flint had to be got, and a thing called ‘a steel/ which might have been the remains of an old horse-shoe, had to be purchased; the flint, struck edge-way on the steel, sent sparks into the tinder which smouldered and prepared itself for the matches. The matches were a formidable bundle of thin strips of wood, diamond-pointed at the ends and dipped in brimstone.” To-day tinder-boxes are curiosities in museums and safety matches are four boxes a penny.

Those indeed were, compared with ours, the dark ages; in 1827 gas, of the poorest quality, was only beginning to be used as a street illuminant. The electric light was undreamed of, inconceivable.

Railways were in their infancy, the first that made an appeal to the metropolis being that from London to Greenwich, and the cattle-trucks of our day are superior to the unroofed third-class carriages of that age. The rattle and jingle and the merry tooting horn of the coach were still abroad in the land, echoing and re-echoing through the pages of Dickens's novels and sketches. Ruskin in a famous passage has inveighed against the prose of railway travel as compared with the poetry of older and slower methods, and de Quincey was equally emphatic. "The modern modes of travelling," he writes in "The English Mail-Coach," "cannot compare with the old mail-coach system in grandeur and power. They boast of more velocity, not, however, as a consciousness, but as a fact of our lifeless knowledge, resting upon alien evidence; as, for instance, because somebody says that we have gone fifty miles in the hour, though we are far from feeling it as a personal experience. . . . The vital experience of the glad animal sensibilities made doubts impossible on the question of our speed; we heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as thrilling; and this speed was not the product of blind, insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest among brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs. . . . But now, on the new system of travelling, iron tubes and boilers have disconnected man's heart from the ministers of his locomotion. . . . Tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, must henceforwards travel by culinary process; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heartshaking, when heard screaming on the wind, and proclaiming itself through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way for ever to the pot-walloppings of the boiler." For ever? There are signs of "for ever" coming to an end now, when electricity is invading the territory of King Steam, and motor cars are creating a revolution which may prove as far-reaching as that heralded by the coming of the "boiler."

Turning to a later period, about midway in Dickens's career, we find some curious facts in Peter Cunningham's "Hand-Book of London," in a new and corrected edition, published in 1850. Compare the list of places of amusement in London of the opening twentieth century with that of the mid-nineteenth; then there were the Italian Opera, in the Haymarket, on the site now occupied by His Majesty's Theatre and the Carlton Hotel; Covent-Garden Theatre, Drury-Lane Theatre, the Adelphi, the Lyceum, the St James's, Sadler's Wells, from which the glory shed upon it by Phelps has

long since departed, Astley's Amphitheatre — where is that now ? — the Princess's, and Exeter Hall Concerts — the very building has vanished — Vauxhall Gardens and Cremorne.

Cunningham gives what is evidently the fruits of experience with regard to "Hotel and Tavern Dinners"; the Clarendon Hotel in New Bond Street "is much resorted to by persons desirous of entertaining friends in the best style, and to whom expense is no object. Dinners are given sometimes at as high a rate as five guineas a-head." Good turtle is to be had at the Ship and Turtle Tavern in Leadenhall-street, and a moderately priced dinner, "with as good tavern wine as any in London," at Richardson's Hotel, under the Piazza in Covent-Garden, and at the Piazza tavern. For joints, from five o'clock to seven — how greatly hours have altered — the Albion, over against Drury-Lane Theatre, Simpson's in the Strand and the Rainbow in Fleet Street are recommended. "If you can excuse an indifferently clean table-cloth, you may dine well and cheaply at the Cheshire Cheese, in Wine-Office-court, in Fleet Street," and at Verrey's, corner of Hanover-street, Regent Street, "you will get some average French cooking." Nowadays it is difficult to obtain average English cooking anywhere in London. The best buns were to be had of Birch's in Cornhill, whose quaint shop front is still a delightful reminder of past times. Anything approaching the modern palatial restaurant was then unknown; respectable women never dined in public. The chop-house was a famous institution in early-Victorian days, with sanded or sawdusted floor and wooden compartments or boxes. A la mode beef was a fairly recent introduction from the "Continent"; and — oh! happy days! — oysters were sixpence a dozen! Cab-fares were eightpence a mile, fourpence for each mile after the first. Dickens was born in 1812, and here follow a few of the more interesting social items of London history of his earlier years: November 29, 1814, The Times first printed by steam power; 1816, first appearance of a steam boat upon the Thames; 1820, cabs introduced; 1822, St James's Park first lighted by gas; October 18, 1826, the last public lottery; 1830, Peter James Bossy was convicted of perjury, and stood in the pillory in the Old Bailey, the last criminal to be so honoured; 1830, omnibuses first introduced by an enterprising Mr Shillibeer, the first running between Paddington and the Bank; February 26, 1836, the first portion of the Greenwich Railway opened; 1838, an experiment made with wood pavement in Oxford Street;

January 10, 1840, the Penny Postage came into being; 1845, two steam packets begin running on the Thames. So far the dependable Cunningham.

This is but a brief, even sketchy, indication of some of the changes which have taken place since the day of Dickens's birth, now nearly a century ago, but it will suffice to show in some degree against what background stand the figures of our portrait group. So great has been the change that much of "Pickwick" is now a puzzle to those who have not some acquaintance with the social history of the period in which it was written. The best of all descriptions of the London of Dickens's early manhood are to be found in his own delightful "Sketches by Boz," especially in the "Scenes," to which for further and better information we refer our gentle readers. "Pickwick," too, should be read from this point of view. There are not a few of us who are thankful that we live in a time when drinking is not the favourite amusement of all classes of society, when public executions have been abolished, and when the prize-fighter is not a hero adored of most men and many women.

VI

THE MAN

WHAT tremendously high spirits ran riot in those early-Victorian days! The men seem to have been just jolly grown-up boys, overflowing with animal spirits. There was no morbidity of decadence then! The flowers were always blooming in the spring, save when holly and mistletoe, good will and good cheer, ruled the roast at winter-tide. Charles Dickens was one of the brightest of them all, a splendidly handsome young fellow, a good forehead above a nose with somewhat full nostrils; eyes of quite extraordinary brilliancy, a characteristic to the day of his death; a somewhat prominent, sensitive mouth. Equally true then was what Serjeant Ballantine wrote at a later period: "There was a brightness and geniality about him," says the Serjeant, "that greatly fascinated his companions. His laugh was so cheery, and he seemed so thoroughly to enter into the feelings of those around him. He told a story well and never prosily; he was a capital listener, and in conversation was not in the slightest degree dictatorial."

With all his vivacity and apparent boyishness he was extremely methodical in all his ways.

"No writer ever lived," says an American friend, in a somewhat sweeping way, "whose method was more exact, whose industry was more constant, and whose punctuality was more marked," and his daughter "Mamie" wrote of him, "There never existed, I think, in all the world, a more thoroughly tidy or methodical creature than was my father. He was tidy in every way — in his mind, in his handsome and graceful person, in his work, in keeping his writing-table drawers, in his large correspondence, in fact in his whole life." He could be a fidget, too, as for example with regard to the furniture of a room in an hotel, at which he might be spending only a single night — rearranging it all, and turning the bed north and south — to meet the views of the electrical currents of the earth!

What astounding vitality he had; his way of resting a tired brain was to indulge in violent bodily exercise; "a fifteen-mile ride out," with a friend, "ditto in, and a lunch on the road," topping up with dinner at six o'clock in

Doughty Street. He would write to Forster, “you don’t feel disposed, do you, to muffle yourself up, and start off with me for a good brisk walk over Hampstead Heath? I know a good ‘ous there where we can have a red-hot chop for dinner, and a glass of good wine,” the “ous” being the far-famed Jack Straw’s Castle.

Of course the success of “Pickwick” brought him into contact with all that was brightest and best in the literary and artistic world of London, and in order to gain some idea of what that meant, let us pay a visit to Gore House and the “most gorgeous Lady Blessington,” by whom we trust we shall be as he was — most kindly welcomed.

VII

LADY BLESSINGTON AND HER COURT

LADY BLESSINGTON must indeed have been a queen of hearts even if we credit but a part of all the kind things that have been said of her beauty and wit. It is not incumbent on us to tell her story in full, but rather to indicate the position she held in Dickens's day in London society, and to portray somewhat of the circle of which she was the centre.

Marguerite Power, Countess of Blessington, was born in 1789, and in 1804, under pressure from her father, was forced into an unhappy marriage with Captain Maurice St Leger Farmer, from whom after a few months of misery she separated. In 1818 he died, drunk, and in the same year she married Charles John Gardiner, first Earl of Blessington, and travelled with him on the Continent until his death, returning a widow to London in 1831, accompanied by Count Alfred d'Orsay, who married and separated from Lady Harriet Gardiner, her second husband's daughter and an heiress. What exactly were the relations between Lady Blessington and D'Orsay we need not stop to inquire, but what the world thought of them is amply proved by the cold shoulders turned toward her by other women on this account and because of earlier mysteries in her career. Lord Blessington, who died in 1829, had left her an income of £2500 a year, unfortunately dependent on the value of landed property in Ireland, which later failed her; also furniture, plate, pictures and so forth. For a time after her arrival in London she lived in her house in St James's Square, which, being too expensive, she let to the Windham Club and moved to Seamore Place, Mayfair, and afterward to Gore House, Kensington. A sister, Mrs Purves, had in 1828 married the Rt. Hon. John Manners Sutton, afterward Lord Canterbury, and another, Mary Anne, a strikingly handsome woman, became the Countess de St Mersault in 1832, she being about thirty and her husband about twice as old. The truth seems to have been that they both believed that they were making a "good match," but, alas, money was not in abundance upon either side. They quarrelled; they separated. Mary Anne's place in her sister's

household was supplied by Marguerite and Ellen Power, the charming daughters of Lady Blessington's brother.

It seems almost as if the language of judicious laudation failed those who sang the praises of "the most gorgeous Lady Blessington." P. G. Patmore, in his very dull book, says of her: "There was an abandon about her, — partly attributed to temperament, partly to her birth and country, and partly, no doubt, to her consciousness of great personal beauty, — which in any woman less happily constituted, would have degenerated into something bordering on vulgarity. But in her it was so tempered by sweetness of disposition, and so kept in check by an exquisite social tact, as well as by natural good breeding as contradistinguished from artificial — in other words, a real sympathy, not an affected one, with the feelings of others — that it formed the chief charm and attraction of her character and bearing." But lest it may be thought that these are the ramblings of a mere man, we quote the description of her given by Mrs Cowden Clarke: — "fair,

florid-complexioned, with sparkling eyes and white, high forehead, above which her bright brown hair was smoothly braided beneath a light and simple blonde cap, in which were a few touches of sky-blue satin ribbon that singularly well became her, setting off her buxom face and its vivid colouring."

She dressed brilliantly, but at the same time with an admirable skill that set off her charms to the very best advantage, as well as also softening that tendency to exuberance which was the only defect in a well-nigh perfect figure. Thus gifted with beauty, with wit, with the supreme gift of charm, is it any wonder that we find Haydon writing in 1835 that "everybody goes to Lady Blessington. She has the first news of every thing, and everybody seems delighted to tell her." Wits, dandies, poets, politicians, scholars, men of letters — all gathered together in her hospitable salon, but women kept carefully away, save her own relations, and Lady Charlotte Bury, Byron's Countess Guiccioli and one or two others. In her circle were the following — a few picked out from many, her friends and her admirers, Walter Savage Landor, whom we find visiting at Seamore Place in 1832, the old and the young Disraeli, Barry Cornwall, Dickens, Bulwer (Lord Lytton), Macready, Captain Marryat — a bluff, breezy-mannered seaman; he was tall, broad in the shoulders and thickset, and Henry Vizetelly, in opposition somewhat to others, says, "There was nothing of the jovial 'salt' about him; none of that flow of animal spirits which his writings might have led

one to expect, nor aught that could be termed genial even; his style," he adds, "was rather that of the 'quarter-deck'; " — Albany Fonblanque, Maclise, John Forster, who met Lady Blessington first in 1836, Trelawney — the "Younger Son " — Lord Canter-



THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.
From the Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.

bury and plenty more, some of whom we shall take care to meet — and, always, Count d'Orsay, the prince of the dandies. The well-dressed man-about-town of those days did not consider it a necessary part of his equipment as a dandy to be or pretend to be devoid of brains or of any interest in the serious affairs of life. He set up to be — and usually was — a wit and a cultivated, accomplished gentleman. Among the most famous, always after D'Orsay, were Dickens himself, Bulwer, Benjamin Disraeli and Harrison Ainsworth, a goodly company the like of which has not been seen before nor since.

Alfred Guillaume Gabriel, Count d'Orsay, was born in 1801, of a noble French family, served in the bodyguard of the Bourbons, and has been immortalised by Byron as a model of the French gentleman of the ancien régime. He came to England, as we have noted, with Lady Blessington in 1831, and actually separated from his wife in 1834, doing so legally some six years later, resigning his interest in the Blessington property in consideration of a large annuity and a sum of £55,000. But such sums were

trifles in the ocean of his expenditure. He counted tradesmen as convenient persons whose reason for existence was to give credit to such magnificent customers as himself, which up to a point they found it profitable to do, for his patronage made them famous.

Charles James Mathews, who had travelled with him and the Blessingtons in Italy, gives this description of D'Orsay when a youth of nineteen: "he was the model of all that could be conceived of noble demeanour and youthful candour; handsome beyond all question; accomplished to the last degree; highly educated, and of great literary acquirements; with a gaiety of heart and cheerfulness of mind that spread happiness on all around him. His conversation was brilliant and engaging, as well as clever and instructive," and the somewhat ponderous Patmore waxes positively enthusiastic over him; "he was one of the very best riders in a country whose riders are admitted to be the best in the world ... he was the best judge of a horse among a people of horse-dealers and horse-jockeys," a fine cricketer, swimmer, boxer, swordsman, wrestler and tennis player; "he was incomparably the handsomest man of his time ... uniting to a figure scarcely inferior in the perfection of its form to that of the Apollo, a head and face that blended the grace and dignity of the Antinous with the beaming intellect of the younger Bacchus, and the almost feminine softness and beauty of the Ganymede."

He was skilled in all the accomplishments that become a man of the world, and an artist of considerable ability; above all, the best dressed man in town. Edmund Yates describes him driving in the Park "always in faultless white kid gloves, with his shirt wristbands turned back over his coat-cuffs, and his whole 'turn-out' . . . perfection." His wit, says Chorley, "was more quaint than anything I have heard from Frenchmen (there are touches of like quality in Rabelais) — more airy than the brightest London wit of my time, those of Sydney Smith and Mr Fonblanque not excepted." He was not only all conquering with the fair sex, to whom he always acted with deferential courteousness, but also with men, whom his capital conversation always delighted. He even conquered Carlyle!

In the spring of 1839 D'Orsay went to see him at Cheyne Row, and the sage's description of the visit is amusing: — "About a fortnight ago, this Phoebus Apollo of dandyism, escorted by poor little Chorley, came whirling hither in a chariot that struck all Chelsea into mute amazement with its splendour. Chorley's under jaw went like the hopper or under riddle

of a pair of fanners, such was his terror on bringing such a splendour into actual contact with such a grimness. Nevertheless, we did amazingly well, the Count and I. He is a tall fellow of six feet three, built like a tower, with floods of dark auburn hair, with a beauty, with an adornment unsurpassable on this planet; withal a rather substantial fellow at bottom, by no means without insight, without fun, and a sort of rough sarcasm rather striking out of such a porcelain figure. He said, looking at Shelley's bust, in his French accent, 'Ah, it is one of those faces who weesh to swallow their chin.' . . . Jane laughed for two days at the contrast of my plaid dressing-gown, bilious, iron countenance, and this Paphian apparition."

Another curious conjunction of stars of different magnitudes was this: "Count d'Orsay is a friend of mine, co-godfather to Dickens's child with me," writes Tennyson in 1852.

The somewhat egregious Nathaniel Parker Willis, a New York man of letters and journalist, who was florid both in his style and in his costume, visited Lady Blessington at Seamore Place, and has left us the following "Pencilling by the Way." That Willis was not a little florid in his literary style as well as in his dress is shown by this description of Lady Blessington: — " In the long library, lined alternately with splendidly-bound books and mirrors, and with a deep window of the breadth of the room, opening upon Hyde Park, I found Lady B alone. The picture to my eye as the door opened was a very lovely one : — a woman of remarkable beauty half buried in a fauteuil of yellow satin, reading by a magnificent lamp suspended from the centre of the arched ceiling; sofas, couches, ottomans, and busts arranged in rather a crowded sumptuousness through the room; enamel tables, covered with expensive and elegant trifles in every corner; and a delicate white hand relieved on the back of a book, to which the eye was attracted by the blaze of diamond rings."

Willis was introduced to Lady Blessington by Landor, by letter, in the year 1834: — " an American gentleman attached to the legation at Paris" and " the best poet the New World has produced in any part of it," with which criticism we cannot find it in our heart to agree, for he was no poet at all but a mere maker of verses. Willis was then twenty-seven years of age, a "smart" man, editor and proprietor of *The New York Mirror*; tall, with a good figure, bright-complexioned, slightly reddish hued hair and large, light-blue eyes; a self-conscious dandy, and self-complacent also. Scarcely a man worth quarrelling with, save that he took advantage of his kindly

welcome in London society to pen a series of portraits which contained a considerable amount of truth leavened with too great an amount of cheap disparagement of men and women far superior to himself.

In 1836 Lady Blessington moved from Seamore Place to Kensington Gore, which she describes to Landor as having “taken up her residence in the country, being a mile from London”! Gore House, the site of which is now occupied by the Royal Albert Hall, was a low, unpretentious building, painted white, standing close down to the roadside, with a fine garden behind. Wilberforce, who emancipated, as his beautiful successor made, slaves, once occupied it, and writes, “We are just one mile from the turnpike at Hyde Park Corner, having about three acres of pleasure-ground around our house, or rather behind it, and several old trees, walnut and mulberry, of thick foliage. I can sit and read under their shade with as much admiration of the beauties of Nature as if I were down in Yorkshire, or anywhere else 200 miles from the great city.”

As some indication of the luxury of Lady Blessington’s surroundings, already hinted at by Willis, we quote this from the catalogue of the sale, to which we shall refer later on : — ” Costly and elegant effects; comprising all the magnificent furniture, rare porcelain, sculpture in marble, bronzes, and an assemblage of objects of art and decoration; a casket of valuable jewellery and bijouxeries, services of rich chased silver and silver-gilt plate, a superbly fitted silver dressing-case ; collection of ancient and modern pictures, including many portraits of distinguished persons, valuable original drawings, and fine engravings, framed and in portfolios; the extensive and interesting library of books, comprising upwards of 5000 volumes, expensive table services of china and rich cut glass, and an infinity of useful and valuable articles. All the property of the Right Hon. the Countess of Blessington, retiring to the Continent.”

Dickens made her acquaintance somewhere about the year 1841, soon becoming one of her closest and most appreciative friends, among whom was also William Makepeace Thackeray.

We find Landor visiting her again in 1837; at her house he was always welcome, and there spent many of his happiest hours in London. “I shall be at Gore House on Monday,” he writes to Forster, “pray come in the evening. I told Lady Blessington I should not let any of her court stand at all in my way. When I am tired of them, I leave them.” Landor describes “Disraeli sitting silently watching their conversation as if it were a display of

fireworks." Can this be true? If true, probably the young novelist was taking stock for future use.

Among those whom Dickens met there was Landor, at a dinner at that most delightful house. The latter's attire had become slightly disordered, to which D'Orsay laughingly drew attention as they rose from the table. Flushing up, Landor said, "My dear Count d'Orsay, I thank you! My dear Count d'Orsay, I thank you from my soul for pointing out to me the abominable condition to which I am reduced! If I had entered the drawing-room, and presented myself before Lady Blessington in so absurd a light, I would have instantly gone home, put a pistol to my head, and blown my brains out!" Those were the great days of the great dandies!

Chorley, the well-known musical critic, from whom we have already quoted, who was introduced to Lady Blessington by N. P. Willis, admired her, as everyone seems to have done who knew her; she had "the keenness of an Irishwoman in relishing fun and repartee, strange turns of language, and bright touches of character. . . . Her taste in everything was towards the gay, the superb, the luxurious." He describes a dinner there on May 8th, 1838 : — "Yesterday evening, I had a very rare treat — a dinner at Kensington tête-à-tête with Lady Blessington and Mr Landor; she talking her best, brilliant and kindly, and without that touch of self-consciousness which she sometimes displays when worked up to it by flatterers and gay companions. Landor, as usual, the very finest man's head I have ever seen, and with all his Johnsonian disposition to tyrannise and lay down the law in his talk, restrained and refined by an old-world courtesy and deference towards his bright hostess, for which chivalry is the only right word."

As evanescent as the enchantments of the actor's art are those of the wit and the beauty, and we can but faintly picture from descriptions by eye- and ear-witnesses the delights of the winter and summer nights' entertainments at Gore House.

William Archer Shee gives a bright description: — "Gore House last night was unusually brilliant. Lady Blessington has the art of collecting around her all that is best worth knowing in the male society of London. There were Cabinet Ministers, diplomats, poets, painters, and politicians, all assembled together. . . . She has the peculiar and most unusual talent of keeping the conversation in a numerous circle general, and of preventing her guests from dividing into little selfish pelotons. With a tact unsurpassed, she contrives to draw out even the most modest tyro from his shell of

reserve, and, by appearing to take an interest in his opinion, gives him the courage to express it. All her visitors seem, by some hidden influence, to find their level, yet they leave her house satisfied with themselves.”

Which is fully borne out by — among much other evidence — what Patmore has recorded of the brilliant hostess: — “As a talker she was a better sort of De Stael — as acute, as copious, as offhand, as original, and almost as sparkling, but without a touch of her arrogance, exigence, or pedantry; and with a faculty for listening that is the happiest and most indispensable of all the talents that go to constitute a good talker.”

George Augustus Sala describes being taken as a small boy by his mother to Gore House, when among others present were Maclise and Harrison Ainsworth, then a young man of about thirty, strikingly handsome, a dandy of the oiled, curled, be-whiskered D’Orsay type. The story is told of the beautiful Blessington standing one time between the two dandies, declaring that she was supported by the two handsomest men in town.

Macready gives a brief glimpse of Lady Blessington in 1837: “reached Lady Blessington’s about a quarter before eight. Found there Fonblanque, Bulwer, Trelawney, Procter, Auldjo, Forster, Lord Canterbury, Fred Reynolds, and Mr and Mrs Fairlie, Kenney, a young Manners Sutton, Count d’Orsay and some unknown. I passed an agreeable day, and a long and interesting conversation in the drawing-room (what an elegant and splendid room it is!) with D’Orsay on pictures.”

As a little powder among all this jam, we note that Edmund Yates recalls Lady Blessington as “ a fair, fat, middle-aged woman, in a big heavy swinging chariot glistening — the chariot, not her ladyship — with varnish, and profusely emblazoned with heraldry, and with two enormous footmen, cane-carrying, powder-headed and silk-stockinged, hanging on behind. One of the Misses Power, her nieces, and remarkably pretty girls, generally accompanied her ladyship.”

Among D’Orsay’s paintings was a large picture of the garden of Gore House, with portraits of Lady Blessington, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Douro, Lord Brougham, Sir Edwin Landseer, the Misses Power and others. “In the foreground, to the right, are the great Duke and Lady Blessington; in the centre, Sir E. Landseer, seated, in the act of sketching a fine cow, with a calf by her side; Count d’Orsay himself with two favourite dogs, is seen on the right of the group, and Lord Chesterfield on the left; nearer the house are the two Misses Power (nieces of Lady Blessington), reading a letter, a

gentleman walking behind. Further to the left are Lord Brougham, Lord Douro, etc., seated under a tree, engaged in conversation.”

Of the many good stories told at Gore House we can find room only for this, told there one night á propos of Theodore Hook’s righteously losing his temper when overpressed by a vulgar hostess to “perform.”

“Do, Mr Hook, do favour us?”

“Indeed, madam, I can’t; I can’t indeed. I am like that little bird, the canary; can’t lay my eggs when any one is looking at me.”

About the year 1847 clouds began to lower over the house; monetary troubles accumulated. We may here relate an incident that occurred one Sunday evening in February, when among others present were Prince Louis Napoleon, Dickens, Bulwer, and Forster. Lady Blessington exhibited a painting of a girl’s face, which she had received from her brother Robert, who held a Government berth at Hobart; it was a portrait done by the hand of the murderer and forger, Thomas Griffiths Wainwright.

In March, 1849, the crash came; the bailiffs entered Gore House, and the glory thereof departed for ever.

“I have just come away,” writes Thackeray,” from a dismal sight: Gore House full of snobs looking at the furniture. Foul Jews; odious bombazine women, who drove up in mysterious flies which they had hired — the wretches, ... so as to come in state to a fashionable lounge; brutes keeping their hats on in the kind old drawing-room — I longed to knock some of them off, and say, ‘Sir, be civil in a lady’s room. . . .’ There was one of the servants there, not a powdered one, but a butler. . . . My heart melted towards him, and I gave him a pound. Ah! it was a strange, sad picture of ‘Vanity Fair.’ My mind is all boiling up with it.”

Lady Blessington and D’Orsay fled to Paris. Her “goods and chattels” sold for sufficient to pay her debts. She and her nieces took an appartement in the Rue du Cerq, hard by the Champs Elysees. In the June of 1849, still an exile, she died peacefully in her sleep. When he heard the news of her death, Landor wrote to Forster, “Yet why call it sad? It was the very mode of departure she anticipated and desired.”

In July, 1856, Dickens wrote to Landor, from Boulogne: “There in Paris ... I found Marguerite Power and little Nelly, living with their mother and a pretty sister, in a very small, neat apartment, and working (as Marguerite told me) hard for a living. All that I saw of them filled me with respect, and revived the tenderest remembrances of Gore House. They are coming to

pass two or three weeks here for a country rest, next month. We had many long talks concerning Gore House, and all its bright associations; and I can honestly report that they had no one in more gentle and affectionate remembrance than you. Marguerite is still handsome”

D’Orsay dined with Dickens in Paris in 1850, and in the same year Thackeray called on him there: “To-day I went to see D’Orsay, who has made a bust of Lamartine, who, too, is mad with vanity. . . . D’Orsay has fitted himself up a charming atelier with arms and trophies, pictures and looking-glasses, the tomb of Blessington, the sword and star of Napoleon, and a crucifix over his bed, and here he dwells without any doubts or remorse, admiring himself in the most horrible pictures which he has painted, and the statues which he gets done for him.”



CHARLES DICKENS.
From the Drawing by Count D’Orsay.

Napoleon, with whom he had been very friendly in his days of exile in London, and who was a familiar and mysterious figure at Gore House, seems to have neglected D’Orsay somewhat in the days of his downfall, but in the year of his death, 1852, appointed him Director of the Fine Arts, a post more lordly in name than in emolument.

D’Orsay had gained a firm place in the hearts of many men whose esteem it was not easy to win or retain. Landor writes on August 7, 1852, “ the death of poor, dear D’Orsay fell heavily tho’ not unexpectedly upon me.

Intelligence of his painful and hopeless malady reached me some weeks before the event. With many foibles and grave faults he was generous and sincere. Neither spirits nor wit ever failed him, and he was ready at all times to lay down his life for a friend." Macready, also, was deeply touched by his death: "To my deep grief perceived the notice of the death of dear Count d'Orsay. No one who knew him and had affections could help loving him. When he liked he was most fascinating and captivating. It was impossible to be insensible to his graceful, frank, and most affectionate manner. . . . He was the most brilliant, graceful, endearing man I ever saw — humorous, witty, and clear-headed."

With some of those in this brilliant circle, who were numbered among Dickens's friends, we meet again.

VIII

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

OF those of the Blessington's intimate friends who were not dandies, but were men of letters, perhaps Walter Savage Landor was the most striking figure. He was born in 1775, and lived on, a chequered life of robust joys and robust miseries, until 1864. What historic days he saw! What a brave connecting link he was for Dickens between the days present and past. Of him as a literary man it is not necessary to say anything here, we need only come into contact with him as a striking and lovable personality. One touch of his younger days we may give: "At Oxford," he says, "I was about the first student who wore his hair without powder. 'Take care,' said my tutor; 'they will stone you for a republican.'" Yet strangely enough he disliked, despised the French as a people. For he was brusque and sweeping in his wholesale judgments, as for example once exclaiming to Macready, "Sir, the French are all scoundrels," which has quite a Johnsonian smack about it. Then, writing from Paris in 1802, he says, "Doubtless the government of Bonaparte is the best that can be contrived for Frenchmen. Monkeys must be chained, though it may cost them some grimaces."

Forster first met Landor in the summer of 1836, when these two with Wordsworth and Crabb Robinson occupied a box at the first night of "Ion." Afterward they adjourned to Talfourd's house, where, as related elsewhere in these pages, a fine company was gathered together. We gain a clear view of him, some two years later, from an American visitor, Charles Sumner, who described him in 1838 as "dressed in a heavy frock-coat of snuff colour, trousers of the same colour, and boots . . . with an open countenance, firm and decided, and a head gray and inclining to baldness . . . conversation . . . not varied, but it was animated and energetic in the extreme. We crossed each other several times; he called Napoleon the weakest, littlest man in history ... he considers Shakspeare and Washington the two greatest men that ever lived, and Cromwell one of the greatest sovereigns."

“I recall the well-remembered figure and face,” writes Forster in 1869, “as they first became known to me nearly thirty years ago. Landor was then upwards of sixty, and looked that age to the full. He was not above the middle stature, but had a stout stalwart presence, walked without a stoop, and in his general aspect, particularly the set and carriage of his head, was decidedly of what is called a distinguished bearing. His hair was already silvered gray, and had retired far upward from his forehead, which, wide and full but retreating, could never in the earlier time have been seen to such advantage. What at first was noticeable, however, in the broad white massive head, were the full yet strangely-lifted eyebrows. ... In the large, grey eyes there was a depth of composed expression that even startled by its contrast to the eager restlessness looking out from the surface of them; and in the same variety and quickness of transition the mouth was extremely striking. The lips that seemed compressed with unalterable will would in a moment relax to a softness more than feminine; and a sweeter smile it was impossible to conceive. ... A loud long laugh hardly less than leonine. Higher and higher went peal after peal, in continuous and increasing volleys. . . .”

He could snore to admiration, also, for we have Dickens writing to him from Paris in 1846, familiarly addressing him as “Young Man “: — ” that steady snore of yours, which I once heard piercing the door of your bedroom . . . reverberating along the bell-wire in the hall, so getting outside into the street, playing Eolian harps among the area railings, and going down the New Road like the blast of a trumpet.”

It is chiefly with his life at Bath that we will deal, where Dickens, Mrs Dickens, Maclise and Forster visited him on February 7th, 1840, at 36 St James’s Square. “Landor’s ghost goes along the silent streets here before me,” Dickens wrote in the year before his death. It was during this visit, writes Forster, that there came into the novelist’s mind the first stirrings of imagination that eventually took form as Little Nell, who became to Landor as one who had really lived and died.

Of his habit of life he himself gives us a description, writing to his sister in 1845: “I walk out in all weathers six miles a day at least; and I generally, unless I am engaged in the evening, read from seven till twelve or one. I sleep twenty minutes after dinner, and nearly four hours at night, or rather in the morning. I rise at nine, breakfast at ten, and dine at five. All the winter I have some beautiful sweet daphnes and hyacinths in my window.”

He used some quaint, old-fashioned pronunciations, such as “woonderful,” “goolden,” “woorld,” “srimp,” “yaller,” and “laylock.”

A love of his old age was Pomeroy, his small, white Pomeranian; he “is sitting in a state of contemplation,” Landor writes playfully, “with his nose before the fire. He twinkles his ears and his feathery tail. . . . Last evening I took him to hear Luisina de Sodre play and sing. . . . Pomeroy was deeply affected, and lay close to the pedal on her gown, singing in a great variety of tones, not always in time. It is unfortunate that he always will take a part where there is music, for he sings even worse than I do.”

“When he laughed and Pomeroy barked,” says Mrs Lynn Linton, “and Pomeroy always barked whenever he laughed — it was Bedlam in that small room in beautiful Bath,”

But even dear Pomeroy came occasionally under the lash of his master’s tongue, or shall we say bark, which was so seldom accompanied by a bite, and Landor would burst out, “Be quiet, you nasty, noisy, troublesome beast! I’ll wring your neck, if you won’t be quiet!”

Mrs Lynn Linton describes in Fraser’s Magazine her first meeting with Landor, in 1847, he then over seventy, she nearly fifty years younger. She was with friends, Doctor Brabant and his sister, in Empson’s curiosity shop at Bath, “when we saw what seemed a noble looking old man, badly dressed in shabby snuff-coloured clothes, a dirty old blue necktie, unstarched cotton shirt — and ‘knubbly’ apple-pie boots. But underneath the rusty old hatbrim gleamed a pair of quiet and penetrating grey-blue eyes; the voice was sweet and masterly; the manner that of a man of rare distinction.” It was Landor, one of the gods of her idolatry; she goes on, “I remember how the blood came into my face as I dashed up to him with both hands held out, and said, ‘Mr Landor? oh! is this Mr Landor?’ as if he had been a god suddenly revealed. And I remember the amused smile with which he took both my hands in his, and said, ‘And who is this little girl, I wonder?’ From that hour we were friends; and I thank God I can say truthfully, that never for one hour, one moment, afterwards were we anything else. For twelve long, dear years, we were father and daughter. We never called each other anything else.” Elsewhere she gives a very amusing picture of him: — ” He was always losing and overlooking, and then the tumult that would arise was something too absurd, considering the occasion. He used to stick a letter into a book: then, when he wanted to answer it, it was gone — and someone had taken it — the only letter he

wanted to answer — that he would rather have forfeited a thousand pounds than have lost, and so on. Or he used to push his spectacles up over his forehead, and then declare they were lost, lost for ever. He would ramp and rave about the room at such times as these, upsetting everything that came in his way, declaring that he was the most unfortunate man in the world, or the greatest fool, or the most inhumanly persecuted. I would persuade him to sit down and let me look for the lost property; when he would sigh in deep despair; and say there was no use in taking any more trouble about it, it was gone for ever. When I found it, as of course I always did, he would say ‘ thank you ‘ as quietly and naturally as if he had not been raving like a maniac half a minute before.”

Carlyle was with Landor in 1850. “Landor was in his house,” he writes, “in a fine quiet street like a New Town Edinburgh one, waiting for me, attended only by a nice Bologna dog. Dinner not far from ready; his apartments all hung round with queer old Italian pictures; the very doors had pictures on them. Dinner was elaborately simple. The brave Landor forced me to talk far too much, and we did very near a bottle of claret, besides two glasses of sherry; far too much liquor and excitement for a poor fellow like me. However, he was really stirring company: a proud, irascible, trenchant, yet generous, veracious, and very dignified old man; quite a ducal or royal man in the temper of him..... He left me to go smoking along the streets about ten at night, he himself retiring then..... Bath is decidedly the prettiest town in all England.”

Malmsey Madeira was a famous, favourite drink of his, a pleasant wine when in proper condition. Landor talked little while he ate, but burst forth between the courses, and of his wine he would swear that it was such that the Ancient Greeks had drunk withal, and that it must have been the favourite tippie of Epicurus and Anacreon, and Pericles and Aspasia.

Dickens, writing of Landor’s appearance, gives a curious account: — ” The arms were very peculiar. They were rather short, and were curiously restrained and checked in their action at the elbows; in the action of the hands, even when separately clenched, there was the same kind of pause, and a notable tendency to relaxation on the part of the thumb. Let the face be never so intense or fierce, there was a commentary of gentleness in the hands essential to be taken along with it. Like Hamlet, Landor would speak daggers but use none. In the expression of his hands, though angrily closed, there was always gentleness and tenderness; just as when they were open,

and the handsome old gentleman would wave them with a little courtly flourish that sat well upon him, as he recalled some classic compliment that he had rendered to some reigning beauty, there was a chivalrous grace about them such as pervades his softer verses.”

Carlyle dubbed him “the unsubduable Roman.”

“Once, when I was staying with him,” Mrs Lynn Linton writes, “he had a small dinner-party, of Dickens, John Forster, and myself. This was my first introduction to both these men. I found Dickens charming, and Forster pompous, heavy, and ungenial. Dickens was bright and gay and winsome, and while treating Mr Landor with the respect of a younger man for an elder, allowed his wit to play about him, bright and harmless as summer lightning . . . but Forster was saturnine and cynical.” Mrs Lynn Linton is righteously indignant at Forster’s “carping and unsympathetic” life of Landor, one of the worst books that ever he wrote.

The occasion of this festivity was his seventy-fifth birthday, and after it he wrote those splendid lines: —

“I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;
I warm’d both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.”

IX

MOVING ON

ALTHOUGH it is not in any way the purpose of this book to re-tell the life of Charles Dickens, it is time we returned to the centre of the circle. In 1838 he rented a cottage at Twickenham, not then the suburb of London which it has since become, where he entertained himself and his friends, and where there were high jinks, as there were apt to be wherever he was present or presided. Among the visitors were Talfourd, Thackeray, Douglas Jerrold, Maclise, Ainsworth, George Cattermole, who Forster says “ had then enough and to spare of fun as well as fancy to supply ordinary artists and humourists by the dozen, and wanted only a little more ballast and steadiness to possess all that could give attraction to good fellowship.” Dear! Dear! If only he had been as steady and dull as Forster! Cattermole, who it will be remembered drew many illustrations for Dickens, married a distant relation of the novelist, Miss Elderton, in 1839, and the “happy couple” passed their honeymoon near Petersham, where Dickens was staying at the time. He was born in 1800 and died in 1868.

Toward the end of the year 1839 Dickens moved from Doughty Street to 1 Devonshire Terrace, a bigger house with a large garden, hard by the York Gate of Regent’s Park, a house afterward occupied by George du Maurier. Of his method of work, writes one who knew him while living there: — ” His hours and days were spent by rule. He rose at a certain time, he retired at another, and though no precisian, it was not often that his arrangements varied. His hours for writing were between breakfast and luncheon, and when there was any work to be done no temptation was sufficiently strong to cause it to be neglected. This order and regularity followed him through the day. His mind was essentially methodical, and in his long walks, in his recreations, in his labour, he was governed by rules laid down for himself, rules well studied beforehand and rarely departed from. The so-called men of business — the people whose own exclusive devotion to the science of profit and loss makes them regard doubtfully all to whom that same science

is not the main object in life — would have been delighted and amazed at this side of Dickens's character.”

X

THREE JESTERS

SAMUEL ROGERS was a rich banker, a poor poet, a wicked wit and a delightful entertainer, amongst his multitudinous guests and friends being Charles Dickens. He was born in 1763 and lived on to unusual old age, dying in 1855. His father was a banker in Cornhill, so that he was wealthy, writing poetry for pleasure and with considerable pains. He was indeed an extremely slow worker, which gave rise to the following quaint conceit of Sydney Smith, who having told a friend that Rogers was not very well, was asked what was wrong with him. "Oh, don't you know," said Sydney Smith, "he has produced a couplet. When our friend is delivered of a couplet, with infinite labour and pains, he takes to his bed, has straw laid down, the knocker tied up, and expects his friends to call and make inquiries, and the answer at the door invariably is, 'Mr Rogers and his little couplet are as well as can be expected.'"

The said Sydney Smith is reported as having gotten himself into trouble with Rogers by recommending him when he sat for his portrait to take the pose of "saying his prayers with his face in his hat." There is another version of this tale, but we like better the above.

To breakfast with the banker-poet in his charming house, 22 St James's Place, St James's Street, overlooking the Green Park, must have been truly delightful, and few there were who would not receive an invitation with pleasure and accept it with alacrity.

Rogers wrote to Lady Dufferin, "Will you breakfast with me to-morrow? S. R." The reply was "Won't I? H. D."

There were usually not more than four or five guests, and for many years there were gathered round the hospitable table the leading lights in literature, art, science, politics, and any distinguished strangers staying in or passing through town. Various are the portraits painted of the poet, varying according to the temperaments of the painters, but it is evident that he was an accomplished entertainer, an admirable teller of tales, a wit, a punster,

and a master of the art of conversation; caustic and cynical at times, and also an inspirer of wit and talk.

“At least, Mr Rogers, you will admit that there was fire in Byron?” said a guest.

“Oh, yes!” he answered, “and plenty of it, but it was hell fire.”

Charles Mackay, who narrates this, gave Rogers a very good character, “he said unkind things, but he did kind ones in a most gracious manner. If he was sometimes severe upon those who were ‘ up,’ he always was tender to those who were ‘down.’ He never closed his purse strings against a friend, or refused to help the young and deserving.”

Tom Moore notes that on March 23, 1843: — ” Breakfasted at Rogers’s to meet Jeffrey and Lord John — two of the men I like best among my numerous friends. Jeffrey’s volubility (which was always superabundant) becomes even more copious, I think, as he grows older. But I am ashamed of myself for finding any fault with him.”

At his dinners he had candles set high round the room so that the pictures might be seen to advantage. When asked what he thought of this arrangement, Sydney Smith replied that he did not like it — ” above, a blaze of light, below, darkness and gnashing of teeth.”

Macaulay writes, “What a delightful house it is! It looks out on the Green Park just at the most pleasant point. The furniture has been selected with a delicacy of taste quite unique. Its value does not depend on fashion, but must be the same while the fine arts are held in any esteem. In the drawing-room, for example, the chimney-pieces are carved by Flaxman into the most beautiful Grecian forms. The bookcase is painted by Stothard, in his very best manner, with groups from Chaucer, Shakspeare, and Boccaccio. The pictures are not numerous, but every one is excellent. The most remarkable object in the dining-room is, I think, a cast of Pope, taken after death by Roubilliac, a noble model in terra-cotta by Michael Angelo, from which he afterwards made one of his finest statues, that of Lorenzo de Medici; and, lastly, a mahogany table on which stands an antique vase. When Chantrey dined with Rogers some time ago he took particular notice of the vase, and the table on which it stands, and asked Rogers who made the table. ‘A common carpenter,’ said Rogers. ‘Do you remember the making of it?’ said Chantrey. ‘Certainly,’ said Rogers, in some surprise, ‘ I was in the room while it was finished with the chisel, and gave the workman directions

about placing it.' 'Yes,' said Chantrey, ' I was the carpenter. I remember the room well, and all the circumstances.'"

Of May 24, 1840, Macready notes, "Talfourd and Dickens called for me, and we went together to Rogers's, where we dined. ... I was pleased with the day, liking Mrs Norton very much, and being much amused with some anecdotes of Rogers's. His collection of pictures is admirable, and the spirit of good taste seems to pervade every nook of his house."

Caroline Elizabeth Sarah was one of the three beautiful daughters of Thomas Sheridan and grand-daughter of Richard Brinsley, and is best known in history as Mrs Norton, having married the Hon. George Chapple Norton in 1827. Later she became Lady Stirling-Maxwell. Her elder sister was Lady Dufferin and her younger the Duchess of Somerset, who was Queen of Beauty at the celebrated Eglinton Tournament. Serjeant Ballantine paints her as one of the most lovely women of her time, clever, too, and accomplished. Of her beauty Charles Sumner gives an enthusiastic account in 1839; her loveliness "has never been exaggerated. It is brilliant and refined. Her countenance is lighted by eyes of the intensest brightness, and her features are of the greatest regularity. There is something tropical in her look; it is so intensely bright and burning, with large dark eyes, dark hair, and Italian complexion. And her conversation is so pleasant and powerful without being masculine, or rather it is masculine without being mannish; there is the grace and ease of the woman with a strength and skill of which any man might well be proud.

Mrs Norton is about twenty-eight years old, and is, I believe, a grossly slandered woman." She was dark-haired, with dark eyes, a classic forehead and delicate features, so others tell us. It is pleasant to find this unanimity, for there does not seem to be any matter upon which the observations of eye-witnesses differ so greatly as upon this of a woman's or a man's appearance. All that we, who have not seen, can do is to strike an average when the evidence is contradictory, with a result more or less unsatisfactory.

Mrs Norton did not live happily with her husband, separating from him in 1836, and he foolishly and without due cause afterward brought an action for divorce against her, coupling her name with that of Lord Melbourne. Rogers stood staunchly by her in her trouble and accompanied her into court on the first day of the trial.

A false accusation has often been levelled against Mrs Norton that in 1852 she conveyed to Delane, the famous editor of *The Times*, the news

that “the heads of the Government had agreed “ upon “ repeal,” the publication of which decision created dismay and amazement. It was said that she had fascinated Sidney Herbert into giving away the secret to her, and it has even been stated that she sold the information for £500 to Barnes, Delane’s predecessor, who had then been dead some four years! Delane had other and more trustworthy sources of obtaining “inside information” as to the views and doings of the Government. She is, more or less, the heroine of Mr George Meredith’s “Diana of the Crossways,” in which the above-mentioned mythical incident in her life is utilised.

To return to our Rogers.

On November 25, 1840, Carlyle dined with Rogers, Milman, “Pickwick” and others: — ” A dull evening, not worth awakening for at four in the morning, with the dance of all the devils round you. . . . Rogers is still brisk, courteous, kindly-affectioned — a good old man, pathetic to look upon.” Some years later he was with him at the Ashburtons’, and notes: — ” I do not remember any old man (he is now eighty-three) whose manner of living gave me less satisfaction. A most sorrowful, distressing, distracted old phenomenon, hovering over the rim of deep eternities with nothing but light babble, fatuity, vanity, and the frostiest London wit in his mouth. Sometimes I felt as if I could throttle him, the poor old wretch!”

He used to tell this tale — ” An Englishman and a Frenchman had to fight a duel. That they might have the better chance of missing one another, they were to fight in a dark room. The Englishman fired up the chimney, and, by Jove! he brought down the Frenchman! When I tell this story in Paris — I put the Englishman up the chimney!”

Apparently he was like Douglas Jerrold in being bitter of wit but not at heart: “When I was young,” he said of himself, “I used to say good-natured things, and nobody listened to me. Now I am old I say ill-natured things and everybody listens to me.” “Often bitter, but very kindly at heart,” writes Tennyson. “We have often talked of death together till I have seen the tears roll down his cheeks.”

“He says the most ill-natured things, and does the best,” says Sumner.

Of his readiness the following is a happy example: A man, whom Rogers did not know, stopped him one day in Piccadilly.

“How do you do, Mr Rogers? You don’t remember me, sir. I had the pleasure of seeing you at Bath.”

“Delighted to see you again — at Bath,” was the response.

Washington Irving, writing from Brighton to Moore, August 14, 1824, says of Rogers, "I dined *tite-a-tite* with him some time since, and he served up his friends as he served up his fish, with a squeeze of lemon over each. It was very piquante, but it rather set my teeth on edge." He does not mention the fact, however, that Moore himself was one of the friends so served up!

Of his friendship with Dickens we have considerable record, but the following must suffice. In Forster we find a comical account of a dinner given by Dickens in April, 1849, when both Rogers and Jules Benedict were taken suddenly but not seriously ill. The host had been dispatiating upon an atrocious pauper-farming case, and was now roundly chaffed as being nearly as iniquitous and a poisoner of his confiding guests. When Forster was helping Rogers on with his over-shoes, for his customary walk home, the poet said, "Do you know how many waistcoats I wear? Five! Here they are!" Wherewith he displayed them.

From Albaro, Dickens writes on the 1st of September, 1844, to Rogers: — "I wish you would come and pluck an orange from the tree at Christmas time. You should walk on the terrace as early in the morning as you pleased, and there are brave breezy places in the neighbourhood to which you could transfer those stalwart Broadstairs walks of yours, and hear the sea, too, roaring in your ears."

And Forster writes to Rogers from Fort House, Broadstairs, under date September 9, 1851 ..."I am staying with Dickens, who, with all his family, desire their most kind remembrances to you. This place is full of associations connected with you, which make it more pleasant to all of us."

Rogers was not an "out-and-out" admirer of Dickens's literary work. In conversation at Broadstairs he said to his nephew Henry Sharpe that he had been looking at the "Christmas Carol" the night before; "the first half-hour was so dull it sent him to sleep, and the next hour was so painful that he should be obliged to finish it to get rid of the impression. He blamed Dickens's style very much, and said there was no wit in putting bad grammar into the mouths of all his characters, and showing their vulgar pronunciation by spelling 'are' 'air,' a horse without an h."

In Paris in 1843, Washington Irving nearly ran over his old friend, "we stopped and took him in. He was on one of his yearly epicurean visits to Paris, to enjoy the Italian opera and other refined sources of pleasure. The hand of age begins to bow him down, but his intellect is as clear as ever, and his talents and taste for society in full vigour. He breakfasted with us

several times, and I have never known him more delightful. He would sit for two or three hours continually conversing, and giving anecdotes, of all the conspicuous persons who have figured within the last sixty years, with most of whom he had been on terms of intimacy. He has refined upon the art of telling a story, until he has brought it to the most perfect simplicity where there is not a word too much or too little, and where every word has its effect. His manner, too, is the most quiet, natural, and unpretending that can be imagined.”

At last came the end: —

“Old Sam Rogers is gone at last,” records William Archer Shee, “at the mature age of ninety-two. His age has been a matter of speculation among his friends for years, and he was as shy of alluding to it as any fading beauty of the other sex. . . . My earliest recollections are associated with him, having in my childhood enjoyed immensely, at each returning Christmas, the merry juvenile parties which he used to give to his nephews and nieces in St James’s Place.” With which pleasant



SAMUEL ROGERS.

From the Drawing by George Richmond, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

peep into the old man’s way of life, let us say “May he rest in peace.”

In startling contrast there stands before us now the pathetic figure of Thomas Hood, a poor man but a rich poet, a kindly wit and a joyous spirit, at whose door poverty was ever knocking with his lean finger and whose

footsteps his life long were dogged by ill-health. He fought a good fight and won an undying name. He was born in 1799 and died — too soon for the world — in 1845. The grandiloquent Samuel Carter Hall describes him as “of middle height, slender and sickly-looking, of sallow complexion and plain features, quiet in expression, and very rarely excited, so as to give indication of either the pathos or the humour that must ever have been working in his soul!” It would be possible to crowd many pages with his quips and quiddities, whims and whimsicalities, but it is somewhat sad laughing at the jests of one whose life was so sorrowful, who wrote rubbish for bread and butter, and who with half Rogers’s worldly advantages would, perchance, have left us more than the few lovely verses we have of his.

One jest we will retail, however; it is one of the most delightful and least known of his; this of a gentleman who was drawing the long bow with regard to his shooting; said Hood,

“What he hit is history.

What he missed is mystery.”

There was not anything in his brave life that became him better than his leaving it.

In what was probably his last letter, written on March 24, 1845, he writes, “Still alive — but cannot last long.” His plucky fight for life was drawing to an end. “He saw the oncoming of death with great cheerfulness,” wrote a friend, “though without anything approaching to levity. Toward the end, he said, ‘It’s a beautiful world, and since I have been lying here, I have thought of it more and more; it is not so bad, even humanly speaking, as people would make it out. I have had some very happy days while I lived in it, and I could have wished to stay a little longer. But it is all for the best, and we shall all meet in a better world.’” On the first of May, feeling that he was sinking, he called his family round his bed, his beloved wife, his daughter, his son: and his last words were, “Remember, I forgive all, all, as I hope to be forgiven.” He sleeps in Kensal Green Cemetery; his epitaph, “He sang ‘The Song of The Shirt.’”

During his last illness, it is said that he made the following gruesome jest, when his wife was making a large mustard poultice for him: — ” Oh, Mary, that will be a great deal of mustard to a very little meat.”

He was very friendly with Dickens, of whom he writes in 1840, “Boz is a very good fellow and he and I are very good friends.” It was proposed to set up a monument to him by public subscription. Asked to support this,

Dickens wrote a letter which foreshadowed his hope, expressed later, that no monument should ever be raised to himself: — " I have the greatest tenderness for the memory of Hood, as I had for himself. But I am not very favourable to posthumous memorials in the monument way, and I should exceedingly regret to see any such appeal as you contemplate made public. ... I think that I best discharge my duty to my deceased friend, and best consult the respect and love with which I remember him, by declining to join in any such public endeavour.

. . I shall have a melancholy gratification in privately assisting to place a simple and plain record over the remains of a great writer that should be as modest as he himself. ..."

With Douglas Jerrold Dickens was upon terms of closest friendship. "He was," he says, "one of the gentlest and most affectionate of men. I remember very well that when I first saw him, in about the year 1835, when I went into his sick room in Thistle Grove, Brompton, and found him propped up in a great chair, bright eyed, and quick, and eager in spirit, but very lame in body, he gave me an impression of tenderness. ... In the company of children and young people he was particularly happy ... he never was so gay, so sweet-tempered, so pleasing, and so pleased as then. Among my own children I have observed this many and many a time."

There was once an estrangement for some months between the two, until one day they sat back to back in a club dining-room: Jerrold turned round, and said, "For God's sake, let us be friends again! A life's not long enough for this."

He is but a shadow of a name to this generation, a ghost of a joker to whose account many jokes have been credited which are neither his nor to his credit, and the author of " Mrs Caudle's Curtain Lectures," of which he himself said, "It just shows what stuff the people will swallow. I could write such rubbish as that by the yard."

Douglas William Jerrold was born in Greek Street, Soho, on January 3, 1803, and died at St John's Wood, June 8, 1857. He had varied experiences, spending some two years as a midshipman and settling in London in 1816 as apprentice to a printer in Northumberland Street, Strand. But we will jump on to the year 1845, when — a famous man of letters and of wit — he went to live at West Lodge, Lower Putney Common; first pausing to gain some idea of his appearance and personality.

We have a description from a German pen of Jerrold in 1855: — ” Douglas Jerrold then lived at Putney. . . . His house was situated on a charming plain, upon which broad-headed cattle were comfortably grazing. . . . Never did I see a handsomer head on an uglier body. Douglas Jerrold is small, with stooping shoulders; but the head placed upon those shoulders is truly magnificent. He has the head of a Jupiter on the body of a Thersites. A high, broad, cheerful, arched forehead; a very fine mouth; a well-shaped nose; clear, heaven blue eyes. . . .”

With which we may compare this from the pen of Edmund Yates: — ” I had often been in his company, and had heard him flash forth the biting epigram and quick repartee for which in our day he has had no rival. A small delicately-formed bent man, with long grey hair combed back from his forehead, with grey eyes deep set under penthouse brows, and a way, just as the inspiration seized him, of dangling a double eyeglass, which hung round his neck by a broad black ribbon: a kindly man for all his bitter tongue . . . soft and easy with women and children.”

The study at his Putney home was a snug room: “All about it are books. Crowning the shelves are Milton and Shakspeare. A bit of Shakspeare’s mulberry tree lies on the mantelpiece. Above the sofa are the ‘Rent Day’ and ‘Distraint for Rent,’ Wilkie’s two pictures. Under the two prints laughs Sir Joshua’s sly ‘Puck,’ perched upon a pulpy mushroom. . . . The furniture is simple solid oak. The desk has not a speck upon it. The marble shell upon which the inkstand rests has no litter in it. Various notes lie in a row between clips, on the table. The paper-basket stands near the arm-chair, prepared for answered letters and rejected contributions. The little dog follows his master into his study, and lies at his feet.

“That cottage at Putney, its garden, its mulberry tree, its grass-plot, its cheery library with Douglas Jerrold as the chief figure in the scene, remains as a bright and most pleasant picture in our memory. He had an almost reverential fondness for books, books themselves, and said he could not bear to treat them, or to see them treated, with disrespect. He told us it gave him pain to see them turned on their faces, stretched open, or dog’s-eared, or carelessly flung down, or in any way misused. He told us this, holding a volume in his hand with a caressing gesture, as though he tended it affectionately and gratefully for the pleasure it had given him.”

There were many merry meetings there of merry spirits, and what a sight for gods and men must have been that of Dickens, Maclise, Macready,

Forster, with their host Jerrold, tucking in their “tuppenies” and playing joyously at leap-frog!

Various writers have tried to make excuse for the severity and hurting-power of Jerrold’s repartees, but for our part we cannot see that any defence can be made for the man who uses his gift of wit to amuse himself at the expense and with the distress of those to whom he professes friendship. Tale after tale is told, there is no questioning their truth, of bitter, wickedly-biting jests made by Jerrold upon the persons or mental qualities of those whom he met. It is not to be denied that at heart he was a most kindly and, in the best sense of the word, charitable man, but his wit too often got the better of his heart; he did not count the cost to others of what was mere fun to him, which he should have been able to do, for a scathing repartee “shut him up” completely. Even such a simple one as that of the young lady behind the bar, upon whom he had been exercising his wit; “There’s your grog,” she said, “mind you don’t fall into it, little man.”

Here are a few specimens of his wit’:

Heraud, the poet, enquired of Jerrold if he had seen his “Descent into Hell”; said Jerrold, “I wish to Heaven I had!”

“That air always carries me away when I hear it,” said a bore.

“Can nobody whistle it?” asked Jerrold.

“Orion” Horne went to Australia, leaving his wife in England; he treated her, said Jerrold, with “unremitting kindness.”

Leigh Hunt said of him, that if he had — and he had — the sting of the bee, he also had the honey.

As an example of Jerrold’s kindlier wit, may be repeated his answer when asked by Charles Knight to write his epitaph; “Good Knight,” said Jerrold.

He had a quaint, whimsical way of putting things. One bitterly cold spring night, walking home across Westminster Bridge, he remarked to his companions: “I blame nobody; but they call this May!”

Of Jerrold’s real kindness the following story is a pleasant confirmation. While living at Putney he had a brougham built for him. At the coachmaker’s one day he was looking at the immaculate varnish on the back of the vehicle.

“Its polish is perfect now,” he said, “but the urchins will soon cover it with scratches.”

“But, sir, I can put on a few spikes that will keep them off”

“No — to me a thousand scratches on my carriage would be more welcome than one on the hand of a footsore lad, to whom a stolen lift might be a godsend.”

One of his less well-known accomplishments was that of whistling with great sweetness.

On the 8th of June, 1857, Dickens met Jerrold at the Gallery of Illustration, Regent Street — afterward better known as German Reeds’ — where they were to meet W. H. Russell to advise him with regard to his lectures on the War in the Crimea. “Arriving some minutes before the time,” Dickens related to Blanchard Jerrold, “I found your father sitting alone in the hall. I sat down by him in a niche on the staircase, and he told me that he had been very unwell for three or four days. A window in his study had been newly painted, and the smell of the paint (he thought it must be that) had filled him with nausea and turned him sick, and he felt weak and giddy, through not having been able to retain any food. He was a little subdued at first, and out of spirits; but we sat there half an hour talking, and when we came out together he was quite himself. In the shadow I had not observed him closely; but when we got into the sunshine of the streets I saw that he looked ill. We were both engaged to dine with Mr Russell at Greenwich, and I thought him so ill that I advised him not to go ... we walked on to Covent Garden, and before we had gone fifty yards he was very much better. ... It would do him good to have a few quiet hours in the air, and he would go on with us to Greenwich. . . . We strolled through the Temple on our way to a boat; and I have a lively recollection of him, stamping about Elm Tree Court (with his hat in one hand, and the other pushing his hair back), laughing in his heartiest manner at a ridiculous remembrance we had in common, which I had presented in some exaggerated light to divert him. We found our boat, and went down the river, . . . and talked all the way. . . . The dinner-party was a large one, and I did not sit near him at table. But he and I had arranged, before we went in to dinner, that he was to eat only of some simple dish that we agreed upon, and was only to drink sherry and water. We broke up very early, and before I went away with Mr Leech, who was to take me to London, I went round to Jerrold, and put my hand upon his shoulder, asking him how he was. He turned round to show me the glass beside him, with a little wine and water in it. ‘I have kept to the prescription. ... I have quite got over the paint, and I am perfectly well.’ He was really elated by the relief of having recovered,

and was as quietly happy as I ever saw him. We exchanged 'God bless you!' and shook hands.

"I went down to Gad's Hill next morning, where he was to write to me after a little while, appointing his own time for coming to see me there. A week afterwards, another passenger in the railway carriage in which I was on my way to London Bridge, opened his morning paper, and said: 'Douglas Jerrold is dead!'"

XI

A GROUP OF ARTISTS

MR W. P. FRITH in his truly delightful Reminiscences tells an amusing story of some of those who will appear in these pages. Two of the best known frescoes in the Houses of Parliament are by Maclise, "The Death of Nelson" and "The Meeting of Wellington and Blucher after the Battle of Waterloo." On the invitation of the painter of them, John Phillip — Phillip of Spain — Egg, and Frith went to see the completed Wellington, with which they were greatly struck. "I shall go and put the dashed thing I am doing on the fire," exclaimed Phillip, as they walked away homeward. "We didn't say half enough to him about it," said Egg, "let us send him a congratulatory address — a round-robin, or something." On the proposal of Frith it was decided to add to the address a small gift, a silver port-crayon or pencil case, and when the question arose of asking others to join in with them, Frith volunteered to approach Landseer, from whom he received the following reply: — "Dear Frith, I have been away and unwell, which partly accounts for my apparent want of attention to your note, telling of the affectionate intentions towards our justly-valued friend, D. Maclise. I am inclined to think the committee, or whoever suggested this testimonial to D. M., would do well to pause and reconsider the matter. I think the scheme out of proportion with the gigantic achievement, and that it comes at the wrong time. You may sincerely believe in my respect and admiration for his great genius, and that I as faithfully appreciate the man, who is the best fellow on earth." As Frith himself admits, the pencil case on one side and Maclise's frescoes on the other were slightly out of proportion, but we know that the kindly, generous Irishman did not look at the affair in this light, but welcomed warmly the mark of appreciation from his brothers of the palette.

Daniel M'Clise, or Maclise as he afterward wrote his name, was born in Cork on January 25, 1811, being the son of a small tradesman. The first notable event of his life occurred when he was fourteen years of age. Sir Walter Scott was that year touring in Ireland, in company of the Lockharts

and Miss Edgeworth, and visited Cork. Maclise finding out that the famous Scotsman was calling at the shop of a well-known bookseller named Bolster, seized the opportunity to make a sketch of Sir Walter, which he worked up at home and the next day procured its exhibition in the shop, where it was noticed by the great man himself. Maclise was dragged forward, and Scott, astonished at the skill of the juvenile artist, signed his name to the sketch. The drawing was lithographed, and the copies sold brought Maclise immediate profit and profitable notoriety. In July, 1827, he went to London, entering the Royal Academy Schools, where he worked with assiduity and success.

He was a tall man, over six feet in height; his forehead high, crowned with dark, glossy curls, and his eyes large and expressive, the lips rather full. Frith describes Maclise as a man "delightful in every way," good-looking, generous, an enthusiast in his appreciation of the work of others and untouched by envy.

Forster waxes enthusiastic over him when writing of the company that visited Dickens at Twickenham in 1838. "Nor was there anything that exercised a greater fascination over Dickens than the grand enjoyment of idleness, the ready self-abandonment to the luxury of laziness, which we both so laughed at in Maclise, under whose easy swing of indifference, always the most amusing at the most aggravating events and times, we knew that there was artist-work as eager, energy as unwearying, and observation almost as penetrating as Dickens's own." He goes on to mention "a quaint oddity that in him gave to shrewdness itself an air of Irish simplicity," and speaks of his "handsome person." Indeed, they were fine young fellows all in those days, and dandies the most of them, all honour to them.

In May, 1838, Maclise, then well on the road to a fame of which time has somewhat dimmed the lustre, had been introduced by Forster to Dickens, and the two struck up an affectionate and lasting friendship. His portrait of Dickens, now in the National Portrait Gallery, was exhibited in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1840. It is generally known that when the painting was completed Dickens sent the artist a handsome cheque, which was returned, accompanied by the following letter: — "My dear Dickens, How could you think of sending me a cheque for what was to me a matter of gratification? I am almost inclined to be offended with you. May I not be permitted to give some proof of the value I attach to your friendship? I

return the cheque, and regret that you should have thought it necessary to send it to yours faithfully, Daniel Maclise.” To which Dickens responded: “Do not be offended. I quite appreciate the feeling which induced you to return what I sent you; notwithstanding, I must ask you to take it back again. If I could have contemplated for an instant the selfish engrossment of so much of your time and extraordinary powers, I should have had no need (knowing you, I knew that well) to resort to the little device I played off. I will take anything else from you at any time that you will give me, any scrap from your hand; but I entreat you not to disturb this matter. I am willing to be your debtor for anything else in the whole wide range of your art, as you shall very readily find whenever you put me to the proof.”

Thackeray pronounced the portrait “perfectly amazing — a looking-glass could not render a better facsimile.”

Maclise died of acute pneumonia in 1870. To the very last art was all in all to him, and on the day before his death, which occurred on the 25th of April, he tried to work, but the pencil fell from his fingers. He was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, the annual dinner of the Royal Academy taking place on the same day, at which Dickens’s last words spoken in public were a eulogy of his friend: “The gentlest and most modest of men, the freshest as to his generous appreciation of young aspirants, and the frankest and largest hearted as to his peers, incapable of a sordid or ignoble thought, gallantly sustaining the true dignity of his vocation, without one grain of self ambition, wholesomely natural at the last as at the first, ‘in wit a man, simplicity a child.’“

Of Egg, Dickens writes, he “is an excellent fellow, and full of good qualities; I am sure a generous and staunch man at heart, and a good and honourable nature.” Augustus Leopold Egg was born in 1816, became a student at the Royal Academy in 1836 and R.A. in 1860. Holman Hunt describes him as “a keen reader and renderer of human expression, he had distinguished himself from his compeers by the freshness of his pictorial dramas, so that he reached at times the realm of poetic interpretation.” In and round about 1850 he lived in Ivy Cottage, in Black Lion Lane, now Queen’s Road, Bayswater, then almost countrified; the house was ancient and picturesque, and was the scene of many a pleasant party and jollification. Frith relates a funny tale of Mulready, who persistently refused Egg’s frequent invitations. It transpired that he did so, because he believed that Leech in his amusing caricature of the once famous Mulready envelope

had insinuated that the designer of it was “a leech and a bloodsucker,” the mistake arising from Mulready’s ignorance of Leech’s habit of signing his work with a bottle containing a leech. The matter was explained, the next invitation accepted, and Mulready astonished and amused Leech, with whom he became very friendly, by narrating the delusion under which he had laboured.

Egg was of somewhat Jewish appearance, large nose, large mouth, long black hair — a regular mane, which he had a habit of tossing.

Mark Lemon was a frequent guest at Egg’s dinners, and Frith describes him as apt to be quarrelsome when he had imbibed the amount of wine which in others conduces to increased joviality.

The dining-room was long, low, and narrow, the table round, the walls covered with engravings by S. W. Reynolds, after the greater Reynolds, and there was a first-rate cook and an excellent cellar. Let us take a peep at a party whereat beside the host were Dickens, Frith, Mark Lemon, Leech, and others. So well-served was the banquet that Dickens proposed a vote of thanks to the cook, suggesting that she should be summoned and addressed by him. “Like most good cooks,” said the host, “she has an uncertain temper, and I shouldn’t advise you to try it — she wouldn’t understand your ‘appropriate language’ as meant seriously, and she might resent it in her own language, which, I believe, is sometimes described by her kitchen companions as ‘bad language.’”

Lemon topped this with a serio-comic story of a ferocious cook of a friend of his, with whom he had a terrific encounter.

Books, pictures, painters, actors were in turn discussed. Of Charles Kean, Dickens acutely said: “If you can imagine port wine without its flavour, you have a fair comparison between the elder Kean and his son.”

After dessert, at Forster’s request, Leech sang a song, probably his favourite “King Death,” written by Barry Cornwall, which he used to sing with pathetic solemnity, arousing, usually, uproarious laughter. Here are a few lines:

“King Death was a rare old fellow,
He sat where no sun could shine.
And he lifted his hands so yellow
To drink of his coal-black wine.
Hurra! for the coal-black wine!”

He had a deep, sympathetic voice, and after listening to him one time, Jerrold remarked: "I say, Leech, if you had the same opportunity of exercising your voice as you have of using your pencil, how it would draw!"

At Egg's, Dickens interrupted the song with: "There, that will do. If you go on any longer you will make me cry."

Then followed a story by Leech, a mild gamble at a quaint game called "Races," at which Dickens lost all his loose silver and was not allowed to stake his watch and chain, as he solemnly proposed to do, a visit to Egg's "workshop" to inspect his "goods," and then the host, in reply to a query from Dickens, told the following strange story (we quote Mr Frith) of "a pencil drawing of great beauty, representing a handsome young man — the head and bust only — " which hung in the dining room, " and below the drawing was a small piece of discoloured linen with an inscription."

"What is the history of this?" asked Dickens. "Can you tell us? Who is this good-looking young fellow? and what is the meaning of this discoloured stuff, which looks as if it had been white at one time?"

"Yes," said Egg; "it was white at one time, but that time is long ago. Sit down all of you, and I will tell you about it. The room you have just left, where I work, was built by Reynolds, the engraver, about 1815, or thereabouts. A boy named Cousins was apprenticed to him about that time to learn the art of engraving. The boy's parents were very poor, and the lad had been their main support by making pencil likenesses, which he executed with wonderful skill. This practice with the pencil was of great service to him in learning the different processes of mezzotinto engraving, and he advanced very rapidly in his new art, to the great satisfaction of his master, with whom he became a favourite pupil, and eventually a very efficient assistant. One day — in 1817, I think, but am not sure about the date — a young man, dressed in a coat with a fur collar, and the many capes in favour with the youth of that period — a handsome, gipsy-like fellow — called upon Reynolds, and was shown into the engraving-room. After the usual greetings, Reynolds said, 'Now, you must let me have your likeness. I have a lad here who will take you in no time.' 'Well,' said the young man, 'if he is as rapid as that,' or something like it, 'he may try his hand; but five-and-twenty minutes are about all I can give him.' 'Sit down there, then,' said Reynolds. 'Now, Cousins, my boy, do your best.' In less than half an hour the drawing was made from the features, but the hair was still

unfinished; except that, the likeness was perfect. 'Give him five minutes more for the hair.' 'Five minutes, and no more,' said the sitter, taking out his watch. The hair was done, and the gipsy-like-looking man shook hands with the boy, patted him upon the head, and went away. 'Well done, Cousins, my boy. Now, do you know who it was you have been drawing?' 'No, sir.' 'That young fellow was Edmund Kean, who took the town by storm in Shylock the other night.' And," concluded Egg, "the piece of linen affixed to the drawing was torn from the breast of Kean's shirt by himself in one of his storms of passion in Sir Giles Overreach; and the lad Cousins is the well-known engraver and Academician."

Egg was a capital host, and amongst his gifts was a quiet fund of dry humour. He showed himself superior to many of his contemporary artists by his early and enthusiastic recognition of the work of Holman Hunt, which differed so greatly in aim from his own.

The following quaint anecdote is related of him as an amateur actor: —

In Lytton's "Not So Bad as We Seem," Egg was "discovered" when the curtain rose, and thus soliloquised: "Years ago, when under happier circumstances —" which the actor invariably rendered, "Here's a go, etc."

Holman Hunt carried the news of his death to Wilkie Collins, who was overwhelmed by it, and said: "And so I shall never any more shake that dear hand and look into that beloved face! And, Holman, all we can resolve is to be closer together as more precious in having had his affection." To Hunt, Dickens wrote of Egg, referring chiefly to their dramatic travels: "The dear fellow was always one of the most popular of the party, always sweet-tempered, humorous, conscientious, thoroughly good, and thoroughly beloved."

We must not stop with the Landseers for long; we have so many friends to make; art is long, but books should not be overlong. They were three: Thomas, born in 1795, Charles in 1799, and Edwin Henry in 1802, the sons of the well-known engraver John Landseer. Thomas, too, "whom everyone quite loves for his sweet nature" writes Dickens, was an engraver, helping to popularise many of his youngest brother's famous pictures; he was a big, genial, stout man, afflicted with deafness, which he asserted to have been the result of standing too near to a cannon when it was fired. Once at an evening party he gathered from the clapping of hands that he could see that the song he had not heard had been a success; he approached the singer, and made this appalling request: "That must have been a delightful song of

yours; would you mind singing a verse or two into my trumpet?" Charles and Edwin were both slight, active men, but the former, when not making puns, was apt to be brusque, whereas Sir Edwin was a most courtly person, and spoke with a drawl, natural or acquired. A daughter of Mr Frith describes him thus: "he was small and compact, and wore a beautiful shirt with a frill in which was placed a glittering diamond brooch or pin, I do not know which; and he looked to me like one of his own most good-humoured white poodles. He was curled and scented and exquisitely turned out." The same writer tells a comic story of him: he was walking one day with a certain duchess through a glen where workmen had been making extensive alterations in the face of nature; "I can't think how it was managed," said he; "oh, it was quite easy," was her reply, startling from so mild mannered a personage, "it was a mere matter of damming and blasting."

A quaint story is told of him when he was "visitor" at the R. A. Life School. His father — John Landseer — came in one night and found his son reading —

"Why don't you draw?" asked the old man.

"Don't feel inclined," the son shouted down his father's ear trumpet.

"What's the book?"

"Oliver Twist."

"Is it about art?"

"No; it's about Oliver Twist."

"Let me look at it. Ha! It's some of Dickens's nonsense, I see. You'd much better draw than waste your time upon such stuff as that."

When Edwin proposed that Sydney Smith should sit to him for his portrait, he met with the retort: "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"

He could work almost as well with his left as with his right hand. He had the faculty of imitating the cries of animals with marvellous truth, and the tale is told of his approaching, on all fours, a savage dog, which was so terrified at his snarls and growls that he snapped his chain, leaped over the wall, and appeared no more.

We will now turn to some of the artists whose connection with Dickens was a matter of business as well as of friendship, at any rate in most cases; we mean to those who were associated with him as illustrators of his work.

With George Cruikshank we need not stay long, for he can have had little if any affinity with Dickens. He was born in 1792, and lived on until 1878,

and, no doubt, accounted for his length of years by the strength of his teetotalism. In "Leaves from a Life," a highly entertaining work, we read, "a most eccentric couple whom I, at any rate, hated, were Mr and Mrs George Cruikshank; but I have never seen any woman worship her husband as did Mrs George. . . . she would never allow anyone to speak if George wanted to lay down the law on any particular subject, and she invariably took care that some time or other during the evening he should be encouraged to sing, or else to give ' in costume ' the moving ballad of 'Lord Bateman.' As the costume consisted always of my very best hat and red feather worn rakishly on the side of his head, and my sacred red ' opera cloak ' flung over one shoulder, I could scarcely retain my rage, especially as he had no more idea of singing than a crow, and he used to declaim the ' Ballad ' hopping round and round the inner drawing-room, with Mrs Cruikshank following him with admiring eyes and leading and enforcing applause when he stopped for an instant in his wild career."

He apparently went entirely mad over the drink question, of which, as an example, may be recorded an encounter between him and Mrs Lynn Linton: "one evening," she relates, "we had been to Westland Marston's, and we walked home together. On the way we passed a group of rowdy drunken men and women. Suddenly George stopped, and, taking hold of my arm, said solemnly:

"'You are responsible for those poor wretches.'

"I answered that I did not exactly see this, and disclaimed any share in their degradation. But he insisted on it, and hung those ruined souls like infernal bells about my neck, tinkling out my own damnation, because at supper I had drunk a glass of champagne from which he had vainly tried to dissuade me!"

At an evening party at Dickens's, Cruikshank went up to the wife of a celebrated artist, who was innocently drinking a glass of sherry, which he brusquely took away, exclaiming: "You dare not take it, you must not take it!" Luckily Dickens noted the performance; clutching Cruikshank by the arm, he said: "How dare you touch it! Just because you've been a drunken old reprobate all your life, there's no reason why she shouldn't drink a glass of wine. Give it back at once."

He seems, indeed, to have made a terrible nuisance of his hobby — we find Shirley Brooks noting in his diary: "Old George Cruikshank called on me ... to express his regret, or rather to talk about himself and end with a

tea-total moral, which I snubbed. Never cared for this man, and yet he is a wondrous artist in a limited way.”

Jerrold, meeting him after his conversion to the water cult, said: “Now, George, remember that water is good anywhere — except on the brain.” The jest contained wise advice by which the receiver of it did not profit.

Hablot Knight Browne, best known as “Phiz,” was a man much more after Dickens’s heart. He was the descendant of an exiled Huguenot, named Simon Brunet, and was born on July 12, 1815, in Kennington Lane, the ninth son of his father. He was apprenticed to Finden, the engraver, but he disliked the mechanical work. His friendship with Dickens commenced with “Pickwick,” and it is related that the rejected Thackeray carried to Browne the news that the latter had been selected for the work, the two celebrating the occasion at a tavern with sausages and stout. He does not, however, seem to have been a very “social” man, but rather reserved, and latterly to have grown out of touch with Dickens. “I was about the last of those he knew in early days with whom Dickens fell out,” he said to Mr Arthur Allchin, “and considering the grand people he had around him, and the compliments he perpetually received, it is a wonder we remained friends so long.”

Later still, writing to one of his sons about the illustrations to “A Tale of Two Cities,” the last work of Dickens for which he made the drawings, he says: “A rather curious thing happened with this book: Watts Phillips the dramatist hit upon the very same identical plot; they had evidently both of them been to the same source in Paris for their story. Watts’ play came out with great success, with stunning climax, at about the time of Dickens’s sixth number. The public saw that they were identically the same story, so Dickens shut up at the ninth¹ number instead of going on to the eighteenth as usual. All this put Dickens out of temper, and he squabbled with me amongst others, and I never drew another line for him.”

1 Actually the eighth number.

He died at Hove in 1882.

He was for long connected with Punch, beginning to work for it in 1842, the second year of its life, and drew its second wrapper. Even after his illness in 1861 he continued to work for it, drawing with the pencil tied to his fingers.

Of the earlier and happier days of his dealings with Dickens, we have some glimpses, which are also interesting in that they bring home to us the difference in travelling in those days and these. In the summer of 1837, he and Dickens and his wife went for a ten days' trip abroad, landing at Calais on July 2. Dickens writes to Forster: "we have arranged for a post-coach to take us to Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp, and a hundred other places, that I cannot recollect now and couldn't spell if I did." Then in February of the succeeding year he accompanied Dickens to Yorkshire, in search of "local colour" for Dotheboys' Hall. Dickens writes to his wife of this journey: "As we came further north the mire grew deeper. About eight o'clock it began to fall heavily, and, as we crossed the wild heaths hereabout, there was no vestige of a track. The man kept on well, however, and at eleven we reached a bare place with a house standing alone in the midst of a dreary moor. ... I was in a perfect agony of apprehension, for it was fearfully cold, and there was no outward sign of anybody being up in the house. But to our great joy we discovered a comfortable room, with drawn curtains and a most blazing fire. In half an hour they gave us a smoking supper and a bottle of mulled port (in which we drank your health), and then we retired to a couple of capital bedrooms, in each of which there was a rousing fire halfway up the chimney. . . We have had for breakfast, toast, cakes, a Yorkshire pie, a piece of beef about the size and much the shape of my portmanteau, tea, coffee, ham, and eggs."

We may take this opportunity of expressing the opinion that Dickens has scarcely received sufficient credit as a writer of admirable letters: a department of literature in which he is amongst the great.

John Leech must have been a man of singular and striking charm; all men and women seem to have had a kind word to say for him. He was born in 1817, his father being the proprietor of a coffee-house on Ludgate Hill, and was educated at the Charterhouse, where began his life-long friendship with Thackeray, who often told of Leech's arrival at the school, a small boy of seven, in little blue jacket and high-buttoned trousers, and of his being set upon a table and being made to sing. Leech's mother took a room in a house from which she could overlook the school and watch her son playing his games. Later he became a medical student, one of his comrades being Albert Smith, but *res angustae* made him take to drawing for a livelihood. When nineteen years old, on the death of Seymour, he offered himself,

unsuccessfully it need scarcely be recorded, as illustrator of “Pickwick,” with the author of which he was to become so intimate.

Leech in 1838 is thus pictured by Henry Vizetelly: He was “ a good-looking young fellow, though somewhat of the Dundreary type — tall and slim, with glossy brown hair negligently arranged in the then prevailing fashion, and the luxuriant whiskers,” also the mode of the moment.

Leech used to live in a terrace of three or four houses that was just beyond the turning called Wright’s Lane, in Kensington, and there he died. A girl-friend describes him as “tall and blue-eyed, irritable and energetic,” but it would be nearer the truth to substitute for “irritable,” nervous. Mrs Leech was a pretty, early-Victorian little woman, who often made her appearance in her husband’s drawings; a quiet, Martha-like housewife, who scarcely realised, perhaps, how great a part she played in her “man’s” life. There was much of romance in the way he met and wooed her. One day, in 1843, he passed a bewitching young lady in the street, was bewitched, discreetly followed her home, hunted up her name in the directory, contrived to obtain an introduction to her, wooed and won her. Thus, in this highly-romantic way Miss Annie Eaton became Mrs John Leech, and appeared again and again in his Punch pictures as one of the “plump young beauties” whom Thackeray admired.

Dean Hole, who first met Leech in 1858, thus describes him: “He was very like my idea of him, only ‘ more so.’ A slim, elegant figure, over six feet in height, with a grand head, on which nature had written ‘gentleman ‘ — with wonderful genius in his ample forehead; wonderful penetration, observation, humour, in his blue-gray Irish eyes; and wonderful sweetness, sympathy and mirth about his lips, which seemed to speak in silence.”

Du Maurier describes him as “the most charming companion conceivable, having intimately known so many important and celebrated people, and liking to speak of them. ... He was tall, thin, and graceful, extremely handsome, of the higher Irish type, with dark hair and whiskers and complexion, and very light greyish-blue eyes; but the expression of his face was habitually sad, even when he smiled.”

One of the neatest stories of Leech’s “good things” is this: on one occasion while drawing the illustrations for some of Albert Smith’s books, artist and author were leaving the latter’s house together, when a small urchin jeeringly read out the inscription on the brass door-plate:

“Ho, yus! Mister Albert Smith, M.R.C.S., Surgin Dentist!”

“Good boy,” said Leech, “here’s a penny for you; now go and insult somebody else.”

On another occasion, the joke was on Leech, who, indeed, does not seem to have been a maker but more an illustrator of jests. He and some friends were visiting a waxworks show, and Leech, looking at a lean representation of George IV, exclaimed: “I thought George IV was a fat man.” “Did yer?” retorted the irritated showman, “Did yer? Yer wouldn’t be a fat man neither if you’d been kep without vittles so long as him!”



From the Drawing by Sir J. E. Millais, Hart. P.R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery, photograph by Emery Walker.

When Thackeray died, in 1863, Leech said: “I saw the remains of the poor dear fellow, and, I assure you, I can hardly get over it. A happy or a merry Christmas is out of the question.” On hearing of his death, Leech said to a colleague on *Punch*: “I feel somehow I shan’t survive him long, and I shouldn’t much care either, if it were not for my family.”

And when Leech himself was no more, Thackeray’s daughter, Mrs Ritchie (now Lady Ritchie) exclaimed: “How happy my father will be to meet him.”

Punch’s epitaph on him was “to know him well was to love him dearly.” He was buried close to Thackeray at Kensal Green, among the pall bearers

being Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, Tom Taylor, Horace Mayhew, Sir John Tenniel, Sir Francis Cowley Burnand, and Sir John Everett Millais.

XII

THACKERAY

THACKERAY and Dickens knew and esteemed each other, but there can be no doubt that there was not anything of really intimate friendship between them. It will be sufficient, therefore, in these pages to show briefly the points and occasions of contact between the two. Thackeray was born in 1811 at Calcutta, and, as we have seen, while at the Charterhouse began his friendship with John Leech; also, as we have seen, he first met Dickens in the "Pickwick" days at Furnival's Inn. We hear — briefly — of Thackeray's occasional appearances at Dickens's house for theatrical and other entertainments, and on October '13, 1855, Dickens took the chair at a dinner given in the London Tavern to Thackeray on his departure to pay his second visit to America. Of which occasion it may be noted, as indicating the troubles that meet even such vagabondish historians as ourselves, that one chronicler says Dickens surpassed himself in his speech, another states that he was not very happy; one notes that Thackeray was not very good, another would have us believe that he excelled himself. So many listeners so many opinions, apparently.

Dickens observed and recorded Thackeray's fondness for children: "he had a particular delight in boys, and an excellent way with them. I remember his once asking me, with fantastic gravity, when he had been to Eton, where ray eldest boy then was, whether I felt as he did in regard of never seeing a boy without wanting instantly to give him a sovereign."

In the summer of 1858, Thackeray and Dickens were entangled in an unfortunate squabble arising out of a foolish article in *Town Talk*, written by Edmund Yates. Indeed, in some of its sentences rather more than foolish, as for example: "No one succeeds better than Mr Thackeray in cutting his coat according to his cloth. Here he flattered the aristocracy; but when he crossed the Atlantic George Washington became the idol of his worship." Yates, himself, admitted the "silliness and bad taste" of the article, which annoyed Thackeray the more, for he thought it an invasion on the privacy of intercourse at the Garrick Club, of which both were members, as also was

Dickens. He promptly made matters worse by a strong letter to the delinquent, who went to Dickens for advice, and the battle of the giants — with Tom Thumb in between — began in earnest. Thackeray's next step was to appeal to the Club committee, with the result that at the general meeting, in spite of a spirited defence by Dickens and Wilkie Collins, Yates was condemned to banishment from the Club unless he tendered an ample apology. This resulted in Yates's retirement, and in an estrangement between Thackeray and Dickens, which did not come to an end until a week before the death of the former in 1863. The two shook hands and "made it up" at the Athenaeum.

To the Cornhill Magazine for February, 1864, Dickens contributed a fine eulogy of his dead friend and rival: "No one can be surer than I of the greatness and goodness of his heart. . . . The last words he corrected in print were 'And my heart throbbed with an exquisite bliss.' God grant that on that Christmas Eve when he laid his head back on his pillow and threw up his arms as he was wont to do when very weary, some consciousness of duty done, and of Christian hope throughout life humbly cherished, may have caused his own heart so to throb, when he passed away to his Redeemer's rest. He was found peacefully lying as above described, composed, undisturbed, and to all appearance asleep."

Which may fitly be followed by lines written by Thackeray of Dickens:

"Have you read Dickens? O! it is charming! brave Dickens! It has some of his prettiest touches — those inimitable Dickens touches which make such a great man of him; and the reading of the book has done another author a great deal of good. In the first place it pleases the other author to see that Dickens, who has left off alluding to the A's works, has been copying the O. A., and greatly simplifying his style, and overcoming the use of fine words. By this the public will be the gainer and David Copperfield will be improved by taking a lesson from Vanity Fair."

XIII

NORTHWARD HO!

OUR stage has now become fairly crowded with principal figures; it is time that the action of the piece proceeded, though, indeed, our plot is but loosely jointed and our scenario most vague.

There are events in the year 1841 which have claims upon our attention. We will begin with a minor matter.

On the 21st of January, 1841, Macready called upon Dickens, and the two went on together to call on Rogers. He relates that he asked “Boz” to spare the life of Little Nell, and “observed that he was cruel. He blushed, and men who blush are said to be either proud or cruel; he is not proud, and therefore — or, as Dickens added — the axiom is false.” The next day he found at home a note from Dickens with a forthcoming number of *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, in which “*The Old Curiosity Shop*” was published. “I saw one print in it of the dear dead child that gave a dead chill through my blood. I dread to read it, but I must get it over. ... I have never read printed words that gave me so much pain. I could not weep for some time. Sensation, sufferings have returned to me, that are terrible to awaken: it is real to me; I cannot criticise.” A little girl of his own, three years of age, had died less than a year before.

Then in March, so Forster records, Dickens received a letter from Lord Jeffrey, in Edinburgh, in which he declared that there had been “nothing so good as *Nell* since *Cordelia* “! With this amazing piece of criticism came the information that there was a desire in Edinburgh that he should pay that town a visit. Dickens had been contemplating a trip to Ireland, but this he now rejected in favour of *Northward Ho!* Jeffrey paid a visit to London early in April, but a gloom was cast over the festivities by the news of the death of Wilkie, which Dickens could scarce bring himself to realise: “my heart assures me Wilkie liveth,” he said, “he is the sort of man who will be very old when he dies.”

Wilkie we meet at the *Nickleby* dinner-celebration at the Albion, in Aldersgate Street, on October 5, 1839. Of the party were Talfourd, Maclise,

Macready, and Forster, who tells us that Wilkie “made a speech as good as his pictures,” touching in quaint and homely language upon Dickens’s genius.

Sir David Wilkie, whose works have immortalised himself and whose death inspired one of Turner’s greatest works, was born in Fifeshire in 1785, coming to London twenty years later. He will appear no more in these pages and makes no great figure in the life of Dickens, so we must be content with obtaining a passing glimpse of him as he appeared to some of his friends. C. R. Leslie says: “The little peculiarities of his character, as they all arose from the best intentions, rather endeared him to his friends than otherwise. He was a modest man, and had no wish to attract attention by eccentricity; and indeed all his oddity, and he was in many things very odd, arose from an extreme desire to be exactly like other people.”

Jerdan describes him as “tall and slightly gauche, he was frank and straightforward, and open as the day. There was, indeed, a simplicity in his character which tended to make society his friends. . . . He was also rather grave, or undemonstrative in his demeanour; and even when he appeared at evening parties he might have been mistaken for a Dominie Samson. Yet sometimes Sir David would astonish his younger friends by a specimen of a Scottish dance, a reminiscence of his earlier flings — double quick, over the buckle, and I know not what other strange frisks and capering vagaries.”

E. M. Ward speaks of him as “always wrapped up as if suffering from imperfect circulation; generally two coats on while in the house — very neat in his person: he painted in a room looking out on the Kensington Road — he was then living on the right-hand side of the way, opposite Lower Phillimore Place, some distance beyond the church. . . . I heard Wilkie make his last speech at a dinner at the Royal Academy at the end of the exhibition, previously to his journey to the East, where he died. It was a very strange one for a Scotchman, as he said that the Scotch owed everything to the English. I remember the following sentences: ‘Where we had sheep-walks ye gave us roads; where we had kills ye gave us breeks.’ David Roberts growled out, ‘Hoot, mon! they didna’ give us brains.’“

It was not in, but on his way home from a tour in the East that Wilkie died on board the *Oriental*. The ship had just left Gibraltar and immediately put back, but, permission being refused to land the body, the burial took place at sea.

“What a genius was in this Wilkie,” Carlyle writes in his Journal, “a great broad energy of humour and sympathy; a real painter in his way, alone among us since Hogarth’s time — reflected with sorrow that the man was dead, that I had seen him with indifference, without recognition, while he lived. Poor Wilkie! A very stunted, timidly proud, uninviting, unproductive looking man. ... I saw Wilkie and did not know him. One should have his eyes opener.”

But before we go North with Dickens we will make the acquaintance of “that bright old man” Jeffrey, as Dr John Brown called him. Francis Jeffrey, Lord Jeffrey, was born in 1773, and his fame chiefly rests upon the critical and other articles which he wrote in the Edinburgh Review, of which he was one of the founders in 1802, and which he edited from 1803 to 1829.

Two visitors to him in 1838 have left us their impressions, and once again we find that opinions do differ in a manner that sometimes is almost incredible.

Carlyle seems to have been disappointed: “My esteem for Jeffrey,” he says, “could not hide from me that at bottom our speech was, as I said, clatter. In fact, he is becoming an amiable old fribble, very cheerful, very heartless, very forgettable and tolerable.”

Charles Sumner stayed with him at Craig Crook Castle, and records: “never have I heard anyone express himself with such grace, beauty, precision, and variety of words as did Jeffrey . . . superlatively eminent as a converser, — light, airy, poetical, argumentative, fantastical, and yet full of the illustrations of literature and history. . . . English did, indeed, fall mended from his lips. Words the most apt, and yet out of ordinary reach, came at his bidding, like well-trained servants. He spoke of anciently passing along the streets of Edinburgh, and having water ejaculated upon his head . . . Jeffrey against all the world!”

Of his real good-heartedness a good example is his letter to Moore, when, in 1819, the poet’s finances were at a low ebb: “I cannot from my heart,” writes the critic, “resist adding another word. I have heard of your misfortunes and of the noble way you bear them. Is it very impertinent to say that I have £500 entirely at your service, which you may repay when you please; and as much more, which I can advance upon any reasonable security of repayment in seven years. Perhaps it is very unpardonable in me to say this; but upon my honour, I would not make you the offer, if I did not feel that I would accept it without scruple from you.” This from the man

whose caustic and unjustifiable criticism had in past days led to an “ affair of honour” between these two, which only just did not come off, ending in farce. It is characteristic of both men that, while their seconds were making the final arrangements on the field of battle, they strolled up and down together, chatting in most friendly spirit.

When one complained to Sydney Smith that Jeffrey had irritably damned the North Pole when that subject was introduced, he promptly and sympathizingly remarked: “I’ve heard him speak disrespectfully of the equator.”

He died in 1850.

“Poor dear Jeffrey!” writes Dickens of the event, “I . . . was so stunned by the announcement . . . I had a letter from him in extraordinary good spirits within this week or two ... I say nothing of his wonderful abilities and great career, but he was a most affectionate and devoted friend to me; and though no man could wish to live and die more happily, so old in years and yet so young in faculties and sympathies, I am very, very deeply grieved for his loss.”

Mr and Mrs Dickens arrived in Edinburgh on June 23, and promptly proceeded to sight-see. Among the first people they met was Professor Wilson, “a tall, burly, handsome man of eight-and-fifty, with a gait like O’Connell’s, the bluest eye you can imagine, and long hair” — John Wilson, known the world over as “Christopher North.” Dickens gives a wonderful word-picture of him, which is quoted in the pages of Forster. The public dinner of welcome took place on Friday, June 25, with Wilson, vice Lord Jeffrey indisposed, occupying the chair. The scene was brilliant, the room crammed, and Dickens met with an enthusiastic reception, which did not, however, scare him out of his self-possession. The toasts entrusted to him were: “Wilson and Scottish Literature,” and the “Memory of Wilkie.”

He was also accorded the freedom of the city.

On a later day, they drove out to Lord Jeffrey’s place, Craig Crook, three miles away; indeed, their visit to Edinburgh was a whirl of pleasure and triumph, and we hear of Dickens sighing for “Devonshire Terrace and Broadstairs, for battledore and shuttlecock.”

After Edinburgh, a trip to the Highlands, and “so home.”

XIV

AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE

WHEN Dickens was known to be contemplating a trip to America, said Fonblanque: “Why, aren’t there disagreeable people enough to describe in Blackburn or Leeds?”

In January, 1842, Mr and Mrs Dickens sailed for America in the good ship *Britannia* of the Cunard Line — Captain Hewett in command — returning in July. It is not within the scope of this work to detail the events of that eventful trip, which have been so well and fully told in the pages of Forster, but rather to take the opportunity of meeting some of Dickens’s American friends.

First, Washington Irving, to whom he writes from Washington, on March 21: “Wherever you go, God bless you! What pleasure I have had in seeing you and talking with you, I will not attempt to say. I shall never forget it as long as I live.” From New York, Dickens writes to Forster: “Washington Irving is a great fellow. We have laughed most heartily together. He is just the man he ought to be.” It was in New York the two first met in the flesh, in the spirit and on paper they had met before.

A letter, says Irving in 1841, “from that glorious fellow Dickens (Boz), in reply to the one I wrote, expressing my heartfelt delight with his writings, and my yearnings towards himself. See how completely we sympathize in feeling: ‘My dear Sir, There is no man in the world who could have given me the heart-felt pleasure you have, by your kind note. . . . There is no living writer, and there are very few among the dead, whose approbation I should feel so proud to earn. And with everything you have written upon my shelves, and in my thoughts, and in my heart of hearts, I may honestly and truly say so. If you could know how earnestly I write this, you would be glad to read it — as I hope you will be, faintly guessing at the warmth of the hand I autobiographically hold out to you over the broad Atlantic.

“I wish I could find in your welcome letter some hint of an intention to visit England. I can’t. I have held it at arm’s length, and taken a bird’s-eye view of it, after reading it a great many times, but there is no greater

encouragement in it this way than in a microscopic inspection. I should love to go with you — as I have gone, God knows how often — into Little Britain, and Eastcheap, and Green Arbour Court, and Westminster Abbey. I should like to travel with you, outside the last of the coaches, down to Bracebridge Hall. It would make my heart glad to compare notes with you about that shabby gentleman in the oilcloth hat and red nose, who sat in the nine-cornered back parlour of the Masons' Arms; and about Robert Preston, and the tallow chandler's widow, whose sitting-room is second nature to me; and all about those delightful places and people that I used to walk about (with) and dream of in the day-time, when a very small and not over-particularly taken-care-of boy. . . .

“I have been so accustomed to associate you with my pleasantest and happiest thoughts, and with my leisure hours, that I rush at once into full confidence with you, and fall, as it were naturally, and by the very laws of gravity, into your open arms. Questions come thronging to my pen as to the lips of people who meet after long hoping to do so. I don't know what to say first, or what to leave unsaid, and am constantly disposed to break off and tell you again how glad I am this moment has arrived.

“My dear Washington Irving, I cannot thank you enough for your cordial and generous praise, or tell you what deep and lasting gratification it has given me. I hope to have many letters from you, and to exchange a frequent correspondence. I send this to say so. After the first two or three, I shall settle down into a connected style, and become gradually rational.

“You know what the feeling is, after having written a letter, sealed it, and sent it off. I shall picture you reading this, and answering it before it has lain one night in the post-office. Ten to one that before the fastest packet could reach New York I shall be writing again.

“Do you suppose the post-office clerks care to receive letters? I have my doubts. They get into a dreadful habit of indifference. A postman, I imagine, is quite callous. Conceive his delivering one to himself, without being startled by a preliminary double knock!

“Always your faithful friend,

“Charles Dickens.”

In “The Life and Letters of Washington Irving,” there is a most interesting account of Dickens, Irving & Co., by Professor Felt on, extracted from the speech he made at the Massachusetts Historical Society after the death of Irving. It is worthy of quotation almost in full: “The time

when I saw the most of Mr Irving, was the winter of 1842, during the visit of Charles Dickens in New York. I had known this already distinguished writer in Boston and Cambridge. ... I renewed my acquaintance with Mr Dickens, often meeting him in the brilliant society which then made New York a most agreeable resort. Halleck, Bryant, Washington Irving, . . . and others scarcely less attractive by their genius, wit, and social graces, constituted a circle not to be surpassed anywhere in the world. I passed much of the time with Mr Irving and Mr Dickens; it was delightful to witness the cordial intercourse of the young man, in the flush and glory of his fervent genius, and his elder compeer, then in the assured possession of immortal renown. Dickens said, in his frank, hearty manner, that from his childhood he had known the works of Irving; and that, before he thought of coming to this country, he had received a letter from him, expressing the delight he felt in reading the story of Little Nell; and from that day they had shaken hands autographically across the Atlantic. Great and varied as was the genius of Mr Irving, there was one thing he shrank with a comical terror from attempting, and that was a dinner speech.

“A great dinner, however, was to be given to Mr Dickens in New York, as one had already been given in Boston; and it was evident to all that no man but Washington Irving could be thought of to preside. With all his dread of making a speech, he was obliged to obey the universal call, and to accept the painful pre-eminence. I saw him daily during the interval of preparation, either at the lodgings of Dickens, or at dinner or evening parties. ... At length the long-expected evening arrived; a company of the most eminent persons, from all the professions and every walk of life, were assembled, and Mr Irving took the chair. ... I had the honour to be placed next but one to Mr Irving, and the great pleasure of sharing in his conversation. He had brought the manuscript of his speech, and laid it under his plate. ‘I shall certainly break down,’ he repeated over and over again. At last the moment arrived. Mr Irving rose, and was received with deafening and long-continued applause, which by no means lessened his apprehension. He began in his pleasant voice; got through two or three sentences pretty easily, but in the next hesitated; and, after one or two attempts to go on, gave it up, with a graceful allusion to the tournament, and the troops of knights all armed and eager for the fray; and ended with the toast, ‘Charles Dickens, the guest of the nation.’ ‘There!’ said he, as he resumed his seat under a

repetition of the applause which had saluted his rising, ‘there, I told you I should break down, and I’ve done it’“

In a letter to Rogers from New York, dated February 3, 1836, Irving writes: “I am building a little cottage on the banks of the Hudson, and hope, in the course of the spring, to have, for the first time in my life, a roof of my own over my head. It stands in the midst of the ‘fairy haunts of long lost hours,’ in a neighbourhood endeared to me by boyish recollections, and commands one of our magnificent river prospects. I only wish I could have you there as a guest, and show my sense of that kind and long-continued hospitality enjoyed in your classic little mansion in St James’s Place.”

Thackeray gives this description of a visit paid by him when in New York, in 1855, to Washington Irving: “One day I went out to Yonkers, fifteen miles from here, on the Hudson River, and spent the pleasantest day I have had in the States; drove from the pretty village, a busy, bustling new place lying on the river banks, thrice as broad as the Rhine, and as picturesque, to Irvingtown, nine miles, where good old Washington Irving lives with two nieces, who tend him most affectionately, in a funny little in-and-out cottage surrounded by a little domain of lawns not so smooth as ours, and woods rather small and scrubby ; — in little bits of small parlours, where we were served with cakes and wine, — with a little study not much bigger than my back room, with old dogs trotting about the premises, with flocks of ducks sailing on the ponds, — a very pleasant, patriarchal life. He is finishing the second volume of a Life of Washington; he has other two to write; it’s a bold undertaking for a man of seventy-four. I don’t know whether the book is good or not; the man is, and one of the pleasantest things I have noted in American manners is the general respect and affection in which this good old man is held. — He described, however, how a few days or weeks since a stranger came out and introduced himself, woke up good old Irving from a snooze in his arm-chair, sat and talked for half-an-hour, and a few days after appears a long account in the Herald of Sunnyside and Mr Irving, and how he slept and looked, and what he talked about, etc., etc. — Isn’t it pleasant?”



CHARLES DICKENS (1842). From the Bust by Henry Dexter, modelled during Dickens's first visit to America

A sweet, kindly, homely, lovable man as well as a writer of rare charm and humour. Tom Moore speaks of him as “not strong as a ‘lion,’ but delightful as a domestic animal.”

Of Dickens himself, we may as well take a glimpse. Here is a pen-portrait of him as he sat for his picture to Francis Alexander, a well-known Boston artist: “His long brown hair, slightly curling, sweeps his shoulder, the bright eyes glance, and that inexpressible look of kindly mirth plays round his mouth and shows itself in the arched brow. Alexander caught much of that singular lighting up of the face which Dickens had, beyond anyone I ever saw;” and J. T. Fields says that he “seemed like the Emperor of Cheerfulness on a cruise of pleasure, determined to conquer a realm or two of fun every hour of his overflowing existence.”

Indeed, he made a host of good and kind friends, many of whom, as we shall see, afterward came to visit him in England. There was Dana, the author of “Two Years Before the Mast” — a book once much read and well worth the reading — “a very nice fellow indeed,” so Dickens wrote, “. . . he is short, mild-looking, and has a careworn face.”

At Cambridge University he met many of the professors, who appear to have been goodly company, and not dry-as-dust, as are too many dons. There was Longfellow, whose poetry was almost as popular once upon a time in England as in America; Ticknor; Bancroft, “a famous man; a straightforward, manly, earnest heart.” But above all there was Felton, who became to him a very dear friend. He was Professor of Greek at Cambridge, and Dickens found him a man after his own heart, “unaffected, hearty, genial, jolly,” adding with quaint insularity, “quite an Englishman of the best sort.” He describes a meeting with him on board ship on the way down to New York, having previously made his acquaintance at Boston. They were evidently a hilarious couple, for “we drank all the porter on board, ate all the cold pork and cheese, and were very merry indeed.” They were also, at least we will hope so, men of fine digestions.

At New York they were very kindly entreated by their friend David Colden, of whom Dickens writes to Macready that he was a real good fellow, and “I am deeply in love with his wife. Indeed we have received the greatest and most earnest and zealous kindness from the whole family, and quite love them all.”

Sumner, from whom more than one quotation has been given, proved a serviceable friend also. Fitz-Greene Halleck “is a merry little man,” as opposed to Bryant, who is melancholy; the painter, Washington Allston, “a glorious old genius”; Henry Clay is “a most charming fellow”; on the whole, he seems to have liked very well the men he met. J. T. Fields, the Boston publisher, we will meet again. He was one of the sincerest admirers that Charles Dickens ever had, and he had plenty.

Into Canada, which Mr and Mrs Dickens visited, we need not follow them.

Dickens appears to have been entertained at more than one dinner on his return home, and Hood was one of those who entertained him at Greenwich, and this is the account he gives of the festivity: “The snug one dozen of diners . . . turned out to be above two (in fact twenty-seven) — two others, Talfourd and Macready, being prevented. Jerdan was the Vice, and a certain person, not very well adapted to fill a Chair, was to have occupied the opposite Virtue, but on the score of ill-health I begged off, and Captain Marryat presided instead. On his right Dickens, and Monckton Milnes, the poetical M.P., on his left, Sir John Wilson, T. H., and for my left hand neighbour Dr Elliotson . . . Foster” (? Forster), “Stanfield the painter.

Among the rest were Charles and Tom Landseer. Tom two stone deafer than I am, and obliged to carry a tube. Father Prout and Ainsworth; . . . Procter, alias Barry Cornwall, and Barham, otherwise Ingoldsby, Cruikshank, and Cattermole, . . . and a Rev. Mr Wilde, who greatly interested Dr Elliotson and myself: a tall, very earnest-looking man, like your doctor, only with none of his Sweet-William colour, but quite pale; and the more so for long jet-black locks, either strange natural hair, or an unnatural wig. He was silent till he sang, and then came out such a powerful bass voice, fit for a cathedral organ — to a song of the olden time, that between physiognomy, costume, vox, and words, the impression was quite black-letterish. . . . Well, we drank ‘the Boz’ with a delectable clatter, which drew from him a good warm-hearted speech. . . . He looked very well. . . . Then we had more songs. Barham chanted a Robin Hood ballad, and Cruikshank sang a burlesque ballad of Lord H – 1 and somebody, unknown to me, gave a capital imitation of a French showman. Then we toasted Mrs Boz, and the Chairman, and the Vice, and the Traditional Priest sang the ‘Deep Deep Sea’, in his deep deep voice; and then we drank to Procter, who wrote the said song; . . . and Ainsworth’s, and a Manchester friend of the latter sang a Manchester ditty, so full of trading stuff, that it really seemed to have been not composed, but manufactured. . . . As to myself, I had to make my second maiden speech, for Mr Monckton Milnes proposed my health in terms my modesty might allow me to repeat to you, but my memory won’t. However, I ascribed the toast to my notoriously bad health, and assured them that their wishes had already improved it — that I felt a brisker circulation — a more genial warmth about the heart, and explained that a certain trembling of my hand was not from palsy, or my old ague, but an inclination in my hand to shake itself with everyone present. Whereupon I had to go through the friendly ceremony with as many of the company as were within reach, besides a few more who

1 Lord Bateman; surely?

came express from the other end of the table. Very gratifying, wasn’t it?”

With many of the hosts we have already met, but will take this opportunity of glancing at some of the others. William Jerdan was in his day a well-known Scottish journalist, and distinguished himself by being the first to lay hold on the assassin of Spencer Perceval in the House of Commons in 1812; he was an antiquary of note, helped to found the Royal Society of Literature, and wrote a somewhat dull “Autobiography”. Richard

Monckton Milnes, afterward Lord Houghton, lives in literary history as a minor poet of some parts; we meet him later on.

Of Doctor Elliotson, who was a great friend of Thackeray also, and of “Barry Cornwall,” we shall see more anon. Though it does not particularly pertain to this place — or at all to the date with which we are dealing — here is another Greenwich dinner: On July 24, 1848, a very pleasant jaunt was made to Greenwich by Macready in company with some American friends, the party being joined in the evening at the Trafalgar by Dickens and his wife, Miss Hogarth, Mrs Macready, Stanfield, Maclise, and one or two others, “and we sat down to one of those peculiar English banquets, a whitebait-dinner. We were all very cheerful — very gay; all unbent, and without ever forgetting the respect due to each other; all was mirth unrestrained and delighted gaiety. Songs were sung in rapid succession, and jests flung about from each part of the table. Choruses broke out, and the reins were flung over the necks of the merry set. After ‘Auld Lang Syne’ sung by all, Catherine” (Mrs Macready) “giving the solos, we returned home in our hired carriage, and an omnibus, hired for the nonce. ... A very happy day.”

XV

DICKENS WITH THE CHILDREN

IT is not only with his grown-up but with his children friends that we must meet Charles Dickens if we are to understand him. No man ever loved children more sincerely, was happier with them, or more intimately sympathized with them. Again and again he shows in his writings his love and understanding of them. To many Little Nell and Paul Dombey make but small appeal; they appear of the lime-light lime-lighty, and it can scarcely be denied that Dickens has somewhat failed in depicting them. He saw them with his mind's eye and heard them with his mind's ear, but he has scarcely succeeded in making them quite real to us of to-day, life-like as we have seen one of them to have been to such men as Landor, Macready, and Lord Jeffrey.

Shortly before his first trip to America, we find him writing a charming letter to his child-friend, Mary Talfourd, who has asked him to dine with her upon her birthday. He replies that unfortunately he cannot do so, he will soon be leaving his own children for six long months, and feels that he must be with them as much as possible. "But although," he writes to her, "I cannot come to see you on that day, you may be sure I shall not forget that it is your birthday, and that I shall drink your health and many happy returns, in a glass of wine, filled as full as it will hold. And I shall dine at half-past five myself, so that we may both be drinking our wine at the same time; and I shall tell my Mary (for I have got a daughter of that name but she is a very small one as yet) to drink your health too. ..." 1

Then what a delightfully whimsical letter is that he wrote in 1838 to an unknown correspondent, a Master Hastings Hughes, concerning "Nicholas Nickleby," about the disposal of the characters in which story the youngster had written to him, the letter reaching Dickens through the hands of "Ingoldsby" Barham; it winds up thus:

"I meant to have written you a long letter, but I cannot write very fast when I like the person I am writing to, because that makes me think about them, and I like you, and so I tell you. Besides, it is just eight o'clock at

night, and I always go to bed at eight o'clock, except when it is my birthday, and then I sit up to supper. So I will not say anything more besides this — and that is my love to you and Neptune; and if you will drink my health every Christmas Day I will drink yours — come.

“I am,

“Respected Sir,

“Your affectionate friend.”

1 A list of Dickens's children may prove interesting:

Charles Culliford Boz, b.1837, d.1896.

Mary (Mamie), b.1838, d. (unmarried) 1896.

Kate Macready, b.1839. Married, i. Charles Allston Collins in 1860, who died in 1873; ii. Charles Edward Perugini.

Walter Landor, b.1841, d.1863.

Francis Jeffrey, b.1844, d.1886.

Alfred Tennyson, b. 1845.

Sydney Smith Haldimand, b.1847, d., and buried at sea, 1872.

Henry Fielding, b. 1849. (K.C. in 1892.)

Dora Annie, b.1850, d.1851.

Edward Bulwer Lytton (Plorn), b.1852, d.1902.

But we shall best learn what he was to children if we look at him with the eyes of one of his own young folk, as we are able to do by means of the very charming reminiscences given us by Miss Mary Dickens, whose nickname in the family was “Mamie,” and also, as descriptive she says, “Mild Gloster.”

During the trip to America the house in Devonshire Terrace was let, and the children stayed in Osnaburgh Street, near Regent's Park, in the charge of Mr and Mrs Macready, but went back home to welcome the travellers on their return: “It is here that I dimly remember the return of the travellers. One evening, after dark, we were hurried to the gate, a cab was driving up to the door, or, rather, as it would then have been called, a hackney coach; before it could stop, a figure jumped out, someone lifted me up in their arms, and I was kissing my father through the bars of the gate. How all this happened, and why the gate was shut, I am unable to explain. He, no doubt, was in such a state of joy and excitement, that, at sight of us, he just made a rush, and kissed us as he could. Home at last!”

It was while in America that he was asked to write an epitaph for the tomb of a little child; this is what he wrote:

This is the Grave of a Little Child,
WHOM GOD IN HIS GOODNESS CALLED TO A BRIGHT
ETERNITY

WHEN HE WAS VERY YOUNG.

HARD AS IT IS FOR HUMAN AFFECTION TO RECONCILE
ITSELF TO DEATH

IN ANY SHAPE (AND MOST OF ALL, PERHAPS, AT FIRST IN
THIS),

HIS PARENTS CAN EVEN NOW BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE A
CONSOLATION

TO THEM THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES,

AND WHEN THEY SHALL HAVE GROWN OLD AND GRAY,

Always to think of him as a Child in Heaven.

“And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of
them.”

When his children were still tiny folk, he would sing to them before they
went up to bed all manner of funny songs, the which he would himself
enjoy and laugh at as much as any of his small audience. Encores were
allowed, especially of one ditty of an old, rheumatic man, who had caught
cold in an omnibus, which was sung with a piping voice broken with
coughing and sneezing.

He understood their night terrors, the cause of such horrible agony — no
weaker word would be strong enough — to so many small ones. He entered
heart and soul into all their amusements, their keeping of pet animals — did
he not himself keep pet ravens? — and their games. Miss “Mamie”
narrates how anxious he was that they should learn to dance well, and how
he insisted on her and her sister Katie teaching him and Leech how to dance
the polka; how earnestly he devoted himself to it; how he would practise
gravely by himself in a corner, and how one bitter winter’s night he awoke
with the fear on him that he had forgotten the step, so jumped out of bed
and practised it — ” one, two, three; one, two, three “ — to his own
whistling and by the dim rays of a rush-light.

He writes to Professor Felton, in 1842, an account of the festivities at
Devonshire Terrace on Twelfth Night, his son Charley’s birthday; there was
a magic lantern and “divers other tremendous engines of that nature.”
Forster and he had procured between them the stock-in-trade of a conjuror,
and “O my dear eyes, Felton, if you could see me conjuring the company’s

watches into impossible tea-caddies, and causing pieces of money to fly, and burning pocket-handkerchiefs without hurting 'em, and practising in my own room, without anybody to admire, you would never forget it as long as you live." Clarkson Stanfield was a "confederate," who always did his part "exactly the wrong way, to the unspeakable delight of all beholders." And, again, to the same friend on January 2, 1844: "Forster is out again; and if he don't go in again, after the manner in which we have been keeping Christmas, he must be very strong indeed. Such dinings, such dancings, such conjurings, such blindman's buffings, such theatre-goings, such kissings-out of old years and kissings-in of new ones, never took place in these parts before." Then follows a description of him dancing a country dance with Mrs Macready at a children's party at the actor's house.

Yes, Dickens loved children and won their love.

XVI

BROADSTAIRS

IN August, 1842, the family went down to Broadstairs, which from 1837 to 1847 was his favourite watering-place. When first he went there, it was a little-known and quiet place of retirement, and its peacefulness was delightful to him.

In 1840 he writes to Maclise:

“My foot is in the house,
My bath is on the sea,
And, before I take a souse.
Here’s a single note to thee,”

and then follows an invitation to “come to the bower which is shaded for you in the one-pair front, where no chair or table has four legs of the same length, and where no drawers will open till you have pulled the pegs off, and then they keep open and won’t shut again.”

But it is to Professor Felton, to whom he wrote some of the most delightful of his letters, that he best described the place: the intense quiet, the splendid sea, the Goodwin Sands and the floating lights thereon, the North Foreland lighthouse, the sands, and the quaint old-fashioned company.

Wherever he went he delighted to surround himself with the best of good company, with his good friends, and few men had more or more sincere friends than he had. In 1840, Maclise and Forster went down to join him there, so as to have the pleasure of posting to London with him by way of Chatham, Rochester, and Cobham. Again, in August, 1841, he went there, and so on, again and again, faithful to the places he loved as to the friends.

It was “Our English Watering-Place: —

“In the autumn-time of the year, when the great metropolis is so much hotter, so much noisier, so much more dusty or so much more water-carted, so much more crowded, so much more disturbing and distracting in all

respects, than it usually is, a quiet sea-beach becomes indeed a blessed spot. Half awake and half asleep, this idle morning in our sunny window on the edge of a chalk cliff in the old-fashioned watering-place to which we are a faithful resorter, we feel a lazy inclination to sketch its picture. The place seems to respond. Sky, sea, beach, and village, lie as still before us as if they were sitting for a picture. It is dead low-water. A ripple plays among the ripening corn upon the cliff, as if it were faintly trying from recollection to imitate the sea; and the world of butterflies hovering over the crop of radish seed are as restless in their little way as the gulls are in their larger manner when the wind blows. But the ocean lies winking in the sunlight like a drowsy lion — its glassy waters scarcely curve upon the shore — the fishing-boats in the tiny harbour are all stranded in the mud — our two colliers (our watering-place has a maritime trade employing that amount of shipping) have not an inch of water within a quarter of a mile of them, and turn, exhausted, on their sides, like faint fish of an antediluvian species. Rusty cables and chains, ropes and rings, undermost parts of posts and piles and confused timber-defences against the waves, lie strewn about, in a brown litter of tangled seaweed and fallen cliff which looks as if a family of giants had been making tea here for ages, and had observed an untidy custom of throwing their tea-leaves on the shore.”

XVII

CORNWALL AND COMPANY THERE

IN the autumn of 1842, the “Inimitable Boz,” Maclise, Forster and Stanfield “tripped” down to Cornwall, and a merry jaunt they made of it. In a letter to Felton, Dickens notes this as taking place just after Longfellow’s visit had concluded, concerning which a few words. Two events of this visit seem to have become firmly fixed in Longfellow’s memory, one of which was a trip to Rochester, where they had some difficulty, which they boldly surmounted, in visiting the ruins of the castle; the second being what we should now term a slumming expedition into some of the lowest quarters of London.

Of his visit Longfellow wrote, “I passed a very agreeable fortnight with Dickens. His whole household is a delightful one. At his table he brings together artists and authors — such as Cruikshank, a very original genius; Maclise, the painter; Macready, the actor, etc., etc.” And of his departure: — ” Taking reluctant leave of London, I went by railway to Bath, where I dined with Walter Savage Landor, a rather ferocious critic.”

With “the trippers” we are now familiar, with the exception of Clarkson Stanfield. Of the artist friends with whom Dickens was intimate it is probable that he will hold by far the highest place in the history of painting, with the possible exceptions of Wilkie and Landseer, who, once his maudlin semi-human animal pictures are forgotten, will come by his own again. Stanfield was born at Sunderland in the year 1793, and was, therefore, somewhat older than the other members of the jovial party of which we are writing, but in spirits as youthful and jolly as any of them. From childhood he showed a love of drawing and a love of the sea; in 1808 he entered the merchant service, and four years later was “pressed” for the navy. In 1814 both he and Douglas Jerrold were on board H.M.S. Namur, and he painted scenery for a dramatic performance of which the latter was “manager.” Incapacitated by an accident he retired from the service, but not altogether from sea service until 1818, when he obtained work as scene painter at the Royalty Theatre, in Wellclose Square, London, East, a house much

frequented by seafaring men. In 1822, in similar capacity he achieved great success at Drury Lane, at the same time beginning to work at easel pictures, giving up scene-painting in 1834, though, as we shall see, he occasionally practised it to help his friend Dickens and others. For Macready he painted in 1837 a diorama for his pantomime at Covent Garden, and in 1842 the effective scenery for "Acis and Galatea" at Drury Lane. He was for years a regular contributor to the Royal Academy, becoming an Associate in 1832, and an Academician in 1835. In 1847 he settled down at Hampstead at the Green Hill, where he spent many happy and sociable years.

"Clarkson Stanfield lives vividly in our memory," writes Mrs Cowden Clarke, "as we last saw him, when we were in England in 1862, in his pretty garden-surrounded house at Hampstead. He showed us a portfolio of gorgeous sketches made during a tour in Italy, two of which remain especially impressed upon our mind. One was a bit taken upon Mount Vesuvius about daybreak, with volumes of volcanic smoke rolling from the near crater, touched by the beams of the rising sun; the other was a view of Esa, a picturesque sea-side village perched on the summit of a little rocky hill, bosomed among the olive-clad crags and cliffs of the Cornice road between Nice and Turbia." During his latter years his health was not robust, and he retired somewhat from "sociabilities," dying in 1867. Dickens dubbed him "the soul of frankness, generosity, and simplicity, the most loving and most lovable of men." Dickens writes to Chorley on June 2, 1867, from Gad's Hill: "I saw poor dear Stanfield (on a hint from his eldest son) in a day's interval between two expeditions. It was clear that the shadow of the end had fallen on him. It happened well that I had seen, on a wild day at Tynemouth, a remarkable sea-effect, of which I wrote a description to him, and he kept it under his pillow." "You know Mrs Inchbald's story, Nature and Art?" Hood once wrote, "What a fine edition of Nature and Art is Stanfield."

Dickens and Lemon clasped hands over Stanfield's grave, the first time they had met since Dickens's estrangement from the editor of Punch, who had very rightly declined to bring his paper into taking a part in a purely domestic affair of Dickens. Stanfield on his deathbed had begged Dickens to "make it up" with his old friend, and with success.

We must now hark back to the autumn of the year 1842, and the trip to Cornwall, which lasted nearly three weeks: "seriously, I do believe there never was such a trip," writes Dickens to Professor Felton. Cornwall was

not in those days as easy of access as it is nowadays; the railway took them down into Devonshire, and then they proceeded in an open carriage and with the aid of post horses. How old-world it sounds! Sometimes they journeyed on right through the night, for Dickens did not allow the grass to grow beneath his feet, even when holiday making. Dickens set the pace in whatever company he might be; indeed, we can scarcely imagine him ever playing “follow my leader “; he himself was always leader. On this occasion, as he tells us, he was purse-bearer and paymaster, also “regulated the pace” at which the party travelled. Stanfield carried a map and a compass; Forster was baggage-master, and Maclise, not being allotted any particular task, sang songs! “Heavens!” writes Dickens, in the letter already mentioned, “if you could have seen the necks of bottles — distracting in their immense varieties of shape — peering out of the carriage pockets! ... If you could have seen but one gleam of the bright fires by which we sat in the big rooms of ancient inns at night, until long after the small hours had come and gone, or smelt but one steam of the hot punch (not white, dear Felton, like that amazing compound I sent you a taste of, but a rich, genial, glowing brown) which came in every evening in a huge broad china bowl! I never laughed in my life as I did on this journey. ... I was choking and gasping and bursting the buckle off the back of my stock, all the way.”

They visited Tintagel, the rocky home peopled with memories of King Arthur and his knights; Mount St Michael and the Land’s End were other points. Says Forster, in one of the few eloquent passages in his pages: “Land and sea yielded each its marvels to us; but of all the impressions brought away, of which some afterwards took forms as lasting as they could receive from the most delightful art, I doubt if any were the source of such deep emotion to us all as a sunset we saw at Land’s End. Stanfield knew the wonders of the Continent, the glories of Ireland were native to Maclise, I was familiar from boyhood with border and Scottish scenery, and Dickens was fresh from Niagara; but there was something in the sinking of the sun behind the Atlantic that autumn afternoon, as we viewed it together from the top of the rock projecting farthest into the sea, which each in his turn declared to have no parallel in memory.”

Among the lasting forms was a sketch of the Logan Stone by Stanfield, with Forster perched atop of it; “as to your clambering,” said Maclise to Forster in after years, “don’t I know what happened of old? Don’t I still see the Logan Stone, and you perched on the giddy top, while we, rocking it on

its pivot, shrank from all that lay concealed below ... do I forget you clambering up the goat-path to King Arthur's castle of Tintagel, when, in my vain wish to follow, I grovelled and clung to the soil like a Caliban, and you, in the manner of a tricky spirit and stout Ariel, actually danced up and down before me!" Actually?

Maclise painted a picture of the waterfall of St Wight on, to which Forster had guided him, which Dickens under a feigned name bought at the Academy exhibition, knowing that the generous painter, if he knew of his friend's desire to possess it, would insist on making him a present of it. When the artifice was discovered he did so insist, but Dickens, as usual, had his own way. Maclise some four years later "got even" by painting the portrait of Mrs Dickens.



THE LOGAN STONE IN CORNWALL, WITH JOHN FORSTER SEATED ON THE TOP. From a Sketch by Clarkson Stanfield R.A.

XVIII

1843

ON February 12 Dickens writes to Forster that having found himself unable to write, he had in despair “started off at half-past two with my pair of petticoats to Richmond,” where they dined, the “pair” being Mrs Dickens and her sister Miss Georgina Hogarth, who had become one of his household and who to the hour of his death remained his steadfast, devoted ally. Better friend no man ever had. Another dinner, in May, was that organised by Dickens as a token of regard and esteem to his old friend and fellow-worker John Black, of the Morning Chronicle, who had ceased to be editor of the paper for which he had achieved so much. The dinner was at Greenwich, and among the company of good fellows were Thackeray, Macready, Maclise, Sheil, Fonblanque and Forster. It is not surprising that the meeting was a success.

Yet another dinner, at the Star and Garter at Richmond, to wish Godspeed to Macready, who was setting out for America. “We gave him a splendid dinner last Saturday at Richmond,” Dickens writes to Felton, “whereat I presided with my accustomed grace. He is one of the noblest fellows in the world, and I would give a great deal that you and I should sit beside each other to see him play *Virginius*, *Lear*, or *Werner*, which I take to be, every way, the greatest piece of exquisite perfection that his lofty art is capable of attaining . . . You recollect, perhaps, that he was the guardian of our children while we were away. I love him dearly. . . .”

A very different affair was the Star and Garter of yesterday to that of today, a humbler but a far happier hostelry to our mind. Fire was its doom. The garden behind it was beautiful, and the small rooms which opened into it were bowered in jasmine, honeysuckle, and roses; the lawns were shaded by magnificent old trees, and at the foot was a fine avenue of limes. On Sunday afternoons and evenings in summer, the garden and hotel would be crowded with revellers, a gathering largely composed of those well known in artistic and literary and Bohemian circles. We obtain countless glimpses

of the place in early Victorian novels and memoirs. Here is one taken from Serjeant Ballantine's very amusing "Experiences."

"There was a party I well remember in connection with one of the most delightful days of many that I passed there; it consisted of Balfe the composer, and his surpassingly lovely daughter, whose career was only too short. She was twice married; once to Sir J. Crampton, who I think was our ambassador to the Court of Russia, and afterwards to a grandee of Spain, and died when quite young. Mowbray Morris was another of the group. He was manager of the Times newspaper, and with him I was very intimate. . . .

"The fourth of the group in addition to myself was Mr Delane, the editor of the same paper, and upon the shoulders of these two men rested the entire weight of its management. No one could be in the society of the latter gentleman without feeling that he was a man of the age. There was a quiet power in his conversation, his knowledge was very varied, and a vein of agreeable persiflage adorned and lightened whatever he talked about. The last time I met him was at a dinner party at Dr Quain's, the eminent physician.

"At that time his mind had partially given way under the attacks of incurable disease, and it was painful to witness how occasional were the flashes of an intellect that in former days was wont to shed so bright and lasting a light. On this occasion his brougham came for him at the time it had been his custom to go to the office, and he still had the idea that he was actively engaged, although the real editorship had passed into other hands. It seems so short a time since we five were stretched upon the grass plot in full health and spirits, and now I alone of all that party am left to recall it." This was written in 1898.

With Delane Dickens became very intimate.

The "American Notes" and portions of "Martin Chuzzlewit" had not unnaturally given considerable offence in America, and it was considered wiser that Dickens should not force the fact of his friendship with Macready upon Americans by seeing him off at Liverpool, this being pointed out by Captain Marryat. The doubt had been in Dickens's mind already, and he had discussed it with Mrs Dickens more than once, but a fear lest he should be accused of giving too much importance to his doings withheld him from moving in the matter. But Marryat, also perceiving the danger, determined him. Forster thought otherwise — not the only occasion on which he advised Dickens other than wisely.

On October 2 he was down at Manchester, speaking at the opening of the Athenaeum there, among others on the platform being Disraeli and Cobden. He pointed out the help that even a little knowledge could be to men of humble rank, “watching the stars with Ferguson the shepherd’s boy, walking the streets with Crabbe, a poor barber here in Lancashire with Arkwright, a tallow chandler’s son with Franklin, shoe-making with Bloomfield in his garret, following the plough with Burns, and high above the noise of loom and hammer, whispering courage in the ears of workers I could this day name in Sheffield and Manchester.”

In an amusing letter to Ainsworth, written a few days later, he gives a truly graphic picture of a cold in the head, caught probably at Liverpool: “I am at this moment deaf in the ears, hoarse in the throat, red in the nose, green in the gills, damp in the eyes, twitchy in the joints, and fractious in the temper. ... I will make prodigious efforts to get the better of it to-night by resorting to all conceivable remedies, and if I succeed so as to be only negatively disgusting to-morrow, I will joyfully present myself at six, and bring my womankind along with me.”

We find him, too, interesting himself keenly in the question of ragged schools, writing to Miss Coutts (afterward the Baroness Burdett Coutts) a stirring account of them, which brought a prompt promise of help from her; “she is a most excellent creature,” he writes, “I protest to God, and I have a most perfect affection and respect for her.” Indeed, she was his very good friend from the opening days of his career, and did to him and his children many an act of kindness.

In September he wrote to Macvey Napier, the editor of the Edinburgh Review, offering to write upon the education question, to the effect that a system exclusively founded upon Church principles would not do, and that “the Church Catechism is wholly inapplicable to the state of ignorance that now prevails; and why no system but one, so general in great religious principles as to include all creeds, can meet the wants and understandings of the dangerous classes of society.” Had this policy that he then advocated been adopted, how much unhappy and unnecessary controversy would have been saved. This offer of an article was not accepted, as, indeed, he scarcely expected it would be. But so strong were his feelings on the matter, and so keen his differences of opinion with clergymen of the Church of England, that he took seats in the Little Portland Street Unitarian Chapel, of which

the Rev. Edward Tagart was then minister, an interesting, able man and a good antiquary, his wife an amiable, thoughtful woman.

Toward the end of the year, Dickens's thoughts turned steadily toward foreign travel, chiefly in search of rest; he and all his family; to go to Normandy or Brittany; possibly to walk through Switzerland, France and Italy; to take Mrs Dickens to Rome and Venice; many vague plans crossed his mind; eventually a prolonged stay in Italy was decided upon.

XIX

ITALY

WE purpose to deal somewhat fully with this journey to Italy, because by so doing we shall receive light upon Dickens's character. He has himself told the tale at length in his "Pictures from Italy" and his letters to Forster and other friends, from the first of which we shall quote at some length. The house in Devonshire Terrace was let, and during the two weeks immediately preceding their departure, the family put up in Osnaburgh Terrace. Then a carriage was purchased for forty-five pounds, "as for comfort — let me see — it is about the size of your library"; presumably Forster's; "with night-lamps and day-lamps and pockets and imperials and leathern cellars, and the most extraordinary contrivances. Joking apart, it is a wonderful machine." A wonderful courier he obtained too, one Roche, who, until his death in 1849, was with Dickens on all his foreign travels. Thus Dickens describes him, "the radiant embodiment of good humour . . . in the person of a French courier — best of servants and most beaming of men."

Before deciding on his destination Dickens had written to Lady Blessington asking her advice and telling her that Nice appealed to him as a good place for headquarters, but both she and D'Orsay recommended Pisa, upon which suggestion he did not act.

Of course before setting out a dinner was necessary to make all things regular, and this took place at Greenwich, when Lord Normanby was in the chair, and among others present there had come with Stanfield, J. M. W. Turner, who "had enveloped his throat, that sultry summer day, in a huge red belcher-handkerchief, which nothing would induce him to remove. He was not otherwise demonstrative, but enjoyed himself in a quiet silent way, less perhaps at the speeches than at the changing lights on the river." Carlyle stayed away, protesting that he loved Dickens, but preferred to express his affection otherwise than dining out in the dog days.

The party travelled via Boulogne to Paris; then "on a fine Sunday morning in the Midsummer time and weather of eighteen hundred and forty-four, it was, my good friend, when — don't be alarmed; not when two

travellers might have been observed slowly making their way over that picturesque and broken ground by which the first chapter of a Middle-Aged novel is usually attained — but when an English travelling-carriage of considerable proportions, fresh from the shady halls of the Pantechnicon near Belgrave Square, London, was observed (by a very small French soldier; for I saw him look at it) to issue from the gate of the Hôtel Meurice in the Rue Rivoli at Paris.”

En route to Sens, to Avallon, to Chalons, to Lyons, to Avignon, to Marseilles. Once more we will take a look at the old-world methods of travelling, uncomfortable enough in many ways, but so inexpressibly superior in that travellers then did really see something of the country and the people: —

“We have four horses, and one postillion, who has a very long whip, and drives his team, something like the Courier of Saint Petersburg in the circle at Astley’s or Franconi’s: only he sits his own horse instead of standing on him. The immense jack-boots worn by these postillions, are sometimes a century or two old; and are so ludicrously disproportionate to the wearer’s foot, that the spur, which is put where his own heel comes, is generally half-way up the leg of the boots. The man often comes out of the stable-yard, with his whip in his hand and his shoes on, and brings out, in both hands, one boot at a time, which he plants on the ground by the side of his horse, with great gravity, until everything is ready. When it is — and oh Heaven! the noise they make about it! — he gets into the boots, shoes and all, or is hoisted into them by a couple of friends; adjusts the rope harness, embossed by the labours of innumerable pigeons in the stables; makes all the horses kick and plunge; cracks his whip like a madman; shouts ‘En route — Hi!’ and away we go.”

“Then, there is the Diligence, twice or thrice a-day, with the dusty outsides in blue frocks, like butchers; and the insides in white nightcaps; and its cabriolet head on the roof, nodding and shaking, like an idiot’s head; and its Young-France passengers staring out of window, with beards down to their waists, and blue spectacles awfully shading their warlike eyes, and very big sticks clenched in their National grasp. Also the Malle Poste, with only a couple of passengers, tearing along at a real good dare-devil pace, and out of sight in no time. Steady old Cures come jolting past, now and then, in such ramshackle, rusty, musty, clattering coaches as no Englishman would believe in; and bony women dawdle about in solitary places, holding

cows by ropes while they feed, or digging and hoeing or doing field-work of a more ITALY

laborious kind, or representing real shepherdesses with their flocks — to obtain an adequate idea of which pursuit and its followers, in any country, it is only necessary to take any pastoral poem, or picture, and imagine to yourself whatever is most exquisitely and widely unlike the descriptions therein contained.”

So runs on the clever delineation of men and manners in France in 1844 as written in the pages of one of Dickens’s most delightful works, “Pictures from Italy.” We will not track the travellers step by step; at Marseilles they stayed a night and then proceeded by steamer to Genoa, their destination. Of their arrival there and their two miles’ drive to Albaro, where a villa had been rented, Dickens gives a highly comical description. He writes like a boy of prodigious observation. “Novelty,” he says, “pleasant to most people, is particularly delightful, I think, to me.” After a short period of depression caused by the Villa Bagnerello, or “the Pink Jail,” being a somewhat dilapidated and depressing residence, he settled down to keen enjoyment of the new life, into which he plunged with the thoroughness that he displayed in all his undertakings.

As an example of the minuteness of his observation even of places that he merely glanced at, take this description of a fountain in a courtyard behind a palace in Genoa: —

“You stand in a yard (the yard of the same house) which seems to have been unvisited by human foot for a hundred years. Not a sound disturbs its repose. Not a head, thrust out of any of the grim, dark, jealous windows, within sight, makes the weeds in the cracked pavement faint of heart, by suggesting the possibility of there being hands to grub them up. Opposite to you, is a giant figure carved in stone, reclining, with an urn, upon a lofty piece of artificial rockwork; and out of the urn dangles the fag end of a leaden pipe, which, once upon a time, poured a small torrent down the rocks. But the eye-sockets of the giant are not drier than this channel is now. He seems to have given his urn, which is nearly upside down, a final tilt; and after crying, like a sepulchral child, ‘All gone !’ to have lapsed into a stony silence.”

Indeed, it might justly be questioned if ever there were another so greatly gifted with powers of observation as was Dickens. He shows it throughout all his work; and the more we know of his life the more we can understand

and appreciate the excellence of his art as a descriptive writer. It is well to remember that imagination is not creation but utilisation and adaptation of things seen and known. Unfortunately most of us see and know so little. Again and again, too, does he in his letters as in his fiction give a quaint touch of humanity to stocks and stones. He — in the case above quoted — almost succeeds in making us feel a pity for this lonely, forgotten giant and his empty urn. These thoughts were undoubtedly the inspiration of the moment, the outcome of his whimsical turn of mind, not laboured fun-making or deliberate picture-painting. He says this himself, when writing of the amphitheatre at Verona: —

“When I had traversed all about it, with great interest, and had gone up to the topmost round of seats, and turning from the lovely panorama closed in by the distant Alps, looked down into the building, it seemed to lie before me like the inside of a prodigious hat of plaited straw, with an enormously broad brim and a shallow crown; the plaits being represented by the four-and-forty rows of seats. The comparison is a homely and fantastic one, in sober remembrance and on paper, but it was irresistibly suggested at the moment, nevertheless”

He was at his best when whimsical; still at Verona: — “I read Romeo and Juliet in my own room at the inn that night — of course, no Englishman had ever read it there, before — and set out for Mantua next day at sunrise, repeating to myself (in the coupe of an omnibus, and next to the conductor, who was reading the Mysteries of Paris),

There is no world without Verona’s walls.

But purgatory, torture, hell itself.

Hence-banished is banished from the world,

And world’s exile is death

which reminded me that Romeo was only banished five-and-twenty miles after all, and rather disturbed my confidence in his energy and boldness “; and at his worst, a bad worst, when he indulges in moralising, none of the freshest or most profound, or expressed in language free from tawdriness. Dickens was a humourist, thank Heaven for it; as with Sterne, his pathos too often became bathos.

In October he moved from the depressing “Pink Jail” to the Palazzo Peschiere, better both as to accommodation and situation.

From a delightful letter, written to Maclise, we must make one brief quotation, “green figs I have already learned to like. Green almonds (we

have them at dessert every day) are the most delicious fruit in the world. And green lemons, combined with some rare hollands that is to be got here, make prodigious punch, I assure you.” And this from a letter to Stanfield: — ” I love you so truly, and have such pride and joy of heart in your friendship, that I don’t know how to begin writing to you. When I think how you are walking up and down London in that portly surtout, and can’t receive proposals from Dick 1 to go to the theatre, I fall into a state between laughing and crying, and want some friendly back to smite. ‘Je-im!’ ‘Aye, aye, your honour,’ is in my ears every time I walk upon the seashore here; and the number of expeditions I make into Cornwall in my sleep, the springs of Flys I break, the songs I sing, and the bowls of punch I drink, would soften a heart of stone.” Did ever any other man possess such overflowing good spirits?

There does not seem to have been anything that delighted him more keenly than to be in close touch with his friends: — ” You told me it was possible,” we have him writing to Mr Tagart, “that you and Mrs Tagart might wander into these latitudes in the autumn. I wish you would carry out that infant intention to the utmost. It would afford us the truest delight and pleasure to receive you. If you come in October, you will find us in the Palazzo Peschiere, in Genoa, which is surrounded by a delicious garden, and is a most charming habitation in all respects.”

In Genoa, as elsewhere, when at work he sadly missed the turmoil of London; his pen drags: — ”Put me down on Waterloo Bridge,” he writes to Forster, while he is hard at “ The Chimes,” “ at eight o’clock in the evening, with leave to roam about as long as I like, and I would come home as you know, panting to go on. I am sadly strange as it is, and can’t settle.” When the book was finished, Dickens made holiday, touring by himself — though, of course, escorted by Roche — through Ferrara, Parma, Modena, Bologna, Verona, Mantua, Venice

1 A nickname for himself.



and other places of which he has given his “impressions.”

From Milan, on November 18, he writes to Forster, “My design is, to walk into Cuttris’s coffee-room 1 on Sunday the 1st December, in good time for dinner . . . and when I meet you — oh Heaven! what a week we will have.” He was better than his word, arriving a day earlier, rushing at once to meet Maclise and Forster — we can imagine the uproarious greetings! The motive of this brief visit to London is to be found in a letter to Douglas Jerrold from Cremona on October 16, “Forster has told you,” he writes, “or will tell you, that I very much wish you to hear my little Christmas book; and I hope you will meet me, at his bidding, in Lincoln’s Inn Fields,” and in one to Forster of earlier date: — ” I know you have consented to the party. Let me see. Don’t have anyone, this particular night, to dinner, but let it be a summons for the special purpose at half-past 6. Carlyle, indispensable, and I should like his wife of all things: her judgment would be invaluable. You will ask Mac, and why not his sister? Stanny and Jerrold I should particularly wish; Edwin Landseer; Blanchard; perhaps Harness; and what say you to Fonblanque and Fox? . . . And when I meet you (in sound health I hope) oh Heaven! what a week we will have.”

On Monday, December 2, the party assembled: Carlyle, Stanfield, Laman Blanchard, Douglas Jerrold, Frederick Dickens, Charles’s brother, W. J.

Fox, Unitarian minister, journalist, free-trader and M.P., Alexander Dyce, the Shakespearean scholar, Maclise, and William Harness, another good Shakespearean.

It was of Blanchard that Jerrold said, referring to his

1 The Piazza Hotel, Covent Garden.

fondness for society, "He to parties gave up what was meant for mankind."

So successful was the reading that at "Ingoldsby" Barham's request a second took place; in Barham's diary we read, "December 5, 1844. — Dined with Charles Dickens, Stanfield, Maclise and Albany Fonblanque at Forster's. Dickens read with remarkable effect his Christmas story, *The Chimes*, from the proofs."

Dickens was delighted, "I swear I wouldn't have missed that week, that first night of our meeting, that one evening of the reading at your rooms," he said to Forster, "aye, and the second reading too, for any easily stated or conceived consideration."

Apparently he dined at Gore House the very day of the reading, but surely this must have been a slip of his pen when writing to Mrs Dickens?

On his way back to Italy he stayed at Paris to meet Macready, who was acting there. We gain a peep at his views on the subject of opera in a letter to Forster: he heard Grisi in *Il Pirato*, "the passion and fire of a scene between her, Mario, and Fornasari was as good and great as it is possible for anything operatic to be." He read "*The Chimes*" to Macready, and in a letter to Mrs Dickens thus records the effect, "If you had seen Macready last night, undisguisedly sobbing and crying on the sofa as I read, you would have felt, as I did, what a thing it is to have power."

Before the end of the year he was settled down again in Genoa; in January he started Southward on a tour with Mrs Dickens, which included Rome and the Carnival, of which he gives so bright and vivid a description in the "Pictures," and then in June — good-bye to Italy. In a letter to Lady Blessington, dated May 9, he says, "I write you my last Italian letter for this bout, designing to leave here, please God, on the ninth of next month, and to be in London again by the end of June. I am looking forward with great delight to the pleasure of seeing you once more, and mean to come to Gore House with such a swoop as shall astonish the poodle, if, after being accustomed to his own size and sense, he retain the power of being astonished at anything in the wide world."

The return journey was made by the Great St Gothard, of the crossing by which pass Dickens gives a truly thrilling description in a letter to Forster. The party was met at Brussels by Maclise, Jerrold and the aforesaid Forster, a week of fun and frolic was spent in Belgium, and so home by the end of June.

XX

1845-6

THE two most important events — for our purpose — during the latter part of the year 1845 and the earlier of 1846 are the one connected with amateur theatricals and the other with very practical and at the same time impractical journalism.

The notion of an amateur performance had some time since been mooted, and, working with his wonted energy, within three weeks after his return to town the play had been chosen and cast, and negotiations entered upon for a playhouse. The upshot was detailed in a letter to George Cattermole, who was asked to but did not take the part of Downright in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in His Humour." The date fixed for the performance was September 21, the place Miss Kelly's Theatre, in Dean Street, Soho, now known as the Royalty; the occasion strictly private, that is to say, the audience was invited, each member of the cast being allotted from thirty to thirty-five cards; Stanfield was to have been Downright, indeed, rehearsed the part twice, but threw it up finding his time fully occupied with the scenery; Dickens was Bobadil; Jerrold, Master Stephen; Mark Lemon, Brainworm; Leech, Master Matthew; Forster, Kitley. The performance was so triumphant a success that it was repeated some weeks later for a charity; and before the year closed a performance was given of another Elizabethan THE "DAILY NEWS" masterpiece, Beaumont and Fletcher's "Elder Brother." Dickens's gifts as an actor and stage-manager it will be more convenient to discuss later on in connection with more public performances. After the "show" there was to be a little supper, writes Dickens to Macready, "at No. 9, Powis Place, Great Ormond Street, in an empty house belonging to one of the company. There I am requested by my fellows to beg the favour of thy company and that of Mrs Macready. The guests are limited to the actors and their ladies — with the exception of yourselves, and D'Orsay, and George Cattermole,' or so ' — that sounds like Bodadil a little."

Undertaking the editorship of the Daily News was one of the few bad blunders, if not the one, that Dickens made in his business life, which might have been avoided, indeed, if he had taken the advice urged upon him by Forster, who very rightly held that Dickens was by temperament unsuited for grappling with the peculiarly harassing duties of the editor of a daily newspaper. Forster knew well how great the cost was to Dickens of work that seemed so spontaneous and so facilely produced, knew also that his health was not so robust as his habits of life would appear to show. Also, what could Dickens gain either in fame or the good-will of the public by success in his new walk of life? There was indeed everything to lose and not anything to gain. However, Dickens had made up his mind to the undertaking.

The work was indeed harassing: —

On January 21, he writes to Forster, before going home at six o'clock in the morning, "been at press three-quarters of an hour, and were out before the Times."

On the same day to W. J. Fox, who had undertaken to write some of the political articles: — "The boy is waiting. I need not tell you how our Printer failed us last night. I hope for better things to-night, and am bent on a fight for it. If we can get a good paper to-morrow, I believe we are as safe as such a thing can be."

On February 9, to Forster he writes to say that he is tired and worn out, having already hinted that it was in his mind to throw up the work and to go abroad once again; in little over four months from the starting of the paper Dickens's connection with it had entirely ceased. The decision to sever himself from it appears to have been arrived at in conversation with Forster during a two days' visit to Rochester on his birthday, he, Mrs Dickens, Miss Hogarth, Maclise, Forster and Jerrold making up the party. Visits were paid to the Castle, to Watt's Charity, the Chatham lines, Cobham Church and Cobham Park, the while they put up at the Bull Inn, which still glories in the names of Dickens and Pickwick.

XXI

SWITZERLAND

AFTER dining with Forster on May 30, “Mr and Mrs Charles Dickens and Family” left England on the following day en route for Switzerland, travelling via Ostend, Verviers, Coblenz, Mayence, Mannheim, Strasburg, Bile, so to Lausanne; accompanied, or rather conducted, by the indefatigable Roche. From our point of view this visit to Switzerland, which lasted until late in the autumn, is chiefly notable in that during it he made some lasting and true friends. But before introducing ourselves to some of these, we may touch upon one or two minor incidents, which help in one way or another to throw light upon his character. For a full account of this stay in Switzerland — as of many other matters which we merely touch upon or entirely neglect — recourse must be had to Forster’s “Life” and to the three volumes of “Letters,” these latter being by no means so well known as they should be; as we have said before, Dickens was among the master men of “Letters.”

His hatred and misunderstanding of other days and other ways is well shown in a description he gives of a visit he paid in August to Chillon; “there is a courtyard inside; surrounded by prisons, oubliettes, and old chambers of torture; so terrifically sad, that death itself is not more sorrowful. And oh! a wicked old Grand Duke’s bedchamber upstairs in the tower, with a secret staircase down into the chapel where the bats were wheeling about; and Bonnivard’s dungeon; and a horrible trap whence prisoners were cast out into the lake; and a stake all burnt and crackled up, that still stands in the torture ante-chamber to the saloon of justice (!) — what tremendous places! Good God, the greatest mystery in all the earth, to me, is how or why the world was tolerated by its Creator through the good old times, and wasn’t dashed to fragments.” It is strange that with his intimate knowledge of the horrors of London and his passionate love for and sympathy with the poor and oppressed he did not realise that our ways to-day are other ways, but in the sum of suffering caused by them by no means better ways. Again, commenting upon the revolution that had upset

the Swiss government, he says, “they are a genuine people, these Swiss. There is better metal in them than in all the stars and stripes of all the fustian banners of the so-called, and falsely-called, U-nited States. They are a thorn in the sides of European despots, and a good wholesome people to live near Jesuit ridden Kings on the brighter side of the mountains.” This is quite high-class demagogues. Later on he says that he believes “the dissemination of Catholicity to be the most horrible means of political and social degradation left in the world.”

Now to hark back to the commencement of the visit, from the very beginning of which he was fortunate in the matter of making of friends. Among the earliest with whom he became acquainted, the acquaintance rapidly growing into sincere friendship, were Mrs Jane Marcet, a Swiss lady, married to the distinguished chemist, Alexander John Gaspard Marcet, and a writer herself of popular scientific works for the young; her maiden name was Haldimand: and William Haldimand, her brother. He was born in 1784, the son of a London merchant, Anthony Francis Haldimand, and was an excellent man of business, becoming a director of the Bank of England when only twenty-five. In 1820 he was elected M.P. for Ipswich, but in 1828 settled at Lausanne in his villa, Denanton. He was among the most ardent supporters of the cause of Greek Independence, guaranteeing Admiral Cochrane £20,000 toward the equipment of a fleet. Toward the founding of a hospital for the blind at Lausanne he subscribed £24,000, and his other charitable gifts were large.

Dickens says of him with amusing extravagance — “He has founded and endowed all sorts of hospitals and institutions here,” going on to say that he is hospitably giving a dinner to introduce “our neighbours, whoever they are.” To him and to a Swiss friend, M. de Cerjat, Dickens wrote many of his most delightful letters. Of the rest of the circle we need only name the Hon. Richard and Mrs Watson of Rockingham Castle. Mrs Watson was the daughter of Lord George Quin, who married Lady Georgiana Spencer, and Mr Watson was the fourth son of the second Lord Sondes. Rockingham Castle was situated upon one of the few hills to be found in the county of Northampton; a fine old pile that had once upon a time been a Royal hunting-lodge and stood in the midst of a well-wooded park. A portion of the house dated back as far as King Stephen. In the great Hall, on one of the beams, was a quaint inscription,

“thys House Shall Be Preserved And Never Shall Decays While Almighty God Is Honoured And Served Daye By DAYE.”

We will here take a peep into the future, first quoting what Dickens has to say of his friends: — ”He is a very intelligent agreeable fellow, the said Watson by-the-bye; he sat for Northamptonshire in the Reform Bill time, and is high sheriff of his county and all the rest of it; but has not the least nonsense about him, and is a thorough good liberal. He has a charming wife.”

In 1849 we find Dickens paying the Watsons a visit at Rockingham, and he writes thence on November 30 a quaint account of the old place.

Miss Mary Boyle first met Dickens when on a visit to Rockingham. Mrs Watson was a relative of hers, though not very near, and knowing that she much desired to meet “Boz,” asked her down to do so, naming a certain day and train and bidding her look out for the Dickens family at Euston. It was not, however, until the train had reached Wolverton that they met; then the guard flung open the door of her carriage and announced, “This is Mr Charles Dickens, who is enquiring for Miss Boyle.”

She was an enthusiastic amateur actress; what more natural than that she and Dickens should at once join forces and play the mad gentleman scenes from “Nicholas Nickleby” for the benefit of the house party? In the dining-room, a beautiful apartment, panelled in oak, and adorned with numerous heraldic shields, the “theatre” was erected on this occasion.

Mr Watson died in 1852, to the great grief of Dickens, who had felt for him a sincere affection: — ” I loved him as my heart, and cannot think of him without tears,” and again, “I loved him very much, and God knows he deserved it.” Dickens wrote to the widow one of the truest, most tender letters of sympathy and consolation that man ever penned. It would be a profanity to quote from it; it should be read in its entirety.

Both as regards time and place we have gone far astray from Switzerland, to which we will now return, but only for a brief space, as it is by no means our intention to follow his footsteps at all closely.

One of the many trips that he made was especially interesting and enjoyable; the company, Mr and Mrs Dickens, Miss Hogarth, Mr Haldimand, M. and Mdme. de Cerjat and their daughter, Mr and Mrs Watson and some others; destination, the Great St Bernard monastery; a jolly, merry party. The holy fathers Dickens held to be “a piece of sheer

humbug.” Writing to Mrs Watson on October 7, 1856, and referring to a chapter in “Little Dorrit “ in which the family of that name visits the Great St Bernard, he says, “ I did write it for you; and I hoped in writing it, that you would think so. All those remembrances are fresh in my mind, as they often are, and gave me an extraordinary interest in recalling the past. I should have been grievously disappointed if you had not been pleased, for I took aim at you with a most determined intention.”

On Monday, November 16, they started for Paris: — “I don’t believe there are many dots on the map of the world where we shall have left such affectionate remembrances behind us, as in Lausanne. It was quite miserable this last night, when we left them at Haldimand’s.”

So by post to Paris, where they arrived on the 20th, with “several tons of luggage, other tons of servants, and other tons of children.”

XXII

PARIS

WE shall be with Dickens in Paris again later on, and will make excuse of this three months' visit chiefly to show Dickens as an affectionate brother. His eldest sister, Fanny, was born at Portsea, in 1810, two years before her famous brother. She became a pupil at the Royal Academy of Music, in Tenterden Street, and during one of the saddest periods of his sad childhood Dickens went to see her receive a prize there: — "I could not bear to think of myself — beyond the reach of all such honourable emulation and success. The tears ran down my face. I felt as if my heart were rent. I prayed, when I went to bed that night, to be lifted out of the humiliation and neglect in which I was. I never had suffered so much before. There was no envy in this." It was while at Paris that he received disquieting news concerning the health of his sister — now Mrs Burnett — her husband was also a musician — which caused him grave disquietude. She had broken down while at a party at Manchester, and the doctor reported that her lungs were seriously affected. There had previously been fears, but Mrs Dickens had taken her to Doctor Elliotson, who had then given a favourable verdict. Dickens now suggested that she should see him again, and the sentence this time was practically one of death; her health completely broke down. In the early days of July, 1848, Dickens wrote to Forster telling him that the end had come.

Of the good doctor we must say a word or two. John Elliotson was born in 1791, the son of a chemist, and was educated at Edinburgh, and Jesus College, Cambridge, afterward "walking" St Thomas's and Guy's hospitals. Among his eccentricities, which were many, may be mentioned that he was one of the first of modern Englishmen to wear a beard. His lectures as Professor of the Practice of Medicine at London University were highly popular, and he was one of the most energetic promoters of University College Hospital. In time he became a student of mesmerism, which brought him into conflict with the medical profession, and greatly interested Dickens. But it is not to our purpose to follow his career, distinguished in

many ways, as a physician. He was the friend of Thackeray, who dedicated "Pendennis" to him, and of Dickens.

Elliotson and Dickens were joint benefactors to one John Overs, a carpenter, who was stricken with consumption, dying in 1844. He had some small literary talent, and when disease incapacitated him from work, some of his stories were published by T. C. Newby, with an introduction by Dickens, under the title "Evenings of a Working Man," and dedicated to Elliotson, of whom Forster says: — "whose name was for nearly thirty years a synonym with us all for unwearied, self-sacrificing, beneficent service to everyone in need." Miss Coutts (as she then was) appears prettily in the same connection. Dickens wrote on behalf of the widow to thank Miss Coutts for her generous help in money and for having obtained admission to an orphanage for one of the children; the reply came, "what is the use of my means but to try and do some good with them?"

Dickens paid a flying visit of eight days to London, chiefly on business intent, and Forster went over to Paris early in 1847 for a fortnight of riotous and vehement sight-seeing, Dickens showing his usual thoughtfulness for a friend's comfort by arranging every detail of his journey, even to the ordering of his dinner at Boulogne at the Hotel des Bains and the taking a place for him in the malle-poste. At Paris, they went to palaces, theatres, hospitals, says Forster, as well as to all the more usual "sights." They were made free of the green-room at the Francais by Regnier, one of the closest of Dickens's many actor friends; they were present at a lesson given by Samson at the Conservatoire; saw various plays, including "Clarisse Harlowe," in which the acting of Rose Cheri greatly impressed them by its pathos; supped with the splendid Alexandre Dumas and with Eugene Sue. Lamartine, Theophile Gautier, Scribe, Chateaubriand and Victor Hugo were among other famous men they met. Forster gives a striking description of the last-named, in his home in the Place Royale, with its gorgeous decorations. He depicts him as "rather under the middle size, of compact close-buttoned-up figure, with ample dark hair falling loosely over his close-shaven face, I never saw upon any features so keenly intellectual such a soft and sweet gentility, and certainly never heard the French language spoken with the picturesque distinctness given to it by Victor Hugo."

The stay at Paris was cut short by the illness of Dickens's eldest son, who was then at King's College School, with scarlet fever, and Mr and Mrs Dickens at once returned to London, but owing to the infectious nature of

the disease did not see their son for some weeks. The boy had been nursed in lodgings in Albany Street by his grandmother, Mrs Hogarth, and an amusing story — worth repeating — is told of a charwoman who inquired if the patient was the son of the author of “Dombey and Son.” On hearing this was so, she exclaimed, “Lawk, ma’am! I thought that three or four men must have put together Dombey!”

XXIII

ON TOUR

NO attempt is made in this rambling record to adopt any strict order of dates. This chapter will be devoted to tours made by Dickens and a Company of Amateur Actors through the provinces, which have been aptly designated by Maclise as "splendid strolling." Dickens loved the theatre and all connected with it, and several actors were amongst his closest friends. It was by the merest freak of fate that he did not become a professional actor. As a young man, he was an enthusiastic playgoer, and studied various parts himself. Then he determined to try his fortune upon the boards, writing to George Bartley, the comedian and stage-manager at Covent Garden Theatre, describing what powers he believed himself to possess, and asking for an interview. Bartley responded, and a date was fixed for a visit, at which the aspirant's powers were to be tested before no less a person than Charles Kemble. The day arrived, but Dickens was prostrated with a cold. The visit was postponed until the next season, but in the meanwhile the beginnings of a journalistic success had been made and the matter was not reopened.

In 1847 it was proposed to give some representations of "Every Man in His Humour" on behalf of Leigh Hunt, who was in financial difficulties, and to this motive was added the relieving of the pecuniary necessities of John Poole, the dramatic author.

Some letters of Dickens's in June and July set forth fairly fully the aims of the performances and the constitution of the cast. They are written to Mr Alexander Ireland, a Scotchman who had settled in Manchester, being the publisher and business manager of the Examiner there. He is best remembered as the author of "The Book-Lover's Enchiridion." Manchester was one of the towns it was proposed to visit, and Dickens wrote to Ireland, having heard from a common friend that he was interested in all that concerned Leigh Hunt.

Of this charming writer we do not propose to say much. James Henry Leigh Hunt was born in the year 1784, and was educated at Christ's

Hospital, now as far as concerns London, alas, no more; it was a place of many happy literary ghosts. To every kind of journalism he turned his graceful pen, he was essayist and also poet, but little of his writing has stood the cruel test of time. There is scarce one work of his which to-day has many readers except among students of literature, perhaps the most generally popular book of his being "The Town," a delightful volume to all lovers of London. Among other of his writings may be named "The Story of Rimini"; "Lord Byron and some of His Contemporaries"; "A Legend of Florence," produced at Covent Garden in 1840; an "Autobiography," which is very disappointing, and "An Old Court Suburb." His chief claim to fame is that he was the friend of Lamb, Moore, Byron, Keats, Shelley, and — for our purpose — of Charles Dickens. He died in 1859 and was buried at Kensal Green. Of his style of prose writing we may gain some hint from an excerpt from his "Autobiography," dealing with his school-days: —

"Christ-Hospital (for such is its proper name, and not Christ's Hospital) occupies a considerable portion of ground between Newgate Street, Giltspur Street, St Bartholomew's, and Little Britain. There is a quadrangle with cloisters; and the Square inside the cloisters is called the Garden, and most likely was the monastery garden. Its only delicious crop for many years has been pavement. Another large area, presenting the Grammar and Navigation Schools, is also misnamed the Ditch; the town ditch having formerly run that way. In Newgate Street is seen the hall, or eating-room, one of the noblest in England, adorned with enormously long paintings by Verrio and others, and with an organ. A portion of the old quadrangle once contained the library of the monks, and was built or repaired by the famous Whittington, whose arms were to be seen outside; but alterations of late years have done it away. Our routine of life was this. We rose to the call of a bell at six in summer, and seven in winter; and after combing ourselves, and washing our hands and face, we went at the call of another bell to breakfast. All this took up about an hour. From breakfast we proceeded to school, where we remained till eleven, winter and summer, and then had an hour's play. Dinner took place at twelve. Afterwards was a little play till one, when we went again to school, and remained till five in summer, and four in winter. At six was the supper. We used to play after it in summer till eight. On Sundays, the school time of other days was occupied in church, both morning and evening; and as the Bible was read to us every day before

every meal, besides prayers and grace, we rivalled the monks in the religious part of our duties.”

At the man himself we may profitably take a few peeps. In 1834 he was living at 4 Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea, with Carlyle as near neighbour, who thus describes Hunt and his surroundings: —

“Hunt’s household. Nondescript! Unutterable! Mrs Hunt asleep on cushions; four or five beautiful, strange, gipsy-looking children running about in undress, whom the lady ordered to get us tea. The eldest boy, Percy, — a sallow, black-haired youth of sixteen, with a kind of dark cotton nightgown on, — went whirling about like a familiar, pervading everything; an indescribable dreamlike household. . . . Hunt’s house excels all you have ever read of, — a poetical Tinkerdom, without parallel even in literature. In his family room, where are a sickly large wife and a whole school of well-conditioned wild children, you will find half a dozen old rickety chairs gathered from half a dozen different hucksters, and all seeming engaged, and just pausing, in a violent hornpipe. On these and around them and over the dusty table and ragged carpet lie all kinds of litter, — books, paper, eggshells, scissors, and, last night when I was there, the torn heart of a half-quarter loaf. His own room above stairs, into which alone I strive to enter, he keeps cleaner. It has only two chairs, a bookcase, and a writing table; yet the noble Hunt receives you in his Tinkerdom in the spirit of a king, apologizes for nothing, places you in the best seat, takes a window-sill himself if there is no other, and then, folding closer his loose flowing ‘ muslin cloud ‘ of a printed night-gown, in which he always writes, commences the liveliest dialogue on philosophy and the prospects of man (who is to be beyond measure happy yet); which again he will courteously terminate the moment you are bound to go; a most interesting, pitiable, lovable man, to be used kindly but with discretion.”

In 1839 Sumner speaks of him as “truly brilliant in conversation . . . he is of about the middle size, with iron-gray hair parted in the middle, and suffered to grow quite long.”

Mrs Cowden Clarke gives us a pleasant peep at Leigh Hunt; she was introduced to him at a party, where he sang a cheery nautical song in his sweet though small baritone. “His manner — fascinating, animated, full of cordial amenity, and winning to a degree of which I have never seen the parallel — drew me to him at once.” And J. T. Fields in his diary writes: — June 30, 1859. — ” Drove to Hammersmith, where we found Leigh Hunt

and his two daughters awaiting us. It was a very tiny cottage, with white curtains and flowers in the window; but his beautiful manner made it a rich abode. The dear old man talked delightfully about his flowers, calling them ‘gentle household pets.’“

More or less disguised both Landor and Leigh Hunt figure in “Bleak House,” the former as Lawrence Boythorn, the latter as Harold Skimpole. Landor is said to have been rather proud of his portrait; not inexcusably Leigh Hunt was not so. Wilkie Collins made the following note in his copy of Forster’s “Life of Charles Dickens,” “At Dickens’s own house, when Leigh Hunt was one of his guests at dinner on that occasion, Hunt directly charged Dickens with taking the character of Harold Skimpole from the character of Leigh Hunt, and protested strongly. I was not present, but Dickens told me what had happened.” Forster’s verdict on Dickens was that “he erred from thoughtlessness only,” but both “Barry Cornwall” and Forster himself protested and urged Dickens to alter the likeness, who wrote to the latter, “You will see from the enclosed that Procter is much of my mind. I will nevertheless go through the character again in the course of this afternoon, and soften down words here and there,” but after a second note from Procter further changes were made. In an article, “Leigh Hunt, a Remonstrance,” published in “All The Year Round,” in 1859, Dickens wrote: —

“The fact is this: exactly those graces and charms of manner which are remembered in the words we have quoted were remembered by the author of the work of fiction in question when he drew the character in question. Above all other things, that’ sort of gay and ostentatious wilfulness’ in the humouring of a subject, which had many times delighted him, and impressed him as being unspeakably whimsical and attractive, was the airy quality he wanted for the man he had invented. Partly for this reason, and partly (he has since often grieved to think) for the pleasure it afforded him to find that delightful manner reproducing itself under his hand, he yielded to the temptation of too often making the character speak like his old friend. He no more thought, God forgive him! that the admired original would ever be charged with the imaginary vices of the fictitious creature than he has himself ever thought of charging the blood of Desdemona and Othello on the innocent Academy model who sat for Iago’s leg in the picture. Even as to the mere occasional manner, he meant to be so cautious and conscientious that he privately referred the two proof-sheets of the first

number of that book to two intimate literary friends of Leigh Hunt, and altered the whole of that part of the text on their discovering too strong a resemblance to his 'way.'"

In one of the above-mentioned letters to Ireland, Dickens makes mention of the other beneficiary: — "there is no objection to its being known that this is Mr Poole, the author of ' Paul Pry ' and ' Little Peddlington ' and many comic pieces of great merit, and whose farce of ' Turning the Tables ' we mean to finish with in Manchester. Beyond what he will get from these benefits, he has no resource in this wild world, I know." Not only did the dramatist gain relief from these benefits, but later on, and largely through Dickens's efforts, obtained a Civil List pension. He was born in about 1785 and lived on until 1872. Though his plays cannot be said to have held the stage, he has created one immortal figure in "Paul Pry." He was a bit of a wag in his way, as is evidenced by a quaint saying of his at a dinner where the host was grumbling because he could not find any stuffing in the leg of pork he was carving : — " Perhaps," said Poole, "it is in the other leg." But like many another wag he did not highly relish any joke the edge of which was turned against himself.

Writing on October 8, 1862, to Wilkie Collins, Dickens said: —

"I saw Poole (for my sins) last Saturday, and he was a sight. He had got out of bed to receive me (at 3 P.m.) and tried to look as if he had been up at Dawn — with a dirty and obviously warm impression of himself on the bedclothes. It was a tent bedstead with four wholly unaccounted for and bare poles, each with an immense spike on the top, like four lightning conductors. He had a fortnight's grey beard, and had made a lot of the most extraordinary memoranda of questions to ask me — which he couldn't read — through an eyeglass which he couldn't hold. He was continually beset with a notion that his landlady was listening outside the door, and was continually getting up from a kind of ironing-board at which he sat, with the intention of darting at the door, but invariably missed his aim, and brought himself up by the forehead against blind corners of the wall." And to Macready in April, 1865, "Poole still holds out at Kentish Town, and says he is dying of solitude. His memory is astoundingly good. I see him about once in two or three months, and in the meantime he makes notes of questions to ask me when I come. Having fallen in arrear of the time, these generally refer to unknown words he has encountered in the newspapers.

His last three (he always reads them with tremendous difficulty through an enormous magnifying glass) were as follows: —

1. What's croquet?
2. What's an albert chain?
3. Let me know the state of mind of the queen."

Returning to the Ireland letters, we may quote what description Dickens gave of the company: — " Jerrold and myself you have heard of; Mr George Cruikshank and Mr Leech (the best caricaturists of any times perhaps) need no introduction, Mr Frank Stone (a Manchester man) and Mr Egg are artists of high reputation. Mr Forster is the critic of The Examiner, the author of 'The Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth,' and very distinguished as a writer in The Edinburgh Review. Mr Lewes is also a man of great attainments in polite literature, and the author of a novel published not long since, called 'Ranthorpe.' Mr Costello is a periodical writer, and a gentleman renowned as a tourist. Mr Mark Lemon is a dramatic author, and the editor of Punch — a most excellent actor, as you will find. My brothers play small parts, for love, and have no greater note than the Treasury and the City confer on their disciples."

The close friendship between Dickens and Egg commenced with these "play-actings." Of the others mentioned we will glance at one or two. Lewes is the George Henry Lewes, who wrote many things, novels, plays, biographies, dramatic and other criticisms, of whose work perhaps the most lasting will prove to be his "Life of Goethe." In 1851 he met with "George Eliot," travelled with her in Germany three years later, and afterward lived with her until his death. He was one for whom Dickens had a sincere regard. Dudley Costello, of Irish descent as his name shows, was a journalist of considerable repute, a novelist, an expert in MSS., and, we are told, " good-humoured, sociable, and with a large stock of amusing conversation."

Mark Lemon was born in about 1820, of Jewish descent, as may be gathered from his "Christian" name, and died in the May of 1870, very shortly before the death of Dickens himself. Edmund Yates says of him, " corpulent, jovial, bright-eyed, with a hearty laugh and an air of bonhomie, he rolled through life the outward impersonation of jollity and good temper." In early days he was mine host of "The Shakespeare" tavern in Wych Street. As editor of Punch he drove his difficult team with tact and

discretion. Opinions differ considerably as to his characteristics, for he has been described as a “mealy-mouthed sycophant”; Dickens called him “a most affectionate and true-hearted fellow “; and another, who knew him well, the “most loveable elderly boy I have ever seen.” Joseph Hatton said of him, “he believed in one God, one woman, one publication “ — his wife and Punch. Of his witticisms — or rather “funniments “ — we will quote but one, from a letter, “our nurse-maid has the chicken-pock, and we expect to see her throw out feathers to-morrow.” He published a volume of “Prose and Verse,” which Douglas Jerrold unkindly dubbed “Prose and Worse.” It was to Lemon that Hans Andersen addressed the remark, “Ah, Mr Lemon, I like you; you are so full of comic.”

In 1851 Lemon was with Dickens at a time of sore trouble. John Dickens, the novelist’s father, had died on April 5th, and on the 14th Dickens, yielding to pressure, fulfilled his engagement to preside at the Sixth Annual Dinner of the General Theatrical Fund. He came up from Malvern, where he had been staying, and made at the dinner a brilliant speech, from which we will make a brief quotation: — ” let any man ask his own heart, and confess if he have not some grateful acknowledgements for the actor’s art? Not peculiarly because it is a profession often pursued, and as it were marked, by poverty and misfortune — for other callings, God knows, have their distresses — nor because the actor has sometimes to come from scenes of sickness, of suffering, ay, even of death itself, to play his part before us — for all of us, in our spheres, have as often to do violence to our feelings and to hide our hearts in fighting this great battle of life, and in discharging our duties and responsibilities. But the art of the actor excites reflections, sombre or grotesque, awful or humorous, with which we are all familiar. If any man were to tell me that he denied his acknowledgements to the stage, I would simply put to him one question — whether he remembered his first play?” During the dinner Forster had been called out, to receive the sad information that Dickens’s daughter Dora had died suddenly. When he left the chair, Mark Lemon helped Forster to break the terrible news. We pass on to a letter dated April 26, 1855, from Dickens to Lemon, a child of whose had died; “Leech and I called on Tuesday and left our loves. I have not written to you since, because I thought it best to leave you quiet for a day. I have no need to tell you, my dear fellow, that my thoughts have been constantly with you, and that I have not forgotten (and never shall forget)

who sat up with me one night when a little place in my house was left empty.”

Now to our tourists.

On Monday, July 26, the company appeared at Manchester, when in addition to the Ben Jonson comedy the farces “A Good Night’s Rest” and “Turning the Tables “ were given, the takings being over £440 ; on the 28th they acted at Liverpool, but for the above-named farces “ Comfortable Lodgings, or Paris in 1750” was substituted; the receipts were over £460. The expenses of the undertaking were so heavy that the profits were but £420, which, however, cannot be considered a mean result.

XXIV

ODDMENTS AND ELOQUENCE

BEFORE proceeding with our story we may pause a moment to note Dickens's friendship with two poets of different countries, generations and gifts. He writes from Paris, in 1846, to M. de Cerjat that Tom Moore is very ill; he fears dying, though the fear did not prove well founded, as he lived on until 1852. Dickens adds that the last time he had seen him was in London, and that he had found him "sadly changed and tamed, but not much more so than such a man might be under the heavy hand of time." In Forster we find record of Dickens meeting with the brilliant Irish singer at the house of Sir Francis Burdett, in 1841, Rogers being present and in a somewhat rude humour. Moore was a connecting link between, we might almost say, to-day, for there are many with us still who knew Charles Dickens, and the literature and literary men of the latter end of the eighteenth century, for he was born in 1779, coming to London twenty years later. Also from Paris, but this time to Lady Blessington, Dickens writes to say that he has been to visit Victor Hugo, whose house he describes as looking like an old curiosity shop: "I was much struck by Hugo himself, who looks like a genius as he is, every inch of him, and is very interesting and satisfactory from head to foot." We have quoted these two oddments here, instead of in their proper chronological niches, for we wish once again to draw attention to the fact that Dickens has been grossly neglected as a writer of letters and also to express the wish that some day the letters and Forster's Life may be welded into a whole, with additions and omissions. Lastly, in order that we may acknowledge the self-evident fact that these pages owe much to the Letters and the aforesaid Life.

In the autumn of this year (1847) a visit was paid to the belov'd Broadstairs, and on returning the family were able to take possession again of their own house in Devonshire Terrace. In December Mr and Mrs Dickens paid a visit to Leeds and to Glasgow, to which we will turn our attention for a moment. The first-named visit was in order that Dickens should preside at a soiree at the Leeds Mechanics' Institution, when almost

twelve hundred people were present. The novelist, who was afflicted with “a most disastrous cold,” spoke at some length, and it will serve the good purpose of showing what manner of speaker Dickens was on such occasions if we quote one or two passages. “The cause in which we are assembled,” he said, “and the objects we are met to promote, I take, and always have taken to be, the cause and the objects involving almost all others that are essential to the welfare and happiness of mankind. And in a celebration like the present, commemorating the birth and progress of a great educational establishment, I recognise a something, not limited to the spectacle of the moment, beautiful and radiant though it be — not limited even to the success of the particular establishment in which we are more immediately interested — but extending from this place and through swarms of toiling men elsewhere, cheering and stimulating them in the onward, upward path that lies before us all. Wherever hammers beat, or wherever factory chimneys smoke, wherever hands are busy, or the clanking of machinery resounds — wherever, in a word, there are masses of industrious human beings whom their wise Creator did not see fit to constitute all body, but into each and every one of whom he breathed a mind — there, I would fain believe, some touch of sympathy and encouragement is felt from our collective pulse now beating in this hall.” That passage may have sounded all right, but it reads dangerously like clap-trap.

The visit to Glasgow was for a somewhat similar ceremony, a soiree in the City Hall to commemorate the opening of the Glasgow Athenaeum, and as an example of his lighter — and by far superior — oratory we will quote the following: —

“It is a great satisfaction to me to occupy the place I do in behalf of an infant institution; a remarkably fine child enough, of a vigorous constitution, but an infant still. I esteem myself singularly fortunate in knowing it before its prime, in the hope that I may have the pleasure of remembering in its prime, and when it has attained to its lusty maturity, that I was a friend of its youth. It has already passed through some of the disorders to which children are liable; it succeeded to an elder brother of a very meritorious character, but of rather a weak constitution, and which expired when about twelve months old, from, it is said, a destructive habit of getting up early in the morning: it succeeded this elder brother, and has fought manfully through a sea of troubles. Its friends have often been much concerned for it; its pulse has been exceedingly low, being only 1250, when

it was expected to have been 10,000; several relations and friends have even gone so far as to walk off once or twice in the melancholy belief that it was dead. Through all that, assisted by the indomitable energy of one or two nurses, to whom it can never be sufficiently grateful, it came triumphantly, and now, of all the youthful members of its family I ever saw, it has the strongest attitude, the healthiest look, the brightest and most cheerful air.”

We have neither the desire nor the space to deal with each of the many public speeches made by Dickens on similar and dissimilar occasions. But it may be said, judging as far as it is possible to do so from the written and not from the spoken word, that Dickens’s speeches were very much like his writings in style, and also like them in this: that their humour was very much more admirable than their pathos, which is, to use a slangy but extremely expressive word, often rather “cheap.”

Justin M’Carthy counts Dickens as quite the best after-dinner speaker he ever heard, “his voice was rich, full, and deep, capable of imparting without effort every tone and half-tone of emotion, pathetic, inspiring, or humorous, that any spoken words could demand. His deep eyes seemed to flash upon every listener among the audience whom he addressed.”

But he was at his best in “narratory” or plainly matter-of-fact passages. Here are two retrospective “bits” of thoroughly Dickensian flavour. The first is an extract from a speech delivered at the London Tavern in December, 1854, on the occasion of the Anniversary Dinner of the Commercial Travellers’ Schools: —

“I think it may be assumed that most of us here present know something about travelling. I do not mean in distant regions or foreign countries, although I dare say some of us have had experience in that way, but at home, and within the limits of the United Kingdom. I dare say most of us have had experience of the extinct ‘fast coaches,’ the ‘Wonders,’ ‘Taglionis,’ and ‘Tally-Hos,’ of other days. I dare say most of us remember certain modest post-chaises, dragging us down interminable roads, through slush and mud, to little country towns with no visible population, except half-a-dozen men in smock-frocks, half-a-dozen women with umbrellas and pattens, and a washed-out dog or so shivering under the gables, to complete the desolate picture. We can all discourse, I dare say, if so minded, about our recollections of the ‘Talbot,’ the ‘Queen’s Head,’ or the ‘Lion’ of those days. We have all been to that room on the ground floor on one side of the old inn yard, not quite free from a certain fragrant smell of tobacco, where

the cruets on the sideboard were usually absorbed by the skirts of the box-coats that hung from the wall; where awkward servants waylaid us at every turn, like so many human man-traps; where county members, framed and glazed, were eternally presenting that petition which, somehow or other, had made their glory in the county, although nothing else had ever come of it. Where the books in the windows always wanted the first, last, and middle leaves, and where the one man was always arriving at some unusual hour in the night, and requiring his breakfast at a similarly singular period of the day. I have no doubt we could all be very eloquent on the comforts of our favourite hotel, wherever it was — its beds, its stables, its vast amount of posting, its excellent cheese, its head waiter, its capital dishes, its pigeon-pies, or its 1820 port. Or possibly we could recall our chaste and innocent admiration of its landlady, or our fraternal regard for its handsome chambermaid. A celebrated domestic critic once writing of a famous actress, renowned for her virtue and beauty, gave her the character of being an ‘eminently gatherable-to-one’s-arms sort of person.’ Perhaps someone amongst us has borne a somewhat similar tribute to the mental charms of the fair deities who presided at our hotels.”

In 1865 he presided at the second Annual Dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund, at the Freemasons’ Tavern, making a speech which has become almost historic, at any rate as regards the following excerpt: —

“I hope I may be allowed in the very few closing words that I feel a desire to say in remembrance of some circumstances, rather special, attending my present occupation of this chair, to give those words something of a personal tone. I am not here advocating the case of a mere ordinary client of whom I have little or no knowledge. I hold a brief to-night for my brothers. I went into the gallery of the House of Commons as a parliamentary reporter when I was a boy not eighteen, and I left it — I can hardly believe the inexorable truth — nigh thirty years ago. I have pursued the calling of a reporter under circumstances of which many of my brethren at home in England here, many of my modern successors, can form no adequate conception. I have often transcribed for the printer, from my shorthand notes, important public speeches in which the strictest accuracy was required, and a mistake in which would have been to a young man severely compromising, writing on the palm of my hand, by the light of a dark lantern, in a post-chaise and four, galloping through a wild country, and through the dead of the night, at the then surprising rate of fifteen miles

an hour. The very last time I was at Exeter, I strolled into the castle yard there to identify, for the amusement of a friend, the spot on which I once ‘took,’ as we used to call it, an election speech of my noble friend Lord Russell, in the midst of a lively fight maintained by all the vagabonds in that division of the county, and under such a pelting rain, that I remember two good-natured colleagues, who chanced to be at leisure, held a pocket-handkerchief over my notebook, after the manner of a state canopy in an ecclesiastical procession. I have worn my knees by writing on them on the old back row of the old gallery of the old House of Commons; and I have worn my feet by standing to write in a preposterous pen in the old House of Lords, where we used to be huddled together like so many sheep — kept in waiting, say, until the woollack might want restuffing. Returning home from excited political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known in this country. I have been, in my time, belated on miry by-roads, towards the small hours, forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheelless carriage, with exhausted horses and drunken postboys, and have got back in time for publication, to be received with never forgotten compliments by the late Mr Black, coming in the broadest of Scotch from the broadest of hearts I ever knew.”

There could not be anything better in its class than that, or in another way than this, quoted from a speech made by Dickens at the thirteenth anniversary dinner of the General Theatrical Fund, when Thackeray was in the chair: —

“It is not for me at this time, and in this place, to take on myself to flutter before you the well-thumbed pages of Mr Thackeray’s books, and to tell you to observe how

full they are of wit and wisdom, how out-speaking, and how devoid of fear or favour; but I will take leave to remark, in paying my due homage and respect to them, that it is fitting that such a writer and such an institution should be brought together. Every writer of fiction, although he may not adopt the dramatic form, writes in effect for the stage. He may never write plays; but the truth and passion which are in him must be more or less reflected in the great mirror which he holds up to nature. Actors, managers, and authors are all represented in this company, and it may be supposed that they all have studied the deep wants of the human heart in many theatres; but none of them could have studied its mysterious workings

in any theatre to greater advantage than in the bright and airy pages of 'Vanity Fair.' To this skilful showman, who has so often delighted us, and who has charmed us again to-night, we have now to wish God speed, and that he may continue for many years to exercise his potent art. To him fill a bumper toast, and fervently utter, God bless him!"

From Glasgow, where they were the guests of Mr Sheriff, afterward Sir Archibald, Alison, Dickens went on to Edinburgh. The weather was not pleasant; "it has been snowing, sleeting, thawing, and freezing, sometimes by turns and sometimes all together, since the night before last," he writes to Miss Hogarth. Alison, of course, was the author of a "History of Europe," more famous perhaps than read, who — writes Dickens — "lives in style in a handsome country house out of Glasgow, and is a capital fellow, with an agreeable wife, nice little daughter, cheerful niece, all things pleasant in his household." While at Edinburgh he received from Lord Jeffrey the news of the bankruptcy of James Sheridan Knowles, the Irish actor and dramatist, author of plays once held in very high esteem, but which today scarcely ever haunt the boards, "Virginius," "The Hunchback," "The Love Chase" and so forth.

Frith gives a highly amusing description of one of Knowles's performances in one of his own plays, "The Wife"; "he played an Italian — named Pierre, I think — with a broad Irish accent. The part was one for the display of strong passion; and the stronger became the situation, the more evident became the brogue. Knowles's square, powerful figure, with his fine expressive face, made such an impression upon me, that I believe I could recognise him now."

He was the delightful person who told O. Smith, the actor, that he always mistook him "for his namesake T. P. Cooke"!

It had been decided to give some amateur performances to endow the curatorship of the Shakespeare House at Stratford-on-Avon, destined for Knowles, which plan, however, was abandoned on the town authorities taking the matter into their hands, but the sum received was presented to the unfortunate dramatist, who later on received a pension at the hands of Lord John Russell.

"Every Man in His Humour" was repeated, "The Merry Wives of Windsor" was added to the repertoire, and the farce "Love, Law, and Physick" was also played. The performances were at Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Glasgow, and — naturally — London,

at the Haymarket Theatre. The programme for May 17 makes interesting reading: —

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

Amateur performance

in aid of

**THE FUND FOR THE ENDOWMENT OF A PERPETUAL
CURATORSHIP OF SHAKESPEARE'S HOUSE,**

To be always held by some one distinguished in Literature, and more especially in Dramatic Literature; the Profits of which it is the intention of the Shakespeare House Committee to keep entirely separate from the Fund now raising for the purchase of the House.

On Wednesday Evening, May 17th, 1848, will be presented
**BEN JONSON'S Comedy of
EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.**

Knowell (<i>an old gentleman</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. Dudley Costello.
Edward Knowell (<i>his son</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. Frederick Dickens.
Brainworm (<i>the father's man</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. Mark Lemon.
George Downright (<i>a plain squire</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. Frank Stone.
Wellbred (<i>his half-brother</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. G. H. Lewes.
Kitely (<i>a merchant</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. John Forster.
Captain Bobadil (<i>a Paul's man</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. Charles Dickens.
Master Stephen (<i>a country gull</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. Augustus Egg.
Master Mathew (<i>the town gull</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. John Leech.
Thomas Cash (<i>Kitely's cashier</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. Augustus Dickens.
Oliver Cobb (<i>a water bearer</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. George Cruikshank.
Justice Clement (<i>an old merry magistrate</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. Willmott.
Roger Formal (<i>his Clerk</i>)	.	.	.	Mr. Cole.
Dame Kitely (<i>Kitely's wife</i>)	.	.	.	Miss Fortescue.
Mistress Bridget (<i>her sister</i>)	.	.	.	Miss Kenworthy.
Tib (<i>Cobb's wife</i>)	.	.	.	Mrs. Cowden Clarke.

The Costumes by Messrs. Nathan, of Titchbourne Street.

To conclude with Mr. Kenney's farce of
LOVE, LAW, AND PHYSIC.

Doctor Camphor	.	.	.	Mr. George Cruikshank.
Captain Danvers	.	.	.	Mr. Frederick Dickens.
Flexible	.	.	.	Mr. Charles Dickens.
Andrew	.	.	.	Mr. G. H. Lewes.
Lubin Log	.	.	.	Mr. Mark Lemon.
John Brown	.	.	.	Mr. Augustus Egg.
Coachman	.	.	.	Mr. Eaton.
Laura	.	.	.	Miss Anne Romer.
Mrs. Hillary	.	.	.	Mrs. Cowden Clarke.
Chambermaid	.	.	.	Miss Woods.

The Band will perform.

Previous to the Comedy, The Overture to Semiramide. Rossini.

Between Battaglie Galop Kolloonitsch.

The Acts Czarina Mazurka T. German Reed

Aria Somnambulacornet Bellini

Wedding Marchobligato Mendelssohn

Previous to Farce, The Prince of Wales Quadrilles . Jullien.

The doors will be opened at half-past six, and the performance will commence at half-past seven precisely, by which time it is requested that the whole of the company may be seated.

Directors of general arrangements — Mr. John Payne Collier, Mr. Charles Knight, Mr. Peter Cunningham and the London Shakespeare House Committee.

Stage Manager — Mr. Charles Dickens.

Evening dress in all parts of the House.

In “The Merry Wives” Mark Lemon played Falstaff, Dickens Justice Shallow and Mrs Cowden Clarke Dame Quickly, who gives a graphic description of Dickens at rehearsal: — ” He had a small table placed rather to one side of the stage, at which he generally sat, as the scenes went on in which he himself took no part. On this table rested a moderate-sized box; its interior divided into convenient compartments for holding papers, letters, etc., and this interior was always the very pink of neatness and orderly arrangement. Occasionally he would leave his seat at the managerial table, and stand with his back to the foot-lights, in the very centre of the front of the stage, and view the whole effect of the rehearsed performance as it proceeded, observing the attitudes and positions of those engaged in the dialogue, their mode of entrance, exit, etc., etc. He never seemed to overlook anything; but to note the very slightest point that conduced to the, ‘going well’ of the whole performance. With all this supervision, however, it was pleasant to remark the utter absence of dictatorialness or arrogation of superiority that distinguished his mode of ruling his troop: he exerted his authority firmly and perpetually; but in such a manner as to make it universally felt to be for no purpose of self-assertion or self-importance; on the contrary, to be for the sole purpose of ensuring general success to their united efforts.”

A rehearsal with him was serious, earnest work. Of his acting, to which we shall return later on, she also gives a vivid word-picture : —

“The ‘make-up’ of Dickens as Justice Shallow was so complete, that his own identity was almost unrecognisable, when he came on to the stage, as the curtain rose, in company with Sir Hugh and Master Slender; but after a

moment's breathless pause, the whole house burst forth into a roar of applaudive reception, which testified to the boundless delight of the assembled audience on beholding the literary idol of the day, actually before them. His impersonation was perfect: the old, stiff limbs, the senile stoop of the shoulders, the head bent with age, the feeble step, with a certain attempted smartness of carriage characteristic of the conceited Justice of the Peace — were all assumed and maintained with wonderful accuracy; while the articulation, part lisp, part thickness of utterance, part a kind of impeded sibilation, like that of a voice that 'pipes and whistles in the sound' through loss of teeth — gave consummate effect to his mode of speech. The one in which Shallow says, "Tis the heart, Master Page; 'tis here, 'tis here. I have seen the time with my long sword I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats," was delivered with a humour of expression in effete energy of action and would-be fire of spirit that marvellously imaged fourscore years in its attempt to denote vigour long since extinct."

In this same year (1848) or thereabouts, Dickens in his own proper person is depicted by Sir Joseph Crowe as "full of fun and enjoyed company vastly. His abundant hair of sable hue enframed a grand face, somewhat drawn and thrown into capricious ridges. His dress was florid: a satin cravat of the deepest blue, relieved by embroideries, a green waistcoat with gold flowers, a dress coat with a velvet collar and satin facings, opulence of white cuff, rings in excess, made up a rather striking whole."

The performances began in London on April 15, and the tour lasted — on and off — until July 20, the result being gross receipts amounting to over £2500.

XXV

1848-9

IN this and some of the succeeding years Dickens passed quite a considerable portion of his time at the seaside. In March he and his wife were at Brighton, Mrs Macready, who was in ill-health, being with them. Then came the play-acting, as described, when the actors were accompanied by Mrs Dickens and Miss Hogarth; then in the autumn Broadstairs again; at the end of the year Brighton once more with his wife and sister-in-law; not a bad series of outings for one year. In the February of '49 they were back at Brighton, where the Leeches joined them. This visit was remarkable for the landlord of the lodgings and his daughter being attacked by lunacy — ” if you could have heard the cursing and crying of the two; could have seen the physician and nurse quitted out into the passage by the madman at the hazard of their lives; could have seen Leech and me flying to the doctor's rescue; could have seen our wives pulling us back; could have seen the M.D. faint with fear; could have seen three other M.D.'s come to his aid; with an atmosphere of Mrs Gamps, strait-waistcoats, struggling friends and servants, surrounding the whole . . . “!

Then came a desertion of Broadstairs in the summer and a quite notable visit to the Isle of Wight. This going to Bonchurch seems first to have been discussed early in the preceding year, judging by a letter to the Reverend James White, in which Dickens expresses a fear that Bonchurch may prove too relaxing, adding that his thoughts have wandered to the north as far as Yorkshire, and sometimes to Dover.

James White, a very jolly, jovial man, is to be counted as one of the most intimate and most dear of Dickens's friends, and this visit to Bonchurch, where he lived, cemented the friendship between the two families. He was born in 1803, dying in 1862, and was educated at Pembroke College, Oxford. He was a miscellaneous writer of considerable scope and no little ability. Of him Forster gives a quite delightful account: “in the kindly shrewd Scotch face, a keen sensitiveness to pleasure and pain was the first thing that struck any common observer. Cheerfulness and gloom coursed

over it so rapidly that no one could question the tale they told. But the relish of his life had outlived its more than usual share of sorrows; and quaint sly humour, love of jest and merriment, capital knowledge of books, and sagacious quips at men, made his companionship delightful.”

Charles Knight met him with Dickens at Broadstairs in 1850, and says “it was impossible for me not to love him. His heart was as warm as his intellect was clear. His conversational powers were of no common order, for to the richness of a cultivated mind he brought a natural vein of humour.”

Dickens apparently went on ahead to spy out the land, for he writes to his wife on June 16 from Shanklin that he has “taken a most delightful and beautiful house, belonging to White, at Bonchurch; cool, airy, private bathing, everything delicious. I think it is the prettiest place I ever saw in my life, at home or abroad.” The villa bore — for a summer resort — the ill-omened name of Winterbourne.

Great were the fun and the junketings! Many the pleasant visitors; Mr and Mrs Leech were with them much of the time, and others were Mark Lemon, Macready, Talfourd, Egg. Dickens seems to have rioted to the top of his bent, giving full fling to his inexhaustible spirits. One of the frolics was the starting of a club dubbed the “Sea Serpents,” in opposition to the “Red Lions,” of which association Dr Edwin Lankester, a well-known man of science, was the merry leader. Here is Mrs Lankester’s account of the gay-dog doings of the “Serpents.” “I recollect the jolly procession from Sandown as it moved across the Downs, young and old carrying aloft a banner bearing the device of a noble red lion painted in vermilion on a white ground. Wending up the hill from the Bonchurch side might be seen the ‘Sea Serpents,’ with their ensign floating in the wind — a waving, curling serpent, cut out of yards and yards of calico, and painted of a bronzy-green colour with fiery-red eyes, its tail being supported at the end by a second banner-holder. Carts brought up the provisions on either side, and at the top the factions met to prepare and consume the banquet on the short, sweet grass under shadow of a rock or a tree.” Leech would immortalise the party with his pencil, and they — or some of them — appeared in *Punch* on August 25, as participators in the tragedy labelled “Awful Appearance of a ‘Wopps’ at a Picnic.” Then by way of additional sport a race would be arranged between those two stout men, Dr Lankester and Mark Lemon, the stately Macready acting as judge.

But it was not all “beer and skittles.” Toward the end of September a most unfortunate and dangerous accident befell Leech. Bathing when the sea was running somewhat high, he was knocked down by a heavy wave, the blow resulting in congestion of the brain, a serious and anxious illness. Bleeding was resorted to, but at last to alleviate the alarming restlessness of the sufferer, Dickens proposed to Mrs Leech that he should try the effect of mesmerism; “I fell to; and, after a very fatiguing bout of it, put him to sleep for an hour and thirty-five minutes. A change came on in the sleep and he is decidedly better.”

The enervating climate of the Isle of Wight did not at all suit Dickens; “Naples is hot and dirty, New York feverish, Washington bilious, Genoa exciting, Paris rainy — but Bonchurch, smashing. I am quite convinced that I should die here, in a year.” It was not he only that suffered, but his wife, Miss Hogarth, and the Leeches were similarly affected. So he “folded his tents” at the end of September and beat a retreat to recruit at Broadstairs, whose reviving breezes soon worked wonders.

During this year he was busily at work on “David Copperfield,” which of his books he loved the best and in which he has shown us so much of himself. We have not in these pages done more than make bare mention of any of his other stories, but to this one novel we must devote some little space, for although Forster rightly warns us not to strain the point too far, there is undoubtedly much in its pages of autobiography, we cannot hope ever to know with exactness how much.

The publication of the novel, in monthly parts, by Messrs Bradbury and Evans, commenced in May, 1849, concluding in November of the following year. We do not for a moment intend to discuss the literary value of

the story or to debate as to who were or were not the originals of various people in it; we solely desire to draw attention once again to those portions of the novel which are to all intents and purposes an autobiography of a part of the author’s unhappy boyhood. Mr Kitton tells us that in a letter to Mrs Howitt Dickens said that “many childish experiences and many young struggles” had been worked by him into “Copperfield.” We must not identify Dickens with David, but the chapters of the book to which we refer do certainly help us to understand in what light Dickens looked back upon those miserable days, when all hope of advance for him seemed to have disappeared; “no words can express the secret agony of my soul,” he writes, going on to say, “my whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and

humiliation . . . that, even now — famous and caressed and happy — I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children — even that I am a man — and wander desolately back to that time of my life.” It certainly is amazing that any parents could have forced a “ child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally” into a life of mechanical drudgery amid repugnant surroundings and degrading associations; “I know I do not exaggerate,” he writes, “ unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. ... I know that I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. ... I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.” How often in later years, when doing all in his power to make happy the lives of his own children and those of others, must his thoughts have recurred to that time when he worked at covering the blacking pots in the factory by old Hungerford Stairs?

Before we leave this subject, we must refer to the fact that Dickens wrote to Forster that to no one, “ my own wife not excepted,” had he ever narrated the story of those unforgettable days, which statement does not tally with one made by Charles Dickens, junior, who says, “I have my mother’s authority for saying . . . that the story was eventually read to her in strict confidence by my father, who at the same time intimated his intention of publishing it by-and-bye as a portion of his autobiography. From this purpose she endeavoured to dissuade him: on the ground that he had spoken with undue harshness of his father, and especially of his mother: and with so much success that he eventually decided that he would be satisfied with working it into ‘David Copperfield,’ and would give up the idea of publishing it as it stood.” It will probably remain one of the multitudinous curiosities of literature that the story in the end saw the light in the pages of Forster, who was indiscreet, or misunderstood Dickens’s wishes, or else the latter changed his mind. But certainly Forster might have used his judgment and power as biographer to delete the few lines that bear most hardly upon Dickens’s father and mother.

Toward the close of the writing of this book Dickens wrote, “Oh my dear Forster, if I were but to say half of what Copperfield makes me feel tonight, how strangely, even to you, I should be turned inside out! I seem to be sending some part of myself into the Shadowy World.”

XXVI

“HOUSEHOLD WORDS”

THE first number of “Household Words” was published on March 30, 1850, and we must introduce ourselves to W. H. Wills, the subeditor, who won and retained Dickens’s esteem and high regard. Their knowledge of one another had commenced during the unfortunate experiment with the Daily News. He has been described to us by one who knew him as a nice fellow, a hard worker, but one not at all fond of pushing himself forward, all of which is amply borne out by what we learn of him from other sources.

He was a constant contributor to Punch from the commencement of its career, and was secretary to Dickens in the Daily News days, when he was “a small thin man with nimble but slender hands, small but very quick eyes, and a blotched complexion, indicating a defective digestion,” says Sir Joseph Crowe. His wife was a sister of Robert Chambers, the Edinburgh publisher, and — with an eye to his slimness — used to sing “Better be mairried to somethin’ than no to be married ava!” and Douglas Jerrold declared that Wills had been in training all his life to go up a gas pipe. Mrs Lynn Linton was in Paris in the ‘fifties, and notes, “it was here that I first saw Henry Wills, who, with his wife, afterwards became one of my dearest friends.” She found him, as did so many others, kindly-hearted and considerate in all his dealings.

Wills afterward became Dickens’s partner in “All the Year Round.” We shall meet with him again.

Of others whose names became “Household Words” we may introduce a few, giving first place to the authoress of “Mary Barton,” “Cranford,” and the “Life of Charlotte Bronte,” Mrs Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell.

Mrs Cowden Clarke describes her first meeting with Mrs Gaskell, at a luncheon given by Mrs Tagart: “we found a charming, brilliant - complexioned, but quiet-mannered woman; thoroughly unaffected, thoroughly attractive — so modest that she blushed like a girl when we hazarded some expression of our admiration of her ‘Mary Barton’; so full of enthusiasm on general subjects of humanity and benevolence that she

talked freely and vividly at once upon them; and so young in look and demeanour that we could hardly believe her to be the mother of two daughters she mentioned in terms that showed them to be no longer children “; and Mrs Lynn Linton speaks of Mrs Gaskell in the ‘fifties “with her beautiful white arms bare to the shoulder, and as destitute of bracelets as her hands were of gloves.”

That Dickens sincerely admired her work is amply shown not only by the fact that he was anxious to secure her aid but by the terms in which he asked for it. Writing early in 1850 he says: “I do honestly know that there is no living English writer whose aid I would desire to enlist in preference to the authoress of ‘ Mary Barton’ (a book that most profoundly affected and impressed me). . . . My unaffected and great admiration of your book makes me very earnest in all relating to you.”

Forster tells us that George Augustus Henry Sala, to give him his full names, was of all the hitherto unknown writers whom “Household Words” helped on their way the one in whom Dickens took the greatest personal interest. “G. A. S.” in course of time became renowned initials the world over, as belonging to one who in his exuberant way was, perhaps, entitled to be called the Prince of Journalists. As a literary man he cannot claim a distinguished place, but as a writer of bright, picturesque, telling journalese he has scarcely had a rival. Sala was born in 1828, and lived until nearly the close of the nineteenth century. Edmund Yates, a faithful friend and colleague of his, gives an account of him in those early days: — he met him at the Fielding Club, to which he had been taken to meet the Marquis of Stafford and some others, who were loudly praising an American story in “Household Words,” called “Colonel Quagg’s Conversion.” There was much surmise as to who the writer of it could be, but Albert Smith declared that he could produce the author; he “went away, returning in triumph with a slim modest young fellow, about six-and-twenty years of age,” — G. A. S. Yates proceeds, allowing his good-nature to run away with his critical faculty, “ I may be perhaps permitted to say that in the volumes of Household Words from ‘53 to ‘56 are to be found essays which not merely the author of Paris Herself Again and America Revisited has never surpassed, but which Goldsmith or Lamb might have been proud to father.” Had they been so, it would only have gone to prove that it is a wise father who knows the value of his own children. His education may be described

as miscellaneous; he studied drawing and sometimes drew; he was for some time a scene painter; but journalism was his real “line.”



W. P. FRITH, R.A. (AGED 30).
From the Engraving by Augustus L. Egg, R.A.

“G. A. S.”

Frith has somewhat to tell of him, and gives him a good character: — ” he is as charming a companion as such a writer might be expected to be. With the tenderest heart in the world, I am sure he never wrote a severe line about any person or thing unless both thing and person richly deserved it,” which of a critic of painting from a painter is truly unusual praise. He was usually seen in a white waistcoat, which explains the following extract from a letter to Frith, who was painting his portrait in the picture of “The Private View “ : — ” I send you a photo, which Mrs Sala declares to be the best. . . . Don’t forget the white waistcoat. I have worn one every day for five-and-twenty years, so that an old washerwoman said to me once: ‘How I should like to be your washerwoman!’ By this time she would have taken more than two hundred pounds for washing my vests alone. I am old and poor, I but I don’t regret the outlay on my laundry. You can’t very well murder when you have a white waistcoat on. By donning that snowy garment you have, in a manner, given hostages to respectability.”

In “Leaves from a Life” quite a dramatic story is told of a party given at Mr Frith’s when Sala, who had just returned from the American civil war,

was present. The writer says “ we found him most enthrallingly interesting, more especially as he knew all the battle-songs, and sang ‘ Maryland, my Maryland,’ in a way I have never forgotten. I do not mean to say he sang in the accepted or professional sense of the word, but he declaimed the words to music in such a manner that one longed to go out and fight, and I for one could have wept with sheer delight at the melodies.” Mr Frith had arranged the

1 Written in 1881.

dinner as a meeting between Bret Harte and Sala, thinking that the two would be delighted to fraternise. The Salas arrived first, and our authoress was chatting with him in the inner drawing-room when Bret Harte was announced; “I noticed Mr Sala start and look out eagerly into the other room; but before he could move, Papa came up with Bret Harte, saying, ‘I want to introduce my old friend Sala to you, Mr Harte.’ Sala got up; but before anything else could be said, Bret Harte looked straight at Sala, and remarked quite coolly, ‘Sorry to make unpleasant scenes, but I am not going to be introduced to that scoundrel.’ Imagine the sensation, if you can! Papa protested, and tried to make some sort of a modus vivendi between the two men, but it ended by poor Sala and his wife going into the little library, and waiting there until a cab could be fetched, and they left us without their dinner.” It transpired later that Bret Harte’s anger had been roused by something which Sala had written about a lady who had carried despatches in the war, and that he had sworn to shoot him at sight! As the writer pathetically adds, “the evening was naturally not a success.”

Sala was clever in verse as well as in prose, as may be seen from the following verses written during his “Journey Due North” to St Petersburg on a mission from “ Household Words,” and published in “ The Train,” appropriately enough: —

“The King of Prussia drinks champagne.
Old Person drank whate’er was handy;
Maginn drank gin. Judge Blackstone port.
And many famous wits drank brandy.
Stern William Romer drinketh beer.
And so does Tennyson the rhymer;
But I’ll renounce all liquors for
My Caviar and Rudesheimer.
If some kind heart that beats for me

This troubled head could e'er be pressed on;
If in the awful night, this hand
Outstretched a form I loved could rest on;
If wife, or child, or friend, or dog
I called my own, in any clime — a.
This lyre I'd tune to other strains
Than Caviar and Rudesheimer."

Edmund Hodgson Yates, from whose delightful "Recollections and Experiences" we have quoted more than once, was born in 1831 in Edinburgh, where his father Frederick Henry Yates and his mother Elizabeth Brunton (Mrs Yates) were then acting. Of his mother and her acting Dickens was a keen admirer; "no one alive," he wrote in 1858, some years after she had left the boards, "can have more delightful associations with the lightest sound of your voice than I have; and to give you a minute's interest and pleasure, in acknowledgment of the uncountable hours of happiness you gave me, would honestly gratify my heart." After her death in 1860, he wrote to Edmund Yates: "You know what a long and faithful remembrance I always had of your mother as a part of my youth, no more capable of restoration than my youth itself. All the womanly goodness, grace and beauty of my drama went out with her. To the last, I never could hear her voice without emotion. I think of her as of a beautiful part of my own youth, and the dream that we are all dreaming seems to darken."

We meet Frederick Yates acting in "Nicholas Nickleby" in 1838, and as Quilp in 1844. Of the first named Dickens wrote to the actor: "My general objection to the adaptation of any unfinished work of mine simply is that, being badly done and worse acted, it tends to vulgarise the characters, to destroy or weaken in the minds of those who see them the impressions I have endeavoured to create, and consequently to lessen the after interest in their progress. No such objection can exist for a moment where the thing is so admirably done in every respect as you have done it in this instance."

Edmund Yates is best remembered as the founder of the first modern society journal, *The World*, and as the writer of one of the most entertaining memoirs in the language, a book full of pleasant memories of other days, which are rapidly fading into the mists of the historic. Turning once more to "Leaves from a Life," we obtain many glimpses of Yates; "he was a tall, finely-made man," we are told, "with curly hair and a heavy moustache, which concealed in a measure the fact that he was underhung, and he had a

most powerful chin and jaw. He was not good-looking, and naturally the old joke of Beauty and the Beast was repeated more than once about him and his beautiful wife. But he was anything but a beast; he was the truest, dearest, most honourable of men and friends.”

Of his knowledge of and friendship with Dickens, Yates gives a full account. “I have heard Dickens described by those who knew him as aggressive, imperious, and intolerant, and I can comprehend the accusation; but to me his temper was always of the sweetest and kindest. He would, I doubt not, have been easily bored, and would not have scrupled to show it; but he never ran the risk. He was imperious in the sense that his life was conducted on the *sic volo, sic jubeo* principle, and that everything gave way before him. The society in which he mixed, the hours which he kept, the opinions which he held, his likes and dislikes, his ideas of what should or should not be, were all settled by himself, not merely for himself, but for all those brought into connection with him, and it was never imagined they could be called in question. Yet he was never regarded as a tyrant; he had immense power of will, absolute mesmeric force.”

One more quotation from these pages, to show the readiness and kindness of Dickens: — Yates was frequently called upon at public dinners to propose Dickens’s health, “on one occasion — it was at one of the Newsvendors’ dinners — I said nothing at all! I duly rose, but, after a few words, my thoughts entirely deserted me, I entirely lost the thread of what I had intended saying, I felt as though a black veil were dropped over my head; all I could do was to mutter ‘health,’ ‘chairman,’ and to sit down. I was tolerably well known to the guests at those dinners, and they were evidently much astonished. They cheered the toast, as in duty bound, and Dickens was on his feet in a moment. ‘Often,’ he said — ‘often as I have had the pleasure of having my health proposed by my friend, who has just sat down, I have never yet seen him so overcome by his affection and generous emotion as on the present occasion!’ These words turned what would have been a fiasco into a triumph. ‘I saved you that time, I think, sir!’ he said to me as I walked away with him. ‘Serves you well right for being over-confident!’”

Yates was a capital after-dinner speaker; we recall him at a Literary Fund Dinner commencing his remarks by pathetically saying that the gods looked down with admiration on a brave man struggling with adversity, but that “

both gods and men should do so on a fat man with a cold in his head struggling to make an after-dinner speech”!

XXVII

MORE PLAYING

IN the autumn of 1850 the family were once more at Broadstairs, occupying for the first time "Fort House," which Dickens had long coveted. Mrs Dickens lingered on in town for some time, and there is a most amusing letter to her from her husband, dated September 3, in which he mentions a walk taken with Charles Knight, White, Forster and Charles junior to the Roman Castle of Richborough, near to Sandwich, one of the most interesting spots in the pleasant county of Kent, which might almost be called Dickens's county, so closely is his name connected with many places in it — with Rochester, Chatham, Chalk, Cobham, Gad's Hill, Canterbury, Broadstairs, and many another locality. Then follows an account of the bold behaviour of his son Sydney, who bravely set out by himself one Sunday evening to see if the expected Forster had arrived. He was pursued and brought back more than once, until at last, instead of chasing him again, his father shut the gate, and the party awaited developments. "Ally," who accompanied Sydney, was dismayed, but his brother made a ferocious onslaught upon the gate, demanding that it should be opened and backing up his request by hurling a huge stone into the garden. The garrison surrendered, and the honours of war were with Sydney.

From Broadstairs Dickens wrote to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton anent a proposed performance of "Every Man in His Humour" at Knebworth.

Forster speaks most cordially of Lytton, but with some extravagance, noting his burial in Westminster Abbey, "which never opened to receive a more varied genius, a more gallant spirit, a man more constant to his friends, more true to any cause he represented, or whose name will hereafter be found entitled to a more honoured place in the history of his time." Dickens, too, held him in very high esteem; writing of him in 1845, he says, "Bulwer Lytton's conduct is that of a generous and noble-minded man, as I have ever thought him." At the Macready dinner in 1851, when Lytton was in the chair, Dickens in proposing his health said : —

“There is a popular prejudice, a kind of superstition to the effect that authors are not a particularly united body, that they are not invariably and inseparably attached to each other. I am afraid I must concede half-a-grain or so of truth to that superstition; but this I know, that there can hardly be — that there hardly can have been — among the followers of literature, a man of more high standing farther above these little grudging jealousies, which do sometimes disparage its brightness, than Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

“And I have the strongest reason just at present to bear my testimony to his great consideration for those evils which are sometimes unfortunately attendant upon it, though not on him. For, in conjunction with some other gentlemen now present, I have just embarked in a design with Sir Bulwer Lytton, to smoothe the rugged way of young labourers, both in literature and the fine arts, and to soften, but by no eleemosynary means, the declining years of meritorious age. And if that project prosper as I hope it will, and as I know it ought, it will one day be an honour to England where there is now a reproach; originating in his sympathies, being brought into operation by his activity, and endowed from its very cradle by his generosity. There are many among you who will have each his own favourite reason for drinking our chairman’s health, resting his claim probably upon some of his diversified successes. According to the nature of your reading, some of you will connect him with prose, others will connect him with poetry. One will connect him with comedy, and another with the romantic passions of the stage, and his assertion of worthy ambition and earnest struggle against

‘those twin gaolers of the human heart.

Low birth and iron fortune.’

Again, another’s taste will lead him to the contemplation of Rienzi and the streets of Rome; another’s to the rebuilt and repopled streets of Pompeii; another’s to the touching history of the fireside where the Caxton family learned how to discipline their natures and tame their wild hopes down.”

In 1861 Lytton arranged to contribute his weird “Strange Story” to the pages of “All the Year Round,” and Dickens paid him a visit at Knebworth to consult with him. He describes his host as “in better health and spirits than I have seen him in, in all these years, — a little weird occasionally regarding magic and spirits, but always fair and frank under opposition. He was brilliantly talkative, anecdotal, and droll; looked young and well;”

laughed heartily; and enjoyed with great zest some games we played. In his artist character

1 He was born in 1803, and died in 1873.

and talk, he was full of interest and matter, saying the subtlest and finest things — but that he never fails in.”

It is by no means incumbent upon us to write the life of Lytton — which by the way yet remains to be and should be written — and we will content ourselves with two small peeps at him in earlier days. In 1831, in his twenty-eighth year, he was appointed editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, to which Lady Blessington contributed her “*Journals of Conversations with Lord Byron*”; he was described then as a “talented blue-eyed dandy,” who some three years previously had married Rosin a Doyle Wheeler, a beautiful Irishwoman, who was the cause of the only quarrel between him and his mother, and from whom he separated in 1836. It was in 1832 that Lady Blessington first met him.

Benjamin Disraeli writes to his sister in February, 1832, “We had a very brilliant reunion at Bulwer’s last night. Among the notables were . . . Count d’Orsay, the famous Parisian dandy; there was a large sprinkling of blues — Lady Morgan, Mrs Norton, L. E. L., etc. Bulwer came up to me, said ‘There is one blue who insists upon an introduction.’ ‘Oh, my dear fellow, I cannot really, the power of repartee has deserted me.’ ‘I have pledged myself, you must come ‘; so he led me up to a very sumptuous personage, looking like a full-blown rose, Mrs Gore. . . . I avoided L. E. L., who looked the very personification of Brompton — pink satin dress and white satin shoes, red cheeks, snub nose, and hair a la Sappho.”

Sumner speaks of him in 1838 “in his flash falsetto dress, with high-heel boots, a white great coat, and a flaming blue cravat,” and at the Athenaeum!

Rudolf Lehmann gives us a detailed picture of Lytton: “Tall, slim, with finely cut features, prominent among which was a long aquiline nose, with an abundant crop of curly brown hair and a full beard, the first impression he produced, aided by a careful toilette, was one of elegance and ease. . . . There was a certain naivete, strange as that word may sound when applied to so confirmed a man of the world, in his vain and very apparent struggle against the irresistible encroachments of age. He did not give in with that philosophical resignation which might have been expected of one so clever, and in some respects so wise. He fought against it tooth and nail. Lord Lytton’s hair seemed dyed, and his face looked as if art had been called in

aid to rejuvenate it. A quack in Paris had pretended to cure his growing deafness, a constant source of legitimate grief to him.”

Three performances of Ben Jonson’s comedy took place in November in the hall of Knebworth Park; here followeth the programme: —

KNEBWORTH.

On Monday, November 18th, 1850,
will be performed Ben Jonson’s comedy of
EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.

Costumiers. — Messrs. Nathan, of Titchbourne Street.

Perruquier. — Mr. Wilson, of the Strand.

Knowell (<i>an old gentleman</i>)	Mr. Delmé Radcliffe.
Edward Knowell (<i>his son</i>)	Mr. Henry Hawkins.
Brainworm (<i>the father’s man</i>)	Mr. Mark Lemon.
George Downright (<i>a plain squire</i>)	Mr. Frank Stoe.
Wellbred (<i>his half-brother</i>)	Mr. Henry Hale.
Kitely (<i>a merchant</i>)	Mr. John Forster.
Captain Bobadil (<i>a Paul’s man</i>)	Mr. Charles Dickens.
Master Stephen (<i>a country gull</i>)	Mr. Douglas Jerrold.
Master Matthew (<i>the town gull</i>)	Mr. John Leech.
Thomas Cash (<i>Kitely’s cashier</i>)	Mr. Frederick Dickens.

Oliver Cobb (*a water-bearer*) .Mr. Augustus Egg.

Justice Clement (*an old merry magistrate* . The Hon. Eliot Yorke.

Roger ..Formal (*his clerk*).Mr. Phantom.

Dame Kitely (*Kitely’s wife*). Miss Anne Romer.

Mistress Bridget (*his sister*).Miss Hogarth.

Tib (*Cob’s wife*) Mrs. Mark Lemon.

(Who has kindly consented to act in lieu of Mrs. Charles Dickens, disabled by an accident.)

The Epilogue by Mr. Delme Radcliffe.

To conclude with Mrs. Inchbald’s farce of

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

The DoctorMr. Charles Dickens.

La Fleur Mr. Mark Lemon.

The Marquis d’e Lancy . . .Mr. John Leech.

Jeffery Mr. Augustus Egg

ConstanceMiss Hogarth.

LisetteMiss Anne Romer.

Stage Manager ... Mr. Charles Dickens.

The theatre will be open at half past six. The performance will begin precisely at half-past seven.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

It had been hoped that Mary Boyle — ” because she is the very best actress I ever saw off the stage, and immeasurably better than a great many I have seen on it,” wrote Dickens — would have taken the part of Mrs Kitley and of Lisette in the farce, but unfortunately a domestic bereavement prevented her so doing. Mrs Dickens was the unfortunate victim of an accident during a rehearsal, spraining her ankle in a trap-door, and Mrs Mark Lemon came to the rescue. “The nights at Knebworth,” were, as Dickens was confident they would be, “*triumphant.*”

The “design” mentioned in Dickens’s speech at the Macready dinner above quoted, was the founding and endowing of a “ Guild of Literature and Art,” the scheme originating at Knebworth. As a means of raising at any rate a portion of the necessary funds it was planned to give a series of representations of a new comedy which Lytton undertook to write, and of a farce by Dickens, which latter, however, never saw the light of day, or rather of the footlights, in its place being given a similar piece by Lemon, to which Dickens, who acted in it, contributed not a little of the fun. Dickens wrote to the Duke of Devonshire, outlining the scheme to him, and telling him what they hoped for, namely, to act their play at Devonshire House before the Queen and Court. The answer was prompt and satisfactory: — ”I have read with very great interest the prospectus of the new endowment which you have confided to my perusal. . . . I’m truly happy to offer you my earnest and sincere co-operation. My services, my house, and my subscription will be at your orders. And I beg you to let me see you before long, not merely to converse upon this subject, but because I have long had the greatest wish to improve our acquaintance, which has, as yet, been only one of crowded rooms.”

The kindly peer was every whit as good as his word; a theatre was built up in the great drawing-room and the library converted into a green-room.

Richard Hengist Home, better known as “Orion” Home, after his epic which he published at the price of a farthing, took part in the comedy and has left us an account of the performance and the preparations for it.

“The Duke gave us the use of his large picture gallery, to be fitted up with seats for the audience; and his library adjoining for the erection of the theatre. The latter room being longer than required for the stage and the scenery, the back portion of it was screened off for a ‘green-room.’ Sir Joseph Paxton was most careful in the erection of the theatre and seats.

There was a special box for the Queen. None of the valuable paintings in the picture gallery (arranged for the auditorium) were removed; but all were faced with planks, and covered with crimson velvet draperies; not a nail was allowed to be hammered into the floor or walls, the lateral supports being by the pressure from end to end, of padded beams; and the uprights, or stanchions, were fitted with iron feet, firmly fixed to the floor by copper screws. The lamps and their oil were well considered, so that the smoke should not be offensive or injurious — even the oil being slightly scented — and there was a profusion of wax candles. Sir Joseph Paxton also arranged the ventilation in the most skilful manner; and, with some assistance from a theatrical machinist, he put up all the scenes, curtains, and flies. Dickens was unanimously chosen general manager, and Mark Lemon stage manager. We had a professional gentleman for prompter, as none of the amateurs could be entrusted with so technical, ticklish, and momentous a duty.

“Never in the world of theatres was a better manager than Charles Dickens. Without, of course, questioning the superiority of Goethe (in the Weimar theatre) as a manager in all matters of high-class dramatic literature, one cannot think he could have been so excellent in all general requirements, stage effects, and practical details. Equally assiduous and unwearying as Dickens, surely very few men ever were, or could possibly be. He appeared almost ubiquitous and sleepless.”

The opening night at Devonshire House was May 27; the playbill being as follows when the performance was repeated later on at the Hanover Square Rooms in June: —

The Amateur Company of the Guild of
Literature and Art,

To encourage Life Assurance and other Provident habits among Authors and Artists; to render such assistance to both as shall never compromise their independence; and to found a new Institution where honourable rest from arduous labour shall still be associated with the discharge of congenial duties;

Will have the Honour of Performing, for the Third Time, a New
Comedy, in Five Acts, by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Bart., called
NOT SO BAD AS WE SEEM;
or,
MANY SIDES TO A CHARACTER:

The Duke of Middlesex *Peers attached to the son of James II*, Mr. Frank Stone

commonly called the First Pretender Mr. Dudley Costello

The Earl of Loftus

Lord Wilmot (*a young Man at the head of the Mode more than a century ago*,

son to Lord Loftus) Mr. Charles Dickens.

Mr. Shadowly Softhead (*a young gentleman from the City, Friend and Double to Lord*

Wilmot) Mr. Douglas Jerrold.

Mr. Hardman (*a rising Member of Parliament and Adherent to Sir Robert Walpole.*) Mr. John Forster.

Sir Geoffrey Thornside (*a gentleman of good family and estate*) Mr. Mark Lemon.

Mr. Goodenough Easy (*in business, highly respectable, and a friend of Sir Geoffrey*) Mr. F. W. Topham.

Lord Le Trimmer Mr. Peter Cunningham

Sir Thomas Timid....Mr. Westland Marston.

Colonel Flint....Mr. R. H. Horne.

Mr. Jacob Tonson (*a boohseller*)....Mr. Charles Knight

Smart (*valet to Lord Wilmot*)....Mr. Wilkie Collins

Hodge (*servant to Sir Geoffrey Thornside*)... Mr. John Tenniel.

Paddy O'Sullivan (*Mr. Fallen's landlord*) ... Mr. Robert Bell.

Mr. David Fallen (*Grub Street author and pamphleteer*) Mr. Augustus Egg.

Lord Strongbow, Sir John Bruin, Coffee-House Loungers, Drawers, Watchmen and Newsmen.

Lucy (*daughter to Sir Geoffrey Thornside*) Mrs. Henry Compton.

Barbara (*daughter to Mr. Easy*) . . Miss Young.

The Silent Lady of Deadman's Lane . Mrs. Coe.

Scenery.

Lord Wilmot's Lodgings Painted by Mr. Pitt.

"The Murillo" Painted by Mr. Absalom.

Sir Geoffrey Thornside's Library Painted by Mr. Pitt.

Will's Coffee-house Painted by Mr. Pitt

The Streets and Headman's Lane Painted by Mr. Thomas Grieve

The Distrest Poet's Garret (*after Hogarth*) Painted by Mr. Pitt

The Mall in the Park Painted by Mr. Telbin

An Open Space near the River Painted by Mr. Stanfield, R.A.

Tapestry Chamber in Deadman's Lane Painted by Mr. Lous Haghe

The Act Drop Painted by Mr. Roberts, R.A.

Previous to the Play, the Band will perform, under the direction of Mr. Lund, an Overture, composed expressly for this occasion by Mr. C. Coote, Pianist to His Grace the Duke of Devonshire.

The performance to conclude with (for the second time) an Original Farce, in One Act, by Mr. Charles Dickens and Mr. Mark Lemon, entitled

MR. NIGHTINGALE'S DIARY:

Mr. Nightingale Mr. Dudley Costello.

Mr. Gabblewig (*of the Middle Temple*) . Mr. Charles Dickens.

Tip (*his Tiger*) Mr. Augustus Egg.

Slap (*professionally Mr. Flormiville*) . Mr. Mark Lemon.

Lithers (*landlord of the " Water-Lily "*) . Mr. Wilkie Collins.

Rosina Miss Young.

Susan Mrs. Coe.

The Proscenium by Mr. Crace. The Theatre constructed by Mr. Sloman, machinist of the Royal Lyceum Theatre. The Properties and Appointments by Mr. G. Foster. The Costumes (with the exception of the Ladies' dresses, and the dresses of the Farce, which are by Messrs. Nathan, of Titchborne Street) made by Mr. Barnett, of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. Under the superintendence of Mr. Augustus Egg, AR.A. Perruquier, Mr. Wilson, of the Strand. Prompter, Mr. Coe.

The whole Produced under the Direction of Mr. Charles Dickens.

The Band will be under the Direction of Mr. Lund.

Tickets (all the seats being reserved), 10s. each, to be had of Mr. Sams, i, St, James's Street).

Doors open at a Quarter before SEVEN; commence at exactly a Quarter before EIGHT. The whole of the audience are particularly recommended to be seated before a Quarter to Eight.

Of Dickens's acting Horne says: — "The character and costume of ' Lord Wilmot, a young man *at the head of the Mode*, more than a century ago,' did not suit him. His bearing on the stage, and the tone of his voice, were too rigid, hard, and quarter-deck-like, for such 'rank and fashion,' and his make-up, with the three-cornered, gold-laced, cocked hat, black curled wig,

huge sleeve cuffs, long napped waistcoat, knee-breeches and shoe-buckles, were not carried off with the proper air; so that he would have made a good portrait of a captain of a Dutch privateer, after having taken a capital prize. When he shouted in praise of the wine of Burgundy it far rather suggested fine kegs of Schiedam.”

Of the Devonshire House performance, at which the Queen, the Prince Consort and a very distinguished audience were present, Dickens writes on April 28: “ the scenery, furniture, etc., are rapidly advancing towards completion, and will be beautiful. The dresses are a perfect blaze of colour, and there is not a pocket-flap or a scrap of lace that has not been made according to Egg’s drawings to the quarter of an inch. Every wig has been made from an old print or picture. From the Duke’s snuff-box to Wills’ coffee-house, you will find everything in perfect truth and keeping.”

In the latter part of the year there was a provincial tour, when some changes were made in the cast.

This Guild of Literature and Art appears to us now-adays to have been a somewhat undignified and crazy project, which achieved the failure that it deserved. Dickens and Lord Lytton were the prime moving spirits in the affair, which certainly cannot have added to the dignity of men of letters in the eyes of a prosaic world. Lytton gave a plot of ground at Stevenage, in Hertford



THE EARL OF LYTTON.
From the Sketch by "Alfred Croquis" (G. M. G. B. L. S.)

shire for the projected “alms-houses,” as well as providing “ Not so Bad As We Seem.”

The money accruing from these performances went to build a semi-almshouse, semi-college, based on the plan of that of the Home of the Turkey Merchants, Morden College, at Blackheath, but the funds were not sufficient to carry out the whole scheme. Of Lytton at this time, Hollingshead says that he “was not one of those men who had the art of growing old with grace. He had a keen, Jewish look, and would have made an imposing figure in a synagogue. Outside in a garden, in the bright sunshine, with all his ‘make-up ‘ — the remnant of his ‘dandy days,’ which he had never altogether turned his back upon — he was only imposing for his talent and literary reputation.”

Sir John R. Robinson, so long and so worthily connected with the Daily News, gave in the “Cornhill Magazine” a very graphic description of Dickens presiding over a meeting of the Guild : — ” I can easily figure him in the thick of the work; writing a play, acting in it, bringing men together, some with a command, some with an intimation that they were in it; here a joke, there a pathetic touch. His smile was enough; Gradgrind could not hold out against Charles Dickens. ... As a chairman he was as precise and accurate in carrying out the traditions of the post. Before business began,

his happy laugh rang through the room; he had a word for every friend, and generally they were his associates as well as friends. Voices were high in merriment, and it looked as though business would never begin; but when Mr Dickens did take his seat, ‘Now, gentlemen, Wills will read us the minutes of the last meeting. Attention, please. Order!’ it might have been the most experienced chairman of the Guildhall, purpled by a hundred public dinners.”

Sir John relates later on, “On reaching Wellington Street one day to attend a council meeting, I found Mr Dickens alone. Though he was always most kind to me ... I felt rather alarmed, for I knew he would insist on business being done. The minute-book records three resolutions as having been passed at that meeting. We waited a while, talking about things in the papers, and then Mr Dickens, in an inimitably funny way, remarked: ‘Will you move me into the chair?’ ‘I will,’ I answered, ‘I know you can be trusted to keep order in a large gathering.’ Then came resolutions, carried after discussion; little speeches in the imitated voice of absent members, the appropriate gravity never departed from. My share was insignificant, but it served to supply Mr Dickens with hints and texts to keep the fun going.”

XXVIII

WILKIE COLLINS

OF Wilkie Collins, who will make further appearances in these pages, it now behoves us to say somewhat. William Wilkie, to give him his full name, was the eldest son of William Collins, the painter, and the elder brother of Charles Allston Collins — whom we shall meet later on — and was born in the year 1824 in Tavistock Square. He was called after his father's old friend Sir David Wilkie. His early travels with his parents in Italy supplied him with material for his first novel "Antonina," which work so pleased his father that he was freed from "durance vile" in the tea warehouse in which he had been employed. Of his first coming into contact with Dickens the following is the record. On February 10, 1851, Dickens wrote asking W. H. Wills to take a small part in "Not So Bad As We Seem." Wills could not or would not, so Dickens reminded Egg that he had said that Wilkie Collins would be glad to play any part in the piece and suggested for him the character proposed to Wills. "Will you undertake," he wrote, "to ask him if I shall cast him in this part? . . . I knew his father well, and should be very glad to know him."

In 1849 a landscape of his was hung at the Royal Academy, and "Antonina" was published in 1850. He was a skilful painter of landscape. Holman Hunt states that in his early days he had thought of being an artist, and describes him in 1851 thus : — "He was a man now, slight of build, about five feet six inches in height, with an impressive head, the cranium being noticeably more prominent on the right side than on the left, which inequality did not amount to a disfigurement; perhaps indeed it gave a stronger impression of intellectual power. He was redundant in pleasant temperament. . . ."

He was highly gifted socially, blessed with unbounded good humour and with a happy facility for relating good stories. He was fond of foreign travel, including trips to Paris; was a bon vivant. A friend tells us that he gained his impulse to write fiction from the perusal of French novels, the art of which appealed strongly to him. From the same source we gain two

anecdotes which throw light upon his habits. He was not a punctual man; Dickens was, and had not only ordained that breakfast should be at nine o'clock, but that those who were late for it might, or rather should, 'go without.' The result was that once when staying at Boulogne with Dickens, Collins was discovered breakfasting in solitary state at the Casino off pate de foie gras! Convivial customs were more honoured in the observance than the breach in those days. At a christening party Collins arrived very late, after an excellent dinner. The happy infant was produced by the mother for his admiration; Collins steadied himself, looked solemnly at it, and said, "Ah! Child's drunk. He's very drunk!"

Rudolf Lehmann tells us that "in his moments of good health he used to be a ready, amiable talker, but unfortunately they were rare. He had found laudanum most efficacious in soothing his excruciating nervous pains. Like the tyrant of old who, to make himself

WILKIE COLLINS

proof against being poisoned, swallowed a daily increased portion of poison, Wilkie had gradually brought himself, not only to be able, but absolutely to require, a daily quantity of laudanum a quarter of which would have been sufficient to kill any ordinary person."

It was he who said of Forster's "Life" that it was "the Life of John Forster, with occasional Anecdotes of Charles Dickens," a cynicism with just sufficient semblance of truth to give it stinging power.

Holman Hunt writes of him about 1860, "No one could be more jolly than he as the lord of the feast in his own house, where the dinner was prepared by a chef, the wines plentiful, and the cigars of the choicest brand. The talk became rollicking and the most sedate joined in the hilarity; laughter long and loud crossed from opposite ends of the room and all went home brimful of good stories."

He sometimes would burst out, "Ah! you might well admire that masterpiece; it was done by that great painter Wilkie Collins, and it put him so completely at the head of landscape painters that he determined to retire from the profession in compassion for the rest," and so on in good-humoured chaff of himself.

Motley describes him — at a dinner at Forster's in 1861 — as "a little man, with black hair, a large white forehead, large spectacles, and small features. He is very unaffected, vivacious, and agreeable."

The following amusing story is told anent Dickens's fondness for clothes more "coloured" than "plain" : — A well-known artist was one day made

a present of a very gorgeous piece of stuff, and was puzzled as to what use he could put it. "Oh, send it to Dickens," said Wilkie Collins, "he'll make a waistcoat of it."

He died in 1889. Whether his novels will live is a matter which future generations only can determine, but the past and passing generations Wilkie Collins helped to spend many hours pleasantly over the pages of "The Moonstone," "The Woman in White," and other tales distinguished chiefly for the clever contrivance of their plots.

XXIX

OTHER FRIENDS

TO draw the portraits, even in miniature, of all the friends of Charles Dickens would call for many volumes; to some only can these pages, therefore, give attention, and those picked out at random rather than of deliberate selection, though we have chiefly chosen those who taken together may be said to be representative. It would indeed be a foolish undertaking to write of all those who formed the wide circle of Dickens's friends and acquaintances; we confine our attention principally to those upon whom we may fairly infer that he had an influence or who influenced him. It need scarcely be repeated that he was a hospitable man, delighting in seeing his friends and family happy around him.

At the close of 1847 he discovered to his surprise and regret that the lease of the Devonshire Terrace house had but two years more to run, and it is for the most part with the "other friends" of the Devonshire Terrace days that these pages next following will deal.

We must retell a pleasant anecdote from the pages of Forster, of how he, Dickens, Talfourd, Edwin Landseer and Stanfield sallied forth one summer evening in 1849 to see the Battle of Waterloo, at Astley's "over the water," when whom should they see going in to witness the performance but the "Duke" himself, with Lady Douro and the little Ladies Ramsay, and all the good folk cheering him heartily. Forster's party do not seem to have found the entertainment entertaining, and Talfourd was heard to express a fervent wish that "the Prussians would come up."

The Carlyles were among Dickens's firmest friends, and it is quite delightful to know that when Dickens inquired after the sage's health he replied that he was a lorn, lone creature and everything went contrary with him. It is not called for here to set forth again the events of Carlyle's life; we may content ourselves with gaining some sight of him as he came into contact with others who figure in these pages, and with the endeavour to show somewhat of the happier side of his marriage, which recent works have too greatly obscured or underrated.

We gain a glimpse of Leigh Hunt house-hunting with Carlyle in 1834 in Chelsea; “Hunt gave me dinner, a pipe even and glass of ale; was the blithest, helpfulest, most loquacious of men; yet his talk only fatigued me vastly; there was much, much of it; full of airiness indeed, yet with little but scepticising quibbles, crotchets, fancies, and even Cockney wit, which I was all too earnest to relish.”

Carlyle first met Dickens at a dinner at the Stanleys’ in Dover Street, in March, 1840: — ” Pickwick, too, was of the same dinner party, though they did not seem to heed him over-much. He is a fine little fellow — Boz, I think. Clear blue, intelligent eyes, eyebrows that he arches amazingly, large protrusive rather loose mouth, a face of most extreme mobility, which he shuttles about — eyebrows, eyes, mouth and all — in a very singular manner while speaking. Surmount this with a loose coil of common-coloured hair, and set it on a small ecupact figure, very small, and dressed a la D’Orsay rather than well — this is Pickwick. For the rest a quiet, shrewd looking, little fellow, who seems to guess pretty well what he is and what others are.”

Lady Ritchie thus describes Mrs Carlyle, and a visit with her father to Cheyne Row: “In the dining-room stood that enchanting screen covered with pictures, drawings, prints, fashions, portraits, without end, which my father liked so much; upstairs was the panelled drawing-room with its windows to the Row, and the portrait of Oliver Cromwell hanging opposite the windows. But best of all, there was Mrs Carlyle herself, a living picture; Gainsborough should have been alive to paint her; slim, bright, dark-eyed, upright, in her place. She looked like one of the grand ladies our father used sometimes to take us to call upon. She used to be handsomely dressed in velvet and point lace. She sat there at leisure, and prepared for conversation. She was not familiar, but cordial, dignified, and interested in everything as she sat installed in her corner of the sofa by one of the little tables covered with nick-nacks of silver and mother-of-pearl.” And she said, “If you wish for a quiet life, never you marry a dyspeptic man of genius.”

One of the most curious references to Carlyle is in a letter of Charles Sumner, of June 14, 1838: “I heard Carlyle lecture the other day; he seemed like an inspired boy; truth and thoughts that made one move on the benches came from his apparently unconscious mind, couched in the most grotesque style, and yet condensed to a degree of intensity . . . childlike in manner and feeling.”

Turn where we will, however, read what opinion of him we may, there always is seen beneath the rough exterior the sincerity and genuine goodness of the man; of him, as Goldsmith said of Johnson, it may truly be said that there was nothing of the bear about him but the skin. He and his wife called on Lady Eastlake, then Miss Rigby, in 1844, of which visit she records, "Mr Carlyle called, bringing with him his wife — certainly a more refined half; but he is an honest, true man, a character such as he himself can alone describe. He is a kind of Burns in appearance — the head of a thinker, the eye of a lover, and the mouth of a peasant. His colours, too, seem to have been painted on his high cheek-bones at the plough's tail." Later she writes of him, "the best laugh I ever heard. ... He has the thinnest possible surface over his mind; you can get through it at once. . . . Mrs Carlyle interested me; she is lively and clever, and evidently very happy."

Mrs Browning in 1851 writes of Carlyle, "you come to understand perfectly when you know him, that his bitterness is only melancholy, and his scorn, sensibility. Highly picturesque, too, he is in conversation; the talk of writing men is very seldom so good."

From Forster in August, 1848, the Carlyles received "an invaluable treat; an opera box namely, to hear Jenny Lind sing farewell. Illustrious indeed. We dined with Fuz 1 at five, the hospitablest of men; at eight, found the Temple of the Muses all a-shine for Lind & Co., — the piece, *La Somnambula*, a chosen bit of nonsense from beginning to end, — and, I suppose, an audience of some three thousand expensive-looking fools male and female come to see this Swedish Nightingale 'hop the

1 Forster.

twig,' as I phrased it. ... 'Depend upon it,' said I to Fuz, 'the Devil is busy here to-night, wherever he may be idle!' — Old Wellington had come staggering in to attend the thing. Thackeray was there; D'Orsay, Lady Blessington, — to all of whom (Wellington excepted !) I had to be presented and give some kind of foolery, — much against the grain."

But a dyspeptic man of genius, or indeed a dyspeptic gifted with stupidity for the matter of that, does not make a husband whose ways will tend toward a quiet life, but we see no reason for overstating the unhappinesses that arose in the Carlyles' lives, or to doubt that beneath the surface storms there was a great depth of content and joy. We will take three extracts from Professor Masson's very pleasant book, "Memories of London in the Forties." Of Mrs Carlyle he says : — "Her conversation, which was more

free and abundant than it probably would have been had Carlyle been there, impressed me greatly. She had, as I found then, and as is proved by some of her now published letters, a real liking for Robertson, though apt to make fun of him when opportunity offered; and Robertson's energetic ways had always an inspiring effect on people he was with, drawing them out admirably and starting topics. At all events I shall never forget the first impression made upon me by the appearance of this remarkable lady as she sat, or rather reclined, in a corner of the sofa, talking to the burly Robertson, herself so fragile in form, with delicately cut and rather pained face of pale hue, very dark hair, smoothed on both sides of an unusually broad forehead, and large, soft lustrous eyes of gypsy black. Something in her face and expression, then and afterwards, would occasionally remind me of portraits I had seen of the Young Voltaire; and the brilliance of her conversation, and even the style of it, bore out the resemblance. She was, indeed, one of the most brilliant of the witty talkers, full of light esprit, and though generally suppressing herself when her husband was present, quite as delightfully copious as he was both in theme and words when she had to be his substitute. Though her style and manner of thinking had undoubtedly been influenced by him, an original difference had been preserved. Her most characteristic vein was the satirical; within this, the form to which she tended most was satirical narrative; and the narratives in which she most excelled were stories of things that had recently happened to herself or within the circle of her acquaintance."

Of Carlyle he draws this portrait: —

"More vivid in my memory now than the matter of the talk is the impression made on me by Carlyle's powerful head and face; the hair then dark and thick, without a sign of grizzle, the complexion a strong bilious ruddy, the brow over-hanging and cliff-like, the eyes deep sunk and aggressive, and the firm mouth and chin then closely shaven. All in all, with his lean, erect figure, then over five feet eleven inches in height, and the peculiar bilious ruddy of his face, he was, apart from the fire of genius in his eyes and flowing through his talk, not unlike some Scottish farmer or other rustic of unusually strong and wiry constitution, living much in the open air. His Annandale accent contributed to the resemblance. His vocabulary and grammar were of the purest and most stately English; and the Scotticism, which was very marked, was wholly in the pronunciation and intonation. Like Scotsmen generally, from whatever RUFFLES

district of Scotland, he enunciated each syllable of every word with a deliberation and emphasis unusual with English speakers, giving each, as it were, a good bite before letting it go. The West Border intonation was intensified, in his case, by a peculiarity which was either wholly his own, or a special characteristic of the Carlyles of Ecclefechan. He spoke always with a distinct lyrical chaunt; not the monotonous and whining sing-song, mainly of pulpit origin, one hears occasionally among Scotsmen, and which is suggestive too often of hypocrisy and a desire to cheat you, but a bold and varying chaunt, as of a man not ashamed to let his voice rise and fall, and obey by instinctive modulation every flexure of his meaning and feeling. Mrs Carlyle had caught something of this lyrical chaunt, by sympathy and companionship; and the slighter Scotticism of her voice was distinguished also by a pleasant habit of lyrical rise and cadence.”

The Professor sums up, too leniently perchance, but a pleasant corrective to the corrosive of Froude : —

“My now far-back London memories of the year 1844 include some of my pleasant reminiscences of the demeanour of this famous couple to each other in their domestic privacy. It was uniformly exemplary and loving in all essential respects, with a kind of stately gallantry on Carlyle’s part when he turned to his Jane, or she interposed one of her remarks; and on her part the most admiring affection for him in all that he said or did. If there was ever a ruffle, it was superficial merely, and arose from an occasional lapse of his into a mood of playful teasing and persistence of rhetorical mastery even against her. . . . She was fond of entertaining her friends with sprightly stories of any recent misbehaviour of his, and on such occasions he would listen most benignantly and approvingly, with the pleased look of a lion whose lioness was having her turn in the performance. How different this from the picture drawn by Froude of Mrs. Carlyle as a kind of intellectual Cinderella, the patient drudge of a literary Diogenes whose barkings at the human race were only relieved by croakings about his health.”

After her death, Monckton Milnes records that Carlyle said to him: “She wrapped me round like a cloak, to keep all the hard and cold world off me. . . . When I came home, sick with mankind, there she was on the sofa, always with a cheerful story of something or somebody, and I never knew that she, poor darling! had been fighting with bitter pains all day. . . . She had never a mean thought or word from the day I first saw her looking like a flower out of the window of her mother’s old brick house, my Jeanie, my queen.”

Milnes' own judgment — and he knew them both intimately — was “that they were about as happy together as married people of strong characters and temperaments usually are.”

Charles Buller once said a delightful thing to Carlyle : — “I often think how puzzled your Maker must be to account for your conduct.”

Before turning to others it will interest those who believe that they can trace the gradual acquirement by Carlyle of his extraordinary style to ponder over this curious statement of Lord Jeffrey, in reply to a remark made by Charles Sumner that Carlyle had changed his style since he wrote the essay on Burns, “ Not at all, I will tell you why that is different from his other articles: / altered it.”

We will now turn to Monckton Milnes, whom we have quoted above, and who was one of the most delightful familiars of this circle. In more ways than one he may be said to have succeeded to the mantle of Rogers; he was a rich man, he was a minor poet, he was a wit and he entertained his friends to breakfast. He had “ breakfasted” with Rogers, and himself instituted similar functions in his Pall Mall chambers, where he acquired the fame of “ always bringing out some society curiosity.” It almost seems that the only qualification necessary in a guest was notoriety, for Sir Henry Taylor relates that at one of his breakfasts an inquiry was made as to whether a certain murderer had been hanged that morning, which drew the remark from the host's sister, “I hope so, or Richard will have him at his breakfast-party next Thursday.” Carlyle writes in 1831, “ I had designed to be at one of your breakfasts again this season, and see once more with eyes what the felicity of life is.”

When the question of a pension for Tennyson was being discussed, Carlyle said to Milnes, who was calling at Cheyne Row, “Richard Milnes, when are you going to get that pension for Alfred Tennyson?”

“My dear Carlyle, the thing is not so easy as you seem to suppose. What will my constituents say if I do get the pension for Tennyson? They know nothing about him or his poetry, and they will probably think he is some poor relation of my own, and that the whole affair is a job.”

To which Carlyle responded,

“Richard Milnes, on the Day of Judgment, when the Lord asks you why you didn't get that pension for Alfred Tennyson, it will not do to lay the blame on your constituents; it is you that will be damned.”

In his entertaining “ The Life, Letters and Friendships of Richard Monckton Milnes, First Lord Houghton,”

Sir Wemyss Reid writes: “Never, indeed, was there a more delightful host than Milnes. Whether his guests were famous or obscure, whether they belonged to the great world or had merely for the moment emerged from the masses, they could not be long in his company without feeling the charm of his manner, and being warmed and attracted by the tenderness of his heart. His fame as a talker was world-wide. . . . But to hear Milnes at his best, it was necessary to meet him at the breakfast-table. ... It is with a great sadness indeed that those who often had the privilege of meeting him in this fashion in his own home must recall those breakfasts, absolutely informal and unpretending, but made memorable by the choice treasures of wit, of paradox, of playful sarcasm, and of an apparently inexhaustible store of reminiscences, which Milnes offered to his guests “; and of his house at Fryston, “ No record, alas! remains of the talk with which the pleasant rooms of Fryston rang in the days when their master was entertaining men and women as distinguished as those whose names I have given. The many good sayings, the shrewd views of individuals and affairs, the stores of out-of-the-way incidents in history, have all sunk into silence; but so long as any live who were privileged to partake of those hospitalities, and to witness those meetings of men and women of genius, their memory cannot fade, and the name of Fryston will be cherished in the innermost recesses of the heart.”

A wit is distinguished from a mere merry-maker by his wisdom, just as a wise man is from a philosopher by his wit; so it will not be *mal-d-propos* to quote a few of the *dicta* of Monckton Milnes.

“What a rare thing is a grown-up mind!”

“No wonder we were friends, for we had found ourselves in a moral quarantine together.”

“He lost both dinners and flattery, both his bread and his butter.”

“I really have not room to pity everybody — I’m not God Almighty.”

“God has given us the gift of Faith, it is true, but He has given us the gift of Doubt as well.”

“I can be humble enough, but, alas! I always *know* that I am so.”

“Good conversation is to ordinary talk what whist is to playing cards,” or we will add “ bridge.”

An amusing story is told of him in his old age. After a dinner, a young lady thought to pay him a pretty and pleasing compliment by singing his song, "The Beating of my own Heart." He went peacefully to sleep, only arousing himself for a moment when her memory failed her to supply the missing word. He had, also, the happy gift of being able to sleep soundly through dull after dinner speeches.

Sir Wemyss Reid gives an amusing letter from Wilkie Collins to Mrs Milnes:

"12, Harley Street, W., *May 17/A*, 1862. "Dear Mrs Milnes, — I have always had a foreign tendency to believe in *Fate*. That tendency has now settled into a conviction. Fate sits on the doorstep at 16, Upper Brook Street, and allows all your guests the happiness of accepting your hospitality with the one miserable exception of the Doomed Man who writes this letter. When your kindness opened the door to me on the occasion of your 'At Home,' Fate closed it again, using as the instrument of exclusion a neuralgic attack in my head. Quinine and patience help me to get the better of this, and Mrs Milnes (with an indulgence which I am penitently conscious of not having deserved) offers me a second chance. Fate, working with a postman for an instrument on this occasion, sends me a dinner invitation for Thursday, the 22nd, one day before I receive Mrs Milnes's kind note. No guardian angel warns me to pause. I accept the invitation, and find myself engaged to dine on the 22nd, *not* in London, for I might then have asked permission to come to Brook Street in the evening, but at Richmond, where there is no help for me.

"I think this 'plain statement' really makes out my case. I have not the audacity to ask you to accept my apologies. My aspirations are limited to presenting myself as a fit object for your compassion. The ancients, in any emergency, were accustomed to mollify Fate by a sacrifice. I am quite ready to try the experiment. If I presented myself on the doorstep of your house with a portable altar, a toga, a live sheep, and a sacrificial knife, would it be convenient? I fear not. A crowd might collect; the Animals' Protection Society might interfere at the moment of divination, and Mr Milnes might be subjected to annoying inquiries in the House of Commons. My only resource left is to ask you to exercise the Christian privilege of forgiveness, and to assure you that I deserve it, by being really, and not as a figure of speech, very sorry."

Parry the “entertainer,” prototype of Corney Grain and George Grossmith, was a firm friend of these days. John Orlando Parry was born in London in the year 1810, the only son of John Parry, the well-known Welsh composer. He was a “prodigy,” appearing at the age of fifteen as a harpist, but his future lay in his voice, a rich baritone, and his sense of fun. After spending some time in Italy, where he was the pupil of Lablache, he returned to England in 1834. Two years later he made his appearance on the stage of the St James’s Theatre under John Braham, later on singing in “The Village Coquettes,” written by Dickens, with music by John Hullah. After various experiences as a concert singer, he produced at the Store Street Music Hall, near Bedford Square, an “entertainment” written by Albert Smith, “Notes Vocal and Instrumental,” illustrated by large water-colour drawings executed by himself. He had now found his genre. In 1860 he joined the famous German Reeds at the Gallery of Illustration in Regent Street. He was certainly an “all round” performer, writing his songs, composing his music, singing and accompanying himself.

Of another very famous singer we catch occasional glimpses. Not any other tenor has ever so firmly won and for so long held the affections of the British public as did John Sims Reeves, who, born in 1818, lived on to the end of the century. Edmund Yates tells the story of his successful appearance in opera at Drury Lane in 1847, under the management of the great “Mons” Jullien, when the orchestra was under the conductorship of no less a person than Hector Berlioz; “the first production was Lucia di Lammermoor, and the next day the town was ringing with the praises of the new tenor, Mr Sims Reeves, who had proved himself more than worthy of the great expectations which had been raised concerning him. I perfectly recollect the tumultuous roars of applause evoked by his great scene at the end of the second act, and have a remembrance of roars of another kind, occasioned by the very comic manner in which, under the influence of great excitement, he persisted in shaking his head. His ‘Fra Poco’ — rendered, I remember, ‘From these fond arms they tore thee’ — was enormously effective; and when the curtain fell, Mr Sims Reeves was enrolled as a first favourite with the public, which for more than thirty-five years I has never deserted him.”

It will be within the memory of many that Sims Reeves attained an unenviable celebrity for disappointing the public. At a certain function Dickens, who was in the chair, had to announce that Sims Reeves was

unfortunately unable to be present owing to a throat attack and, therefore, that his promised song would not be forthcoming. The news was received with incredulous laughter by some sceptical and ill-mannered guests. Dickens, very angry, added to his statement: — " My friend, Mr Sims Reeves, regrets his inability to fulfil his engagement owing to an unfortunately amusing and highly facetious cold." Many a time, indeed, did this great singer disappoint an expectant audience, but never, so a personal friend of his has told us, without real cause; his throat was highly delicate and sensitive, and he has even been present, ready and willing, in the artists' room, but at the last moment could not sing; the spirit willing, but the flesh weak.

Charles Kemble and his daughters were among Dickens's very good friends, a courtly, handsome old man, but deaf withal, for it is related of him that at the Garrick Club during a terrific thunderstorm he mildly remarked, " I think we are going to have some thunder; I feel it in my knees." Leigh Hunt wrote of him, " Were

1 Written in 1884.

he not personally gifted as he is, it would be a sad thing to lose the last of the Kembles from Covent Garden — to look in vain for the living and vigorous representative of that truly noble house which has laid on us all a great debt of gratitude, and with which he seemed still to connect us. John Kemble and Mrs Siddons had not quite left this their proper seat while he remained there, for we had associated him with them in their most signal triumphs, to which he lent all the grace and vigour of youth, which were theirs no longer ... he was endowed with rich and various faculties, which can be found in no one else in the same perfection and harmony. Where now shall we seek the high Roman fashion of look, and gesture, and attitude? Where shall old chivalry retain her living image, and high thoughts, 'seated in a heart of courtesy,' have adequate expression? Where shall the indignant honesty of a young patriot spirit 'show fiery off'? Whither shall we look for gentlemanly mirth, for gallant ease, for delicate raillery, and gay, glittering enterprise?"

In 1839 we find Charles Dickens writing, "I wish you would tell Mr Sydney Smith that of all the men I ever heard of and never saw, I have the greatest curiosity to see and the greatest interest to know him."

He did see and know the witty canon of St Paul's, whom all men honoured for his upright manliness. He was another Doughty Street man,

taking up his residence there at No. 8 in 1804, when he was evening preacher at the Foundling Hospital with a stipend of £50 per annum. Many another London house is connected with his name, but we only need mention two. In 1806 he was in Orchard Street, Oxford Street, and Lady Holland says : — ” the pleasantest society at his house was to be found in the little suppers which he established once a week; giving a general invitation to about twenty or thirty persons, who used to come as they pleased. ... At these suppers there was no attempt at display, nothing to tempt the palate; but they were most eagerly sought after, and were I to begin enumerating the guests usually to be found there, no one would wonder that they were so.”

When he was given a “stall” in St Paul’s in 1809, he writes: — ”I have just taken possession of my preferment. The house is in Amen Corner, — an awkward name on a card, and an awkward annunciation to the coachman on leaving any fashionable mansion. I find too (sweet discovery !) that I give a dinner, every Sunday for three months in the year, to six clergymen and six singing-men, at one o’clock.”

Of his wit these pages have already given samples; we add but two more : — when advised by his doctor to take a walk upon an empty stomach, he solemnly asked “Whose?” We like, too, his remark, “What a pity it is that in England we have no amusements but vice and religion.”

Another Doughty Street personality: —

Charles William Shirley Brooks was born on April 29, 1815, at number 52, being the eldest son of William Brooks and Elizabeth Sabine. As a young man he was distinctly a good-looking fellow — how many of the young literary lions of those days seem to have been handsome! — with well-cut features, bright eyes concerning whose colour evidence is contradictory, and hands and feet of which he was not a little proud. Says Edmund Yates of him at a much later date, “ Even at the last, when his hair was silvery-white and his beard grizzled, he retained his freshness, which, combined with his hearty, genial SHIRLEY BROOKS

manner, his appreciation of, and promptitude to enter into, fun, made him look considerably younger than his real age. He was hearty and hospitable, fond of dining at the dinners of rich City companies, where he would make excellent speeches; fond of enjoying the company of a friend at the Garrick Club, or at a corner table in a coffee-room at one of the old hotels in Covent Garden.”

There was Peter, the son of Allan, Cunningham, who earned the eternal gratitude of all lovers of London and students of its history by his "Hand-Book of London. Past and Present." He was a scholar and a good fellow. There was Henry Fothergill Chorley, the critic, to whom a newspaper writer who had lost both his manners and his temper once pleasingly referred as "the Chorleys and the chawbacons of literature." We meet him again in the Gad's Hill days; there he was a frequent and most welcome visitor; good company he seems to have been, a walker of great powers despite his "apparently weak physique"; always ready for a game or a romp or a charade. Miss Dickens describes him as "doing all sorts of good and generous deeds in a quiet, unostentatious way."

Charles Knight, of whom Shirley Brooks said, "it is an honour to have been his friend." He lives in history as one of the pioneers of cheap literature for what was then called "the masses." He was a man of quick temper, but never morose; in appearance strong, of middle height and with well-cut features.

Dickens, as did so many others, owned to a real affection for the Procter family, "our dear good Procter" he calls "Barry Cornwall," whom Forster somewhat exuberantly dubs "a poet as genuine as old Fletcher or Beaumont." We hear of Dickens coming up from Gad's Hill to help to celebrate the poet's eighty-second birthday. Lord Byron and Sir Robert Peel had been among his schoolmates at Harrow; he had known Keats, Lamb, Shelley, Coleridge, Landor, Leigh Hunt, and Rogers; he was a poet and a friend of poets. He died in October, 1874, aged eighty-seven.

Charles Sumner writes of him in 1839, he "is about forty-two or forty-five, and is a conveyancer by profession. His days are spent in the toilsome study of abstracts of titles; and when I saw him last Sunday, at his house, he was poring over one which press of business had compelled him to take home.

"He is a small, thin man, with a very dull countenance, in which, nevertheless, — knowing what he has written, — I could detect the 'poetical frenzy.' His manner is gentle and quiet, and his voice low. He thought if he could live life over again he would be a gardener. . . . Mrs Procter is a sweet person; she is the daughter of my friend, Mrs Basil Montagu, and has much of her mother's information and intelligence."

"Dined at Procter's in the summer of 1859," Hawthorne relates, "to meet Charles Sumner, Leigh Hunt, J. T. Fields, 'Eothen' Kinglake and others."

Fields thus describes the scene: “Adelaide Procter did not reach home in season to begin the dinner with us, but she came later in the evening, and sat for some time in earnest talk with Hawthorne. It was a ‘goodly companie,’ long to be remembered. As the twilight deepened around the table, which was exquisitely decorated with flowers, the author of ‘ Rimini’ recalled to Procter’s recollection other memorable tables where they used to meet in vanished days with Lamb, Coleridge, and others of their set long since passed away. ... I cannot remember all the good things I heard that day. . . . Hunt . . .

speaking of Landor’s oaths . . . said ‘They are so rich, they are really nutritious.’“

J. T. Fields called on him in 1869 and found him feeble, but kindly and genial, “his speech was somewhat difficult to follow, for he had been slightly paralyzed not long before ... he spoke with warm feeling of Longfellow, who had been in London during that season, and had called to see his venerable friend. . . . ‘Wasn’t it good of him,’ said the old man, in his tremulous voice, ‘to think of me before he had been in town twenty-four hours ?’“

“In the spring of the year 1853,” writes Dickens, “I observed a short poem among the proffered contributions,¹ very different, as I thought, from the shoal of verses perpetually setting through the office of such a periodical.” It was not until the Christmas of the following year that he discovered that his contributor “ Mary Berwick” was none other than Adelaide Anne Procter, the eldest child of his old friend, known to us today as the authoress of “Legends and Lyrics.” Hawthorne called her “ the lovely daughter of Barry Cornwall.”

She was born in Bedford Square on October 30, 1825, and early showed a fondness for poetry. She was cheerful, full of fun and humour, laughter ever ready. She lay dying, with sweetest patience, fifteen long months.

“At length, at midnight on the second of February, 1864, she turned down a leaf of a little book she was reading, and shut it up.

“The ministering hand . . . was soon around her neck, and she quietly asked, as the clock was on the stroke of one:

““Do you think I am dying, mamma?’

1 To “ All the Year Round”

““I think you are very, very ill to-night, my dear.’

““Send for my sister. My feet are so cold. Lift me up!’

“Her sister entering as they raised her, she said: ‘It has come at last !’ and with a bright and happy smile, looked upward, and departed.”

Is not that truly Dickensian?

Thackeray writes to her in June, 1860, “ Why are your verses so very, very grey and sad? . . . I don’t like to think you half so sad as your verses. I like some of them very much indeed, especially the little tender bits.”

“The first and only time I met Miss Adelaide Procter, of poetic fame, was at Eastlake’s,” I writes Frith, “and I had the pleasure of taking her down to dinner. Miss Procter was very charming, but nature had been very unkind to her in respect of personal appearance. I fear it could not be denied that the authoress of the ‘Lost Chord,’ and so many other beautiful poems, was a very plain person indeed, but her conversation was delightful. Photography, at the time of which I am speaking, was a new art; the conversation turned upon it at dinner, and, as I looked at Miss Procter, I thought how fearfully she would suffer if she ventured to submit herself to its uncompromising ‘justice without mercy’ treatment. As if she read my thoughts, she said:

“‘I had my photograph taken the other day, and you never saw such an ugly wretch as they made of me.’

“I forget what I said in reply, but I muttered something, and the lady continued:

“‘ I remonstrated with the man, and what do you think he said ? — ’ Very sorry, miss, but we can’t alter nature.”

Tom Taylor was a frequent visitor; Hawthorne says

I Sir Charles Eastlake, P.R.A.

of him — ”a humorous way of showing up men and matters, but without originality or much imagination or dance of fancy,” and again — ” liked him very well this evening; but he is a gentleman of very questionable aspect, — un-English, tall, slender, colourless, with a great beard of soft black, and, methinks, green goggles over his eyes.”

The last of the friends with whom we shall deal here, and among the less known now to fame, were Mr and Mrs Milner-Gibson. Of Thomas Milner-Gibson we need only note that he was one of Lord Beaconsfield’s schoolmates at Higham; that after serving as the Conservative member for Ipswich, he became one of the strongest supporters of the Anti-Corn Law League, a Liberal and President of the Board of Trade under Palmerston and Russell. In January, 1870, Dickens rented his house, 5 Hyde Park Place, nearly opposite the Marble Arch. The Milner-Gibson suppers were a great

“institution,” where were to be met — mentioning chiefly those whose names appear in our pages — Mazzini, Place, Sir Charles and Lady Eastlake, Monckton Milnes, Albert and Arthur Smith, Landseer, Leech, Chorley, the Procters, and Mr and Mrs Charles Dickens. “It was no mere affair of small-talk,” says Edmund Yates, “ices, and lemonade. A substantial supper was a feature of the evening, and the foreigners had a pleasant way of rushing down directly that meal was served and sweeping the table. It was here that Leech, returning flushed from an encounter with the linkman, told me laughingly he would not have minded if ‘ Mr Leech’s carriage’ had been called, but that the fellow would roar out, ‘ The keb from Nottin’ ‘Ill!’”

In Mr Layard’s “The Life of Mrs Lynn Linton” there is an amusing account of Mrs Milner-Gibson’s penchant for spiritualism, and an interesting letter from Dickens to Mrs Linton, in which he says, referring to the then very popular séances, “ I hold personal inquiry on my part into these proceedings to be out of the question for two reasons. Firstly, because the conditions under which such inquiries take place — as I know in the recent case of two friends of mine, with whom I discussed them — are preposterously wanting in the commonest securities against deceit or mistake. Secondly, because the people lie so very hard, both concerning what did take place and what impression it made at the time on the inquirer.

“Mr Hume, or Home (I rather think he has gone by both names), I take the liberty of regarding as an impostor. If he appeared on his own behalf in any controversy with me, I should take the further liberty of letting him know publicly why. But be assured that if he were demonstrated a humbug in every microscopic cell of his skin and globule of his blood, the disciples would still believe and worship.

“Mrs Gibson is an impulsive, compassionate, affectionate woman. But as to the strength of her head ; — would you be very much surprised by its making a mistake? Did you never know it much mistaken in a person or two whom it devoutly believed in ? — Believe me ever faithfully your true friend,

Charles Dickens.”

XXX

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

IN 1851 Dickens left Devonshire Terrace, where he had lived since 1839, moving to Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, which he purchased, and which had previously been the home of his friend Frank Stone, the A.R.A., of whom we may say a few words. He was described to Frith by Dickens as “ a better fellow than Stone never lived, but he is always in the right about every earthly thing, and if you talk till Doomsday you will never convince him to the contrary.”

He was born in 1800 at Manchester, the son of a cotton spinner, to which calling he himself was brought up, soon, however, turning to art, being entirely self-taught. In 1831 he came to London, and among his first work were pencil drawings for the “Book of Beauty.” He first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1837, and there is to be seen in his paintings much of the rather too sweet sentimentality which is characteristic of the productions of his son Marcus Stone. He was the friend of many literary men, among others of Rogers, Thackeray and Dickens, who makes Sairey Gamp speak of him as “a fine-looking, portly gentleman, with a face like an amiable full moon.” He died in November, 1859, and was buried at Highgate. He was a tall, good-looking fellow. It is said that Mrs Frank Stone was born on the field of Waterloo, while the battle was in full swing!

There is a delightful story of him in “Leaves from a Life “ : — ” I have a picture in my gallery of Mr Stone’s short way with a dreadful cook my mother had in the year of the great comet, 1858, when we were at Weymouth and Papa was detained in town. . . . Mama suspected the cook of theft, and was certain she drank, but was at her wit’s end what to do. She confided in Mr Stone; he got a policeman in hiding, and then commanded the cook to pack her boxes and go. She must have suspected something, for they were packed, and all she had to do was to go to her room and assume her bonnet and shawl. The boxes were brought down, and then the policeman appeared, and to her rage and consternation demanded the keys. We were in the front room, divided from the other room by folding doors,

and through the crack we commanded the whole scene, Mr Stone towering over cook and policeman alike, Mama and Mrs Stone cowering in a corner, while article after article came out of the boxes, some of them ours, more belonging evidently to former mistresses, and all obviously belonging to any one save the cook. Mama took her belongings, the policeman all that was marked with a coronet or a name, and finally she was on the point of being allowed to depart, without her wages, when Mr Stone, with a howl, leaped at her and turned her shawl back over her shoulders. Will it be believed that she was hung round with bags of groceries, and had a large bar of yellow soap under each arm? Even the policeman smiled, while we children simply roared with laughter, while the cook turned and fled, soap and all, and never came near us again!”

From the same pages we quote the account of his death : — ”One morning in the autumn, Mrs Stone went downstairs to get him his breakfast, leaving him to read the Times, and then get up quietly to his work when he had had some food. When she returned he was dead, his glasses still on his nose and the Times in his hand; he had simply ‘ fallen on sleep ‘ without a cry or a movement. When the model came, to be sent away because Mr Stone was dead, she remarked, with all the inconsequence of her class, ‘ Well! he might ‘a let me know!’“

At Tavistock House many additions and improvements were made by Dickens, concerning which there are highly entertaining letters to his brother-in-law Henry Austin, an architect, who was superintendent of “ the works “; written from Broadstairs, where Dickens stayed from May until November. Of these we will quote but one: —

“My dear Henry, O! O! O! D the Pantechmicon.

O! . . . The infamous says the stoves shall be

fixed to-morrow. O! if this were to last long; the distraction of the new book, the whirling of the story through one’s mind, escorted by workmen, the imbecility, the wild necessity of beginning to write, the not being able to do so, the, O! I should go O!

“P.S. None. I have torn it off.”

But in November the workmen were out and the family in.

Holman Hunt gives a most interesting account of a visit he paid to Dickens at Tavistock House, which was brought about by their common friend Wilkie Collins : — “He was then forty-eight years of age. By his early portraits he had appeared to be a good-looking beau of the last

Georgian days, and the portrait painters had seized little that bespoke firmness under a light and cheerful exterior; but in these later days all the bones of his face showed, giving it truly statuesque dignity, and every line on his brow and face were the records of past struggle and of present power to paint humanity in its numberless phases.”

We now meet quite one of the most charming characters among Dickens’s friends — Hans Christian Andersen, who we find writing from Copenhagen to a friend in London in 1846, “ How I should like to shake the hand of ‘ Boz.’ “ He paid his first visit to London in 1847, putting up at the Sabloniere Hotel, of which building at any rate a portion had once been Hogarth’s house, and which was largely frequented by foreigners. It was pulled down in 1870, and the Tenison school now occupies the site. He arrived in the middle of June. He met Dickens at Lady Blessington’s, whither he was taken by Jerdan — ” I was yesterday at Lady Blessington’s ... a man came into the room ... we took each other by the hand, looked into each other’s eyes, and laughed for joy; we knew each other so well, although this was our first meeting — it was Charles Dickens. . . . Outside the house is a pretty verandah which runs along its whole length . . . here we stood for a long time and talked — talked in English, but he understood me, and I him.”

Lady Eastlake mentions a visit from Andersen in this year, when he was, “a long, thin, fleshless, boneless man, wriggling and bending like a lizard with a lantern-jawed, cadaverous visage. Simple and childlike, and simpletonish in his manner. We had a great deal of talk, and after so recently reading his life, he seems no stranger to me. His whole address and manner are irresistibly ludicrous.” But second impressions were better; a few days later we read, “ Andersen dined with us. He had one stream of interesting talk — perhaps rather too much of himself, but to me that was novel and entertaining. . . . Altogether he left a most agreeable impression on mind and heart; especially on the latter, for his own seemed so affectionate. No wonder he finds people kind; all stiffness is useless with him, as he is so evidently a simple child himself.”

On his journey home he caught the Ostend boat from Ramsgate, en route dining with Dickens and his family at Broadstairs. Dickens saw him safely aboard : — ” We pressed each other’s hands, and he looked at me so kindly with his shrewd, sympathetic eyes, and as the ship went off, there he stood, waving his hat, and looking so gallant, so youthful, and so handsome.

Dickens was the last who sent me a greeting from dear England's shore." Dickens wrote to him, "Come again to England, soon! But whatever you do, do not stop writing, because we cannot bear to lose a single one of your thoughts. They are too true and simply beautiful to be kept safe only in your own head."

In 1851 Andersen visited Dickens in Tavistock Square, and has given us an account of the house.

"In Tavistock Square stands Tavistock House. This and the strip of garden in front of it are shut out from the thoroughfare by an iron railing. A large garden with a grass plat and high trees stretches behind the house, and gives it a countrified look in the midst of this coal and gas-steaming London. In the passage from street to garden hung pictures and engravings. Here stood a marble bust of Dickens, so like him, so youthful and handsome; and over a bedroom door and a dining-room door were inserted the bas-reliefs of Night and Day, after Thorwaldsen. On the first floor was a rich library with a fireplace and a writing-table, looking out on the garden; and here it was that in winter Dickens and his friends acted plays to the satisfaction of all parties.

The kitchen was underground, and at the top of the house were the bedrooms. I had a snug room looking out on the garden; and over the tree-tops I saw the London towers and spires appear or disappear as the weather cleared or thickened."

In 1857 Andersen was a delighted and delightful visitor at Gad's Hill, arriving early in June and staying until the middle of July. He crossed from Calais to Dover, and rushed up to town in the mail train, and down again to Higham Station on the North Kent line, where he was greeted by a porter with "Are you the foreign gentleman who is going to Mr Dickens's?"

"Before me," he writes, "lay on the broad high road Dickens's country-house, whose tower, with its gilded weathercock, I had seen for some time over the tops of the trees. It was a handsome new house, with brick walls and a projecting entrance, supported by small pillars; a thick hedge of cherry-trees joined the house, in front of which was a carefully-tended grass-plot, in the rear two splendid cedar trees, whose crooked branches spread their green shade over a garden fenced in with ivy and wild grape. As I entered the house Dickens came to meet me, so happy, so cordial; he looked somewhat older than when we parted ten years before, but this was partly owing to the beard he wore; his eyes glistened as formerly, the same

smile played round his mouth, the same clear voice sounded so cheerily, even more affectionate than heretofore. Dickens was now in his best years, so youthful, lively, eloquent, and rich in humour, through which the warmest cordiality ever shone. I cannot find more characteristic words to describe him than a quotation from the first letter I wrote home. 'Select the best of Charles Dickens's works, form from them the image of a man, and you have Dickens.' Just as he stood before me in the first hour, he remained unchanged during all the weeks I passed with him, ever jovial, merry, and sympathising."

Of Miss Burdett Coutts Andersen gives a charming account: — "On my first stay at Gadshill I met there an elderly lady dressed in black and another younger; they remained a week there, and were most amiable, straightforward, and kind; we walked together up to the monument; I drove with them to Rochester, and when they quitted us the younger lady said that I must stay at her house when I visited London. From Dickens I learned that she was Miss Coutts; he spoke with the utmost veneration of her, and of the glorious Christian use to which she applied her enormous fortune; I should have an opportunity of seeing an English mansion appointed with all possible wealth. I visited her, and it was not the rich pictures, the bedizened language, the palatial resources, which imparted to the house grandeur and a peculiar brilliancy, but the noble, feminine, amiable Miss Coutts herself, she offered such a simple and touching contrast to her richly-attired servants. She had noticed that I had felt cold while in the country; it was not yet thoroughly warm, hence a fire burned cheerily in my chimney. How comfortable I felt then! There were books, cozy arm-chairs, sofas, and rococo furniture, and from the window a perfect view over the garden of Piccadilly and the Green Park. Close to London are Miss Coutts's country-house and garden; here are long alleys of rhododendrons, which shook their blue petals over the carriage in which I was seated; here were magnificent cedars and rare exotics, while the hothouses were filled with tropical vegetation. From all these splendours the owner led me to a small kitchen-garden, where she seemed fondest of being; it seemed as if these plants, which possessed such value for the poor, harmonised best with her nature."

Of some of the high-jinks at Tavistock House we must give a brief description.

Miss Mary Boyle describes a merry New Year's Eve : — "It seemed like a page cut out of the 'Christmas Carol,' as far, at least, as fun and frolic

went: authors, actors, friends from near and far, formed the avenues of two long English country dances, in one of which I had the honour of going up and down the middle, almost' interminably' as it seemed, with Charles Dickens for my partner. The Keeleys were there, husband and wife, the former declining to dance; but when Sir Roger de Coverley struck up, he was loudly called upon to do so, and a vehement dispute began between the two sets, which should secure him in their ranks. That inimitable comedian showed so much fun in the apparent hesitation of his choice as to elicit roars of laughter, which were followed by thunders of applause, when the winning side claimed Keeley as their own."

In 1854, on Twelfth Night, and in 1855, there were theatricals with the children as the "company," "supported " by a few grown-ups; Henry Fielding's burlesque "Tom Thumb" was one of the pieces performed, and "Fortunio" another. "Uncle" Mark Lemon was the giantess Glumdalca in the former, and Dickens the ghost of Gaffer Thumb. Thackeray, who was among the audience, rolled off his seat in uncontrollable laughter, so great was his amusement at one of the songs. In "Fortunio " Lemon appeared as the dragon, and Dickens as the irascible Baron. The "bill" contained many funniments, such as the announcement of the "Reengagement of that irresistible comedian Mr Ainger," and such names for the performers as Mr Pass6 (Dickens), Mr Mudperiod, Mr Measly Servile, and Mr Wilkini Collini.

Of the year 1855, Edmund Yates writes, "Visiting relations had . . . been established between us and the Dickens family, and we were invited to Tavistock House, on the 18th of June, to witness the performance of Wilkie Collins's drama, *The Lighthouse*, in which the author and Dickens, Frank Stone, Augustus Egg, Mark Lemon and the ladies of the family took part. My mother, who went with us, told me that Dickens, in intensity, reminded her of Lemaitre in his best days. I was much struck by the excellence of Lemon's acting, which had about it no trace of the amateur. ... It was a great night for my mother. She renewed her acquaintance with Stanfield and Roberts, and was addressed in very complimentary terms by the great John Forster. Thackeray and his daughters, Leech, Jerrold, Lord Campbell, and Carlyle were there."

Stanfield was the scene-painter, and Dickens, who was "Mr Crummles, lessee and manager," writes to him, "I have a little lark in contemplation, if you will help it to fly. Collins has done a melodrama (a regular old-style

melodrama), in which there is a very good notion. . . . Now there is only one scene in the piece, and that, my tarry lad, is the inside of a lighthouse. . . . We mean to burst on an astonished world with the melodrama, without any note of preparation. So don't say a syllable to Forster if you should happen to see him."

After the show, "we then turned to at Scotch reels (having had no exercise), and danced in the maddest way until five. . . ."

The most famous performance was the production of "The Frozen Deep," by Wilkie Collins, on Twelfth Night, 1857, the birthday of Charles Dickens the younger. In 1874, when the play was published as a story, Collins wrote in the introduction : —

"As long ago as the year 1856 I wrote a play called 'The Frozen Deep.'

"The work was first represented by amateur actors, at the house of the late Charles Dickens, on the 6th of January, 1857. Mr. Dickens himself played the principal part, and played it with a truth, vigour, and pathos never to be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to witness the performance. The other personages of the story were represented by the ladies of Mr. Dickens's family, by the late Mark Lemon (editor of Punch), by the late Augustus Egg, R.A. (the artist), and by the author of the play.

"The next appearance of 'The Frozen Deep' (played by the amateur company) took place at the Gallery of Illustration, Regent Street, before the Queen and the Royal Family, by the Queen's own command. After this special performance other representations of the work were given — first at the Gallery of Illustration, subsequently (with professional actresses) in some of the principal towns in England — for the benefit of the family of a well-beloved friend of ours, who died in 1857 — the late Douglas Jerrold. At Manchester the play was twice performed — on the second evening in the presence of three thousand spectators. This was, I think, the finest of all the representations of 'The Frozen Deep.' The extraordinary intelligence and enthusiasm of the great audience stimulated us all to do our best. Dickens surpassed himself. The trite phrase is the true phrase to describe that magnificent piece of acting. He literally electrified the audience.

In Remembrance of the late Mr. Douglas Jerrold

FREE TRADE HALL

Under The Management Of Mr. Charles Dickens

On FRIDAY Evening, Aug. 21, and on SATURDAY Evening,
Aug. 22, 1857,

AT EIGHT O’CLOCK EXACTLY

Will be presented an entirely new Romantic Drama, in
Three Acts, by

MR. WILKIE COLLINS

CALLED

THE FROZEN DEEP

The Overture composed expressly for this Piece by Mr. FRANCESCO
BERGER, who will conduct the ORCHESTRA

The Dresses by Messrs. Nathan, of Titchbourne Street, Haymarket, and
Miss Wilkins, of Carburton Street, Fitzroy Square. Perruquier, Mr. Wilson,
of the Strand.

Captain Ebsworth (of the ‘ Sea-Mew’) . Mr. Edward Pigott

Captain Holding {of the ‘ Wanderer ‘) . . Mr. Alfred Dickens

Lieutenant Crayford Mr. Mark Lemon

Frank Aldersley Mr. Wilkie Collins

Richard Wardour Mr. Charles Dickens

Lieutenant Steventon Mr. Young Charles 1

John Want (Ship’s Cook) Mr. Augustus Egg

Bateson (two of the Sea Mew’s’ people)....Mr. Shirley Brooks

Darker Mr. Charles Collins

(officers And Crews Of The ‘sea-mew’ And ‘wanderer.’)

Mrs. Steventon Mrs. George Vining

Rose Ebsworth Miss Ellen Sabine

Lucy Crayford Miss Ellen Ternan

Clara Burnham Miss Maria Ternan

Nurse Esther Mrs. Ternan

Maid Miss Mewte *

The Scenery and Scenic Effects of the First Act by Mr. Telbin.

The Scenery and Scenic Effects of the Second and Third Acts by Mr.
Stanfield, R.A.

1 A facetious nickname, invented by Dickens for his eldest son.

2 Another nickname by Dickens for a young lady who had nothing to say.

“I present here, as’ a curiosity’ which may be welcome to some of my
readers, a portion of the original playbill of the performance at Manchester.
To me it has now become one of the saddest memorials of the past that I
possess. Of the nine amateur actors who played the men’s parts (one of

them my brother, all of them my valued friends) but two are now living besides myself — Mr Charles Dickens, junr., and Mr Edward Pigott.

“The country performances being concluded, nearly ten years passed before the footlights shone again on ‘The Frozen Deep.’ In 1866 I accepted a proposal, made to me by Mr Horace Wigan, to produce the play (with certain alterations and additions) on the public stage, at the Olympic Theatre, London. The first performance took place (while I was myself absent from England) on the 27th of November, in the year just mentioned. Mr H. Neville acted the part created ‘by Dickens.

“Seven years passed after the production of the play at the Olympic Theatre, and then ‘The Frozen Deep’ appealed once more to public favour, in another country than England, and under a totally new form.

“I occupied the autumn and winter of 1873-74 most agreeably to myself, by a tour in the United States of America, receiving from the generous people of that great country a welcome which I shall remember proudly and gratefully to the end of my life. During my stay in America I read in public, in the principal cities, one of my shorter stories (enlarged and rewritten for the purpose), called ‘The Dream-Woman.’ Concluding my tour at Boston, I was advised by my friends to give, if possible, a special attraction to my farewell reading in America, by presenting to my audience a new work. Having this object in view, and having but a short space

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of time at my disposal, I bethought myself of ‘The Frozen Deep.’ The play had never been published, and I determined to rewrite it in narrative form for a public reading. The experiment proved, on trial, to be far more successful than I had ventured to anticipate. Occupying nearly two hours in its delivery, the transformed ‘Frozen Deep’ kept its hold from first to last on the interest and sympathies of the audience.”

“I think the last time I went to the Tavistock House theatricals,” writes Mrs Keeley, “was at the coming of age of the eldest son, Charley. I sat in a nice place, and in front of me was Macready, with Lord Lyndhurst resting against the tragedian’s legs. Edwin Landseer was also present among the audience, together with George Cruikshank, Augustus Egg, Stanfield (who painted the scenery), and, I think, John Forster. I recollect that Dickens ‘gagged’ a good deal, as usual, in a piece called ‘Uncle John,’ and that Mac, who disapproved of such things, kept growling out, sotto voce, ‘Oh, you shouldn’t gag!’”

Tavistock House was relinquished in September, 1860, thenceforward Gad's Hill being Dickens's home.

XXXI

ON THE CONTINENT — 1853-6

IN the summer of 1853 Dickens was at Boulogne, to which place we shall return later on, and in October started thence with Wilkie Collins and Augustus Egg for a run through Switzerland and Italy. The expedition nearly came to an untimely end upon the Mer de Glace — ” we were . . . going along an immense height like a chimney-piece, with sheer precipice below, when there came rolling from above, with fearful velocity, a block of stone about the size of one of the fountains in Trafalgar Square, which Egg, the last of the party, had preceded by not a yard, when it swept over the ledge, breaking away a tree, and rolled and tumbled down into the valley.”

In the “ Letters” there is a delightful account of this trip, from which we will take a few extracts to prove the quality of the remainder. To Miss Hogarth he writes from Milan on October 25: “On the Swiss side of the Simplon, we slept at the beastliest little town, in the wildest kind of house, where some fifty cats tumbled into the corridor outside our bedrooms all at once in the middle of the night — whether through the roof or not, I don’t know, for it was dark when we got up — and made such a horrible and terrific noise that we started out of our beds in a panic. . . . We continue to get on very well together. We really do admirably. I lose no opportunity of inculcating the lesson that it is of no use to be out of temper in travelling, and it is very seldom wanted for any of us. Egg is an excellent fellow, and full of good qualities; I am sure a generous and staunch man at heart, and a good and honourable nature.”

From Genoa to Naples the voyage was more exciting than pleasant, though it was rendered less disagreeable by meeting with his old friends the Emerson Tennents — Sir James, the first baronet, a famous traveller and a not unknown politician.

George Dolby tells a quaint little story of Dickens at the funeral of this old friend : — ” ‘ Of course I made an ass of myself,’ Dickens said, ‘and did the wrong thing, as I invariably do at a funeral.’ He proceeded to explain that, arriving at the house of his late friend, he was met in the hall

by an elderly gentleman, who extended his hand. Presuming this to be a friend of Sir James's, whom he had met somewhere but had forgotten, he shook the gentleman by the hand, saying at the same time —

“‘ We meet on a sad occasion.’

“‘ Yes, indeed,’ was the reply, ‘Poor dear Sir James.’

“(This with a long-drawn sigh.)

“Dickens passed on to the dining-room where several other friends were congregated, and where for a time he quite forgot his friend in the hall; but presently he was reminded of that affecting meeting by the entrance of the elderly gentleman carrying before him a trayful of hats adorned with long mourning bands, and so high was the pile as to almost hide him from view.

“The elderly gentleman's position in society was now made manifest. He was the undertaker's man, and wanted Dickens's hat for the purpose of funereal decoration; hence his object in holding out his hand.”

As we have said the voyage to Naples was excessively uncomfortable, which is not to be marvelled at, as the ship was overcrowded abominably, and there was no sleeping accommodation of any kind: “the scene on board beggars description. Ladies on the tables, gentlemen under the tables, and ladies and gentlemen lying indiscriminately on the open deck, arrayed like spoons on a sideboard. . . . We were all gradually dozing off when a perfectly tropical rain fell, and in a moment drowned the whole ship. . . . Emerson Tennent, with the greatest kindness, turned his son out of his state room (who, indeed, volunteered to go in the most amiable manner), and I got a good bed there. The store-room down by the hold was opened for Egg and Collins, and they slept with the moist sugar, the cheese in cut, the spices, the cruets, the apples and pears — in a perfect chandler's shop; in company with what the 's would call a

‘hold gent.’ ... a cat, and the steward — who dozed in an armchair, and all night long fell headforemost, once in every five minutes, on Egg, who slept on the counter or dresser.”

Winding up our brief account, we quote an amusing description of a visit to the opera at Rome: — ” All the seats are numbered arm-chairs, and you buy your number at the pay-place, and go to it with the easiest direction on the ticket itself. We were early, and the four places of the Americans were on the next row behind us — all together. After looking about them for some time, and seeing the greater part of the seats empty (because the audience generally wait in a caff6 which is part of the theatre), one of them

said ‘Waal I dunno — I expect we aint no call to set so nigh to one another neither — will you scatter Kernel, will you scatter sir?’ — Upon this

the Kernel ‘scattered’ some twenty benches off; and they distributed themselves (for no earthly reason apparently but to get rid of one another) all over the pit. As soon as the overture began, in came the audience in a mass. Then the people who had got the numbers into which they had ‘scattered’ had to get them out; and as they understood nothing that was said to them, and could make no reply but ‘A — mericani,’ you may imagine the number of cocked hats it took to dislodge them. At last they were all got back into their right places, except one. About an hour afterwards when Moses (Moses in Egypt was the opera) was invoking the darkness, and there was a dead silence all over the house, unwonted sounds of disturbance broke out from a distant corner of the pit, and here and there a head got up to look. ‘What is it neow, sir?’ said one of the Americans to another; ‘some person seems to be getting along, again stroom.’ ‘Waal sir,’ he replied, ‘I dunno. But I ‘xpect ‘tis the Kernel sir, a holdin on.’ So it was. The Kernel was ignominiously escorted back to his right place, not in the least disconcerted, and in perfectly good spirits and temper.”

Broadstairs was “Our English Boulogne,” “Our French Watering Place,” in which latter place Dickens resided from June to September, 1853, from June until October, 1854, and from June until September, 1856.

Boulogne is one of the most misunderstood places in the world, at least by those who have not resided there for some little time. It is looked upon as almost the French equivalent of our English Margate, whereas in reality it is a most interesting and in many ways most picturesque town. We need not enter into its ancient history, but would rather recall that it has for long years been one of the gates of France through which has ebbed and flowed a constant stream of wayfarers from and to our coasts. In May, 1822, the Rob Roy, the first of the Boulogne steam packets, brought over six passengers, since then the traffic has grown to its present enormous extent. But the days that most appeal to us are those before the so-called abolition of imprisonment for debt, when many a poor exile from England haunted its hilly and not seldom smelly streets. There was a club at which they used to play whist at franc points — no credit given! They were on the whole a fairly cheerful crew, certainly so considering that most of them had seen better days, and not a few lie sleeping in the cemetery upon the hill, up beyond the old walls of the old town, from which it is possible almost to see

the distant white cliffs of "home." A visit to this cemetery, beside the St Omer Road, brings home to the English eye how sad a part his countrymen have played in the history of the town, dying there on alien soil. Of the more famous names we may mention Sir Nicolas Harris Nicolas, the antiquarian, who began life in the navy in the stirring days at the opening of last century; Basil Montagu, friend of Coleridge and Wordsworth, and editor of Bacon; Katherine, Lady Dundonald, widow of the tenth earl, the fiery sailor; Smithson Tennant, the Cambridge chemist; Sir William Ouseley, the Orientalist. No fewer than eighty-two bodies from the female convict ship, the Amphitrite, which was wrecked off Boulogne in 1833, all hands being lost, are interred here; as also Thomas Green, the captain, and many of the officers, passengers, and crew of the Reliance, wrecked in 1812, seven souls only out of 116 being saved. But it is the tombstones, many of them of the humblest description, bearing unknown names that are the saddest; here lie many exiles, who died heartbroken, hopeless, and poor.

The old town of Boulogne is as picturesque a walled city as we need desire to see, and from it a brief walk takes us out into the countryside.

In 1853, Dickens rented a house high up, near the Calais Road, "a doll's country-house of many rooms, in a delightful garden," he calls it in a letter to Wilkie Collins. He writes to Forster, "If this were but 300 miles farther off how the English would rave about it! I do assure you that there are picturesque people, and town, and country, about this place, that quite fill up the eye and fancy." And, "this house is on a great hill-side, backed up by woods of young trees. It faces the Haute Ville with the ramparts and the unfinished cathedral. ... On the slope in front, going steep down to the right, all Boulogne is piled and jumbled about in a very picturesque manner." Dickens quite fell in love with his landlord, M. Beaucourt, whom in "Our French Watering-Place" he describes as M. Loyal Devasseur: —

"We can never henceforth separate our French watering-place from our own landlord of two summers, M. Loyal Devasseur, citizen and town-councillor. Permit us to have the pleasure of presenting M. Loyal Devasseur.

"His own family name is simply Loyal; but, as he is married, and as in that part of France a husband always adds to his own name the family name of his wife, he writes himself Loyal Devasseur. He owns a compact little estate of some twenty or thirty acres on a lofty hillside, and on it he has built two country-houses, which he lets furnished. They are by many

degrees the best houses that are so let near our French watering-place; we have had the honour of living in both, and can testify.

“The entrance-hall of the first we inhabited was ornamented with a plan of the estate, representing it as about twice the size of Ireland; insomuch that when we were yet new to the property (M. Loyal always speaks of it as ‘La propriety’) we went three miles straight on end in search of the Bridge of Austerlitz — which we afterwards found to be immediately outside the window. The Chateau of the Old Guard, in another part of the grounds, and, according to the plan, about two leagues from the little dining-room, we sought in vain for a week, until, happening one evening to sit upon a bench in the forest (forest in the plan), a few yards from the house door, we observed at our feet, in the ignominious circumstances of being upside down and greenly rotten, the Old Guard himself, that is to say, the painted effigy of a member of that distinguished corps, seven feet high, and in the act of carrying arms, who had had the misfortune to be blown down in the previous winter. It will be perceived that M. Loyal is a staunch admirer of the great Napoleon. He is an old soldier himself — captain of the National Guard, with a handsome gold vase on his chimney-piece, presented to him by his company — and his respect for the memory of the illustrious general is enthusiastic. Medallions of him, portraits of him, busts of him, pictures of him, are thickly sprinkled all over the property. During the first month of our occupation, it was our affliction to be constantly knocking down Napoleon: if we touched a shelf in a dark corner, he toppled over with a crash; and every door we opened, shook him to the soul. Yet M. Loyal is not a man of mere castles in the air, or, as he would say, in Spain. He has a specially practical, contriving, clever, skilful eye and hand. His houses are delightful. He unites French elegance and English comfort, in a happy manner quite his own. He has an extraordinary genius for making tasteful little bedrooms in angles of his roofs, which an Englishman would as soon think of turning to any account as he would think of cultivating the desert. We have ourself reposed deliciously in an elegant chamber of M. Loyal’s construction, with our head as nearly in the kitchen chimney-pot as we can conceive it likely for the head of any gentleman, not by profession a sweep, to be. And, into whatsoever strange nook M. Loyal’s genius penetrates, it, in that nook, infallibly constructs a cupboard and a row of pegs. In either of our houses, we could have put away the knapsacks and hung up the hats of the whole regiment of Guides.

“Aforetime, M. Loyal was a tradesman in the town. You can transact business with no present tradesman in the town, and give your card ‘chez M. Loyal,’ but a brighter face shines upon you directly. We doubt if there is, ever was, or ever will be, a man so universally pleasant in the minds of people as M. Loyal is in the minds of the citizens of our French watering-place. They rub their hands and laugh when the}’ speak of him. Ah, but he is such a good child, such a brave boy, such a generous spirit, that Monsieur Loyal! It is the honest truth. M. Loyal’s nature is the nature of a gentleman. He cultivates his ground with his own hands (assisted by one little labourer, who falls into a fit now and then); and he digs and delves from morn till eve in prodigious perspirations — ’ works always,’ as he says — but, cover him with dust, mud, weeds, water, any stains you will, you never can cover the gentleman in M. Loyal. A portly, upright, broad-shouldered, brown-faced man, whose soldierly bearing gives him the appearance of being taller than he is; look into the bright eye of M. Loyal, standing before you in his working blouse and cap, not particularly well shaved, and, it may be, very earthy, and you shall discern in M. Loyal a gentleman whose true politeness is ingrain, and confirmation of whose word by his bond you would blush to think of. Not without reason is M. Loyal when he tells that story, in his own vivacious way, of his travelling to Fulham, near London, to buy all these hundreds and hundreds of trees you now see upon the property, then a bare, bleak hill; and of his sojourning in Fulham three months; and of his jovial evenings with the market-gardeners; and of the crowning banquet before his departure, when the market-gardeners rose as one man, clinked their glasses all together (as the custom at Fulham is), and cried, ’ Vive Loyal!’

“M. Loyal has an agreeable wife, but no family; and he loves to drill the children of his tenants, or run races with them, or do anything with them, or for them, that is good-natured. He is of a highly convivial temperament, and his hospitality is unbounded. Billet a soldier on him, and he is delighted. Five-and-thirty soldiers had M. Loyal billeted on him this present summer, and they all got fat and red-faced in two days. It became a legend among the troops that whosoever got billeted on M. Loyal rolled in clover; and so it fell out that the fortunate man who drew the billet ’ M. Loyal Devasseur ’ always leaped into the air, though in heavy marching order. M. Loyal cannot bear to admit anything that might seem by any implication to disparage the military profession. We hinted to him once, that we were conscious of a remote doubt arising in our mind, whether a sou a day for

pocket-money, tobacco, stockings, drink, washing, and social pleasures in general, left a very large margin for a soldier's enjoyment. Pardon! said Monsieur Loyal, rather wincing. It was not a fortune, but — a la bonne heure — it was better than it used to be! What, we asked him on another occasion, were all those neighbouring peasants, each living with his family in one room, and each having a soldier (perhaps two) billeted on him every other night, required to provide for those soldiers?' Faith!' said M. Loyal reluctantly; 'a bed, monsieur, and fire to cook with, and a candle. And they share their supper with those soldiers. It is not possible that they could eat alone.' — 'And what allowance do they get for this?' said we. Monsieur Loyal drew himself up taller, took a step back, laid his hand upon his breast, and said, with majesty, as speaking for himself and all France, 'Monsieur, it is a contribution to the State!'

"It is never going to rain, according to M. Loyal. When it is impossible to deny that it is now raining in torrents, he says it will be fine — charming — magnificent — to-morrow. It is never hot on the property, he contends. Likewise it is never cold. The flowers, he says, come out, delighting to grow there; it is like Paradise this morning; it is like the Garden of Eden. He is a little fanciful in his language: smilingly observing of Madame Loyal, when she is absent at vespers, that she is 'gone to her salvation' — all6e a son salut. He has a great enjoyment of tobacco, but nothing would induce him to continue smoking face to face with a lady. His short black pipe immediately goes into his breast pocket, scorches his blouse, and nearly sets him on fire. In the town council and on occasions of ceremony, he appears in a full suit of black, with a waistcoat of magnificent breadth across the chest, and a shirt-collar of fabulous proportions. Good M. Loyal! Under blouse or waistcoat, he carries one of the gentlest hearts that beats in a nation teeming with gentle people. He has had losses, and has been at his best under them. Not only the loss of his way by night in the Fulham times — when a bad subject of an Englishman, under pretence of seeing him home, took him into all the night public-houses, drank 'arfanarf' in every one at his expense, and finally fled, leaving him shipwrecked at Cleefeeway, which we apprehend to be Ratcliffe Highway — but heavier losses than that. Long ago, a family of children and a mother were left in one of his houses without money, a whole year. M. Loyal — anything but as rich as we wish he had been — had not the heart to say 'you must go'; so they stayed on and stayed on, and paying-tenants who would have come in

couldn't come in, and at last they managed to get helped home across the water; and M. Loyal kissed the whole group, and said, 'Adieu, my poor infants 1' and sat down in their deserted salon and smoked his pipe of peace. — 'The rent, M. Loyal?' 'Eh! well! The rent!' M. Loyal shakes his head. 'Le bon Dieu,' says M. Loyal presently, 'will recompense me,' and he laughs and smokes his pipe of peace. May he smoke it on the property, and not be recompensed, these fifty years!"

We feel assured that we shall be granted forgiveness for this lengthy quotation, not only because the picture is so delightful in itself, but because it shows us one of Dickens's humbler friends. We add to it this view of the old town: —

"We have an old walled town, rich in cool public wells of water, on the top of a hill within and above the present business-town; and if it were some hundreds of miles farther from England, instead of being, on a clear day, within sight of the grass growing in the crevices

of the chalk-cliffs of Dover, you would long ago have been bored to death about that town. It is more picturesque and quaint than half the innocent places which tourists, following their leader like sheep, have made impostors of. To say nothing of its houses with grave courtyards, its queer by-corners, and its many-windowed streets white and quiet in the sunlight, there is an ancient belfry in it that would have been in all the annuals and albums, going and gone, these hundred years, if it had but been more expensive to get at. Happily it has escaped so well, being only in our French watering-place, that you may like it of your own accord in a natural manner, without being required to go into convulsions about it. We regard it as one of the later blessings of our life, that Bilkins, the only authority on taste, never took any notice that we can find out, of our French watering place. Bilkins never wrote about it, never pointed out anything to be seen in it, never measured anything in it, always left it alone. For which relief, Heaven bless the town and the memory of the immortal Bilkins likewise!

"There is a charming walk, arched and shaded by trees, on the old walls that form the four sides of this high town, whence you get glimpses of the streets below, and changing views of the other town and of the river, and of the hills and of the sea. It is made more agreeable and peculiar by some of the solemn houses that are rooted in the deep streets below, bursting into a fresher existence atop, and having doors and windows, and even gardens, on these ramparts. A child going in at the courtyard gate of one of these

houses, climbing up the many stairs, and coming out at the fourth-floor window, might conceive himself another Jack, alighting on enchanted ground from another bean-stalk. It is a place wonderfully

populous in children; English children, with governesses reading novels as they walk down the shady lanes of trees, or nursemaids interchanging gossip on the seats; French children with their smiling bonnes in snow-white caps, and themselves — if little boys — in straw head-gear like beehives, work-baskets and church hassocks. Three years ago, there were three weazen old men, one bearing a frayed red ribbon in his threadbare buttonhole, always to be found walking together among these children, before dinner-time. If they walked for an appetite, they doubtless lived on pension — were contracted for — otherwise their poverty would have made it a rash action. They were stooping, blear-eyed, dull old men, slip-shod and shabby, in long-skirted, short-waisted coats and meagre trousers, and yet with a ghost of gentility hovering in their company. They spoke little to each other, and looked as if they might have been politically discontented if they had had vitality enough. Once, we overheard red-ribbon feebly complain to the other two that somebody, or something, was ‘a robber’; and then they all three set their mouths so that they would have ground their teeth if they had had any. The ensuing winter gathered red-ribbon unto the great company of faded ribbons, and next year the remaining two were there — getting themselves entangled with hoops and dolls — familiar mysteries to the children — probably in the eyes of most of them, harmless creatures who had never been like children, and whom children could never be like. Another winter came, and another old man went, and so, this present year, the last of the triumvirate left off walking — it was no good, now — and sat by himself on a little solitary bench, with the hoops and the dolls as lively as ever about him.”

There is scarce anything in Goldsmith or Lamb that is more charming.

Here, as everywhere else that he went, Dickens gathered his friends around him, among his visitors being Wilkie Collins, the Leechs, the Wards, and the Frank Stones. We find him writing to Peter Cunningham, “ If you ever have a holiday that you don’t know what to do with, do come and pass a little time here. We live in a charming garden in a very charming country, and should be delighted to receive you. Excellent light wines on the premises, French cookery, millions of roses, two cows (for milk punch), vegetables cut for the pot, and handed in at the kitchen window; five

summer-houses, fifteen fountains (with no water in 'em), and thirty-seven clocks (keeping, as I conceive, Australian time; having no reference whatever to the hours on this side of the globe).”

In 1854 M. Beaucourt was again Dickens's landlord, the house this time being the Villa du Camp de Droite, on the summit of the hill, not far from the Napoleon Column, of which the foundation-stone was laid by Soult in 1804, and which commemorates the encampment of the army that was to conquer perfidious Albion, whose white shores can be seen gleaming across the channel. “We have a most charming place here,” he writes to W. H. Wills, “it beats the former residence all to nothing. We have a beautiful garden, with all its fruits and flowers, and a field of our own, and a road of our own away to the Column, and everything that is airy and fresh. ... If the weather ever should be fine, it might do you good sometimes to come over with the proofs 1 on a Saturday, when the tide serves well, before

1 Of Household Words.

you and Mrs W. make your annual visit. Recollect there is always a bed, and no sudden appearance will put us out.”

The visit of the Prince Consort and Napoleon III to the great Northern Camp was the event of this year; “The day came at last, and all Boulogne turned out for its holiday,” says Forster, then proceeds to quote a letter of Dickens's: — ” but I had by this cooled down a little, and, reserving myself for the illuminations, I . . . set off upon my usual country walk. See my reward. Coming home by the Calais road, covered with dust, I suddenly find myself face to face with Albert and Napoleon, jogging along in the pleasantest way, a little in front, talking extremely loud about the view, and attended by a brilliant staff of some sixty or seventy horsemen, with a couple of our royal grooms with their red coats riding oddly enough in the midst of the magnates. I took off my wide-awake without stopping to stare; whereupon the Emperor pulled off his cocked hat; and Albert (seeing, I suppose, that it was an Englishman) pulled off his. Then we went our several ways. The Emperor is broader across the chest than in the old times when we used to see him so often at Gore House, and stoops more in the shoulders.”

The Leechs were among the visitors this year. After an exceeding stormy crossing, poor Leech, who had suffered severely, was uproariously greeted by the hardhearted throng of idlers who always watch the arrivals by boat, whereupon he explained to Dickens that he now understood what an actor's

feelings must be when his efforts are rewarded with applause; "I felt," he said, "that I had made a great hit."

In 1856 Dickens was back again at the Villa des

Moulineaux, and among those who went over to see him were Douglas Jerrold and Wilkie Collins, who for many weeks lived in a little cottage in the garden of the villa.

Dickens avoided, as far as possible, his fellow-countrymen on tour, and of some of them he had hard words to say. After a visit to the pier, he writes, "The said pier at evening is a phase of the place we never see, and which I hardly know. But I never did behold such specimens of the youth of my country, male and female, as pervade that place. They are really, in their vulgarity and insolence, quite disheartening. One is so fearfully ashamed of them, and they contrast so unfavourably with the natives."

Great sorrow was caused by the death here of his friend, Gilbert Abbott Beckett, one of the original "Punch" staff, a metropolitan police magistrate, and the author of numerous comic works and plays. Mr M. H. Spielmann, in his "History of Punch," relates how when mere lads, a Beckett and his chum, Henry Mayhew, started a satirical paper *The Cerberus*, with a capital of three pounds! To "Punch" he was a facile contributor. "I recollect well," writes the Hon. T. T. a Beckett, in his "Reminiscences," "my brother — who wrote for it from the first number to the last that appeared in his life-time — bringing me away from my office on an assurance that if I accompanied him as far as the Strand, he would show me something that would fill me at once with gratification and amazement. He kept me in suspense until I reached Catherine Street, when he stopped short and said, 'Now you shall see me draw a pound from Punch, and if that don't amaze and gratify you, you must have but a poor sense of the marvellous and very little brotherly sympathy.'"

Of his nimble wit Mr Spielmann gives a pretty example, "when the election of Louis Napoleon appeared likely, the policy of Punch in respect to it was anxiously discussed at the Table. One of the Staff — Thackeray most likely — declared that it would be wise to be indefinite. 'Nonsense,' said a Beckett, 'if you're not definite, you'd better be dumb in it!'"

An epidemic had broken out in Boulogne, and among many children attacked by it was a Beckett's favourite son; the father hastened from Paris, and himself died only two days after his boy.

Turning to happier matters; Albert and Arthur Smith were two jolly fishermen, and used to go a-fishing in the harbour. Dr Elliotson was also among the visitors to Boulogne, and Ballantine gives a comic description of a “crossing.” Upon one occasion the doctor, Charles Dickens, and Ballantine “started together in the packet from Boulogne, for Folkestone. Neither of my comrades was a good sailor, and they knew it themselves. The illustrious author armed himself with a box of homoeopathic globules; and the doctor, whose figure was rotund, having a theory that by tightening the stomach the internal movements which caused the sickness might be prevented, waddled down to the boat with his body almost divided by a strap. The weather was stormy, and neither remedy proved of any avail.”

We will say “farewell” to “Our French Watering Place” with one more quotation : —

“The English form a considerable part of the population of our French watering-place, and are deservedly addressed and respected in many ways. Some of the surface-addresses to them are odd enough, as when a laundress puts a placard outside her house announcing her possession of that curious British instrument, a ‘Mingle’; or when a tavern-keeper provides accommodation for the celebrated English game of ‘Nokemdon.’ But, to us, it is not the least pleasant feature of our French watering-place that a long and constant fusion of the two great nations there, has taught each to like the other, and to learn from the other, and to rise superior to the absurd prejudices that have lingered among the weak and ignorant in both countries equally.

“Drumming and trumpeting, of course, go on for ever in our French watering-place. Flag-flying is at a premium, too; but we cheerfully avow that we consider a flag a very pretty object, and that we take such outward signs of innocent liveliness to our heart of hearts. The people in the town and in the country are a busy people who work hard; they are sober, temperate, good-humoured, light-hearted, and generally remarkable for their engaging manners. Few just men, not moderately bilious, could see them in their recreations without very much respecting the character that is so easily, so harmlessly, and so simply pleased.”

In October, 1855, after an autumn spent at Folkestone, Dickens spent the winter in Paris, taking an appartement at 49 Avenue de Champs Elysees, where he remained until the following May. Wilkie Collins lodged hard by,

the Reverend James White and his family also stayed for the winter, and among the visitors was the ever welcome Macready.

Dickens had a “most awful job to find a place that would in the least suit” him and his family, but at last settled at the address above given, where, he writes to Wills, “I have two floors . . . entresol and first — in a doll’s house, but really pretty within, and the view without astounding.”

He seems to have devoted considerable time to the theatre; renewed his friendship with M. Regnier of the Francais, and writes to Forster a brilliant account of Frederic Lemaitre’s acting.

There on January 19, 1856, we have him writing to Wilkie Collins, noting that he is “sitting” to Ary Scheffer, and that he has met Georges Sand at Madame Viardot’s, noting of her — ” the human mind cannot conceive any one more astonishingly opposed to all my preconceptions. If I had been shown her in a state of repose, and asked what I thought her to be, I should have said: ‘The Queen’s monthly nurse.’ Au teste, she has nothing of the *bas bleu* about her, and is very quiet and agreeable.” Ary Scheffer he describes as a “ frank and noble fellow,” but with regard to the portrait he writes sadly to Forster, “The nightmare portrait is nearly done. ... It is a fine spirited head, painted at his very best. . . . But it does not look to me at all like, nor does it strike me that if I saw it in a gallery I should suppose myself to be the original. It is always possible that I don’t know my own face.”

Forster gives brief notes of some pleasant dinner parties; at Scribe’s, to meet Auber, “a stolid little elderly man, rather petulant in manner “; at M. Pichot’s, where was Lamartine, “frank and unaffected,” and “Scribe and his wife were of the party, but had to go away at the ice time,” to be at the opening performance of Scribe and Auber’s opera “Manon Lescaut “; Mdme. Scribe — “the most extraordinary woman I ever beheld; for her eldest son must be thirty, and she has the figure of five . and twenty, and is strikingly handsome. So graceful, too, that her manner of rising, curtsying, laughing, and going out after him, was pleasanter than the pleasantest thing I have ever seen done on the stage.”

MRS CHARLES DICKENS

BEFORE entering upon the one unpleasant task which the writing of this book compels us to perform, namely, the account of the separation between Charles Dickens and his wife, it will be well to gain a more close acquaintance with the latter than we have yet done. The pages of Forster contain but very fleeting and scanty glimpses of her. She was the eldest daughter of George Hogarth, Dickens's fellow-worker on the *Morning Chronicle*, and was married on April 2, 1836. The honeymoon was spent at the little village of Chalk, on the road between Rochester and Gravesend. E. Laman Blanchard tells us that he used frequently to meet Dickens walking on this road, usually near Chalk, at a point where a pretty lane branched off in the direction of Shorne and Cobham, "here the brisk walk of Charles Dickens was always slackened, and he never failed to glance meditatively for a few moments at the windows of a corner house on the southern side of the road, advantageously situated for commanding views of the river and the far-stretching landscape beyond. It was in that house he lived immediately after his marriage." Soon after the birth of their first son they stayed there again. In the early years, at any rate, of their married life, Dickens used to take his wife into his confidence as to the progress of the work in hand, for when writing "*Nicholas Nickleby*" he says in a letter to Forster, "Nancy is no more. I showed what I have done to Kate last night, who was in an unspeakable 'state' : from which and my own impression I augur well."

We have already noted many trips and tours upon which Mrs Dickens accompanied her husband, not always, however, starting in very high spirits, as to America, when Dickens says in referring to his anxiety to go there, "Kate cries dismally if I mention the subject," not altogether an unnatural thing for a mother to do; later on he writes, "Kate is quite reconciled. Anne" (her maid) "goes, and is amazingly cheerful and light of heart upon it." Of which Anne Dickens wrote at a very different time as, "an attached woman servant (more friend to both of us than a servant), who

lived with us sixteen years, and is now married, and who was, and still is, in Mrs Dickens's confidence and in mine. . . ."

Here are two accounts of Mrs Dickens's personal appearance at this period : —

"I was first introduced to his wife," writes E. E. C. "in the sanctuary of the bedroom, where I was arranging my hair before the glass. I thought her a pretty little woman, with the heavy-lidded large blue eyes so much admired by men. The nose was a little retrouse, the forehead good, the mouth small, round, and red-lipped, with a pleasant smiling expression, notwithstanding the sleepy look of the slow-moving eyes. The weakest part of her face was the chin, which melted too suddenly into the throat."

Of her, during the visit to America in 1842, here is a description, "Mrs Dickens is a large woman, having a great deal of color, and is rather coarse; but she has a good face and looks amiable. She seemed to think that Mr Dickens was the attraction, and was perfectly satisfied to play second, happy in the knowledge that she was his wife. She wore a pink silk dress, trimmed with a white blond flounce, and a pink cord and tassel wound about her head. She spoke but little, yet smiled pleasantly at all that was said."

Chief Justice Ellis Lewis, of Philadelphia, writes, "I was much pleased with the social and genial disposition of Mr Dickens, and was impressed with the great difference which appeared to exist, at that early time, in their lives, between the husband and wife. She was good looking, plain and courteous in her manners, but rather taciturn, leaving the burthen of the conversation to fall upon her gifted husband." What else could the poor lady be expected to do?

Dickens writes on April 24, 1842, of their arrival at Cincinnati, where they landed at night, "as we made our way on foot over the broken pavement, Anne measured her length upon the ground, but didn't hurt herself. I say nothing of Kate's troubles — but you recollect her propensity? She falls into, or out of, every coach or boat we enter; scrapes the skin off her legs; brings great sores and swellings on her feet; chips large fragments out of her ankle-bones; and makes herself blue with bruises. She really has, however, since we got over the first trial of being among circumstances so new and so fatiguing, made a most admirable traveller in every respect. She has never screamed or expressed alarm under circumstances that would have fully justified her doing so, even in my eyes; has never given way to

despondency or fatigue, though we have now been travelling incessantly, through a very rough country, for more than a month, and have been at times, as you may readily suppose, most

thoroughly tired; has always accommodated herself, well and cheerfully, to everything; and has pleased me very much, and proved herself perfectly game." The "even in my eyes," and "has pleased me very much" smack somewhat of the sultanesque.

An American visitor, Miss Clarke, described Mrs Dickens in 1852 as "a plump, rosy, English, handsome woman, with a certain air of absent-mindedness, yet gentle and kindly."

On Continental tours and sojournings we catch faint glimpses of her now and again in Forster's pages; we read, too, of her ill-health more than once and of visits to Malvern and elsewhere for its betterment, but she is permitted — rightly or wrongly, who knows? — by the biographer to make but little figure until we reach the chapter headed somewhat melodramatically, "What Happened At This Time." Before studying this sad chapter, we will give some further portraits of Mrs Dickens.

An old friend of hers has told us that she must have been extremely pretty as a girl; a sweet-natured, easygoing, amiable woman; without, perhaps, any very strong character. A thorough-going admirer of her husband, whom she loved very sincerely. Once at Boulogne, our informant was driving with Mrs Dickens, who told of her husband's intense fondness for babies, and how he liked them as "new" as possible. Then we have Hans Andersen writing, "I had previously heard many people remark that Agnes in 'David Copperfield' was like Dickens's own wife; and although he may not have chosen her deliberately as a model for Agnes, yet still I can think of no one else in his books so near akin to her in all that is graceful and amiable. Mrs Dickens had a certain soft, womanly repose and reserve about her; but whenever she spoke there came such a light into her large eyes, and such a smile upon her lips, and there was such a charm in the tones of her voice, that henceforth I shall always connect her and Agnes together."

In 1853 Mrs Beecher Stowe describes Mrs Dickens as "a good specimen of a truly English woman; tall, large, and well developed, with fine, healthy colour, and an air of frankness, cheerfulness, and reliability. A friend whispered to me that she was as observing and fond of humour as her husband."

Another has told us that she was a typical, crinoliny early - Victorian woman, a John Leech woman, which conveys much to those familiar with the earlier volumes of "Punch." She was a domestic wife in the days when wives were expected to be so, and, as was also expected, made little figure in her husband's public life. She was a sweet, kind, charming woman. "She was a kind, good woman," we are told by one who heartily sympathised with her, "good in every sense of the word, and when she left her husband's house, she left her heart behind her."

Lady Ritchie writes of a children's party at the Dickens's, "One special party I remember, which seemed to me to go on for years with its kind, gay hospitality, its music, its streams of children passing and re-passing. We were a little shy coming in alone in all the consciousness of new shoes and ribbons, but Mrs Dickens called us to sit beside her till the long sweeping dance was over, and talked to us as if we were grown up, which is always flattering to little children."

As Dickens himself insisted on making public some details, at any rate, of the causes that led to his separating from Mrs Dickens, we are not trespassing on a matter which he considered did not concern the public; moreover, the method of his dealing with it casts a considerable light upon his character. He has told his story with not a little fullness; it must be borne in mind that Mrs Dickens chose the more dignified part — silence.

Forster was a man who weighed well his written words, and there are many pregnant sentences in the chapter to which we have alluded, and this tale had best be told, for the most part, in his words, and those of Dickens, taken from that same chapter, and from a letter written by Dickens to Arthur Smith, "as an authority for correction of false rumours and scandals." This letter was published in the New York Tribune of August 16, 1858, and Dickens always called it his "violated letter"; but, having been written as an "authority," we do not see that we can do better than quote portions of it.

Forster begins his chapter by noting that a change had gradually been coming over Dickens, and that "the satisfactions which home should have supplied, and which indeed were essential requirements of his nature, he had failed to find in his home." His nervous system had undoubtedly become strained; "too late to say, put the curb on," he writes, "and don't rush at hills — the wrong man to say it to. I have now no relief but in action. I am become incapable of rest. I am quite confident I should rust, break, and die, if I spared myself. Much better to die, doing. What I am in

that way, nature made me first, and my way of life has of late, alas! confirmed. I must accept the drawback — since it is one — with the powers I have; and I must hold upon the tenure prescribed to me.” Then later, “Why is it, that as with poor David, a sense comes always crushing on me now, when I fall into low spirits, as of one happiness I have missed in life, and one friend and companion I have never made?”

Edmund Yates tells us, “ it had been obvious to those visiting at Tavistock House that, for some time, the relations between host and hostess had been somewhat strained; but this state of affairs was generally ascribed to the irritability of the literary temperament on Dickens’s part, and on Mrs Dickens’s side to a little love of indolence and ease, such as, however, provoking to their husbands, is not uncommon among middle-aged matrons with large families! . . . Dickens, the master of humour and pathos, the arch-compeller of tears and laughter, was in no sense an emotional man.”

Forster writes that, though not altogether unsuspecting, he was shocked at receiving a letter from Dickens, of which this is the main portion: “Poor Catherine and I are not made for each other, and there is no help for it. It is not only that she makes me uneasy and unhappy, but that I make her so too — and much more so. She is exactly what you know, in the way of being amiable and complying; but we are strangely ill-assorted for the bond there is between us. God knows she would have been a thousand times happier if she had married another kind of man, and that her avoidance of this destiny would have been at least equally good for us both. I am often cut to the heart by thinking what a pity it is, for her own sake, that I ever fell in her way; and if I were sick or disabled to-morrow, I know how sorry she would be, and how deeply grieved myself, to think how we had lost each other. But exactly the same incompatibility would arise, the moment I was well again; and nothing on earth could make her understand me, or suit us to each other. Her temperament will not go with mine. It mattered not so much when we had only ourselves to consider, but reasons have been growing since which make it all but hopeless that we should even try to struggle on. What is now befalling me I have seen steadily coming, ever since the days you remember when Mary was born; and I know too well that you cannot, and no one can, help me.” Then further on, “I claim no immunity from blame. There is plenty of fault on my side, I dare say, in the way of a thousand uncertainties, caprices, and difficulties of disposition; but only one thing will alter all that, and that is the end which alters everything.”

In the "Letter," he writes, "Mrs Dickens and I have lived unhappily together for many years. Hardly anyone who has known us intimately can fail to have known that we are, in all respects of character and temperament, wonderfully unsuited to each other. I suppose that no two people, not vicious in themselves, ever were joined together, who had a greater difficulty in understanding one another, or who had less in common." And, "For some years past Mrs Dickens has been in the habit of representing to me that it would be better for her to go away and live apart; . . . that she felt herself unfit for the life she had to live as my wife, and that she would be better far away. I have uniformly replied that we must bear out our misfortune, and fight the fight out to the end; that the children were the first consideration, and that I feared they must bind us together 'in appearance.'"

Then follows a statement which seems to point to a very curious omission on the part of Forster in his account of the separation : — "At length, within these three weeks, it was suggested to me by Forster that even for their sakes, it would surely be better to reconstruct and rearrange their unhappy home. I empowered him to treat with Mrs Dickens, as the friend of both of us for one and twenty years. Mrs Dickens wished to add on her part, Mark Lemon, and did so. On Saturday last Lemon wrote to Forster that Mrs Dickens, 'gratefully and thankfully accepted' the terms I proposed her."

In May, 1858, the separation took place, the eldest son going with his mother, the other children with their father.

Irritated by scandalous gossip, Dickens took the unwise step of taking the public into his confidence, acting against the advice of discreet friends and upon that of one — usually discreet — John Delane, the editor of *The Times*. In *Household Words* for June 12, under the heading "Personal," Dickens addressed his readers in a short paper, from which we give the following extracts: —

"My conspicuous position has often made me the subject of fabulous stories and unaccountable statements."

"Some domestic trouble of mine, of long-standing, on which I will make no further remark than that it claims to be respected, as being of a sacredly private nature, has lately been brought to an arrangement, which involves no anger or ill-will of any kind, and the whole origin, progress, and surrounding circumstances of which have been, throughout, within the

knowledge of my children. It is amicably composed, and its details have now but to be forgotten by those concerned in it.”

“I most solemnly declare, then — and this I do, both in my own name and in my wife’s name — that all the lately whispered rumours touching the trouble at which I have glanced, are abominably false.”

He quarrelled with Mark Lemon because a similar statement was not published in *Punch*!

Two more quotations, and we turn gladly from this unhappy incident.

“I well recollect,” says the writer of “*Leaves from a Life*,” speaking of a time after the separation, “being in a box at the theatre one evening with my mother and Mrs Dickens: the latter burst into tears suddenly and went back into the box. Charles Dickens had come into the opposite box with some friends, and she could not bear it. My mother took her back to her house in Gloucester Road, Regent’s Park, telling me to sit quietly until she returned. When she did she said nothing to me, but I heard her tell Papa about it, and add’ I thought I should never be able to leave her; that man is a brute.’ Papa shrugged his shoulders and said nothing.”

Shirley Brooks makes this entry in his diary, under date July nth, 1870, “E “ (Mrs Shirley Brooks) “ called on Mrs Dickens, first time since the death. Describes her as looking well, being calm, and speaking of matters with a certain becoming dignity. Is resolved not to allow Forster, or any other biographer, to allege that she did not make D. a happy husband, having letters after the birth of her ninth child, in which D. writes like a lover. Her eldest daughter visited her and declared that the separation between them had resulted solely from her, Mary’s, own self-will. Miss H. (Hogarth) has also visited her — I will not write about this, but the affair is to the honour of Mrs D.’s heart.”

So we must leave the story, unable to pronounce judgment upon either party, one of whom spoke too much, the other being silent. It has only been told again — as far as it can yet be told — because it helps us to understand the character of Charles Dickens. In conclusion, we cannot do better than quote with entire approbation Dr A. W. Ward’s summing-up, “If he had ever loved his wife with that affection before which so-called incompatibilities of habits, temper, or disposition fade into nothingness, there is no indication of it in any of his numerous letters addressed to her. Neither has it ever been pretended that he strove in the direction of that resignation which love and duty together made possible to David Copperfield, or even that he remained

in every way master of himself, as many men have known how to remain, the story of whose wedded life and its disappointments has never been written in history or figured in fiction.”

XXXIII

GAD'S HILL

THIS day," March 14, 1856, writes Dickens, "I have paid the purchase money for Gad's Hill Place." We need not do more than remind the reader of the story of the queer little boy who had hoped that one day this house might be his, which boy was Dickens. Nor does it come within our plan to give the events of Dickens's life during the years that Gad's Hill was his home; they have already been fully told in the pages of Forster; we shall merely glance at some of them.

Gad's Hill Place is situated on the old Dover Road, about half-way between Gravesend and Rochester. Until 1855 it was the home of the Reverend James Lynn, father of Mrs Lynn Linton. "Of the Lynn girls at Gad's Hill," writes Mr Layard, "we catch a pretty glimpse from no less a personage than one whom Mrs Linton believed to be the prototype of Dickens's creation, Tony Weller. His name was Chomley, and he was driver of the Rochester coach. When passing Gads' Hill House, he was wont to crack his long whip and say to the passengers, 'Now, gentlemen, I will show you the prettiest sight in all the country.' At the sound of the well-known crack, a bevy of bright, pretty young girls would appear at the window, nodding and smiling and kissing their hands to the delighted old Jehu."

In February, 1857, Dickens actually entered upon his new possession, of which we will give his own description, written to M de Cerjat in July, 1858; "At this present moment I am on my little Kentish freehold (not in top boots, and not particularly prejudiced that I know of), looking on as pretty a view out of my study window as you will find in a long day's English ride. My little place is a grave red brick house (time of George the First, I suppose 1), which I have added to and stuck bits upon in all manner of ways, so that it is as pleasantly irregular, and as violently opposed to all architectural ideas, as the most hopeful man could possibly desire. It is on the summit of Gad's Hill. The robbery was committed before the door, on the man with the treasure, and Falstaff ran away from the identical spot of

ground now covered by the room in which I write. A little rustic alehouse, called The Sir John Falstaff, is over the way — has been over the way, ever since, in honour of the event. Cobham woods and Park are behind the house; the distant Thames in front; the Medway, with Rochester, and its old castle and cathedral, on one side.”

In George Dolby’s “ Charles Dickens as I Knew Him” we find much interesting information concerning Gad’s Hill and life there, which throws light upon the character of the master of the house. In the hall was prominent a capacious box for the reception of letters and so forth for the post, with the postal hours painted in big figures upon it. “A peculiarity of the household was the fact that, except at table, no servant was ever seen about. This was because the requirements of life were always ready to hand, especially in the bed-rooms. Each of these rooms contained the most comfortable of beds,

1 Built in 1779.

a sofa, and easy-chair, cane-bottomed chairs — in which Mr Dickens had a great belief, always preferring to use one himself — a large-sized writing-table, profusely supplied with paper and envelopes of every conceivable size and description, and an almost daily change of new quill pens. There was a miniature library of books in each room, a comfortable fire in winter, with a shining copper kettle in each fireplace; and on a side-table, cups, saucers, tea-caddy, teapot, sugar and milk. . . .” Edmund Yates tells us that “ Life at Gadshill for visitors, I speak from experience, was delightful. You breakfasted at nine, smoked your cigar, read the papers, and pottered about the garden until luncheon at one.¹ All the morning Dickens was at work. . . . After luncheon (a substantial meal, though Dickens generally took little but bread and cheese and a glass of ale) the party would assemble in the hall, which was hung round with a capital set of Hogarth prints. . . . Some walked, some drove, some pottered. . . . It was during one of these walks that Dickens showed me, in Cobham Park, the stile close by which, after a fearful struggle, Mr Dadd had been murdered by his lunatic son in 1843. Dickens acted the whole scene with his usual dramatic force. I had heard something of the story before from Frith, who is an excellent raconteur. The murderer then escaped, but was afterward secured: he had been travelling on a coach, and his homicidal tendencies had been aroused by regarding the large neck, disclosed by a very low collar, of a fellow-passenger, who, waking from a sleep, found Dadd’s finger’s (sic) playing round his throat.

On searching Dadd's studio, after his arrest, they found, painted on the wall behind a screen, portraits of Egg, Stone, and Frith, Dadd's

1 Dolby says 1.30.

intimate associates, all with their throats cut — a pleasant suggestion of their friend's intentions.”

When in most houses the soup, the fish, in fact the whole “bill of fare” was placed upon the table at once and growing sodden under the covers, the dinner table at Gad's Hill was bright with flowers and the dishes were handed round. Marcus Stone says that it was the sweetest, cleanliest house he had ever been in, and, we know, that there was not a detail of household management in which Dickens did not take a personal interest. He was master of his house.

Of Dickens at Gad's Hill, Fields says, “on the lawn playing at bowls, in the Swiss summer-house charmingly shaded by green leaves, he always seemed the best part of summer, beautiful as the season is in the delightful region where he lived. ... At his own table, surrounded by his family, and a few guests, old acquaintances from town, — among them sometimes Forster, Carlyle, Reade, Collins, Layard, Maclise, Stone, Macready, Talfourd, — he was always the choicest and liveliest companion. He was not what is called in society a professed talker, but he was something far better and rarer.”

He, also, tells us, what is evident from other sources, that “Bright colours were a constant delight to him; and the gay hues of flowers were those most welcome to his eye. When the rhododendrons were in bloom in Cobham Park, the seat of his friend and neighbour, Lord Darnley, he always counted on taking his guests there to enjoy the magnificent show.”

Holman Hunt gives a charming record of a conversation with Dickens at Gad's Hill in 1860. They got to talking about Shakespeare, and the painter asked the writer which was to him the most interesting passage in the works of the dramatist. Dickens replied that the question was one difficult to answer, for that he loved so many, and then went on to speak of an incident in Henry IV., in Justice Shallow's house and orchard, and the arrival of Falstaff to enrol recruits; “and at last the scene,” Dickens continued, “in Shallow's garden, with Justice Slender added to the party, and Falstaff returning from the Northern wars. As I read I can see the soft evening sky beneath the calm twilight air, and I can smell the steaming pippins as they are brought on to the table, and when I have ended my reading I remember

all as if I had been present, and heard Falstaff and the whole company receiving the news of the King's death."

Across the road that runs in front of the house, was a shrubbery, to which access from the garden was gained by an underground passage, made by Dickens in 1859, and in this shrubbery was placed the Swiss chalet, given to him by Fechter, which came from Paris in ninety-four pieces; "I have put five mirrors in the chalet where I write," he says, "and they reflect and refract, in all kinds of ways, the leaves that are quivering at the windows, and the great fields of waving corn, and the sail-dotted river. My room is up among the branches of the trees; and the birds and the butterflies fly in and out, and the green branches shoot in at the open windows, and the lights and the shadows of the clouds come and go with the rest of the company. The scent of the flowers, and indeed of everything that is growing for miles and miles, is most delicious."

When American friends came to see him here, there were high jinks and tremendous jauntings. Dolby mentions one such gathering — in the latter days, in June, 1869 — when amongst others there were gathered together Mr and Mrs J. T. Fields, Miss Mabel Lowell, a daughter of James Russell Lowell, and Mr and Mrs Childs of Philadelphia, who were astonished at the wonderful singing of the nightingales. "One of the most delightful days of this visit was occupied by a drive from Gad's Hill to Canterbury, a distance of twenty-nine miles, over the old Dover Road, through Rochester, Chatham, Sittingbourne, and Faversham.

"We were to make an early start, so as to give plenty of time for luncheon, in a beautiful spot already chosen, and allow for a ramble afterwards.

"Two post carriages were turned out with postillions, in the red jackets of the old Royal Dover Road, buckskin breeches, and top-boots into the bargain.

"The preparations for this new pilgrimage to Canterbury were of the most lavish description, and I can see now the hampers and wine baskets blocking the steps of the house before they were packed in the carriages.

"Every one was in the best of spirits, the weather was all that could be desired, and the ladies did honour to it by the brightness of their costumes. We were all glad, too, that the restoration of the Chief's health enabled him to enjoy as much pleasure himself as he was giving to his friends.

“We started sharp to time, and travelled merrily over the road, with hop gardens on either side, until we reached Rochester, our horses making such a clatter in this slumbrous old city that all the shopkeepers in the main street turned out to see us pass.

“Mr Dickens rode in the foremost carriage, and having occasion to pull up at the shop of one of the tradesmen in the main street of Rochester, a small crowd collected round the carriages. It seemed to be pretty generally known amongst them that Dickens was of the party, and we got a good deal of fun out of the mistake made by a man in the crowd, who pointed up at Mr James T. Fields, and called out, ‘That’s Dickens!’ Poor Fields was in great confusion, especially when Mr Dickens, to complete the deception, handed up a small parcel to him, with the request, ‘Here you are, Dickens, take charge of this for me.’

“Away we went again through Rochester, and, skirting Chatham, were soon again in the open country on the road to Sittingbourne, where a relay of horses was awaiting us.

“A short rest in the brick-making town was quite sufficient for us, and we sped on to that haven of rest where it had been arranged that we should lunch. A more suitable spot could not have been found. It lay in the deep shades of a wood, with a rippling stream running through.

“The breakfast hour had been an early one, and the long drive had given an excellent edge to our appetites. We turned to with a ready will to unload the carriages, and carry the baskets into the wood. Everybody did something, and the cloth was speedily laid. An hour was the time allowed for luncheon, and out of this we had to let the postillions get their meal when we had finished. Dickens would not let us start again until every vestige of our visit to the wood in the shape of lobster shells and other debris, had been removed.

“We drove into Canterbury in the early afternoon, just as the bells of the Cathedral were ringing for afternoon service. Entering the quiet city under the old gate at the end of the High Street, it seemed as though its inhabitants were indulging in an afternoon’s nap after a midday dinner. But our entry and the clatter of our horses’ hoofs roused them as it had done the people of Rochester, and they came running to their windows and out into the streets to learn what so much noise might mean.

“We turned into the bye-street in which the Fountain Hotel is situated, where the carriages and horses were to be put up while we explored the city.

. . . We took tea at the hotel, and then at about six o'clock started on our homeward journey, Canterbury having by this time quite got over the effects of its day-sleep. The people were enjoying their stroll in the cool of the evening, and the streets presented a much more animated appearance than they had done on our arrival.

“In the interval between drowsiness and wakefulness, Canterbury had evidently summoned sufficient energy to make inquiries about our party; and learning that no less a person than Charles Dickens was responsible for having disturbed their slumbers earlier in the day, the good people at once forgave us all, and were quite hearty in their salutations as we left the town.

“There was never a more delightful ride on a summer's evening than the one we took then. The day was fast closing in, and as there was no reason for loitering on the road, we sped along at a rattling pace.

“The journey from Gad's Hill to Canterbury had taken nearly five hours, including the time allowed for luncheon and loitering. The journey home was made in less than three, and we forgot our fatigue in the enjoyment of supper. It seems to me, as I look back over the years that have intervened, that I enjoyed a great privilege, no less than a rare pleasure, in being in the company of my dear old Chief when he took this his last visit to Canterbury, in the streets of which he had so often wandered in his earlier days.”

On another occasion, really a business meeting, W. H. Palmer, the manager of Niblo's Theatre, New York, and Benjamin Webster, the English actor, were present, and in the billiard room a match was arranged between the two, Dickens acting as marker.

“The disparity between the players appeared to be very great, for the American was in the prime of life, whereas the Englishman was far advanced in years and very feeble. Dickens, however, who knew Mr Webster's 'form,' opened the betting by backing him to win. Fechter backed his new manager, and the rest of the company held aloof from the market for a time. It must be said that the bets were of a very trifling description, for Dickens always set his face against gambling.

“The game was closely contested, but Webster carried it off. Notwithstanding his great age and infirmity, it was most entertaining to see with what unerring certainty he made his strokes, although before each one it took him some moments to make his bridge. Dickens was delighted at his old friend's success, but to me he said — ' Bless you! that's nothing. Ben,

as a young man, was in the habit of tossing in the streets with piemen for pies, and invariably won 1”“

A semi-theatrical friend, who gave to Dickens Linda, the splendid St Bernard that was one of the ornaments of Gad’s Hill Place, was Albert Smith, Albert Richard being his full name. He was born in 1816, and educated at Merchant Taylor’s School, afterward studying at the Middlesex Hospital, in these student days sharing rooms with Leech. Edmund Yates has much to tell us of Albert Smith, whose initials Jerrold unkindly said were only “two thirds of the truth.” He writes, “A man of thirty-five years of age, with large head, large body, short legs; long hair, long reddish-brown beard and moustache, small keen deep-set gray eyes, good aquiline nose, small hands and feet; always badly dressed: when at home at work, he wore a short blue blouse, such as is to be seen on all the Swiss peasants, and an old pair of trousers; in the street he was given to gaudy neckkerchiefs, and had a festoon of ‘charms’ dangling from his watch-chain.” His famous Mont Blanc entertainment was produced on March 15, 1852, at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, and was an immense success. His wife was Miss Mary Keeley, daughter of the famous actress.

Sala paid a visit to Albert Smith, in Percy Street, Tottenham Court Road, when he, the latter, was about thirty, and gives in his “Life and Adventures” a capital account of the event: — “I can recall him, as a sturdy looking, broad-shouldered, short-necked man, with grey eyes, and flowing locks of light brown, and large side-whiskers; later in life he wore a beard. . . . His voice was a high treble; his study was like a curiosity shop. . . . Littered about the room, which was on the ground floor, were piles of French novels, in yellow paper covers, dolls, caricatures, toys of every conceivable kind, a debardeuse silk shirt, crimson sash, and velvet trousers, the white linen raiment of a Pierrot, cakes of soap from Vienna made in the similitude of fruit, iron jewellery from Berlin, . . . miniature Swiss chalets, porcelain and meerschaum pipes — although Albert was no smoker — and the model of a French diligence. The owner of this queer assemblage of odds and ends was clad in a blue blouse. . . . He was one of the kindest and cheeriest of mankind.”

Serjeant Ballantine, who was a close friend of his, goes so far as to credit Albert Smith with genius, to which length few will accompany him who have read his novels, which, though full of life and humour, are not works which give him a claim to such a lofty standing. With the rest of the

Serjeant's description of him it is easier to agree : — ” As a companion he was full of fun, and bubbled over with high spirits. He had passed some years of his early life in Paris in the study of medicine, and could record many an amusing scene of the Quartier Latin. He spoke French fluently, and the good-looking, fair-haired young Englishman must have been a favoured partner at the dances, when grisettes, now a departed class, after the honest labour of the day, indulged in much joyousness without coarseness or crime.”

It was a time of great rejoicing when, in the summer of 1860, Miss Kate Dickens married Charles Alston Collins, younger brother of Wilkie. He was born in 1828. He had studied art, joining the Pre-Raphaelites, and given proofs of rare abilities, but his health was not strong, and he turned to literature, contributing some charming essays to *All The Year Round*. He died in 1873, and, as Forster says, “until then it was not known, even by those nearest to him, how great must have been the suffering which he had borne, through many trying years, with uncomplaining patience.”

Among those present at the wedding were Holman Hunt, as best man, Mary Boyle, Marguerite Power, Fechter, Edmund Yates, Percy Fitzgerald, W. H. Wills and his wife, Henry Chorley, Chauncey Hare Townshend, and Wilkie Collins.

XXXIV

CHARLES ALBERT FECHTER

NEXT after Macready it is safe to count Charles Fechter as Dickens's most intimate friend among the players. He used to say of himself that his father was a German, his mother French, and that he "breathed" in Hanway Yard, Oxford Street, where he saw the light in the year 1824. He received some education as an artist, but the stage attracted him too strongly to resist the call, and he first trod the boards, as an amateur, at the Salle Moliere in "Le Mari de la Veuve." After studying at the Conservatoire, he toured in Italy, and between 1844-60 made various appearances at the Comédie Francaise, Vaudeville, Ambigu Comique, Varietes, Porte St Martin, Odeon. By all accounts he was an actor of rare romantic charm and sincerity. His first striking success appears to have been made in "La Dame aux Camelias" and he was the original Luis and Fabien in "The Corsican Brothers." In 1845 he appeared with a French troupe in London, in 1846 acted in Berlin, and made his first appearance in English at the Princess's Theatre on October 27, 1860, in "Ruy Blas." To complete this brief sketch of his biography, before turning to the man and the actor: he first acted "Hamlet" in March, 1861; undertook the management of the Lyceum Theatre in 1863, opening with "The Duke's Motto." Four years later he went

to the Adelphi Theatre, where he produced and acted the leading part in Charles Dickens's and Wilkie Collins's "No Thoroughfare." In 1870 he went to the United States, where he died in 1879 on his farm near Philadelphia.

John Hollingshead states that if he had any private financial supporter — a "backer" — it was Dickens, and that when Fechter went to America he owed him several thousand pounds, a debt every farthing of which was paid off.

Socially he was a genial, blustering, kind fellow, with a very good conceit of himself. Of small talk he had no great supply, but was possessed of a wonderful gift of mimicry, which afforded high entertainment. In "Leaves from a Life" he is described as "a stout, fleshy looking man, with rather

long hair and very beautiful hands, feet, and legs; and his voice, despite his extremely strong accent, was very delightful.” Edmund Yates says of him, he “ was singularly abstemious in those days, eating little and drinking nothing but weak claret-and-water, though he had a good cellar, and was especially proud of some 1820 port, which he was always offering to his friends; a man of singular fascination, and amiability, though intolerant of humbug, and savage where he disliked.” The following from Herman Charles Merivale’s entertaining volume, “Bar, Stage and Platform “ is too good to quote otherwise than in full: —

“Fechter’s appearance as an English actor followed shortly after Charles Kean’s retirement from management, and, too soon, from life. And Kean was more amusing about ‘that Frenchman’ than about anything else. His own French, it must be admitted, was purest Captain of the Boats. ‘Shattow-Reddow,’ with a strong emphasis on the first syllables, was his way of dwelling on the duellist, whom Fechter dismissed as ‘Chiteaurenaud’ all in one syllable, as the man of Killarney contrived to do, they say, with McGillicuddy’s Reeks. That any Frenchman should act in English at all was too much for that Etonian spirit. But that he should act any of his — Kean’s — parts, was sacrilege. Why, it was worse than ‘Dillod.’ Some rash intruder accused Kean of having had hints from Fechter about his Mephistopheles — a strong stage picture of the popular fiend from the jocular stand-point, but memorable — and he admitted it with a reservation. When he grew excited, his m’s and n’s were wont to get more mixed than ever with him. ‘Taught me, did he? Dab his impudence. I went to see him in Paris, and he showed me how to bake by dose.’

“Nevertheless, it is by right of his Hamlet and Iago that Fechter takes his rank with me. Of all my actors of romance he was the best, and in that light he made those parts quite daringly his own. It has been told of ‘W. G.’ the cricketer, that when he made his first appearance at Brighton with his new methods, Alfred Shaw the bowler, after the match was over, complained to an old chum — the umpire, who had not seen Grace before — that he never bowled so well in his life, and that he was always being hit for four or six against the rules. ‘It’s all very well,’ he said, ‘ but it ain’t cricket.’ ‘Well, Alfred, I dunno,’ answered the pal. ‘If you bowls him all you knows, and he cobs you out of the ground every time, I calls it cricket, and good cricket too.’

So did an astonished world remark of Fechter's Hamlet that it was very wonderful, but wasn't Shakespeare. Well, perhaps not, though only Shakespeare knows. But if a Hamlet fairly sweeps you off your feet in a whirl of new excitement, in the scenes in which you have been most accustomed to methods of quite another kind, I call it Shakespeare, and good Shakespeare too.

My umpire in this case was a quaint old box-keeper who had served under Kean, and remained at the Princess's when Fechter was there. Of course we were old friends, and when I went to see the Frenchman's Hamlet, I asked him what he thought about it before the play began. 'Sir!' he said, 'it's wonderful. We all know Mr Kean. Mr Kean was great. But with 'im, 'Amlet was a tragedy, with Mr Fechter it's quite another thing. He has raised it to a mellerdram.' And in its stirring sense of action, with his vivid stage-management, and with his romantic, volcanic, lawless personality, that is exactly what Mr Fechter did."

Dickens first saw him act in Paris, "He was making love to a woman, and he so elevated her as well as himself by the sentiment in which he enveloped her, that they trod in a purer ether, and in another sphere, quite lifted out of the present. ... I never saw two people more purely and instantly elevated by the power of love. . . . The man has genius in him which is unmistakable."

The friendship and admiration of the two, each for the other, became firm and strong; Forster tells us that Dickens was "his helper in disputes, adviser on literary points, referee in matters of management; and for some years no face was more familiar than the French comedian's at Gad's Hill or in the office of his journal."

Dickens contributed to the *Atlantic Monthly* a paper "On Mr Fechter's Acting," from which quotation will serve the double purpose of showing Dickens as a dramatic critic and Fechter as an actor. "The first quality observable in Mr Fechter's acting," he writes, "is, that it is in the highest degree romantic. However elaborated in minute details, there is always a peculiar dash and vigor in it, like the fresh atmosphere of the story whereof it is a part. When he is on the stage, it seems to me as though the story were transpiring before me for the first and last time. Thus there is a fervor in his lovemaking — a suffusion of his whole being with the rapture of his passion — that sheds a glory on its object and raises her, before the eyes of the audience, into the light in which he sees her." Again, "Picturesqueness

is a quality above all others pervading Mr Fechter's assumptions. Himself a skilled painter and sculptor, learned in the history of costume, and informing those accomplishments and that knowledge with a similar infusion of romance (for romance is inseparable from the man), he is always a picture, — always a picture in its right place in the group, always in true composition with the background of the scene." Lastly, " Mr Fechter has been in the main more accustomed to speak French than to speak English, and therefore he speaks our language with a French accent. But whosoever should suppose that he does not speak English fluently, plainly, distinctly, and with a perfect understanding of the meaning, weight, and value of every word, would be greatly mistaken."

THE WEARING OF A BEARD

IN 1859, Forster commissioned from Frith a portrait of Dickens, which he had suggested some time before, but the painting had been postponed until such time as Dickens should see fit to shave off his moustache, an ornament which on the author's face Forster considered a disfigurement. But to the moustache was added a "door-knocker" beard, and in terror lest whiskers should also appear, the portrait was put in hand. The painter describes the alteration that had taken place in Dickens's appearance since Maclise had painted him some twenty-five years before; the complexion had grown florid, the long hair shorter and darker, and, he adds, "the expression settled into that of one who had reached the topmost rung of a very high ladder, and was perfectly aware of his position." Dickens proved to be a capital sitter, chatty and anecdotal. Speaking of the surprise expressed by many who on meeting him for the first time found him to be unlike their preconceived ideas, "for instance," he said, "Scheffer, who is a big man — said, the moment he saw me, ' You are not at all like what I expected to see you; you are like a Dutch skipper.' As for the picture he did of me, I can only say that it is neither like me nor a Dutch skipper." Frith's portrait may, on the whole, be considered a success, though Dickens says of it, " It is a little too much (to



CHARLES DICKENS (1859). *From the Oil Sketch by IV. P. Frith, R.A., for the Portrait in the Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.*

my thinking) as if my next-door neighbour were my deadly foe, uninsured, and I had just received tidings of his house being afire; otherwise very good.” While Edwin Landseer said, “I wish he looked less eager and busy, and not so much out of himself, or beyond himself. I should like to catch him asleep and quiet now and then.”

But to return to the beard.

When remonstrated with upon this “disfigurement,” Dickens responded that “the beard saved him the trouble of shaving, and much as he admired his own appearance before he allowed his beard to grow, he admired it much more now, and never neglected, when an opportunity offered, to gaze his fill at himself. If his friends didn’t like his looks, he was not at all anxious for them to waste their time in studying them; and as to Frith, he would surely prefer to save himself the trouble of painting features which were so difficult as a mouth and chin. Besides, he had been told by some of his friends that they highly approved of the change, because they now saw less of him.” He was, indeed, delighted with these adornments, and says, “the moustaches are glorious, glorious. I have cut them shorter, and

trimmed them a little at the ends to improve their shape. They are charming, charming. Without them, life would be a blank.” But Sir Richard Owen speaks of him in 1862 as “not improved in appearance by the scanty beard he has now grown. I think his face is spoiled by it.”

The background was painted at Tavistock House. Not only was the beard a stumbling-block, but there were also questions of dress. Dickens arrived at the artist’s studio in a sky-blue overcoat with red cuffs! The artist protested, the sitter succumbed, remarking that he was “very fond of colour.” One of the artist’s daughters has described Dickens at this period as “rather florid in his dress, and gave me an impression of gold chain and pin and an enormous tie, and he too, as did so many men then, wore his hair long, with the usual waving lock above his forehead.”

On the other hand, the American historian Motley met Dickens at Forster’s in 1861; “his hair is not much grizzled and is thick, although the crown of his head is getting bald. His features are very good, the nose rather high, the eyes largish, greyish, and very expressive. He wears a moustache and beard, and dresses at dinner in exactly the same uniform which every man in London or the civilized world is bound to wear. ... I mention this because I had heard that he was odd and extravagant in his costume. I liked him exceedingly. We sat next each other at table, and I found him genial, sympathetic, agreeable, unaffected, with plenty of light easy talk and touch-and-go fun without any effort or humbug of any kind.”

Here again is a contrary view, given by James Hain Friswell’s daughter Laura, who was passing the office of Household Words in Wellington Street, “when a hansom cab stopped, and out stepped a gaily-dressed gentleman; his bright green waistcoat and vivid scarlet tie anyone would have noticed, but the size of the nosegay in his buttonhole rivetted my attention.”

While upon the subject of costume, this is a quaint sketch of one worn by Mr Frith, who was seated near the altar at the Prince of Wales’s wedding (in 1863), G. A. Sala noting the difference between the Court dress of then and now. Frith “was in shorts, silk stockings, a snuff-coloured coat, with cut steel buttons, a brocaded waistcoat, a black silk bag without a wig to it and a jabot with ruffles.”

Of William Powell Frith, R.A., painter of “The Derby Day,” “Ramsgate Sands,” “The Railway Station,” and many another picture that lingers in the memory, what shall be said but that those who would know him should turn

to his delightful volumes of reminiscences, which are a gold mine to all students of Victorian social life and a treasure house to lovers of anecdote? It will suffice, here, to note that he was born in 1819 at Oldfield, in Yorkshire, to which we may add the detail — amusing to lovers of “Nicholas Nickleby “ — that on coming up to London town he alighted at the Saracen’s Head, upon Snow Hill.

At Dickens’s request Frith, in 1842, painted a “Dolly Varden” and a “Kate Nickleby,” of which Dickens said, “ All I can say is, they are exactly what I meant “; he paid the artist £40 for the pair, which after his death were sold for thirteen hundred guineas. Frith describes Dickens as then “a pale young man with long hair, a white hat, a formidable stick in his left hand.”

XXXVI

THE READINGS

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD gives an interesting account of a dinner with Dickens at the office of Household Words in Wellington Street, Strand, in January, 1858, on the day of the marriage of the Princess Royal, when the town was thronged with visitors and profusely illuminated in the evening. Besides Dickens and Hollingshead there were present W. H. Wills, Wilkie Collins, quietly amiable, Mark Lemon, “a fat, cheery man, not very refined, with eyes not as keen as Dickens’s but with a similar twinkle,” and the Hon. — Townshend,¹ a man of money and of poetic gifts. Dickens was clad in a velvet smoking jacket, and Hollingshead writes, “I noticed, as I thought then, a slight lisp, the deep lines on his face — almost furrows, and the keen twinkling glance of his eye.”

Mrs Keeley used to tell an anecdote of Dickens, in which mention is made of this lisp, “I remember Dickens telling me, in his rapid, earnest way, and with a slight lisp which he had, ‘Ah! when you’re young you want to be old; when you’re getting old you want to be young; and when you’re really old you’re proud of your years.’” The dining-room was on the ground floor, and the menu simple but excellent, including oysters, brought in from Rule’s, hard by in Maiden Lane, and a baked leg of mutton, minus the bone which was

1 Query — the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend?

replaced by a stuff of oysters and veal. The talk apparently did not rise to any very high level, but was bright and amusing. Food was one of the topics, and Wilkie Collins gave vent to the truly British opinion that not only was there not much in the art of cooking, but that there was not anything among French or Italian dishes “that could beat a well-made, well-cooked apple pudding.” Theatrical affairs coming upon the carpet. Dickens lamented the existence of the “star” system, After dinner Dickens

compounded some of his famous “Gin Punch,” the making of which delectable drink was apparently a serious ceremony: — ” The preparations for this drink were elaborate and ostentatious. The kettle was put on the fire; lemons were carefully cut and peeled; a jug was produced, and well rubbed with a napkin, inside and out; glasses were treated in the same manner; the bottle was produced, the gin tasted and approved of, and the brew then began. The boiling water was poured in, the sugar, carefully calculated, was added, the spirit, also carefully calculated, was poured in, the lemon was dropped on the top, the mouth of the jug was then closed by stuffing in the napkin rolled up like a ball, and then the process of perfect production was timed with a watch. Dickens’s manner all this time was that of a comic conjurer, with a little of the pride of one who had made a great discovery for the benefit of humanity.”

It is acknowledged on all hands that the actor’s act is ephemeral, and that it is impossible to convey to anyone not present at the performance anything approaching the actuality of an actor’s personality, ability, and charm. Dickens’s readings were practically a theatrical performance, without costumes or scenery, in which the performer enacted all the characters of the play. We cannot hope, therefore, to do more than convey some vague idea of the nature of the entertainment and of the effect it produced upon those who witnessed it.

When Dickens realised the immense popularity of unpaid readings, given mostly in the cause of charity, it occurred naturally enough to him to undertake paid readings for his own profit. The question was raised by him, not for the first time, in a letter from Gad’s Hill to Forster, in which he says, “What do you think of my paying for this place, by reviving that old idea of some Readings from my books. I am very strongly tempted.” Forster was, we hold quite wisely, opposed to the notion; “it was,” he writes, “a substitution of lower for higher aims; a change to commonplace from more elevated pursuits; and it had so much of the character of a public exhibition for money as to raise, in the question of respect for his calling as a writer, a question also of respect for himself as a gentleman.” We agree with Forster’s conclusion, but not with his reasoning; this anxiety about gentlemanliness smacks sadly of snobbery. The arguments against Dickens pursuing the course he proposed, were, we hold, that it would, if a success, prove a serious and probably dangerous strain upon his bodily health, and that the vividness of the actor’s life — for such it really would be — would

have a tendency to exaggerate the already too strong leaning toward theatricalism and sentimentality that was already a weakness in both the man and his art. Almost simultaneously came three great changes in his life, the separation from his wife, the acquirement of a country house, and this plunge into the life of a public entertainer.

We shall make no attempt to trace the various reading tours in detail; the first series took place in 1858-59, the second in 1861-63, the third in 1864-67, and the final readings in 1868-70.

Hollingshead gives a vivid picture of him at his ‘ desk,’ which in some details differs from any other we have: — “He stood erect before his audience, with his head thrown back, his large eyes bright with a sense of enjoyment of what he was doing, confident, unfaltering, with one hand resting firmly on a paper-knife planted upright on the table. He was a comparatively small man, with long thin hair, beard, and a face prematurely furrowed, a bronzed complexion, earned by much walking in the open air, and a voice with a slight dash of lispng hoarseness. Though a very bad sailor, he might have been taken for a sea captain. His first words sounded like a trumpet blast of assured victory. ‘Marly was dead! There was no mistake about that!’”

Of April 28, 1863, Carlyle records that “I had to go . . . to Dickens’s Reading, 8 P.M., Hanover Rooms, to the complete upsetting of my evening habitudes and spiritual composure. Dickens does it capitally, such as it is; acts better than any Macready in the world; a whole trajic, comic, heroic theatre visible, performing under one hat, and keeping us laughing — in a sorry way, some of us thought — the whole night. He is a good creature, too, and makes fifty or sixty pounds by each of these readings.”

When Dickens was sitting to Frith for his portrait, the painter ventured, greatly daring, to criticise the novelist’s rendering of Sam Weller, which to him seemed wrong, Sam’s quaint sayings being delivered with lowered voice, as though the utterer of them were afraid that his freedom might call down reproof. Dickens listened, smiled, made no comment. But Frith was informed by a friend, who shortly afterward heard Dickens read, that Sam’s sayings were delivered “ like pistol-shots.”

Edmund Yates says that Arthur Smith, Dickens’s “manager,” “a timid man by nature,” was among those who were nervous as to the success of the Readings, “but the moment Dickens stepped upon the platform,¹ walking rather stiffly, right shoulder well forward, as usual, bud in button-hole, and

gloves in hand, all doubt was blown into the air. He was received with a roar of cheering which might have been heard at Charing Cross, and which was again and again renewed. Whatever he may have felt, Dickens showed no emotion. He took his place at his reading-desk, and made a short prefatory speech, in which he said that, though he had read one of his books to a London audience more than once, this was the first time he had ventured to do so professionally; that he had considered the matter, and saw no reason against his doing so, either in deterioration of dignity or anything else; and that, therefore, he took his place on the platform with as much composure as he should at his own desk.”

Of Arthur Smith, Dickens wrote to Yates, “Arthur is something between a Home Secretary and a furniture dealer in Rathbone Place. He is either always corresponding in the genteelest manner, or dragging rout-seats about without his coat,” and again, of a famous night at Liverpool, “Arthur, bathed in checks, took headers into tickets, floated on billows of passes, dived under weirs of shillings, staggered home faint with gold and silver.” From Scarborough to Miss Hogarth, he writes, “Yesterday, at Harrogate, two circumstances occurred

1 At St Martin’s Hall, Long Acre.

which gave Arthur great delight. Firstly, he chafed his leg sore with his black bag of silver. Secondly, the landlord asked him as a favour, ‘If he could oblige him with a little silver.’ He obliged him directly with some forty pounds’ worth,” and, “Arthur told you, I suppose, that he had his shirt-front and waistcoat torn off last night? He was perfectly enraptured in consequence.”

Yates, who knew him well, describes Arthur Smith as “a man full of cleverness of a quaint kind, of a remarkably sweet disposition and winning manner, and of . . . singular aptitude for business. He, too, had been a medical student, but up to this period had made no particular mark in life,¹ the only incident in his career worth mention having been his marriage with an heiress.”

In 1861, he was attacked with an illness, which in the autumn took a serious turn. Forster gives an account by Dickens of an interview with the sick man; “his wakings and wanderings so perpetually turn on his arrangements for the Readings, and he is so desperately unwilling to

relinquish the idea of ‘going on with the business’ to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow, that I had not the heart to press him for the papers.” He died in October; “it is as if my right arm were gone,” Dickens wrote to Forster, and from Ispwich, in November, to Miss Hogarth, “ I miss poor Arthur dreadfully. It is scarcely possible to imagine how much. It is not only that his loss to me socially is quite irreparable, but that the sense I used to have of compactness and comfort about me when I was reading is quite gone. And when I come

1 He had his first opportunity of showing his business qualities in managing the Mont Blanc show of his brother Albert.

out for the ten minutes, when I used to find him always ready for me with something cheerful to say, it is forlorn.”

Arthur Smith was a born show-man and acting manager. When his brother Albert’s “Show” was on at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly — now gone — he delayed the opening of the doors until some few minutes after the advertised time, so creating an uproar and block of the traffic, and when remonstrated with, expressed himself as quite ready to pay fifty pounds for five minutes more!

A few episodes “ on the road “ may be mentioned here. From York Dickens writes to Forster,” I was brought very near to what I sometimes dream may be my Fame, when a lady whose face I had never seen stopped me yesterday in the street, and said to me, *Mr Dickens, will you let me touch the hand that has filled my house with many friends.*” At Newcastle there was nearly a disaster, “An extraordinary thing occurred on the second night. The room was tremendously crowded and my gas apparatus fell down. There was a terrible wave among the people for an instant, and God knows what destruction of life a rush to the stairs would have caused. Fortunately a lady in the front of the stalls ran out towards me, exactly in a place where I knew that the whole hall could see her. So I addressed her, laughing, and half-asked and half-ordered her to sit down again; and, in a moment, it was all over.”

Forster tells a sorry story of the damaging effect wrought upon Dickens’s health of this life of wild and exhausting excitement, and his nerves were still further shaken by the terrible railway accident at Staplehurst, in which he was involved, on June 9, 1865. Ten people were killed and fifty-two

injured out of one hundred and ten passengers in the “Tidal” train from Folkestone, in which Dickens was travelling. The bridge, between Headcorn and Staplehurst, was being repaired; the permanent way was under repair, and the ganger in charge of the workmen miscalculated the hour at which the “ Tidal “ was due to pass. It was a blazing hot day, and the flagman instead of going out the regulation one thousand yards went but five hundred. The train tore up along the straight stretch — to destruction; the engine, the tender, the guard’s van, and one carriage escaped safely, but the rest of the train broke over the bridge, falling in an awful heap of wreck into the field below, with the one exception of the carriage in which Dickens was riding, which “ hung suspended and balanced in an apparently impossible manner,” wrote Dickens in a letter to Thomas Mitton; “Two ladies were my fellow-passengers, an old one and a young one. This is exactly what passed — you may judge of the precise length of the suspense. Suddenly we were off the rail and beating the ground as the car of a half-emptied balloon might. The old lady cried out, ‘My God!’ and the young one screamed. I caught hold of them both (the old lady sat opposite and the young one on my left) and said: ‘We can’t help ourselves, but we can be quiet and composed. Pray don’t cry out.’ The old lady immediately answered, ‘ Thank you; rely on me. Upon my soul, I will be quiet.’ We were then all tilted together down in a corner of the carriage, and stopped. I said to them thereupon: ‘You may be sure nothing worse can happen. Our danger must be over. Will you remain here without stirring while I get out of the window?’ They both answered quite collectedly, ‘Yes,’ and I got out without the least notion of what had happened. Fortunately I got out with great caution, and stood upon the steps. Looking down, I saw the bridge gone and nothing below me but the line of rails. Some people in the two other compartments were madly trying to plunge out of the window, and had no idea that there was an open, swampy field below them and nothing else. The two guards (one with his face cut) were running up and down, on the down side of the bridge, quite wildly. I called out to them, ‘ Look at me. Do stop an instant and look at me and tell me whether you don’t know me.’ One of them answered, ‘ We know you very well, Mr Dickens.’ ‘Then,’ I said, ‘my good fellow, for God’s sake give me your key and send me one of those labourers here and I’ll empty this carriage.’ We did it quite safely by means of a plank or two, and when it was done I saw all the rest of the train, except the two baggage-vans, down in the stream. I got into the carriage

again for my brandy flask, took off my travelling hat for a basin, climbed down the brickwork, and filled my hat with water. Suddenly I came upon a staggering man covered with blood (I think he must have been flung clean out of his carriage) with such a frightful cut across his skull that I couldn't bear to look at him. I poured some water over his face and gave him some brandy, and laid him down on the grass, and he said, 'I am gone !' and afterwards died.

"Then I stumbled over a lady lying on her back against a little pollard tree, with the blood running over her face (which was lead colour) in a number of distinct little streams from her head. I asked her if she could swallow a little brandy, and she just nodded, and I gave her some, and left her for somebody else. The next time I passed her she was dead.

"Then a man who was examined at the inquest yesterday (who had evidently not the least remembrance of what really passed) came running up to me and implored me to help to find his wife, who was afterwards found dead.

"No imagination can conceive the ruin of the carriages or the extraordinary weights under which people were lying, or the complications into which they were twisted up among iron and wood and mud and water."

Of the dreadful effect the accident had upon him we obtain a vivid picture in a letter written by Dickens in August, 1868, to M de Cerjat; "My escape in the Staplehurst accident of three years ago is not to be obliterated from my nervous system. To this hour, I have sudden vague rushes of terror, even when riding in a hansom cab, which are perfectly unreasonable but quite insurmountable. I used to make nothing of driving a pair of horses habitually through the most crowded parts of London. I cannot now drive, with comfort to myself, on the County roads here 1; and I doubt if I could ride at all in the saddle. My reading secretary and companion knows so well when one of these odd momentary seizures comes upon me in a railway carriage, that he instantly produces a dram of brandy, which rallies the blood to the heart and generally prevails."

1Gad's Hill.

XXXVII

AMERICA REVISITED

A FEW days after Stanfield's death, Dickens wrote to Forster, "Poor dear Stanfield! I cannot

think even of him, and of our great loss, for this spectre of doubt and indecision that sits at the board with me and stands at the bedside. I am in a tempest-tossed condition, and can hardly believe that I stand at bay at last on the American question. The difficulty of determining amid the variety of statements made to me is enormous, and you have no idea how heavily the anxiety of it sits upon my soul. But the prize looks so large!" The spectre was the proposal that he should give the Readings in America; eventually he decided to do so, and in November, 1867, he arrived at Boston, accompanied by George Dolby, upon whom had fallen the mantle of Arthur Smith, and of whom Dickens speaks as "an agreeable companion, an excellent manager, and a good fellow." He died in October, 1900. To him all Dickensians owe a debt of gratitude for his volume, "Charles Dickens as I Knew Him", The Story of the Reading Tours in Great Britain and America (1866-1870)."

Financially, artistically, socially, the tour was immensely successful, but there cannot be any doubt that it had a most deleterious effect upon Dickens's breaking health. Almost the whole time he was suffering from a distressing catarrh. Indeed, he was at times seriously ill, as for example at Baltimore, of which he writes, "That afternoon of my birthday, my catarrh was in such a state that Charles Sumner coming in at five o'clock, and finding me covered with mustard poultice, and apparently voiceless, turned to Dolby and said: 'Surely, Mr Dolby, it is impossible that he can read to-night!' Says Dolby: 'Sir, I have told Mr Dickens so, four times to-day, and I have been very anxious. But you have no idea how he will change, when he gets to the little table.' After five minutes of the little table I was not (for the time) even hoarse. The frequent experience of this return of force when it is wanted, saves me a vast amount of anxiety; but I am not at times without

the nervous dread that I may some day sink altogether.” In one of his last letters from America, to his daughter Mary, from Boston, he says, “I not only read last Friday when I was doubtful of being able to do so, but read as I never did before, and astonished the audience quite as much as myself. You never saw or heard such a scene of excitement. Longfellow and all the Cambridge men have urged me to give in. I have been very near doing so, but feel stronger to-day. I cannot tell whether the catarrh may have done me any lasting injury in the lungs or other breathing organs, until I shall have rested and got home. . . . Dolby is as tender as a woman, and as watchful as a doctor. He never leaves me during the reading, now, but sits at the side of the platform, and keeps his eye upon me all the time.”

During the visit Dickens refreshed many old and made many new friendships, though he avoided social festivities as far as possible. In New York he met Henry Ward Beecher, whom he described as “an unostentatious, evidently able, straightforward, and agreeable man; extremely well informed, and with a good knowledge of art.” At Washington he spent an evening with Charles Sumner, “he was specially pleased with his intercourse with Mr Stanton, who on being started with a chapter from any of Mr Dickens’s books, could repeat the whole of the chapter from memory, and, as the author confessed, knew more about his works than he himself did. This was accounted for by the fact that during the war, when Mr Stanton was Commander-in-Chief of the Northern forces, he never went to bed at night without first reading something from one of Mr Dickens’s books.” Of President Andrew Johnson, Dickens writes, “I was very much surprised by the President’s face and manner. It is, in its way, one of the most remarkable faces I have ever seen. Not imaginative, but very powerful in its firmness (or, perhaps, obstinacy), strength of will, and steadiness of purpose. There is a reticence in it, too, curiously at variance with that first unfortunate speech of his. A man not to be turned or trifled with. A man (I should say) who must be killed to be got out of the way. His manner is perfectly composed. We looked at one another pretty hard. There was an air of chronic anxiety upon him; but not a crease or a ruffle in his dress, and his papers were as composed as himself.”

At a dinner at Longfellow’s there were present beside “mine host” and the “guest of the evening,” Agassiz, Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Bayard Taylor, and Dolby, “and the fun flew fast and furious.”

Dolby gives an interesting reminiscence of Dickens and the art of speech making : —

“I remember in England on one occasion, when Mr Wilkie Collins joined us at supper after a Reading in a small country town, the conversation at supper turned on the subject of speech-making. Mr Wilkie Collins remarked that he had invariably felt a difficulty when called upon for a speech either at a public meeting or after dinner, adding that for important occasions his habit was to make notes of what he had to say, and keep them before him for reference during the progress of the speech.

“As is well known, Mr Dickens was one of the happiest of speakers, and on all occasions without any notes to assist him in this most difficult of arts. Declaring that to make a speech was the easiest thing in the world, he said the only difficulty that existed was in introducing the subject to be dealt with. ‘Now suppose I am the president of a rowing club and Dolby is the honorary secretary. At our farewell dinner, or supper, for the season, I, as president, should propose his health in these words’:

“Here he made a speech of the most flattering description, calling on the subject of it for a reply. As I did not feel equal to a response I asked Mr Collins to try his skill first. He handed the responsibility over to Mr Wills, who in his turn handed it back to Mr Dickens, who then told us in a ludicrous speech what the honorary secretary ought to have said, though I am certain no ordinary honorary secretary would ever have dreamt of such a performance. Then I asked Mr Dickens if he could explain to us his modus operandi of preparing an important speech, Mr Wilkie Collins adding that it would be curious to know what (besides the speech) was passing in his mind during its delivery. He told us that, supposing the speech was to be delivered in the evening, his habit was to take a long walk in the morning, during which he would decide on the various heads to be dealt with. These being arranged in their proper order, he would in his ‘mind’s eye,’ liken the whole subject to the tire of a cart wheel — he being the hub. From the hub to the tire he would run as many spokes as there were subjects to be treated, and during the progress of the speech he would deal with each spoke separately, elaborating them as he went round the wheel; and when all the spokes dropped out one by one, and nothing but the tire and space remained, he would know that he had accomplished his task, and that his speech was at an end.

“Mr Wills suggested that if he were in this position, the wheel would whiz round with such rapidity that he would see nothing but space to commence with, and that, without notes or memoranda, in space he would be left — a conclusion in which Mr Wilkie Collins and I fully concurred.”

Pleasant as it would be so to do, we must not linger over the oft-told tale of this American visit. A public banquet of “farewell” was given to Dickens at New York, under the Presidency of Horace Greeley, at Delmonico’s famous restaurant, on April 18, 1868. There were two hundred guests present, including such well-known literary men as George William Curtis, Charles Eliot Norton, Henry John Raymond and many others equally eminent. The scene was brilliant, the speaking — as ever at a dinner of Americans — admirable.

After the final reading Dickens uttered a few words of “good-bye”; from which we quote: —

“When I was reading ‘David Copperfield’ a few evenings since, I felt there was more than usual significance in the words of Peggotty, ‘My future life lies over the sea;’ and when I closed this book just now, I felt most keenly that I was shortly to establish such an alibi as would have satisfied even the elder Mr Weller. The relations which have been set up between us, while they have involved for me something more than mere devotion to a task, have been by you sustained with the readiest sympathy and the kindest acknowledgment.

“These relations must now be broken for ever. Be assured, however, that you will not pass from my mind. I shall often realise you as I see you now, equally by my winter fireside, and in the green English summer weather. I shall never recall you as a mere public audience, but rather as a host of personal friends, and ever with the greatest gratitude, tenderness, and consideration. Ladies and gentlemen, I beg to bid you farewell. God bless you, and God bless the land in which I leave you.”

Dickens sailed for home from New York upon the Cunarder “Russia” on April 22, and the New York Tribune gave the next day a vivid account of the departure: —

“It was a lovely day — a clear blue sky overhead — as he stood resting on the rail, chatting with his friends, and writing an autograph for that one, the genial face all aglow with delight, it was seemingly hard to say the word ‘Farewell,’ yet the tug-boat screamed the note of warning, and those who must return to the city went down the side.

“All left save Mr Fields. ‘Boz’ held the hand of the publisher within his own. There was an unmistakable look in both faces. The lame foot came down from the rail, and the friends were locked in each other’s arms.

“Mr Fields then hastened down the side, not daring to look behind. The lines were ‘ cast off.’

“A cheer was given for Mr Dolby, when Mr Dickens patted him approvingly upon the shoulder, saying, ‘Good boy.’ Another cheer for Mr Dickens, and the tug steamed away.

“‘Good-bye, Boz.’

“‘Good-bye,’ from Mr Fields, who stood the central figure of a group of three, Messrs Du Chaillu and Childs upon each side. Then ‘ Boz ‘ put his hat upon his cane, and waved it, and the answer came ‘Good-bye,’ and ‘God bless you every one.’“

XXXVIII

LAST DAYS AND DEATH

THE journey home worked a most beneficial effect upon his health, which, however, Dickens discounted by toiling strenuously at further Readings, until at length there came a complete breakdown and doctors' orders for rest. Of these last days we have already seen somewhat in the account given by Dolby of the trip from Gad's Hill to Canterbury. For the final London Readings he took the house of the Milner Gibsons at 5 Hyde Park Place. Of the Farewell Reading on Tuesday, March 15th, we must give a brief account. St James's Hall, Piccadilly, was thronged with a gathering representative of all conditions of men and women, numbering over 2000, the whole of the platform being screened off for the "reader." The "readings" chosen were the "Christmas Carol" and the "Trial from Pickwick." Punctually to the moment, eight o'clock, but evidently affected by the excitement of the occasion, Dickens appeared, and the huge audience sprang to their feet, greeting him with an uproar of cheers. After the readings he was "called" again and again, and at last nerved himself to say "good-bye." Charles Kent, one of his closest friends, who was present, thus describes the closing scene, "the manly, cordial voice only faltered once at the very last, the mournful modulation of it in the utterance of the words, 'From these garish lights I vanish now for evermore,' linger . . . like a haunting melody in our remembrance. ... As he moved from the platform after the utterance of the last words of the address, and, with his head drooping in emotion, passed behind the screen on the way to his retiring-room, a cordial hand (my own !) was placed for one moment with a sympathetic grasp upon his shoulder." Dolby relates that he left the platform at last "with quite a mournful gait, and tears rolling down his cheeks. But he had to go forward yet once again, to be stunned by a more surprising outburst than before."

Altogether between April 29, 1858, at St Martin's Hall, and March 15, 1870, at St James's Hall, he had in Great Britain, Ireland and America,

given 423 Readings, clearing profit to the amount of, at least, £45,000.

Dickens now looked forward to enjoying complete freedom to devote himself to "Edwin Drood," of which, however, only six monthly parts were issued by Messrs Chapman and Hall, beginning in April, 1870. The illustrations were drawn by Sir Luke Fildes, R.A., who was brought to Dickens's notice by Millais, and the cover designed by Charles Allston Collins. Sir Luke Fildes, R.A., was born upon Saint Luke's day in the year 1844, and settled in London in 1862. In 1869 Millais went to Dickens, who was searching vainly to find an artist for "Edwin Drood," and exclaimed, "I've found your man," showing him the picture of "The Casuals," in the first issue of *The Graphic*. "Yes, but can he draw a pretty girl?" asked Dickens. The artist saw much of Dickens, who was then staying at Hyde Park Place, opposite the Marble Arch, and was ready to start on a visit to Gad's Hill, when he picked up a newspaper and read the announcement "Death of Charles Dickens." "The death of Dickens," he says, "had an extraordinary effect upon me. It seemed as though the cup of happiness had been dashed from my lips." It is not necessary to touch upon the aggravating controversy that is still raging round the "Mystery."

They were happy and not uneventful days, these last in London. The situation suited him; the bright view over Hyde Park, the noise of traffic from early morning to late hours of the night, all were to his taste.

One evening when entertaining Sir Arthur Helps, Dickens showed to him a collection of photographs of the battlefields of the American Civil War; these Sir Arthur chanced to mention to Queen Victoria, who expressed a wish to see them, whereupon the book containing them was forwarded to Her Majesty. Desiring to see Dickens, he attended one March afternoon at Buckingham Palace. Dolby gives a good account of the interview : —

"The Queen was in London only for a day or two, and Dickens imagined, not unnaturally, that the innumerable calls on the time and attention of Her Majesty would leave space for an interview of about a quarter of an hour. So, as the time appointed was five in the afternoon, he engaged me to meet him in the Burlington Arcade at half-past, when we were to dine together at the 'Blue Posts,' in Cork Street. However, the Chief had grievously miscalculated the probable duration of that interview, for instead of lasting ten or fifteen minutes, it was prolonged for an hour and a half. It was half-past six when he put in an appearance at our place of meeting.

“When his brougham pulled up at the Piccadilly end of the Arcade, I could see that the interview had been an agreeable one, for he was radiant with smiles. Stepping

out of his carriage, he gave hasty instructions to his servant to drive straight home, and to take particular care of a book he had left inside, which was to be given to Miss Dickens the moment he arrived at Hyde Park Place.

“Slipping his arm in mine, we passed through the Arcade and proceeded at once to our dining-place, where I had caused his favourite corner to be kept for him. Having settled down to our dinner, I was naturally anxious to hear from his own lips what Her Majesty and the Chief could have found to talk about for an hour and a half.

“‘Tell me everything,’ I said, modestly.

“‘Everything! my dear fellow, everything! I tell you what, it would be difficult to say what we did not talk about,’ was his reply.

“‘Well, then,’ I said, ‘let me have some of it, unless they were all State secrets.’

“He then went on to tell me that Her Majesty had received him most graciously, and that, as Court etiquette requires that no one, in an ordinary interview with the Sovereign, should be seated, Her Majesty had remained the whole time leaning over the head of a sofa. There was a little shyness on both sides at the commencement, but this wore away as the conversation proceeded.

“Her Majesty expressed her deep regret at not having heard one of the Readings, and although highly flattered at this, Dickens could only express his sorrow that, as these were now finally done with, and as, moreover, a mixed audience was absolutely necessary for their success, it would be impossible to gratify Her Majesty’s wishes in this particular. This, he said, the Queen fully appreciated, quoting to Mr Dickens his own words in his farewell speech: ‘From these garish lights I vanish now for evermore,’ and remarking that even if such a thing were possible, there would be inconsistency in it, which was evidently not one of Mr Dickens’s characteristics. After referring in complimentary terms to the pleasure Her Majesty had derived in witnessing Mr Dickens’s acting in the ‘Frozen Deep,’ as far back as the year 1857, the conversation took a general turn. The Queen showed much interest and curiosity in regard to Mr Dickens’s recent American experiences, and some reference was made to a supposed discourtesy that had been shown in America on one occasion to Prince

Arthur. This, Dickens was very anxious to explain away, assuring the Queen that no true-hearted Americans were in sympathy with the Fenian body in that country; and that nowhere in the world was there a warmer feeling towards the English Queen than existed throughout the whole of the United States (a sentiment which Her Majesty was pleased to hear from so observant an authority). The Chief told me, with a good deal of unctiousness, that Her Majesty had then graciously asked his opinion on the ‘servant question.’ Could he account for the fact ‘that we have no good servants in England as in the olden times’? Mr Dickens regretted that he could not account for this fact, except perhaps on the hypothesis that our system of education was a wrong one. On this same subject of national education, he added, he had his own ideas, but saw no likelihood of their being carried into effect. The price of provisions, the cost of butchers’ meat, and bread, were next lightly touched upon, and so the conversation rippled on agreeably to an agreeable end. But the interview did not close until the Queen, with gracious modesty, had begged Mr Dickens’s acceptance at her own hands of a copy of the ‘Journal in the Highlands,’ in which Her Majesty had placed an autograph inscription, and her own sign manual. This was the book which the coachman had been so particularly enjoined to give into Miss Dickens’s own hands.

“The Queen, on handing the book to Mr Dickens, modestly remarked that she felt considerable hesitation in presenting so humble a literary effort to one of the foremost writers of the age. She had, Her Majesty said, requested Mr Helps to present it for her; but as he had suggested that the gift would be more highly prized by Mr Dickens if he received it from Her Majesty’s own hands, she had resolved herself on this bold act. After asking Mr Dickens to look kindly on any literary faults of her book, Her Majesty expressed a desire to be the possessor of a complete set of Mr Dickens’s works, and added that, if possible, she would like to receive them that afternoon.

“Mr Dickens, of course, was only too pleased to gratify the wishes of the Queen, but begged to be allowed to defer sending his books until he had had a set specially bound for Her Majesty’s acceptance. This was done in due course, and the receipt of the books was acknowledged in the name of the Queen by Mr Helps, in a letter written from Balmoral, dated and posted on the day of Mr Dickens’s death!”

By the Queen’s command he attended a levee held by the Prince of Wales in April, and there was much fun over the “fancy dress.” A few friends

lunched with him on the day, “ just to see how he looked in his cocked hat and sword.” “We got a good deal of fun out of the ‘makeup,’” says Dolby, “in which Dickens heartily joined, but the climax was his utter bewilderment on the subject of the cocked hat. Fancy Dickens in a cocked hat!

“What on earth am I to do with it?” he asked, handing it about in a woe-begone manner. “Why wear it of course,” suggested one of the party.

“But how?” cried the Chief.

“Yes, that’s exactly what I have been wondering,” said another.

“What do you mean, sir ?” said Dickens, with mock indignation. “What difference can it make to you which way I wear it?”

“Oh! none at all. I was merely wondering whether you intended to wear it ‘fore and aft,’ or ‘ th’wart ships ‘; and I thought I would mention that those I had seen were generally worn ‘ fore and aft.’”

Mr Dickens’s reception of this lesson on the wearing of a cocked hat was comic in the extreme; for some had said, ‘it was not intended to be worn, and was a mere appendage any way,’ others were of opinion that ‘it was to be carried under the arm,’ and so on. However, as it was time to start, Dickens tucked the thing under his arm, and, turning to me, said, ‘ Come along, Dolby, drive down to Buckingham Palace with me, and leave me in good society, where at least I shall be free of these ignorant people!’”

The last time he dined out in London was at Lord Houghton’s, to meet the King of the Belgians and the Prince of Wales; Lady Houghton recorded that she had never seen Dickens “ more agreeable than at a dinner at our house about a fortnight before his death.” Forster records a luncheon at Hyde Park Place on May 22, on which day Dickens had heard of the death of Mark Lemon, and, referring to his many comrades in art and letters who had already fallen out of the ranks, said, “and none beyond his sixtieth year, very few even fifty.”

At the end of May he returned to Gad’s Hill Place.

During these last years he seems to have changed greatly in appearance. He was, says Sala of this time, “a bronzed, weatherworn, hardy man, with somewhat of a seaman’s air about him. His carriage was remarkably upright, his mien almost aggressive in its confidence. . . . His appearance in walking dress in the streets, during his later years, was decidedly ‘odd,’ and almost eccentric, being marked by strongly-pronounced colours, and a fashioning of the garments which had somewhat of a sporting and

somewhat of a theatrical guise. To those who did not know that he was Charles Dickens, he might have been some prosperous sea-captain home from a long voyage, some Western senator on a tour in Europe, some country gentleman of Devon or Yorkshire.”

“I had met him about the middle of May,1 at Charing Cross, and had remarked that he had aged very much in appearance. The thought-lines of his face had deepened, and the hair had whitened. Indeed, as he approached me I thought for a moment I was mistaken, and that it could not be Dickens: for that was not the vigorous, rapid walk, with the stick lightly held in the alert hand, which had always belonged to him. It was he, however: but with a certain solemnity of expression in the face, and a deeper earnestness in the dark eyes. However, when he saw me and shook my hand, the delightful brightness and sunshine swept over the gloom and sadness,” so wrote Blanchard Jerrold.

His daughter “Mamie” writes, “ although happy and contented, there was an appearance of fatigue and weariness about him very unlike his usual air of fresh activity.”

The weather was beautifully fine, the house had never worn a brighter aspect, the garden was full of the brilliant flowers he loved. Of the many improvements that he had made, the addition of a conservatory was the last; “Here, Katie,” he said to his daughter, “you behold the last improvement.” Of Sunday, June 5, Miss Dickens writes, “We had been having most lovely weather, and in consequence, the outdoor plants were wonderfully forward in their bloom, my father’s favourite red geraniums making a blaze of colour in the front garden. The syringa shrubs filled the evening air with sweetest fragrance as we sat in the porch and walked about the garden on this last Sunday of our dear father’s life.”

On Monday the sisters, Kate and “Mamie” left for London. Of leave-takings, her father had ever a dislike, but some impulse compelled Kate to say, “I must say good-bye to papa.” He was at work in the chalet in the shrubbery, and there — at his wish — she bade him farewell.

On Tuesday, he went for his last walk in Cobham Park, and in the evening, talking with Miss Hogarth, spoke of his affection for Gad’s Hill Place, of his gladness that he had not given it up and returned to live in London, of his hope that his name might be associated with it, and of his wish to be buried there.

On the Wednesday, the 8th, he was busily working at “Edwin Drood “ all day in the chalet, going across to the house for luncheon, when he appeared well and cheerful. After a cigar in the conservatory, he returned to his desk. Dinner was fixed for six o’clock, and when he came again to the house about five, he appeared “ tired, silent, and abstracted,” which was not unusual with him after a stiff day’s work. He wrote some letters, including one to Charles Kent, making an appointment with him in London for the next day, which as one of the two last he wrote, we will quote in full: —

“Gad’s Hill Place, “Higham By Rochester, “Wednesday *eighth June 1870.*

“My Dear Kent,

To-morrow is a very bad day for me to make a call, as, in addition to my usual office business, I have a mass of accounts to settle with Wills. But I hope I may be ready for you at 3 o’clock. If I can’t be — why, then I shan’t be.

You must really get rid of these Opal enjoyments. They are overpowering.

‘These violent delights have violent ends.’

I think it was a father of your church who made the wise remark to a young gentleman who got up early (and stayed out late) at Verona?

Ever affectionately,

C. D.”

The other of these two letters is in itself more interesting as it is in reply to one addressed to him in reference to a passage in the tenth chapter of “Edwin Drood,” where the Reverend Septimus yields himself up to his mother’s medicaments, “ like the highly popular lamb who has so long and unresistingly been led to the slaughter,” which, according to the writer, “was distasteful to some of his admirers,” being drawn from Holy Writ, and prophetic of the sacrifice of Christ. Dickens very rightly expressed amazement that anyone could attach a scriptural reference to the passage, concluding, “I have always striven in my writings to express veneration for the life and lessons of our Saviour; because I feel it; and because I re-wrote that history for my children — every one of

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Ever affectionately
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THE LAST LETTER.

whom knew it from having it repeated to them — long before they could read, and almost as soon as they could speak.

“But I have never made proclamation of this from the house-tops.”

When Miss Hogarth and he sat down to dinner, she noticed, soon after the meal had commenced, a “striking change in the colour and expression of his face.” She asked him if he were ill, and he replied, “Yes, very ill; I have been very ill for the last hour.” He refused to permit a doctor to be summoned, and continued to talk, though incoherently, speaking of a sale at a neighbouring house, of Macready, of his own departure to London; then rising from his seat, staggered and was only saved from falling by the prompt aid of his sister-in-law. She begged him to lie down; “Yes, on the ground,” were his last words.

“This was at a few minutes after six o’clock,” says Miss Dickens, “I was dining at a house some little distance from my sister’s home. Dinner was half over when I received a message that she wished to speak to me. I found her in the hall with a change of dress for me and a cab in waiting. Quickly I changed my gown, and we begun the short journey which brought us to our so sadly altered home. Our dear aunt was waiting for us at the open door, and when I saw her face I think the last faint hope died within me.” He remained in the same unconscious condition until a few minutes past six

o'clock the next evening, that of Thursday, June 9, "when . . . the watchers saw a shudder pass over him, heard him give a deep sigh, saw one tear roll down his cheek, and he was gone from them."

It is said that he had always desired to die suddenly, and the story is told of his walking through Kensington Gardens when a thunderstorm broke overhead and proposing to the friend with him to shelter under a tree. "No," said the friend, "that is too dangerous. Many people have been killed beneath trees from the effect of lightning." To which Dickens responded, "of all the fears that harass a man on God's earth, the fear of sudden death seems to me the most absurd, and why we pray against it in the Litany I cannot make out. A death by lightning most resembles the translation of Enoch."

When she read the announcement of his death, "the sun seemed suddenly blotted out," says Mrs Cowden Clarke. Carlyle wrote to Gad's Hill, "It is almost thirty years since my acquaintance with him began; and on my side, I may say, every new meeting ripened it into more and more dear discernment of his rare and great worth as a brother man; a most cordial, sincere, clear-sighted, quietly decisive, just, and loving man: till at length he had grown to such a recognition with me as I have rarely had for any man of my time."

CHARLES DICKENS

THAT “you may know a man by his friends” is an old and true saying, and we cannot but feel that we know Charles Dickens the more thoroughly by reason of the intimate converse that we have held with him and with some of his friends in these pages.

But for our part we would count as among a man’s best friends the books and pictures which appeal to him and which he loves. Let us take a glance at the outward seeming of his books as they appeared to a friend of his. G. H. Lewes called on him in Doughty Street, “ those who remember him at that period,” he writes, “ will understand the somewhat disturbing effect produced on my enthusiasm for the new author by the sight of his bookshelves, on which were ranged nothing but three-volume novels and books of travel, all obviously the presentation copies from authors and publishers, with none of the treasures of the bookstall, each of which has its history, and all giving the collection its individual physiognomy. A man’s library expresses much of his hidden life. . . . He shortly came in, and his sunny presence quickly dispelled all misgivings. He was then, as to the last, a delightful companion, full of sagacity as well as animal spirits; but I came away more impressed with the fullness of life and energy than with any sense of distinction. Then of a later visit, “while waiting in his library (in Devonshire Terrace) I, of course glanced at the books. The well-known paper boards of the three-volume novel no longer vulgarised the place; a goodly array of standard works, well-bound, showed a more respectable and conventional ambition; but there was no physiognomy in the collection. A greater change was visible in Dickens himself. In these two years he had remarkably developed. His conversation turned on graver subjects than theatres and actors, periodicals and London life. His interest in public affairs, especially in social questions, was keener. He still remained

completely outside philosophy, science, and the higher literature, and was too unaffected a man to pretend to feel any interest in them.”

Of the book-loves of his childhood Forster tells us that a passage in “David Copperfield” is literally true, and we may quote it with advantage : — ” My father had left a small collection of books in a little room upstairs to which I had access . . . From that blessed little room, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, the Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Bias, and Robinson Crusoe came out, a glorious host, to keep me company.” Other books there were, the Arabian Nights and the Tales of the Genii, of all which the influence can be traced in his own works.

In a letter to George Cattermole in 1838 he mentions “Kenilworth,” “which I have just been reading with greater delight than ever,” and adds that among other books he has with him at Petersham are Goldsmith, Swift, Fielding, Smollett and the British Essayists. Writing to M de Cerjat, he says, “ Let me recommend you, as a brother-reader of high distinction, two comedies, both Goldsmith’s — ‘ She Stoops to Conquer’ and ‘ The Good-natured Man.’ Both are so admirably and so delightfully written that they read wonderfully.”

We may note in passing that of Shakespeare he says, “It is a great comfort, to my way of thinking, that so little is known concerning the poet. It is a fine mystery; and I tremble every day lest something should come out. If he had had a Boswell, society wouldn’t have respected his grave.”

Of Smollett: — ” ‘ Humphrey Clinker’ is certainly Smollett’s best. I am rather divided between ‘ Peregrine Pickle’ and ‘Roderick Random,’ both extraordinarily good in their way, which is a way without tenderness.” Turning to a contemporary writer, he says of Tennyson, “How fine the ‘ Idylls ‘ are! Lord! What a blessed thing it is to read a man who can write! I thought nothing could be grander than the first poem till I came to the third; but when I had read the last, it seemed to be absolutely unapproached and unapproachable.”

J. T. Fields tells us of him, “ There were certain books of which Dickens liked to talk during his walks. Among his special favourites were the writings of Cobbett, De Quincey, the ‘ Lectures on Moral Philosophy ‘ by Sydney Smith, and Carlyle’s ‘French Revolution.’“

In short, with regard to Art, Literature, and Music, Dickens was in no sense of the words an expert critic but an impressionist, without any other

standard than his own likings. For his writings upon pictures we had best turn to the “ Pictures from Italy,” in which he says : —

“I am not mechanically acquainted with the art of painting, and have no other means of judging of a picture than as I see it resembling and refining upon nature, and presenting graceful combinations of forms and colours. I am, therefore, no authority whatever, in reference to the ‘touch ‘ of this or that master; though I know very well (as anybody may, who chooses to think about the matter) that few very great masters can possibly have painted, in the compass of their lives, one-half of the pictures that bear their names, and that are recognised by many aspirants to a reputation for taste, as undoubted originals. But this, by the way. Of the Last Supper, I would simply observe, that in its beautiful composition and arrangement, there it is, at Milan, a wonderful picture; and that, in its original colouring, or in its original expression of any single face or feature, there it is not. Apart from the damage it has sustained from damp, decay, or neglect, it has been (as Barry shows) so retouched upon, and repainted, and that so clumsily, that many of the heads are, now, positive deformities, with patches of paint and plaster sticking upon them like wens, and utterly distorting the expression. Where the original artist set that impress of his genius on a face, which, almost in a line or touch, separated him from meaner painters and made him what he was, succeeding bunglers, filling up, or painting across seams and cracks, have been quite unable to imitate his hand; and putting in some scowls, or frowns, or wrinkles, of their own, have blotched and spoiled the work. This is so well established as an historical fact, that I should not repeat it, at the risk of being tedious, but for having observed an English gentleman before the picture, who was at great pains to fall into what I may describe as mild convulsions, at certain minute details of expression which are not left in it. Whereas, it would be comfortable and rational for travellers and critics to arrive at a general understanding that it cannot fail to have been a work of extraordinary merit, once: when, with so few of its original beauties remaining, the grandeur of the general design is yet sufficient to sustain it, as a piece replete with interest and dignity.”

It will be remembered that he made a biting and quite foolish onslaught upon one of the most famous of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Of English art — in his own day — compared with French, he thought but poorly on the whole of our painters: — ” there is a horrible respectability about most of

the best of them — a little, finite, systematic routine in them, strangely expressive to me of the state of England itself.”

Of music he says and writes but little, and indeed appears to have cared not much for it, save in the form of jovial or sentimental songs, and as incidental music to melodramas, though when in Paris, in 1863, he heard Gounod’s “Faust,” writing of it, “It is a splendid work, in which that noble and sad story is most nobly and sadly rendered, and perfectly delighted me.”

Dickens was in essence a profoundly religious, Christian man, and here, as elsewhere, we think it by far the better way to allow him to speak for himself. This is from his letter to his youngest son on his leaving for Australia in 1868, “You will remember that you have never at home been wearied about religious observances or mere formalities. I have always been anxious not to weary my children with such things before they are old enough to form opinions respecting them. You will therefore understand the better that I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it.”

Earlier, in 1864, he wrote to M de Cerjat, “As to the Church, my friend, I am sick of it. The spectacle presented by the indecent squabbles of priests of most denominations, and the exemplary unfairness and rancour with which they conduct their differences, utterly repel me. And the idea of the Protestant Establishment, in the face of its own history, seeking to trample out discussion and private judgement, is an enormity so cool, that I wonder the Right Reverends, Very Reverends, and all other Reverends, who commit it, can look in one another’s faces without laughing, as the old soothsayers did. Perhaps they can’t and don’t. How our sublime and so different Christian religion is to be administered in the future I cannot pretend to say, but that the Church’s hand is at its own throat I am fully convinced. Here, more Popery, there, more Methodism — as many forms of consignment to eternal damnation as there are articles, and all in one for ever quarrelling body — the Master of the New Testament put out of sight, and the rage and fury almost always turning on the letter of obscure parts of the Old Testament, which itself has been the subject of accommodation, adaptation, varying interpretation without end — these things cannot last. The Church that is to have its part in the coming time must be a more Christian one,

with less arbitrary pretensions and a stronger hold upon the mantle of our Saviour, as He walked and talked upon this earth.”

“Do you ever pray ?” Ada, Lady Lovelace, asked him on her death-bed; “Every morning and evening,” he answered.

As to Dickens’s political views, he may be described as a sentimental, rather than a practical, Radical. It was personal sympathy with the lot of the suffering that stirred him, but of practical and effective reform he had but vague ideas. He wrote to Forster, in 1855, “ a country

which is discovered to be in this tremendous condition as to its war affairs; with an enormous black cloud of poverty in every town which is spreading and deepening every hour, and not one man in two thousand knowing anything about, or even believing in, its existence; with a nonworking aristocracy, and a silent parliament, and everybody for himself and nobody for the rest; this is the prospect, and I think it is a very deplorable one.”

As to the personal appearance and character of the man so much evidence has already been brought together in these pages that we need add but little more.

During the first visit to America, in 1842, Longfellow describes him “a gay, free-and-easy character; with a fine bright face, blue eyes, and long dark hair,” and a Cincinnati lady wrote of him, “He is young and handsome, has a mellow beautiful eye, fine brow, and abundant hair. . . . His manner is easy — negligent — but not elegant. His dress was foppish; in fact, he was overdressed, yet his garments were worn so easily they appeared to be a necessary part of him.”

Richard Hengist Horne, in 1844, gave in “ A New Spirit of the Age “ a somewhat breathless account of Dickens : — “He talks much or little according to his sympathies. His conversation is genial. He hates argument; in fact, he is unable to argue — a common case with impulsive characters who see the whole truth, and feel it crowding and struggling at once for immediate utterance. He never talks for effect, but for the truth or for the fun of the thing. He tells a story admirably, and generally with humorous exaggerations. His sympathies are of the broadest, and his literary tastes appreciate all excellence. He is a great admirer of the poetry of Tennyson. Mr Dickens has singular personal activity, and is fond of games of practical skill. He is also a great walker, and very much given to dancing Sir Roger

de Coverley. In private, the general impression of him is that of a first-rate practical intellect, with ‘no nonsense’ about him.”

Thomas Adolphus Trollope was an enthusiastic admirer of Dickens’s personality; “he was a hearty man, a large-hearted man that is to say. He was perhaps the largest hearted man I ever knew,” he says.

For an unfavourable view of Dickens’s character Dr John Brown may be quoted. He writes to Ruskin, in 1873, “My reasons for saying he was hard-hearted are — 1st, my personal knowledge of him many years ago, and my seeing then his intense, adamantine egoism. 2nd, the revelation of his nature given so frankly, and let us hope unconsciously, in his friend’s huge and most exaggerated life (Forster is a ‘heavy swell,’ and has always been to me offensive, and he has no sense or faculty of humour, and is, as the boy called him, a ‘harbitrary cove’)... He was a man softest outside, hardest at the core.” George Henry Lewes said to Mrs Lynn Linton, “Dickens would not give you a farthing of money, but he would take no end of trouble for you. He would spend a whole day, for instance, in looking for the most suitable lodgings for you, and would spare himself neither time nor fatigue.”

George Eliot says of Dickens in 1852, “His appearance is certainly disappointing, no benevolence in the face, and, I think, little in the head ... in fact, he is not distinguished-looking in any way — neither handsome nor ugly, neither fat nor thin, neither tall nor short.”

To conclude: — One who knew him intimately for many years describes him as full of fun, charming in manner; equipped with bonhomie and considerable shrewdness; a man to whom a woman would go for advice; but a domineering man, fond of his own way and not over fond of those who tried to deny it to him.

It may be taken as written of himself that which we read in “David Copperfield,” “I never could have done what I have done without the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence; without the determination to concentrate myself on one object at a time, no matter how quickly its successor should come upon its heels. . . . My meaning simply is, that whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do well; that whatever I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely; that, in great aims and in small, I have always been thoroughly in earnest. . . . Never to put one hand to anything on which I could throw

my whole self; and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was; I find, now, to have been my golden rules.”

It has not come within the scope of this book to deal critically or otherwise with Dickens as a man of letters, and it would be a too curious inquiry to ask whether his personality would have been worth studying or not had he not been one of the most influential as well as famous of English writers. An author's works can be, and many hold should be, studied apart from the biography of their creator, but be that as it may, there cannot be any doubt that a knowledge of the writer, intimate if possible, adds zest to the pleasure of the reader and not seldom, also, to his understanding.

We leave it to our readers to form, with the evidence here provided them, what idea they may of the physical personality of Charles Dickens; of his character we will say a few words. It is indubitable that much damage

has been done to his fame both as a man and as a writer by indiscreet admirers, who, dazzled by his genius, have been unable to see any fault in his writings or any flaw in his character. To set him up on a pedestal as a minor god only detracts from his high standing as a great man; not only that, but the virtues of a human being shine all the brighter by contrast with his failings.

Of few men is the opinion of their contemporaries so strongly favourable as it is in the case of Dickens, and the evidence is all the more powerful in that it comes from all sorts and conditions of men and women, chiefly, however, from the former. Few women of any great strength of character or power of will appear to have been among his intimates. Among his men friends, too, he was a leader, rather than an equal, with some rare exceptions, such as Carlyle and Lytton. We can trace all through his life, even after his first taste of success, a tendency toward despotism. He was a managing, masterful man, so much so that at times he would quarrel with those who quite rightly opposed his wishes.

He was in a sense a superficial man; his emotions were easily stirred, and — as with easily stirred waters — were not very profound; sentiment with him was apt to degenerate into sentimentality, tragedy to become melodrama, comedy to become farce; these things both in his life and in his books. He was not a scholar, for which, of course, he was in no way to

blame, and his judgments of literature and the arts cannot be called otherwise than middle-class. In all his instincts and ambitions he was of the state of life in which he was born, middleclass; he showed this in his art as well as in his life. It must not be thought that we are using the term middle class as one of opprobrium, but it is distinctly, and in this case truly, definitive.

Set in the balance against these defects his gifts weigh far the heavier. We cannot sum them up better than by repeating Carlyle's eulogium, "The good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever-friendly, noble Dickens — every inch of him an Honest Man." How great praise that from how great a source!

We send forth these pages, with all their sins of omission and commission, in full confidence that they will prove welcome to many a lover of Charles Dickens. To our critical readers we would say that we have made no pretence of completeness; all our aim has been to gather together sufficient facts concerning Charles Dickens and some of his Friends, and so to join them together as to make it possible to form a true picture of a strenuous man and of the strenuous life he led.

THE PUZZLE OF DICKENS'S LAST PLOT by Andrew

Lang



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INTRODUCTION

Forster tells us that Dickens, in his later novels, from *Bleak House* onwards (1853), “assiduously cultivated” construction, “this essential of his art.” Some critics may think, that since so many of the best novels in the world “have no outline, or, if they have an outline, it is a demned outline,” elaborate construction is not absolutely “essential.” Really essential are character, “atmosphere,” humour.

But as, in the natural changes of life, and under the strain of restless and unsatisfied activity, his old buoyancy and unequalled high spirits deserted Dickens, he certainly wrote no longer in what Scott, speaking of himself, calls the manner of “hab nab at a venture.” He constructed elaborate plots, rich in secrets and surprises. He emulated the manner of Wilkie Collins, or even of Gaboriau, while he combined with some of the elements of the detective novel, or roman policier, careful study of character. Except *Great Expectations*, none of his later tales rivals in merit his early picaresque stories of the road, such as *Pickwick* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. “Youth will be served;” no sedulous care could compensate for the exuberance of “the first sprightly runnings.” In the early books the melodrama of the plot, the secrets of *Ralph Nickleby*, of *Monk*, of *Jonas Chuzzlewit*, were the least of the innumerable attractions. But Dickens was more and more drawn towards the secret that excites curiosity, and to the game of hide and seek with the reader who tried to anticipate the solution of the secret.

In April, 1869, Dickens, outworn by the strain of his American readings; of that labour achieved under painful conditions of ominously bad health — found himself, as Sir Thomas Watson reported, “on the brink of an attack of paralysis of his left side, and possibly of apoplexy.” He therefore abandoned a new series of Readings. We think of Scott’s earlier seizures of a similar kind, after which Peveril, he said, “smacked of the apoplexy.” But

Dickens’s new story of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, first contemplated in July, 1869, and altered in character by the emergence of “a very curious and new idea,” early in August, does not “smack of the apoplexy.” We may think that the mannerisms of Mr. Honeythunder, the philanthropist, and of

Miss Twinkleton, the schoolmistress, are not in the author's best vein of humour. "The Billickin," on the other hand, the lodging-house keeper, is "in very gracious fooling:" her unlooked-for sallies in skirmishes with Miss Twinkleton are rich in mirthful surprises. Mr. Grewgious may be caricatured too much, but not out of reason; and Dickens, always good at boys, presents a gamin, in Deputy, who is in not unpleasant contrast with the pathetic Jo of Bleak House. Opinions may differ as to Edwin and Rosa, but the more closely one studies Edwin, the better one thinks of that character. As far as we are allowed to see Helena Landless, the restraint which she puts on her "tigerish blood" is admirable: she is very fresh and original. The villain is all that melodrama can desire, but what we do miss, I think, is the "atmosphere" of a small cathedral town. Here there is a lack of softness and delicacy of treatment: on the other hand, the opium den is studied from the life.

On the whole, Dickens himself was perhaps most interested in his plot, his secret, his surprises, his game of hide and seek with the reader. He threw himself into the sport with zest: he spoke to his sister-in-law, Miss Hogarth, about his fear that he had not sufficiently concealed his tracks in the latest numbers. Yet, when he died in June, 1870, leaving three completed numbers still unpublished, he left his secret as a puzzle to the curious. Many efforts have been made to decipher his purpose, especially his intentions as to the hero. Was Edwin Drood killed, or did he escape?

By a coincidence, in September, 1869, Dickens was working over the late Lord Lytton's tale for All The Year Round, "The Disappearance of John Ackland," for the purpose of mystifying the reader as to whether Ackland was alive or dead. But he was conspicuously defunct! (All the Year Round, September-October, 1869.)

The most careful of the attempts at a reply about Edwin, a study based on deep knowledge of Dickens, is "Watched by the Dead," by the late ingenious Mr. R. A. Proctor (1887). This book, to which I owe much aid, is now out of print. In 1905, Mr. Cuming Walters revived "the auld mysterie," in his "Clues to Dickens's Edwin Drood" (Chapman & Hall and Heywood, Manchester). From the solution of Mr. Walters I am obliged to dissent. Of Mr. Proctor's theory I offer some necessary corrections, and I hope that I have unraveled some skeins which Mr. Proctor left in a state of tangle. As one read and re-read the fragment, points very dark seemed, at least, to become suddenly clear: especially one appeared to understand the meaning

half-revealed and half-concealed by Jasper's babblings under the influence of opium. He saw in his vision, "THAT, I never saw THAT before." We may be sure that he was to see "THAT" in real life. We must remember that, according to Forster, "such was Dickens's interest in things supernatural that, but for the strong restraining power of his common sense, he might have fallen into the follies of spiritualism." His interest in such matters certainly peeps out in this novel — there are two specimens of the supernormal — and he may have gone to the limited extent which my hypothesis requires. If I am right, Dickens went further, and fared worse, in the too material premonitions of "The Signalman" in *Mugby Junction*.

With this brief preface, I proceed to the analysis of Dickens's last plot. Mr. William Archer has kindly read the proof sheets and made valuable suggestions, but is responsible for none of my theories.

ANDREW LANG.
ST. ANDREWS,
September 4, 1905.

THE STORY — DRAMATIS PERSONAE

For the discovery of Dickens's secret in *Edwin Drood* it is necessary to obtain a clear view of the characters in the tale, and of their relations to each other.

About the middle of the nineteenth century there lived in Cloisterham, a cathedral city sketched from Rochester, a young University man, Mr. Bud, who had a friend Mr. Drood, one of a firm of engineers — somewhere. They were “fast friends and old college companions.” Both married young. Mr. Bud wedded a lady unnamed, by whom he was the father of one child, a daughter, Rosa Bud. Mr. Drood, whose wife's maiden name was Jasper, had one son, Edwin Drood. Mrs. Bud was drowned in a boating accident, when her daughter, Rosa, was a child. Mr. Drood, already a widower, and the bereaved Mr. Bud “betrothed” the two children, Rosa and Edwin, and then expired, when the orphans were about seven and eleven years old. The guardian of Rosa was a lawyer, Mr. Grewgious, who had been in love with her mother. To Grewgious Mr. Bud entrusted his wife's engagement ring, rubies and diamonds, which Grewgious was to hand over to Edwin Drood, if, when he attained his majority, he and Rosa decided to marry.

Grewgious was apparently legal agent for Edwin, while Edwin's maternal uncle, John Jasper (aged about sixteen when the male parents died), was Edwin's “trustee,” as well as his uncle and devoted friend. Rosa's little fortune was an annuity producing 250 pounds a-year: Edwin succeeded to his father's share in an engineering firm.

When the story opens, Edwin is nearly twenty-one, and is about to proceed to Egypt, as an engineer. Rosa, at school in Cloisterham, is about seventeen; John Jasper is twenty-six. He is conductor of the Choir of the Cathedral, a “lay precentor;” he is very dark, with thick black whiskers, and, for a number of years, has been a victim to the habit of opium smoking. He began very early. He takes this drug both in his lodgings, over the gate of the Cathedral, and in a den in East London, kept by a woman nicknamed “The Princess Puffer.” This hag, we learn, has been a

determined drunkard, — "I drank heaven's-hard," — for sixteen years BEFORE she took to opium. If she has been dealing in opium for ten years (the exact period is not stated), she has been very disreputable for twenty-six years, that is ever since John Jasper's birth. Mr. Cuming Walters suggests that she is the mother of John Jasper, and, therefore, maternal grandmother of Edwin Drood. She detests her client, Jasper, and plays the spy on his movements, for reasons unexplained.

Jasper is secretly in love with Rosa, the fiancée of his nephew, and his own pupil in the musical art. He makes her aware of his passion, silently, and she fears and detests him, but keeps these emotions private. She is a saucy school-girl, and she and Edwin are on uncomfortable terms: she does not love him, while he perhaps does love her, but is annoyed by her manner, and by the gossip about their betrothal. "The bloom is off the plum" of their prearranged loves, he says to his friend, uncle, and confidant, Jasper, whose own concealed passion for Rosa is of a ferocious and homicidal character. Rosa is aware of this fact; "a glaze comes over his eyes," sometimes, she says, "and he seems to wander away into a frightful sort of dream, in which he threatens most . . ." The man appears to have these frightful dreams even when he is not under opium.

OPENING OF THE TALE

The tale opens abruptly with an opium-bred vision of the tower of Cloisterham Cathedral, beheld by Jasper as he awakens in the den of the Princess Puffer, between a Chinaman, a Lascar, and the hag herself. This Cathedral tower, thus early and emphatically introduced, is to play a great but more or less mysterious part in the romance: that is certain. Jasper, waking, makes experiments on the talk of the old woman, the Lascar and Chinaman in their sleep. He pronounces it “unintelligible,” which satisfies him that his own babble, when under opium, must be unintelligible also. He is, presumably, acquainted with the languages of the eastern coast of India, and with Chinese, otherwise, how could he hope to understand the sleepers? He is being watched by the hag, who hates him.

Jasper returns to Cloisterham, where we are introduced to the Dean, a nonentity, and to Minor Canon Crisparkle, a muscular Christian in the pink of training, a classical scholar, and a good honest fellow. Jasper gives Edwin a dinner, and gushes over “his bright boy,” a lively lad, full of chaff, but also full of confiding affection and tenderness of heart. Edwin admits that his betrothal is a bore: Jasper admits that he loathes his life; and that the church singing “often sounds to me quite devilish,” — and no wonder. After this dinner, Jasper has a “weird seizure;” “a strange film comes over Jasper’s eyes,” he “looks frightfully ill,” becomes rigid, and admits that he “has been taking opium for a pain, an agony that sometimes overcomes me.” This “agony,” we learn, is the pain of hearing Edwin speak lightly of his love, whom Jasper so furiously desires. “Take it as a warning,” Jasper says, but Edwin, puzzled, and full of confiding tenderness, does not understand.

In the next scene we meet the school-girl, Rosa, who takes a walk and has a tiff with Edwin. Sir Luke Fildes’s illustration shows Edwin as “a lad with the bloom of a lass,” with a classic profile; and a gracious head of long, thick, fair hair, long, though we learn it has just been cut. He wears a soft slouched hat, and the pea-coat of the period.

SAPSEA AND DURDLES

Next, Jasper and Sapsea, a pompous ass, auctioneer, and mayor, sit at their wine, expecting a third guest. Mr. Sapsea reads his absurd epitaph for his late wife, who is buried in a "Monument," a vault of some sort in the Cathedral churchyard. To them enter Durdles, a man never sober, yet trusted with the key of the crypt, "as contractor for rough repairs." In the crypt "he habitually sleeps off the fumes of liquor." Of course no Dean would entrust keys to this incredibly dissipated, dirty, and insolent creature, to whom Sapsea gives the key of his vault, for no reason at all, as the epitaph, of course, is to be engraved on the outside, by Durdles's men. However, Durdles insists on getting the key of the vault: he has two other large keys. Jasper, trifling with them, keeps clinking them together, so as to know, even in the dark, by the sound, which is the key that opens Sapsea's vault, in the railed-off burial ground, beside the cloister arches. He has met Durdles at Sapsea's for no other purpose than to obtain access at will to Mrs. Sapsea's monument. Later in the evening Jasper finds Durdles more or less drunk, and being stoned by a gamin, "Deputy," a retainer of a tramp's lodging-house. Durdles fees Deputy, in fact, to drive him home every night after ten. Jasper and Deputy fall into feud, and Jasper has thus a new, keen, and omnipresent enemy. As he walks with Durdles that worthy explains (in reply to a question by Jasper), that, by tapping a wall, even if over six feet thick, with his hammer, he can detect the nature of the contents of the vault, "solid in hollow, and inside solid, hollow again. Old 'un crumbled away in stone coffin, in vault." He can also discover the presence of "rubbish left in that same six foot space by Durdles's men." Thus, if a foreign body were introduced into the Sapsea vault, Durdles could detect its presence by tapping the outside wall. As Jasper's purpose clearly is to introduce a foreign body — that of Edwin who stands between him and Rosa — into Mrs. Sapsea's vault, this "gift" of Durdles is, for Jasper, an uncomfortable discovery. He goes home, watches Edwin asleep, and smokes opium.

THE LANDLESSES

Two new characters are now introduced, Neville and Helena Landless, {1} twins, orphans, of Cingalese extraction, probably Eurasian; very dark, the girl “almost of the gipsy type;” both are “fierce of look.” The young man is to read with Canon Crisparkle and live with him; the girl goes to the same school as Rosa. The education of both has been utterly neglected; instruction has been denied to them. Neville explains the cause of their fierceness to Crisparkle. In Ceylon they were bullied by a cruel stepfather and several times ran away: the girl was the leader, always “dressed as a boy, and showing the daring of a man.” Edwin Drood’s air of supercilious ownership of Rosa Bud (indicated as a fault of youth and circumstance, not of heart and character), irritates Neville Landless, who falls in love with Rosa at first sight. As Rosa sings, at Crisparkle’s, while Jasper plays the piano, Jasper’s fixed stare produces an hysterical fit in the girl, who is soothed by Helena Landless. Helena shows her aversion to Jasper, who, as even Edwin now sees, frightens Rosa. “You would be afraid of him, under similar circumstances, wouldn’t you, Miss Landless?” asks Edwin. “Not under any circumstances,” answers Helena, and Jasper “thanks Miss Landless for this vindication of his character.”

The girls go back to their school, where Rosa explains to Helena her horror of Jasper’s silent love-making: “I feel that I am never safe from him . . . a glaze comes over his eyes and he seems to wander away into a frightful sort of dream in which he threatens most,” as already quoted. Helena thus, and she alone, except Rosa, understands Jasper thoroughly. She becomes Rosa’s protectress. “Let whomsoever it most concerned look well to it.”

Thus Jasper has a new observer and enemy, in addition to the omnipresent street boy, Deputy, and the detective old hag of the opium den.

Leaving the Canon’s house, Neville and Edwin quarrel violently over Rosa, in the open air; they are followed by Jasper, and taken to his house to be reconciled over glasses of mulled wine. Jasper drugs the wine, and thus provokes a violent scene; next day he tells Crisparkle that Neville is

“murderous.” “There is something of the tiger in his dark blood.” He spreads the story of the fracas in the town.

Grewgious, Rosa’s guardian, now comes down on business; the girl fails to explain to him the unsatisfactory relations between her and Edwin: Grewgious is to return to her “at Christmas,” if she sends for him, and she does send. Grewgious, “an angular man,” all duty and sentiment (he had loved Rosa’s mother), has an interview with Edwin’s trustee, Jasper, for whom he has no enthusiasm, but whom he does not in any way suspect. They part on good terms, to meet at Christmas. Crisparkle, with whom Helena has fallen suddenly in love, arranges with Jasper that Edwin and Landless shall meet and be reconciled, as both are willing to be, at a dinner in Jasper’s rooms, on Christmas Eve. Jasper, when Crisparkle proposes this, denotes by his manner “some close internal calculation.” We see that he is reckoning how the dinner suits his plan of campaign, and “close calculation” may refer, as in Mr. Proctor’s theory, to the period of the moon: on Christmas Eve there will be no moonshine at midnight. Jasper, having worked out this problem, accepts Crisparkle’s proposal, and his assurances about Neville, and shows Crisparkle a diary in which he has entered his fears that Edwin’s life is in danger from Neville. Edwin (who is not in Cloisterham at this moment) accepts, by letter, the invitation to meet Neville at Jasper’s on Christmas Eve.

Meanwhile Edwin visits Grewgious in his London chambers; is lectured on his laggard and supercilious behaviour as a lover, and receives the engagement ring of the late Mrs. Bud, Rosa’s mother, which is very dear to Grewgious — in the presence of Bazzard, Grewgious’s clerk, a gloomy writer of an amateur unacted tragedy. Edwin is to return the ring to Grewgious, if he and Rosa decide not to marry. The ring is in a case, and Edwin places it “in his breast.” We must understand, in the breast-pocket of his coat: no other interpretation will pass muster. “Her ring — will it come back to me?” reflects the mournful Grewgious.

THE UNACCOUNTABLE EXPEDITION

Jasper now tells Sapsea, and the Dean, that he is to make “a moonlight expedition with Durdles among the tombs, vaults, towers, and ruins to-night.” The impossible Durdles has the keys necessary for this, “surely an unaccountable expedition,” Dickens keeps remarking. The moon seems to rise on this night at about 7.30 p.m. Jasper takes a big case-bottle of liquor — drugged, of course and goes to the den of Durdles. In the yard of this inspector of monuments he is bidden to beware of a mound of quicklime near the yard gate. “With a little handy stirring, quick enough to eat your bones,” says Durdles. There is some considerable distance between this “mound” of quicklime and the crypt, of which Durdles has the key, but the intervening space is quite empty of human presence, as the citizens are unwilling to meet ghosts.

In the crypt Durdles drinks a good deal of the drugged liquor. “They are to ascend the great Tower,” — and why they do that is part of the Mystery, though not an insoluble part. Before they climb, Durdles tells Jasper that he was drunk and asleep in the crypt, last Christmas Eve, and was wakened by “the ghost of one terrific shriek, followed by the ghost of the howl of a dog, a long dismal, woeful howl, such as a dog gives when a person’s dead.” Durdles has made inquiries and, as no one else heard the shriek and the howl, he calls these sounds “ghosts.”

They are obviously meant to be understood as supranormal premonitory sounds; of the nature of second sight, or rather of second hearing. Forster gives examples of Dickens’s tendency to believe in such premonitions: Dickens had himself a curious premonitory dream. He considerably overdid the premonitory business in his otherwise excellent story, *The Signalman*, or so it seems to a student of these things. The shriek and howl heard by Durdles are to be repeated, we see, in real life, later, on a Christmas Eve. The question is — when? More probably NOT on the Christmas Eve just imminent, when Edwin is to vanish, but, on the Christmas Eve following, when Jasper is to be unmasked.

All this while, and later, Jasper examines Durdles very closely, studying the effects on him of the drugged drink. When they reach the top of the tower, Jasper closely contemplates “that stillest part of it” (the landscape) “which the Cathedral overshadows; but he contemplates Durdles quite as curiously.”

There is a motive for the scrutiny in either case. Jasper examines the part of the precincts in the shadow of the Cathedral, because he wishes to assure himself that it is lonely enough for his later undescribed but easily guessed proceedings in this night of mystery. He will have much to do that could not brook witnesses, after the drugged Durdles has fallen sound asleep. We have already been assured that the whole area over which Jasper is to operate is “utterly deserted,” even when it lies in full moonlight, about 8.30 p.m. “One might fancy that the tide of life was stemmed by Mr. Jasper’s own gate-house.” The people of Cloisterham, we hear, would deny that they believe in ghosts; but they give this part of the precinct a wide berth (Chapter XII.). If the region is “utterly deserted” at nine o’clock in the evening, when it lies in the ivory moonlight, much more will it be free from human presence when it lies in shadow, between one and two o’clock after midnight. Jasper, however, from the tower top closely scrutinizes the area of his future operations. It is, probably, for this very purpose of discovering whether the coast be clear or not, that Jasper climbs the tower.

He watches Durdles for the purpose of finding how the drug which he has administered works, with a view to future operations on Edwin. Durdles is now in such a state that “he deems the ground so far below on a level with the tower, and would as lief walk off the tower into the air as not.”

All this is apparently meant to suggest that Jasper, on Christmas Eve, will repeat his expedition, WITH EDWIN, whom he will have drugged, and that he will allow Edwin to “walk off the tower into the air.” There are later suggestions to the same effect, as we shall see, but they are deliberately misleading. There are also strong suggestions to the very opposite effect: it is broadly indicated that Jasper is to strangle Edwin with a thick black-silk scarf, which he has just taken to wearing for the good of his throat.

The pair return to the crypt, Durdles falls asleep, dreams that Jasper leaves him, “and that something touches him and something falls from his hand. Then something clinks and gropes about,” and the lines of moonlight shift their direction, as Durdles finds that they have really done when he awakens, with Jasper beside him, while the Cathedral clock strikes two.

They have had many hours, not less than five, for their expedition. The key of the crypt lies beside Durdles on the ground. They go out, and as Deputy begins stone-throwing, Jasper half strangles him.

PURPOSE OF THE EXPEDITION

Jasper has had ample time to take models in wax of all Durdles's keys. But he could have done that in a few minutes, while Durdles slept, if he had wax with him, without leaving the crypt. He has also had time to convey several wheelbarrowfuls of quicklime from Durdles's yard to Mrs. Sapsea's sepulchre, of which monument he probably took the key from Durdles, and tried its identity by clinking. But even in a Cathedral town, even after midnight, several successive expeditions of a lay precentor with a wheelbarrow full of quicklime would have been apt to attract the comment of some belated physician, some cleric coming from a sick bed, or some local roysterers. Therefore it is that Dickens insists on the "utterly deserted" character of the area, and shows us that Jasper has made sure of that essential fact by observations from the tower top. Still, his was a perilous expedition, with his wheelbarrow! We should probably learn later, that Jasper was detected by the wakeful Deputy, who loathed him. Moreover, next morning Durdles was apt to notice that some of his quicklime had been removed. As far as is shown, Durdles noticed nothing of that kind, though he does observe peculiarities in Jasper's behaviour.

The next point in the tale is that Edwin and Rosa meet, and have sense enough to break off their engagement. But Edwin, represented as really good-hearted, now begins to repent his past behaviour, and, though he has a kind of fancy for Miss Landless, he pretty clearly falls deeper in love with his late fiancée, and weeps his loss in private: so we are told.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas Eve comes, the day of the dinner of three, Jasper, Landless, and Edwin. The chapter describing this fateful day (xiv.) is headed, When shall these Three meet again? and Mr. Proctor argues that Dickens intends that THEY SHALL meet again.

The intention, and the hint, are much in Dickens's manner. Landless means to start, next day, very early, on a solitary walking tour, and buys an exorbitantly heavy stick. We casually hear that Jasper knows Edwin to possess no jewellery, except a watch and chain and a scarf-pin. As Edwin moons about, he finds the old opium hag, come down from London, "seeking a needle in a bottle of hay," she says — that is, hunting vainly for Jasper.

Please remark that Jasper has run up to town, on December 23, and has saturated his system with a debauch of opium on the very eve of the day when he clearly means to kill Edwin. This was a most injudicious indulgence, in the circumstances. A maiden murder needs nerve! We know that "fiddlestrings was weakness to express the state of" Jasper's "nerves" on the day after the night of opium with which the story opens. On December 24, Jasper returned home, the hag at his heels. The old woman, when met by Edwin, has a curious film over her eyes; "he seems to know her." "Great heaven," he thinks, next moment. "Like Jack that night!" This refers to a kind of fit of Jasper's, after dinner, on the first evening of the story. Edwin has then seen Jack Jasper in one of his "filmy" seizures. The woman prays Edwin for three shillings and sixpence, to buy opium. He gives her the money; she asks his Christian name. "Edwin." Is "Eddy" a sweetheart's form of that? He says that he has no sweetheart. He is told to be thankful that his name is not Ned. Now, Jasper alone calls Edwin "Ned." "'Ned' is a threatened name, a dangerous name," says the hag, who has heard Jasper threaten "Ned" in his opium dreams.

Edwin determines to tell this adventure to Jasper, BUT NOT ON THIS NIGHT: to-morrow will do. Now, DID he tell the story to Jasper that night, in the presence of Landless, at dinner? If so, Helena Landless might

later learn the fact from Neville. If she knew it, she would later tell Mr. Grewgious.

The three men meet and dine. There is a fearful storm. "Stones are displaced upon the summit of the great tower." Next morning, early, Jasper yells to Crisparkle, who is looking out of his window in Minor Canon Row, that Edwin has disappeared. Neville has already set out on his walking tour.

AFTER THE DISAPPEARANCE

Men go forth and apprehend Neville, who shows fight with his heavy stick. We learn that he and Drood left Jasper's house at midnight, went for ten minutes to look at the river under the wind, and parted at Crisparkle's door. Neville now remains under suspicion:

Jasper directs the search in the river, on December 25, 26, and 27. On the evening of December 27, Grewgious visits Jasper. Now, Grewgious, as we know, was to be at Cloisterham at Christmas. True, he was engaged to dine on Christmas Day with Bazzard, his clerk; but, thoughtful as he was of the moody Bazzard, as Edwin was leaving Cloisterham he would excuse himself. He would naturally take a great part in the search for Edwin, above all as Edwin had in his possession the ring so dear to the lawyer. Edwin had not shown it to Rosa when they determined to part. He "kept it in his breast," and the ring, we learn, was "gifted with invincible force to hold and drag," so Dickens warns us.

The ring is obviously to be a piece de conviction. But our point, at present, is that we do not know how Grewgious, to whom this ring was so dear, employed himself at Cloisterham — after Edwin's disappearance — between December 25 and December 27. On the evening of the 27th, he came to Jasper, saying, "I have JUST LEFT MISS LANDLESS." He then slowly and watchfully told Jasper that Edwin's engagement was broken off, while the precentor gasped, perspired, tore his hair, shrieked, and finally subsided into a heap of muddy clothes on the floor. Meanwhile, Mr. Grewgious, calmly observing these phenomena, warmed his hands at the fire for some time before he called in Jasper's landlady.

Grewgious now knows by Jasper's behaviour that he believes himself to have committed a superfluous crime, by murdering Edwin, who no longer stood between him and Rosa, as their engagement was already at an end. Whether a Jasper, in real life, would excite himself so much, is another question. We do not know, as Mr. Proctor insists, what Mr. Grewgious had been doing at Cloisterham between Christmas Day and December 27, the date of his experiment on Jasper's nerves. Mr. Proctor supposes him to have met the living Edwin, and obtained information from him, after his

escape from a murderous attack by Jasper. Mr. Proctor insists that this is the only explanation of Grewgious's conduct, any other "is absolutely impossible." In that case the experiment of Grewgious was not made to gain information from Jasper's demeanour, but was the beginning of his punishment, and was intended by Grewgious to be so.

But Dickens has been careful to suggest, with suspicious breadth of candour, another explanation of the source of Grewgious's knowledge. If Edwin has really escaped, and met Grewgious, Dickens does not want us to be sure of that, as Mr. Proctor was sure. Dickens deliberately puts his readers on another trail, though neither Mr. Walters nor Mr. Proctor struck the scent. As we have noted, Grewgious at once says to Jasper, "I HAVE JUST COME FROM MISS LANDLESS." This tells Jasper nothing, but it tells a great deal to the watchful reader, who remembers that Miss Landless, and she only, is aware that Jasper loves, bullies, and insults Rosa, and that Rosa's life is embittered by Jasper's silent wooing, and his unspoken threats. Helena may also know that "Ned is a threatened name," as we have seen, and that the menace comes from Jasper. As Jasper is now known to be Edwin's rival in love, and as Edwin has vanished, the murderer, Mr. Grewgious reckons, is Jasper; and his experiment, with Jasper's consequent shriek and fit, confirms the hypothesis. Thus Grewgious had information enough, from Miss Landless, to suggest his experiment — Dickens intentionally made that clear (though not clear enough for Mr. Proctor and Mr. Cuming Walters) — while his experiment gives him a moral certainty of Jasper's crime, but yields no legal evidence.

But does Grewgious know no more than what Helena, and the fit and shriek of Jasper, have told him? Is his knowledge limited to the evidence that Jasper has murdered Edwin? Or does Grewgious know more, know that Edwin, in some way, has escaped from death?

That is Dickens's secret. But whereas Grewgious, if he believes Jasper to be an actual murderer, should take him seriously; in point of fact, he speaks of Jasper in so light a tone, as "our local friend," that we feel no certainty that he is not really aware of Edwin's escape from a murderous attack by Jasper, and of his continued existence.

Presently Crisparkle, under some mysterious impression, apparently telepathic (the book is rich in such psychical phenomena), visits the weir on the river, at night, and next day finds Edwin's watch and chain in the timbers; his scarf-pin in the pool below. The watch and chain must have

been placed purposely where they were found, they could not float thither, and, if Neville had slain Edwin, he would not have stolen his property, of course, except as a blind, neutralised by the placing of the watch in a conspicuous spot. However, the increased suspicions drive Neville away to read law in Staple Inn, where Grewgious also dwells, and incessantly watches Neville out of his window.

About six months later, Helena Landless is to join Neville, who is watched at intervals by Jasper, who, again, is watched by Grewgious as the precentor lurks about Staple Inn.

DICK DATCHERY

About the time when Helena leaves Cloisterham for town, a new character appears in Cloisterham, “a white-headed personage with black eyebrows, **BUTTONED UP IN A TIGHTISH BLUE SURTOUT**, with a buff waistcoat, grey trowsers, and something of a military air.” His shock of white hair was unusually thick and ample. This man, “a buffer living idly on his means,” named Datchery, is either, as Mr. Proctor believed, Edwin Drood, or, as Mr. Walters thinks, Helena Landless. By making Grewgious drop the remark that Bazzard, his clerk, a moping owl of an amateur tragedian, “is off duty here,” at his chambers, Dickens hints that Bazzard is Datchery. But that is a mere false scent, a ruse of the author, scattering paper in the wrong place, in this long paper hunt.

As for Helena, Mr. Walters justly argues that Dickens has marked her for some important part in the ruin of Jasper. “There was a slumbering gleam of fire in her intense dark eyes. Let whomsoever it most concerned look well to it.” Again, we have been told that Helena had high courage. She had told Jasper that she feared him “in no circumstances whatever.” Again, we have learned that in childhood she had dressed as a boy when she ran away from home; and she had the motives of protecting Rosa and her brother, Neville, from the machinations of Jasper, who needs watching, as he is trying to ruin Neville’s already dilapidated character, and, by spying on him, to break down his nerve. Really, of course, Neville is quite safe. There is no *corpus delicti*, no carcase of the missing Edwin Drood.

For the reasons given, Datchery might be Helena in disguise.

If so, the idea is highly ludicrous, while nothing is proved either by the blackness of Datchery’s eyebrows (Helena’s were black), or by Datchery’s habit of carrying his hat under his arm, not on his head. A person who goes so far as to wear a conspicuous white wig, would not be afraid also to dye his eyebrows black, if he were Edwin; while either Edwin or Helena **MUST** have “made up” the face, by the use of paint and sham wrinkles. Either Helena or Edwin would have been detected in real life, of course, but we allow for the accepted fictitious convention of successful disguise, and for

the necessities of the novelist. A tightly buttoned surtout would show Helena's feminine figure; but let that also pass. As to the hat, Edwin's own hair was long and thick: add a wig, and his hat would be a burden to him.

What is most unlike the stern, fierce, sententious Helena, is Datchery's habit of "chaffing." He fools the ass of a Mayor, Sapsea, by most exaggerated difference: his tone is always that of indolent mockery, which one doubts whether the "intense" and concentrated Helena could assume. He takes rooms in the same house as Jasper, to whom, as to Durdles and Deputy, he introduces himself on the night of his arrival at Cloisterham. He afterwards addresses Deputy, the little gamin, by the name "Winks," which is given to him by the people at the Tramps' lodgings: the name is a secret of Deputy's.

JASPER, ROSA, AND TARTAR

Meanwhile Jasper formally proposes to Rosa, in the school garden: standing apart and leaning against a sundial, as the garden is commanded by many windows. He offers to resign his hopes of bringing Landless to the gallows (perhaps this bad man would provide a corpus delicti of his own making!) if Rosa will accept him: he threatens to “pursue her to the death,” if she will not; he frightens her so thoroughly that she rushes to Grewgious in his chambers in London. She now suspects Jasper of Edwin’s murder, but keeps her thoughts to herself. She tells Grewgious, who is watching Neville, — ”I have a fancy for keeping him under my eye,” — that Jasper has made love to her, and Grewgious replies in a parody of “God save the King”!

“On Thee his hopes to fix
Damn him again!”

Would he fool thus, if he knew Jasper to have killed Edwin? He is not certain whether Rosa should visit Helena next day, in Landless’s rooms, opposite; and Mr. Walters suggests that he may be aware that Helena, dressed as Datchery, is really absent at Cloisterham. However, next day, Helena is in her brother’s rooms. Moreover, it is really a sufficient explanation of Grewgious’s doubt that Jasper is lurking around, and that not till next day is a PRIVATE way of communication arranged between Neville and his friends. In any case, next day, Helena is in her brother’s rooms, and, by aid of a Mr. Tartar’s rooms, she and Rosa can meet privately. There is a good deal of conspiring to watch Jasper when he watches Neville, and in this new friend, Mr. Tartar, a lover is provided for Rosa. Tartar is a miraculously agile climber over roofs and up walls, a retired Lieutenant of the navy, and a handy man, being such a climber, to chase Jasper about the roof of the Cathedral, when Jasper’s day of doom arrives.

JASPER'S OPIUM VISIONS

In July, Jasper revisits the London opium den, and talks under opium, watched by the old hag. He speaks of a thing which he often does in visions: “a hazardous and perilous journey, over abysses where a slip would be destruction. Look down, look down! You see what lies at the bottom there?” He enacts the vision and says, “There was a fellow traveller.” He “speaks in a whisper, and as if in the dark.” The vision is, in this case, “a poor vision: no struggle, no consciousness of peril, no entreaty.” Edwin, in the reminiscent vision, dies very easily and rapidly. “When it comes to be real at last, it is so short that it seems unreal for the first time.” “And yet I never saw THAT before. Look what a poor miserable mean thing it is. THAT must be real. It’s over.”

What can all this mean? We have been told that, shortly before Christmas Eve, Jasper took to wearing a thick black-silk handkerchief for his throat. He hung it over his arm, “his face knitted and stern,” as he entered his house for his Christmas Eve dinner. If he strangled Edwin with the scarf, as we are to suppose, he did not lead him, drugged, to the tower top, and pitch him off. Is part of Jasper’s vision reminiscent — the brief, unresisting death — while another part is a separate vision, is PROSPECTIVE, “premonitory”? Does he see himself pitching Neville Landless off the tower top, or see him fallen from the Cathedral roof? Is Neville’s body “THAT” — “I never saw THAT before. Look what a poor miserable mean thing it is! THAT must be real.” Jasper “never saw THAT” — the dead body below the height — before. THIS vision, I think, is of the future, not of the past, and is meant to bewilder the reader who thinks that the whole represents the slaying of Drood. The tale is rich in “warnings” and telepathy.

DATCHERY AND THE OPIUM WOMAN

The hag now tracks Jasper home to Cloisterham. Here she meets Datchery, whom she asks how she can see Jasper? If Datchery is Drood, he now learns, WHAT HE DID NOT KNOW BEFORE, THAT THERE IS SOME CONNECTION BETWEEN JASPER AND THE HAG. He walks with her to the place where Edwin met the hag, on Christmas Eve, and gave her money; and he jingles his own money as he walks. The place, or the sound of the money, makes the woman tell Datchery about Edwin's gift of three shillings and sixpence for opium. Datchery, "with a sudden change of countenance, gives her a sudden look." It does not follow that he is NOT Drood, for, though the hag's love of opium was known to Drood, Datchery is not to reveal his recognition of the woman. He does what any stranger would do; he "gives a sudden look," as if surprised by the mention of opium.

Mr. Walters says, "Drood would not have changed countenance on hearing a fact he had known six months previously." But if Drood was playing at being somebody else, he would, of course, give a kind of start and stare, on hearing of the opium. When he also hears from the hag that her former benefactor's name was Edwin, he asks her how she knew that — "a fatuously unnecessary question," says Mr. Walters. A needless question for Datchery's information, if he be Drood, but as useful a question as another if Drood be Datchery, and wishes to maintain the conversation.

DATCHERY'S SCORE

Datchery keeps a tavern score of his discoveries behind a door, in cryptic chalk strokes. He does this, says Mr. Walters, because, being Helena, he would betray himself if he wrote in a female hand. But nobody would WRITE secrets on a door! He adds “a moderate stroke,” after meeting the hag, though, says Mr. Walters, “Edwin Drood would have learned nothing new whatever” from the hag.

But Edwin would have learned something quite new, and very important — that the hag was hunting Jasper. Next day Datchery sees the woman shake her fists at Jasper in church, and hears from her that she knows Jasper “better far than all the reverend parsons put together know him.” Datchery then adds a long thick line to his chalked score, yet, says Mr. Walters, Datchery has learned “nothing new to Edwin Drood, if alive.”

This is an obvious error. It is absolutely new to Edwin Drood that the opium hag is intimately acquainted with his uncle, Jasper, and hates Jasper with a deadly hatred. All this is not only new to Drood, if alive, but is rich in promise of further revelations. Drood, on Christmas Eve, had learned from the hag only that she took opium, and that she had come from town to Cloisterham, and had “hunted for a needle in a bottle of hay.” That was the sum of his information. Now he learns that the woman knows, tracks, has found, and hates, his worthy uncle, Jasper. He may well, therefore, add a heavy mark to his score.

We must also ask, How could Helena, fresh from Ceylon, know “the old tavern way of keeping scores? Illegible except to the scorer. The scorer not committed, the scored debited with what is against him,” as Datchery observes. An Eurasian girl of twenty, new to England, would not argue thus with herself: she would probably know nothing of English tavern scores. We do not hear that Helena ever opened a book: we do know that education had been denied to her. What acquaintance could she have with old English tavern customs?

If Drood is Datchery, then Dickens used a form of a very old and favourite ficelle of his: the watching of a villain by an improbable and

unsuspected person, in this case thought to be dead. If Helena is Datchery, the “assumption” or personation is in the highest degree improbable, her whole bearing is quite out of her possibilities, and the personation is very absurd.

Here the story ends.

THEORIES OF THE MYSTERY

FORSTER'S EVIDENCE

We have some external evidence as to Dickens's solution of his own problem, from Forster. {2} On August 6, 1869, some weeks before he began to work at his tale, Dickens, in a letter, told Forster, "I have a very curious and new idea for my new story. Not communicable (or the interest of the book would be gone), but a very strong one, though difficult to work." Forster must have instantly asked that the incommunicable secret should be communicated to HIM, for he tells us that "IMMEDIATELY AFTER I learnt" — the secret. But did he learn it? Dickens was ill, and his plot, whatever it may have been, would be irritatingly criticized by Forster before it was fully thought out. "Fules and bairns should not see half-done work," and Dickens may well have felt that Forster should not see work not even begun, but merely simmering in the author's own fancy.

Forster does not tell us that Dickens communicated the secret in a letter. He quotes none: he says "I was told," orally, that is. When he writes, five years later (1874), "Landless was, *I THINK*, to have perished in assisting Tartar finally to unmask and seize the murderer," he is clearly trusting, not to a letter of Dickens's, but to a defective memory; and he knows it. He says that a nephew was to be murdered by an uncle. The criminal was to confess in the condemned cell. He was to find out that his crime had been needless, and to be convicted by means of the ring (Rosa's mother's ring) remaining in the quicklime that had destroyed the body of Edwin.

Nothing "new" in all this, as Forster must have seen. "The originality," he explains, "was to consist in the review of the murderer's career by himself at the close, when its temptations were to be dwelt upon as if, not he the culprit, but some other man, were the tempted."

But all this is not "hard to work," and is not "original." As Mr.

Proctor remarks, Dickens had used that trick twice already. ("Madman's Manuscript," *Pickwick*; "Clock Case Confession," in *Master Humphrey's Clock*.) The quicklime trick is also very old indeed. The disguise of a woman as a man is as ancient as the art of fiction: yet Helena MAY be Datchery, though nobody guessed it before Mr. Cuming Walters. She ought

not to be Datchery; she is quite out of keeping in her speech and manner as Datchery, and is much more like Drood.

“A NEW IDEA”

There are no new ideas in plots. “All the stories have been told,” and all the merit lies in the manner of the telling. Dickens had used the unsuspected watcher, as Mr. Proctor shows, in almost all his novels. In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, when Jonas finds that Nadgett has been the watcher, Dickens writes, “The dead man might have come out of his grave and not confounded and appalled him so.” Now, to Jasper, Edwin WAS “the dead man,” and Edwin’s grave contained quicklime. Jasper was sure that he had done for Edwin: he had taken Edwin’s watch, chain, and scarf-pin; he believed that he had left him, drugged, in quicklime, in a locked vault. Consequently the reappearance of Edwin, quite well, in the vault where Jasper had buried him, would be a very new idea to Jasper; would “confound and appall him.” Jasper would have emotions, at that spectacle, and so would the reader! It is not every day, even in our age of sixpenny novels, that a murderer is compelled to visit, alone, at night, the vault which holds his victim’s “cold remains,” and therein finds the victim “come up, smiling.”

Yes, for business purposes, this idea was new enough! The idea was “difficult to work,” says Dickens, with obvious truth. How was he to get the quicklime into the vault, and Drood, alive, out of the vault? As to the reader, he would at first take Datchery for Drood, and then think, “No, that is impossible, and also is stale. Datchery cannot be Drood,” and thus the reader would remain in a pleasant state of puzzlement, as he does, unto this day.

If Edwin is dead, there is not much “Mystery” about him. We have as good as seen Jasper strangle him and take his pin, chain, and watch. Yet by adroitly managing the conduct of Mr. Grewgious, Dickens persuaded Mr. Proctor that certainly, Grewgious knew Edwin to be alive. As Grewgious knew, from Helena, all that was necessary to provoke his experiment on Jasper’s nerves, Mr. Proctor argued on false premises, but that was due to the craft of Dickens. Mr. Proctor rejected Forster’s report, from memory, of what he understood to be the “incommunicable secret” of Dickens’s plot,

and I think that he was justified in the rejection. Forster does not seem to have cared about the thing — he refers lightly to “the reader curious in such matters” — when once he had received his explanation from Dickens. His memory, in the space of five years, may have been inaccurate: he probably neither knew nor cared who Datchery was; and he may readily have misunderstood what Dickens told him, orally, about the ring, as the instrument of detection. Moreover, Forster quite overlooked one source of evidence, as I shall show later.

MR. PROCTOR'S THEORY

Mr. Proctor's theory of the story is that Jasper, after Edwin's return at midnight on Christmas Eve, recommended a warm drink — mulled wine, drugged — and then proposed another stroll of inspection of the effects of the storm. He then strangled him, somewhere, and placed him in the quicklime in the Sapsea vault, locked him in, and went to bed. Next, according to Mr. Proctor, Durdles, then, "lying drunk in the precincts," for some reason taps with his hammer on the wall of the Sapsea vault, detects the presence of a foreign body, opens the tomb, and finds Drood in the quicklime, "his face fortunately protected by the strong silk shawl with which Jasper has intended to throttle him."

A MISTAKEN THEORY

This is “thin,” very “thin!” Dickens must have had some better scheme than Mr. Proctor’s. Why did Jasper not “mak sikker” like Kirkpatrick with the Red Comyn? Why did he leave his silk scarf? It might come to be asked for; to be sure the quicklime would destroy it, but why did Jasper leave it? Why did the intoxicated Durdles come out of the crypt, if he was there, enter the graveyard, and begin tapping at the wall of the vault? Why not open the door? he had the key.

Suppose, however, all this to have occurred, and suppose, with Mr. Proctor, that Durdles and Deputy carried Edwin to the Tramps’ lodgings, would Durdles fail to recognize Edwin? We are to guess that Grewgious was present, or disturbed at his inn, or somehow brought into touch with Edwin, and bribed Durdles to silence, “until a scheme for the punishment of Jasper had been devised.”

All this set of conjectures is crude to the last degree. We do not know how Dickens meant to get Edwin into and out of the vault. Granting that Edwin was drugged, Jasper might lead Edwin in, considering the licence extended to the effects of drugs in novels, and might strangle him there. Above all, how did Grewgious, if in Cloisterham, come to be at hand at midnight?

ANOTHER WAY

If I must make a guess, I conjecture that Jasper had one of his “filmy” seizures, was “in a frightful sort of dream,” and bungled the murder: made an incomplete job of it. Half-strangled men and women have often recovered. In Jasper’s opium vision and reminiscence there was no resistance, all was very soon over. Jasper might even bungle the locking of the door of the vault. He was apt to have a seizure after opium, in moments of excitement, and HE HAD BEEN AT THE OPIUM DEN THROUGH THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 23, for the hag tracked him from her house in town to Cloisterham on December 24, the day of the crime. Grant that his accustomed fit came upon him during the excitement of the murder, as it does come after “a night wi’ opium,” in chapter ii., when Edwin excites him by contemptuous talk of the girl whom Jasper loves so furiously — and then anything may happen!

Jasper murders Edwin inefficiently; he has a fit; while he is unconscious the quicklime revives Edwin, by burning his hand, say, and, during Jasper’s swoon, Edwin, like another famous prisoner, “has a happy thought, he opens the door, and walks out.”

Being drugged, he is in a dreamy state; knows not clearly what has occurred, or who attacked him. Jasper revives, “look on’t again he dare not,” — on the body of his victim — and HE walks out and goes home, where his red lamp has burned all the time — ”thinking it all very capital.”

“Another way,” — Jasper not only fails to strangle Drood, but fails to lock the door of the vault, and Drood walks out after Jasper has gone. Jasper has, before his fit, “removed from the body the most lasting, the best known, and most easily recognizable things upon it, the watch and scarf-pin.” So Dickens puts the popular view of the case against Neville Landless, and so we are to presume that Jasper acted. If he removed no more things from the body than these, he made a fatal oversight.

Meanwhile, how does Edwin, once out of the vault, make good a secret escape from Cloisterham? Mr. Proctor invokes the aid of Mr. Grewgious, but does not explain why Grewgious was on the spot. I venture to think it

not inconceivable that Mr. Grewgious having come down to Cloisterham by a late train, on Christmas Eve, to keep his Christmas appointment with Rosa, paid a darkling visit to the tomb of his lost love, Rosa's mother. Grewgious was very sentimental, but too secretive to pay such a visit by daylight. "A night of memories and sighs" he might "consecrate" to his lost lady love, as Landor did to Rose Aylmer. Grewgious was to have helped Bazzard to eat a turkey on Christmas Day. But he could get out of that engagement. He would wish to see Edwin and Rosa together, and Edwin was leaving Cloisterham. The date of Grewgious's arrival at Cloisterham is studiously concealed. I offer at least a conceivable motive for Grewgious's possible presence at the churchyard. Mrs. Bud, his lost love, we have been told, was buried hard by the Sapsea monument. If Grewgious visited her tomb, he was on the spot to help Edwin, supposing Edwin to escape. Unlikelier things occur in novels. I do not, in fact, call these probable occurrences in every-day life, but none of the story is probable. Jasper's "weird seizures" are meant to lead up to SOMETHING. They may have been meant to lead up to the failure of the murder and the escape of Edwin. Of course Dickens would not have treated these incidents, when he came to make Edwin explain, — nobody else could explain, — in my studiously simple style. The drugged Edwin himself would remember the circumstances but mistily: his evidence would be of no value against Jasper.

Mr. Proctor next supposes, we saw, that Drood got into touch with Grewgious, and I have added the circumstances which might take Grewgious to the churchyard. Next, when Edwin recovered health, he came down, perhaps, as Datchery, to spy on Jasper. I have elsewhere said, as Mr. Cuming Walters quotes me, that "fancy can suggest no reason why Edwin Drood, if he escaped from his wicked uncle, should go spying about instead of coming openly forward. No plausible unfantastic reason could be invented." Later, I shall explain why Edwin, if he is Datchery, might go spying alone.

It is also urged that Edwin left Rosa in sorrow, and left blame on Neville Landless. Why do this? Mr. Proctor replies that Grewgious's intense and watchful interest in Neville, otherwise unexplained, is due to his knowledge that Drood is alive, and that Neville must be cared for, while Grewgious has told Rosa that Edwin lives. He also told her of Edwin's real love of her, hence Miss Bud says, "Poor, poor Eddy," quite a *propos de bottes*, when she

finds herself many fathoms deep in love with Lieutenant Tartar, R.N. ““Poor, poor Eddy!’ thought Rosa, as they walked along,” Tartar and she. This is a plausible suggestion of Mr. Proctor. Edwin, though known to Rosa to be alive, has no chance! But, as to my own remark, “why should not Edwin come forward at once, instead of spying about?” Well, if he did, there would be no story. As for “an unfantastic reason” for his conduct, Dickens is not writing an “unfantastic” novel. Moreover, if things occurred as I have suggested, I do not see what evidence Drood had against Jasper. Edwin’s clothes were covered with lime, but, when he told his story, Jasper would reply that Drood never returned to his house on Christmas Eve, but stayed out, “doing what was correct by the season, in the way of giving it the welcome it had the right to expect,” like Durdles on another occasion. Drood’s evidence, if it was what I have suggested, would sound like the dream of an intoxicated man, and what other evidence could be adduced? Thus I had worked out Drood’s condition, if he really was not killed, in this way: I had supposed him to escape, in a very mixed frame of mind, when he would be encountered by Grewgious, who, of course, could make little out of him in his befogged state. Drood could not even prove that it was not Landless who attacked him. The result would be that Drood would lie low, and later, would have reason enough for disguising himself as Datchery, and playing the spy in Cloisterham.

At this point I was reinforced by an opinion which Mr. William Archer had expressed, unknown to me, in a newspaper article. I had described Edwin’s confused knowledge of his own experience, if he were thoroughly drugged, and then half strangled. Mr. Archer also took that point, and added that Edwin being a good-hearted fellow, and fond of his uncle Jasper, he would not bring, or let Grewgious bring, a terrible charge against Jasper, till he knew more certainly the whole state of the case. For that reason, he would come disguised to Cloisterham and make inquiries. By letting Jasper know about the ring, he would compel him to enter the vault, and then, Mr. Archer thinks, would induce him to “repent and begin life afresh.”

I scarcely think that Datchery’s purpose was so truly honourable: he rather seems to be getting up a case against Jasper. Still, the idea of Mr. Archer is very plausible, and, at least, given Drood’s need of evidence, and the lack of evidence against Jasper, we see reason good, in a novel of this kind, for his playing the part of amateur detective.

DICKENS'S UNUSED DRAFT OF A CHAPTER

Forster found, and published, a very illegible sketch of a chapter of the tale: "How Mr. Sapsea ceased to be a Member of the Eight Club, Told by Himself." This was "a cramped, interlined, and blotted" draft, on paper of only half the size commonly used by Dickens. Mr. Sapsea tells how his Club mocked him about a stranger, who had mistaken him for the Dean. The jackass, Sapsea, left the Club, and met the stranger, A YOUNG MAN, who fooled him to the top of his bent, saying, "If I was to deny that I came to this town to see and hear you, Sir, what would it avail me?" Apparently this paper was a rough draft of an idea for introducing a detective, as a YOUNG man, who mocks Sapsea just as Datchery does in the novel. But to make the spy A YOUNG man, whether the spy was Drood or Helena Landless, was too difficult; and therefore Dickens makes Datchery "an elderly buffer" in a white wig. If I am right, it was easier for Helena, a girl, to pose as a young man, than for Drood to reappear as a young man, not himself. Helena MAY be Datchery, and yet Drood may be alive and biding his time; but I have disproved my old objection that there was no reason why Drood, if alive, should go spying about in disguise. There were good Dickensian reasons.

A QUESTION OF TASTE

Mr. Cuming Walters argues that the story is very tame if Edwin is still alive, and left out of the marriages at the close. Besides, "Drood is little more than a name-label, attached to a body, a man who never excites sympathy, whose fate causes no emotion, he is saved for no useful or sentimental purpose, and lags superfluous on the stage. All of which is bad art, so bad that Dickens would never have been guilty of it."

That is a question of taste. On rereading the novel, I see that Dickens makes Drood as sympathetic as he can. He is very young, and speaks of Rosa with bad taste, but he is really in love with her, much more so than she with him, and he is piqued by her ceaseless mockery, and by their false position. To Jasper he is singularly tender, and remorseful when he thinks that he has shown want of tact. There is nothing ominous about his gaiety: as to his one fault, we leave him, on Christmas Eve, a converted character: he has a kind word and look for every one whom he meets, young and old. He accepts Mr. Grewgious's very stern lecture in the best manner possible. In short, he is marked as faulty — "I am young," so he excuses himself, in the very words of Darnley to Queen Mary! (if the Glasgow letter be genuine); but he is also marked as sympathetic.

He was, I think, to have a lesson, and to become a good fellow. Mr. Proctor rightly argues (and Forster "thinks"), that Dickens meant to kill Neville Landless: Mr. Cuming Walters agrees with him, but Mr. Proctor truly adds that Edwin has none of the signs of Dickens's doomed men, his Sidney Cartons, and the rest. You can tell, as it were by the sound of the voice of Dickens, says Mr. Proctor, that Edwin is to live. The impression is merely subjective, but I feel the impression. The doom of Landless is conspicuously fixed, and why is Landless to be killed by Jasper? Merely to have a count on which to hang Jasper! He cannot be hanged for killing Drood, if Drood is alive.

MR. PROCTOR'S THEORY CONTINUED

Mr. Proctor next supposes that Datchery and others, by aid of the opium hag, have found out a great deal of evidence against Jasper. They have discovered from the old woman that his crime was long premeditated: he had threatened "Ned" in his opiated dreams: and had clearly removed Edwin's trinkets and watch, because they would not be destroyed, with his body, by the quicklime. This is all very well, but there is still, so far, no legal evidence, on my theory, that Jasper attempted to take Edwin's life. Jasper's enemies, therefore, can only do their best to make his life a burden to him, and to give him a good fright, probably with the hope of terrifying him into avowals.

Now the famous ring begins "to drag and hold" the murderer. He is given to know, I presume, that, when Edwin disappeared, he had a gold ring in the pocket of his coat. Jasper is thus compelled to revisit the vault, at night, and there, in the light of his lantern, he sees the long-lost Edwin, with his hand in the breast of his great coat.

Horrified by this unexpected appearance, Jasper turns to fly. But he is confronted by Neville Landless, Crisparkle, Tartar, and perhaps by Mr. Grewgious, who are all on the watch. He rushes up through the only outlet, the winding staircase of the Cathedral tower, of which we know that he has had the key. Neville, who leads his pursuers, "receives his death wound" (and, I think, is pitched off the top of the roof). Then Jasper is collared by that agile climber, Tartar, and by Crisparkle, always in the pink of condition. There is now something to hang Jasper for — the slaying of Landless (though, as far as I can see, THAT was done in self-defence). Jasper confesses all; Tartar marries Rosa; Helena marries Crisparkle. Edwin is only twenty-one, and may easily find a consoler of the fair sex: indeed he is "ower young to marry yet."

The capture of Jasper was fixed, of course, for Christmas Eve. The phantom cry foreheard by Durdles, two years before, was that of Neville as he fell; and the dog that howled was Neville's dog, a character not yet introduced into the romance.

MR. CUMING WALTERS'S THEORY

Such is Mr. Proctor's theory of the story, in which I mainly agree. Mr. Proctor relies on a piece of evidence overlooked by Forster, and certainly misinterpreted, as I think I can prove to a certainty, by Mr. Cuming Walters, whose theory of the real conduct of the plot runs thus: After watching the storm at midnight with Edwin, Neville left him, and went home: "his way lay in an opposite direction. Near to the Cathedral Jasper intercepted his nephew. . . . Edwin may have been already drugged." How the murder was worked Mr. Cuming Walters does not say, but he introduces at this point, the two sounds foreheard by Durdles, without explaining "the howl of a dog." Durdles would hear the cries, and Deputy "had seen what he could not understand," whatever it was that he saw. Jasper, not aware of Drood's possession of the ring, takes only his watch, chain, and pin, which he places on the timbers of the weir, and in the river, to be picked up by that persistent winter-bather, Crisparkle of the telescopic and microscopic eyesight.

As to the ring, Mr. Cuming Walters erroneously declares that Mr. Proctor "ignores" the power of the ring "to hold and drag," and says that potent passage is "without meaning and must be disregarded." Proctor, in fact, gives more than three pages to the meaning of the ring, which "drags" Jasper into the vault, when he hears of its existence. {3} Next, Mr. Cuming Walters supposes Datchery to learn from Durdles, whom he is to visit, about the second hearing of the cry and the dog's howl. Deputy may have seen Jasper "carrying his burden" (Edwin) "towards the Sapsea vault." In fact, Jasper probably saved trouble by making the drugged Edwin walk into that receptacle. "Datchery would not think of the Sapsea vault unaided." No — unless Datchery was Drood ! "Now Durdles is useful again. Tapping with his hammer he would find a change . . . inquiry must be made." Why should Durdles tap the Sapsea monument? As Durdles had the key, he would simply walk into the vault, and find the quicklime. Now, Jasper also, we presume, had a key, made from a wax impression of the original. If he had any sense, he would have removed the quicklime as easily as he inserted it, for Mr. Sapsea was mortal: he might die any day, and be buried,

and then the quicklime, lying where it ought not, would give rise to awkward inquiries.

Inquiry being made, in consequence of Durdles's tappings, the ring would be found, as Mr. Cuming Walters says. But even then, unless Deputy actually saw Jasper carry a man into the vault, nobody could prove Jasper's connection with the presence of the ring in the vault. Moreover, Deputy hated Jasper, and if he saw Jasper carrying the body of a man, on the night when a man disappeared, he was clever enough to lead Durdles to examine the vault, AT ONCE. Deputy had a great dislike of the Law and its officers, but here was a chance for him to distinguish himself, and conciliate them.

However these things may be, Mr. Cuming Walters supposes that Jasper, finding himself watched, re-enters the vault, perhaps, "to see that every trace of the crime had been removed." In the vault he finds — Datchery, that is, Helena Landless! Jasper certainly visited the vault and found somebody.

EVIDENCE OF COLLINS'S DRAWINGS

We now come to the evidence which Forster strangely overlooked, which Mr. Proctor and Mr. Archer correctly deciphered, and which Mr. Cuming Walters misinterprets. On December 22, 1869, Dickens wrote to Forster that two numbers of his romance were "now in type. Charles Collins has designed an excellent cover." Mr. C. A. Collins had married a daughter of Dickens. {4} He was an artist, a great friend of Dickens, and author of that charming book, "A Cruise on Wheels." His design of the paper cover of the story (it appeared in monthly numbers) contained, as usual, sketches which give an inkling of the events in the tale. Mr. Collins was to have illustrated the book; but, finally, Mr. (now Sir) Luke Fildes undertook the task. Mr. Collins died in 1873. It appears that Forster never asked him the meaning of his designs — a singular oversight.

The cover lies before the reader. In the left-hand top corner appears an allegorical female figure of joy, with flowers. The central top space contains the front of Cloisterham Cathedral, or rather, the nave. To the left walks Edwin, with hyacinthine locks, and a thoroughly classical type of face, and Grecian nose. **LIKE DATCHERY, HE DOES NOT WEAR, BUT CARRIES HIS HAT**; this means nothing, if they are in the nave. He seems bored. On his arm is Rosa; **SHE** seems bored; she trails her parasol, and looks away from Edwin, looks down, to her right. On the spectator's right march the surpliced men and boys of the Choir. Behind them is Jasper, black whiskers and all; he stares after Edwin and Rosa; his right hand hides his mouth. In the corner above him is an allegorical female, clasping a stiletto.

Beneath Edwin and Rosa is, first, an allegorical female figure, looking at a placard, headed "LOST," on a door. Under that, again, is a girl in a garden-chair; a young man, whiskerless, with wavy hair, kneels and kisses her hand. She looks rather unimpassioned. I conceive the man to be Landless, taking leave of Rosa after urging his hopeless suit, for which Helena, we learn, "seems to compassionate him." He has avowed his passion, early in the story, to Crisparkle. Below, the opium hag is smoking.

On the other side, under the figures of Jasper and the Choir, the young man who kneels to the girl is seen bounding up a spiral staircase. His left hand is on the iron railing; he stoops over it, looking down at others who follow him. His right hand, the index finger protruded, points upward, and, by chance or design, points straight at Jasper in the vignette above. Beneath this man (clearly Landless) follows a tall man in a "bowler" hat, a "cut-away" coat, and trousers which show an inch of white stocking above the low shoes. His profile is hid by the wall of the spiral staircase: he might be Grewgious of the shoes, white stockings, and short trousers, but he may be Tartar: he takes two steps at a stride. Beneath him a youngish man, in a low, soft, clerical hat and a black pea-coat, ascends, looking downwards and backwards. This is clearly Crisparkle. A Chinaman is smoking opium beneath.

In the central lowest space, a dark and whiskered man enters a dark chamber; his left hand is on the lock of the door; in his right he holds up a lantern. The light of the lantern reveals a young man in a soft hat of Tyrolese shape. His features are purely classical, his nose is Grecian, his locks are long (at least, according to the taste of to-day); he wears a light paletot, buttoned to the throat; his right arm hangs by his side; his left hand is thrust into the breast of his coat. He calmly regards the dark man with the lantern. That man, of course, is Jasper. The young man is EDWIN DROOD, of the Grecian nose, hyacinthine locks, and classic features, as in Sir L. Fildes's third illustration.

Mr. Proctor correctly understood the unmistakable meaning of this last design, Jasper entering the vault -

"To-day the dead are living,
The lost is found to-day."

Mr. Cuming Walters tells us that he did not examine these designs by Mr. Collins till he had formed his theory, and finished his book. "On the conclusion of the whole work the pictures were referred to for the first time, and were then found to support in the most striking manner the opinions arrived at," namely, that Drood was killed, and that Helena is Datchery. Thus does theory blind us to facts!

Mr. Cuming Walters connects the figure of the whiskerless young man kneeling to a girl in a garden seat, with the whiskered Jasper's proposal to Rosa in a garden seat. But Jasper does not kneel to Rosa; he stands apart, leaning on a sundial; he only once vaguely "touches" her, which she

resents; he does not kneel; he does not kiss her hand (Rosa “took the kiss sedately,” like Maud in the poem); and — Jasper had lustrous thick black whiskers.

Again, the same whiskerless young man, bounding up the spiral staircase in daylight, and wildly pointing upwards, is taken by Mr. Cuming Walters to represent Jasper climbing the staircase to reconnoitre, at night, with a lantern, and, of course, with black whiskers. The two well-dressed men on the stairs (Grewgious, or Tartar, and Crisparkle) also, according to Mr. Cuming Walters, “relate to Jasper’s unaccountable expedition with Durdles to the Cathedral.” Neither of them is Jasper; neither of them is Durdles, “in a suit of coarse flannel” — a disreputable jacket, as Sir L. Fildes depicts him — “with horn buttons,” and a battered old tall hat. These interpretations are quite demonstrably erroneous and even impossible. Mr. Archer interprets the designs exactly as I do.

As to the young man in the light of Jasper’s lamp, Mr. Cuming Walters says, “the large hat and the tightly-buttoned surtout must be observed; they are the articles of clothing on which most stress is laid in the description of Datchery. But the face is young.” The face of Datchery was elderly, and he had a huge shock of white hair, a wig. Datchery wore “a tightish blue surtout, with a buff waistcoat and grey trousers; he had something of a military air.” The young man in the vault has anything but a military air; he shows no waistcoat, and he does not wear “a tightish blue surtout,” or any surtout at all.

The surtout of the period is shown, worn by Jasper, in Sir L. Fildes’s sixth and ninth illustrations. It is a frock-coat; the collar descends far below the top of the waistcoat (buff or otherwise), displaying that garment; the coat is tightly buttoned beneath, revealing the figure; the tails of the coat do not reach the knees of the wearer. The young man in the vault, on the other hand, wears a loose paletot, buttoned to the throat (vaults are chilly places), and the coat falls so as to cover the knees; at least, partially. The young man is not, like Helena, “very dark, and fierce of look, . . . of almost the gipsy type.” He is blonde, sedate, and of the classic type, as Drood was. He is no more like Helena than Crisparkle is like Durdles. Mr. Cuming Walters says that Mr. Proctor was “unable to allude to the prophetic picture by Collins.” As a fact, this picture is fully described by Mr. Proctor, but Mr. Walters used the wrong edition of his book, unwittingly.

Mr. Proctor writes:- “Creeping down the crypt steps, oppressed by growing horror and by terror of coming judgment, sickening under fears engendered by the darkness of night and the charnel-house air he breathed, Jasper opens the door of the tomb and holds up his lantern, shuddering at the thought of what it may reveal to him.

“And what sees he? Is it the spirit of his victim that stands there, ‘in his habit as he lived,’ his hand clasped on his breast, where the ring had been when he was murdered? What else can Jasper deem it? There, clearly visible in the gloom at the back of the tomb, stands Edwin Drood, with stern look fixed on him — pale, silent, relentless!”

Again, “On the title-page are given two of the small pictures from the Love side of the cover, two from the Murder side, and the central picture below, which presents the central horror of the story — the end and aim of the ‘Datchery assumption’ and of Mr. Grewgious’s plans — showing Jasper driven to seek for the proofs of his crime amid the dust to which, as he thought, the flesh and bones, and the very clothes of his victim, had been reduced.”

There are only two possible choices; either Collins, under Dickens’s oral instructions, depicted Jasper finding Drood alive in the vault, an incident which was to occur in the story; or Dickens bade Collins do this for the purpose of misleading his readers in an illegitimate manner; while the young man in the vault was really to be some person “made up” to look like Drood, and so to frighten Jasper with a pseudo-ghost of that hero. The latter device, the misleading picture, would be childish, and the pseudo-ghost, exactly like Drood, could not be acted by the gipsy-like, fierce Helena, or by any other person in the romance.

MR. WALTERS'S THEORY CONTINUED

Mr. Cuming Walters guesses that Jasper was to aim a deadly blow (with his left hand, to judge from the picture) at Helena, and that Neville "was to give his life for hers." But, manifestly, Neville was to lead the hunt of Jasper up the spiral stair, as in Collins's design, and was to be dashed from the roof: his body beneath was to be "THAT, I never saw before. THAT must be real. Look what a poor mean miserable thing it is!" as Jasper says in his vision.

Mr. Cuming Walters, pursuing his idea of Helena as both Datchery and also as the owner of "the YOUNG face" of the youth in the vault (and also of the young hands, a young girl's hands could never pass for those of "an elderly buffer"), exclaims: "Imagine the intense power of the dramatic climax, when Datchery, the elderly man, is re-transformed into Helena Landless, the young and handsome woman; and when she reveals the seemingly impenetrable secret which had been closed up in one guilty man's mind."

The situations are startling, I admit, but how would Canon Crisparkle like them? He is, we know, to marry Helena, "the young person, my dear," Miss Twinkleton would say, "who for months lived alone, at inns, wearing a blue surtout, a buff waistcoat, and grey—" "Here horror chokes the utterance of Miss Twinkleton. "Then she was in the vault in ANOTHER disguise, not more womanly, at that awful scene when poor Mr. Jasper was driven mad, so that he confessed all sorts of nonsense, for, my dear, all the Close believes that it WAS nonsense, and that Mr. Jasper was reduced to insanity by persecution. And Mr. Crisparkle, with that elegant dainty mother of his — it has broken her heart — is marrying this half-caste gipsy TROLLOP, with her blue surtout and grey — oh, it is a disgrace to Cloisterham!"

The climax, in fact, as devised by Mr. Cuming Walters, is rather too dramatic for the comfort of a minor canon. A humorist like Dickens ought to have seen the absurdity of the situation. Mr. Walters MAY be right, Helena may be Datchery, but she ought not to be.

WHO WAS THE PRINCESS PUFFER?

Who was the opium hag, the Princess Puffer? Mr. Cuming Walters writes: “We make a guess, for Dickens gives us no solid facts. But when we remember that not a word is said throughout the volume of Jasper’s antecedents, who he was, and where he came from; when we remember that but for his nephew he was a lonely man; when we see that he was both criminal and artist; when we observe his own wheedling propensity, his false and fulsome protestations of affection, his slyness, his subtlety, his heartlessness, his tenacity; and when, above all, we know that the opium vice is HEREDITARY, and that a YOUNG man would not be addicted to it unless born with the craving; {5} then, it is not too wild a conjecture that Jasper was the wayward progeny of this same opium-eating woman, all of whose characteristics he possessed, and, perchance, of a man of criminal instincts, but of a superior position. Jasper is a morbid and diseased being while still in the twenties, a mixture of genius and vice. He hates and he loves fiercely, as if there were wild gipsy blood in his veins. Though seemingly a model of decorum and devoted to his art, he complains of his “daily drudging round” and “the cramped monotony of his existence.” He commits his crime with the ruthlessness of a beast, his own nature being wholly untamed. If we deduce that his father was an adventurer and a vagabond, we shall not be far wrong. If we deduce that his mother was the opium-eater, prematurely aged, who had transmitted her vicious propensity to her child, we shall almost certainly be right.”

WHO WAS JASPER?

Who was Jasper? He was the brother-in-law of the late Mr. Drood, a respected engineer, and University man. We do not know whence came Mrs. Drood, Jasper's sister, but is it likely that her mother "drank heaven's-hard" — so the hag says of herself — then took to keeping an opium den, and there entertained her son Jasper, already an accomplished vocalist, but in a lower station than that to which his musical genius later raised him, as lay Precentor? If the Princess Puffer be, as on Mr. Cuming Walters's theory she is, Edwin's long-lost grandmother, her discovery would be unwelcome to Edwin. Probably she did not live much longer; "my lungs are like cabbage nets," she says. Mr. Cuming Walters goes on —

"Her purpose is left obscure. How easily, however, we see possibilities in a direction such as this. The father, perhaps a proud, handsome man, deserts the woman, and removes the child. The woman hates both for scorning her, but the father dies, or disappears, and is beyond her vengeance. Then the child, victim to the ills in his blood, creeps back to the opium den, not knowing his mother, but immediately recognized by her. She will make the child suffer for the sins of the father, who had destroyed her happiness. Such a theme was one which appealed to Dickens. It must not, however, be urged; and the crucial question after all is concerned with the opium woman as one of the unconscious instruments of justice, aiding with her trifle of circumstantial evidence the Nemesis awaiting Jasper.

"Another hypothesis — following on the Carker theme in 'Dombey and Son' — is that Jasper, a dissolute and degenerate man, lascivious, and heartless, may have wronged a child of the woman's; but it is not likely that Dickens would repeat the Mrs. Brown story."

Jasper, pere, father of John Jasper and of Mrs. Drood, however handsome, ought not to have deserted Mrs. Jasper. Whether John Jasper, prematurely devoted to opium, became Edwin's guardian at about the age of fifteen, or whether, on attaining his majority, he succeeded to some other guardian, is not very obvious. In short, we cannot guess why the Princess Puffer hated Jasper, a paying client of long standing. We are only certain

that Jasper was a bad fellow, and that the Princess Puffer said, “I know him, better than all the Reverend Parsons put together know him.” On the other hand, Edwin “seems to know” the opium woman, when he meets her on Christmas Eve, which may be a point in favour of her being his long-lost grandmother.

Jasper was certainly tried and condemned; for Dickens intended “to take Mr. Fildes to a condemned cell in Maidstone, or some other gaol, in order to make a drawing.” {6} Possibly Jasper managed to take his own life, in the cell; possibly he was duly hanged.

Jasper, after all, was a failure as a murderer, even if we suppose him to have strangled his nephew successfully. “It is obvious to the most excruciatingly feeble capacity” that, if he meant to get rid of proofs of the identity of Drood’s body by means of quicklime, it did not suffice to remove Drood’s pin, watch, and chain. Drood would have coins of the realm in his pockets, gold, silver, bronze. Quicklime would not destroy these metallic objects, nor would it destroy keys, which would easily prove Drood’s identity. If Jasper knew his business, he would, of course, rifle ALL of Edwin’s pockets minutely, and would remove the metallic buttons of his braces, which generally display the maker’s name, or the tailor’s. On research I find “H. Poole & Co., Savile Row” on my buttons. In this inquiry of his, Jasper would have discovered the ring in Edwin’s breast pocket, and would have taken it away. Perhaps Dickens never thought of that little fact: if he did think of it, no doubt he found some mode of accounting for Jasper’s unworkmanlike negligence. The trouser-buttons would have led any inquirer straight to Edwin’s tailor; I incline to suspect that neither Dickens nor Jasper noticed that circumstance. The conscientious artist in crime cannot afford to neglect the humblest and most obvious details.

CONCLUSION

According to my theory, which mainly rests on the unmistakable evidence of the cover drawn by Collins under Dickens's directions, all "ends well." Jasper comes to the grief he deserves: Helena, after her period of mourning for Neville, marries Crisparkle: Rosa weds her mariner. Edwin, at twenty-one, is not heart-broken, but, a greatly improved character, takes, to quote his own words, "a sensible interest in works of engineering skill, especially when they are to change the whole condition of an undeveloped country" — Egypt.

These conclusions are inevitable unless we either suppose Dickens to have arranged a disappointment for his readers in the tableau of Jasper and Drood, in the vault, on the cover, or can persuade ourselves that not Drood, but some other young man, is revealed by the light of Jasper's lantern. Now, the young man is very like Drood, and very unlike the dark fierce Helena Landless: disguised as Drood, this time, not as Datchery. All the difficulty as to why Drood, if he escaped alive, did not at once openly denounce Jasper, is removed when we remember, as Mr. Archer and I have independently pointed out, that Drood, when attacked by Jasper, was (like Durdles in the "unaccountable expedition") stupefied by drugs, and so had no valid evidence against his uncle. Whether science is acquainted with the drugs necessary for such purposes is another question. They are always kept in stock by starving and venal apothecaries in fiction and the drama, and are a recognized convention of romance.

So ends our unfolding of the Mystery of Edwin Drood.

Footnotes:

{1} Landless is not "Lackland," but a form of de Laundeles, a Lothian name of the twelfth century, merged later in that of Ormistoun.

{2} Life of Dickens, vol. iii. pp. 425-439.

{3} J. Cuming Walters, p. 102; Proctor, pp. 131-135. Mr. Cuming Walters used an edition of 1896, apparently a reprint of a paper by Proctor,

written earlier than his final book of 1887. Hence the error as to Mr. Proctor's last theory.

{4} Mrs. Perugini, the books say, but certainly a daughter.

{5} What would Weissmann say to all this?

{6} So Mr. Cuming Walters quotes Mr. Hughes, who quotes Sir L. Fildes. HE believes that Jasper strangled Edwin with the black-silk scarf, and, no doubt, Jasper was for long of that opinion himself.

**IN JAIL WITH CHARLES DICKENS by Alfred
Trumble**



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IN JAIL WITH
Charles Dickens
BY
ALFRED TRUMBLE
EDITOR OF "THE COLLECTOR"
ILLUSTRATED



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Frontispiece



The Mob burning the King's Arms of the House of Connecticut in St. George's Fields.
Engraved by G. Kneller, from a Drawing by G. Kneller.

INTRODUCTORY.



Readers of Charles Dickens must all have remarked the deep and abiding interest he took in that grim accessory to civilization, the prison. He not only went jail hunting whenever opportunity offered, but made a profound study of the rules, practices and abuses of these institutions.

Penology was, in fact, one of his hobbies, and some of the most powerful passages in his books are those which have their scene of action laid within the shadow of the gaol. It was this fact which led to the compilation of the papers comprised in the present volume.

The writer had been a student of Dickens from the days when the publication of his novels in serial form was a periodical event. When he first visited England, many of the landmarks which the novelist had, in a manner, made historical, were still in existence, but of the principal prisons which figure in his works Newgate was the only one which existed in any approximation to its integrity. The Fleet and the King's Bench were entirely swept away; of the Marshalsea only a few buildings remained, converted to ordinary uses. In this country, however, the two jails which interested him, still remain, with certain changes that do not impair their general conformance to his descriptions.

These papers, therefore, consist of personal knowledge, as a voluntary visitor, be it understood, of Newgate. The Tombs in New York, and the Eastern District Penitentiary in Philadelphia, supplemented by references to the records. For the Fleet, Marshalsea, and Kings Bench, the writer is indebted to the chronicles and descriptions of Peter Cunningham, John Timbs, Leigh Hunt, and other ingenious and interesting historians of the London of the early Victorian era. In connection with the paper relating to the Eastern District Penitentiary of Philadelphia, his thanks are due for the assistance and information rendered by Mr. Michael J. Cassidy, the Warden.

ALFRED TRUMBLE.

New York, March 1896.

IN JAIL WITH CHARLES DICKENS.

CHAPTER I.

NEWGATE WITHOUT.



Newgate was the first prison to which Charles Dickens gave any literary attention. An account of a visit to it appears among the early "Sketches by Boz." It is also the only one of the London jails of which he has left us graphic descriptions, or briefer, spirited sketches, which preserves to-day so much of its original character as to be identifiable in detail by the student of his works. The Fleet and the King's Bench have disappeared. The Marshalsea may only be recognized by slight surviving landmarks. But the sombre and sullen bulk of Newgate rears itself in the heart of London, a sinister monument to the horrors bred by a civilization rotten of its own over-ripeness, in the forcing-bed of the most magnificent, wonderful and monstrously terrible city of the world.

If external gloom could exercise an influence to deter anyone from the commission of crime of which it is a part of the penalty, Newgate would never have any inmates. Surrounded at the time of my introductory visit to it, as an accidental but not legally involuntary visitor, by low public-houses, poor shops and a tumble-down market, all bearing the grime of age and the marks of decay, as if the frown of the great jail had blighted them; with the foul, miry lane of Newgate street, and the scarcely-cleaner Old Bailey, alive with muddy carts and shabby people, skulking roughs, draggled women and squalling children, no man who had no business there would care, once having seen it, to seek it out again. Being then new in London, I had been begriming myself among the old books of St. Paul's Churchyard until I was tired and thirsty, and strolling along Ludgate Hill in quest of refreshment, turned into the second street I came to. A few steps more and I found myself stopping at another street corner to look at an immense and grim mass of gray stone towering loftily in the fog, with little windows here and

there along its frowning wall. They were so small that they might have been mere spaces where the builders had forgotten to put in a block of granite, if it had not been for the strong, rusty bars that crossed them. I asked a man who came out of a public-house wiping his mouth on the back of his hand what place that was. He stared at me in evident amazement for a minute, and then said, shortly, in an aggravated tone of voice, poking a finger, still moist from his libation, at it, like a dagger:

“Newgate, that is.”

He went along, shaking his head in a dubious way and looking back several times at me, clearly either suspicious of the genuineness of my stupendous ignorance, or unable to comprehend how anyone could be ignorant of the identity of the famous jail. I have no doubt that it was vastly stupid of me. In fact, I experienced a certain feeling of contempt for myself, now that I knew what the place was, and that it was the place of which I had read so much that I almost had its history by heart; but after all, London is a “very considerable-sized town,” as I once had a Chicago acquaintance generously admit, and one could scarcely be expected to know it like a guide-book, within forty-eight hours after making first acquaintance with its bitter beer, its bloody beef, and its beds into whose coverlids the essence of the fog seemed to have penetrated, if, indeed, the sheets were not woven out of the fog itself.

Newgate, in its external appearance, at least, is an ideal prison. Its aspect, whether purposely or through the adaptation of its construction to its uses, is thoroughly jail-like. The few openings in the walls, the empty blind niches, which might have been left there for statues of great felons never set up in them; the entrance, with its festooned fetters carved in stone as an ornament to the gloomy and forbidding portal, all are appropriate to and a significant part of it. Within a few feet of where I stood when I viewed it first was the spot where the scaffold used to be put up. Here, on the occasion of an execution, as one may read in Chapter 52 of “*Oliver Twist*,” the space before the prison was cleared, and a few strong barriers painted black thrown across the road to break the pressure of the crowd, while the more favored portion of the audience occupied every post of vantage, at windows and housetops, that commanded a view of the ghastly show. Here, as Oliver noted when he came away from his last interview with Fagin at the dawn of day: “A great multitude had already assembled; the windows were filled with people smoking and playing cards to beguile the time; the

crowd was pushing, quarreling and joking. Everything told of life and animation, but one dark cluster of objects in the very centre of all — the black stage, the crossbeam, the rope, and all the hideous apparatus of death.”

Prisoners of old were executed on Tyburn Hill in public, or on some occasions, when it was especially desired to enforce an example, as close as possible to the scene of guilt. Those who were punished for participation in the Gordon Riots of 1780 were swung off in the various parts of the city where their crimes were committed. In 1793 the common places of execution were changed to the Old Bailey, in front of Newgate. There the first culprit was executed on December 9 of that year. Hanging was brisk when George III was king. Between February and December, 1785, ninety-six persons suffered by the trap arrangement now in common use the world over, which was then known as the “new drop.” Previous to that time it had been the custom to perch the candidates for the halter on a cart, which was driven from under them at the fatal signal, while someone hung on to their legs to choke them more speedily and surely — an expeditious practice quite frequently resorted to by Judge Lynch in America in after years, and still not entirely out of use for extemporaneous executions. In “Barnaby Rudge” (volume 2, chapter 19) Dickens gives the most detailed description of a Newgate execution which occurs in his works. The passage is well worth quoting at length:

“The time wore on. The noises in the streets became less frequent by degrees until the silence was scarcely broken, save by the bells in the church towers marking the progress, softer and more stealthily while the city slumbered, of that Great Watcher with the hoary head, who never sleeps or rests. In the brief interval of darkness and repose which feverish towns enjoy, all busy sounds were hushed; and those who awoke from dreams lay listening in their beds, and longed for dawn, and wished the dead of the night were passed.

“Into the street, outside the gaol’s main wall, workmen came straggling, at this solemn hour, in groups of two or three, and, meeting in the centre, cast their tools upon the ground and spoke in whispers. Others soon issued from the gaol itself, bearing on their shoulders planks and beams: these materials being all brought forth, the rest bestirred themselves, and the dull sound of hammers began to echo through the stillness.

“Here and there among this knot of laborers, one with a lantern or a smoky link stood by to light his fellows at their work; and by its doubtful aid some might be seen dimly, taking up the pavement of the road, while others held upright great posts, or fixed them in holes thus made for their reception. Some dragged slowly on toward the rest an empty cart, which they brought rumbling from the prison yard, while others erected strong barriers across the street. All were busily engaged. Their dusky figures moving to and fro at that unusual hour, so active and so silent, might have been taken for those of shadowy creatures toiling at midnight on some ghostly, unsubstantial work, which, like themselves, would vanish with the first gleam of day, and leave but morning mist and vapor.

“While it was yet dark a few lookers-on collected, who had plainly come there for that purpose and intended to remain; even those who had to pass the spot on their way to some other place, lingered, and lingered yet, as though the attraction of that were irresistible. Meanwhile the noise of the saw and mallet went on briskly, mingled with the clattering of boards on the stone pavement of the road, and sometimes with the workmen’s voices as they called to one another. Whenever the chimes of the neighboring church were heard — and that was every quarter of an hour — a strong sensation, instantaneous and indescribable, but perfectly obvious, seemed to pervade them all.

“Gradually a faint brightness appeared in the East, and the air, which had been very warm through the night, felt cool and chilly. Though there was no daylight yet, the darkness was diminished, and the stars looked pale. The prison, which had been a mere black mass, with little shape or form, put on its usual aspect; and ever and anon a solitary watchman could be seen upon its roof, stopping to look down upon the preparations in the street. This man, from forming, as it were, a part of the gaol, and knowing, or being supposed to know, all that was passing within, became an object of much interest, and was eagerly looked for, and as awfully pointed out as if he had been a spirit.

“By and by the feeble light grew stronger, and the houses, with their signboards and inscriptions, stood plainly out in the dull gray of the morning. Heavy stage-wagons crawled from the inn yard opposite, and travelers peeped out, and, as they rolled sluggishly away, cast many a backward look toward the gaol. And now the sun’s first beams came glancing into the street, and the night’s work, which in its various stages

and in the varied fancies of the lookers-on had taken a hundred shapes, wore its own proper form — a scaffold and gibbet.

“As the warmth of the cheerful day began to shed itself upon the scanty crowd the murmur of tongues was heard, shutters were thrown open, the blinds drawn up, and those who had slept in rooms over against the prison, where places to see the execution were let at high prices, rose hastily from their beds. In some of the houses people were busy taking out the window-sashes for the better accommodation of the spectators; in others, the spectators were already seated, and beguiling the time with cards, or drink, or jokes among themselves. Some had purchased seats upon the housetops, and were already crawling to their stations from parapet and garret window. Some were yet bargaining for good places, and stood in them in a state of indecision, gazing at the slowly-swelling crowd, and at the workmen as they rested listlessly against the scaffold — affecting to listen with indifference to the proprietor’s eulogy of the commanding view his house afforded, and the surpassing cheapness of his terms.

“A fairer morning never shone. From the roofs and the upper stories of the buildings the spires of the city churches and the great cathedral dome were visible, rising up beyond the prison into the blue sky, and clad in the color of light summer clouds, and showing in the clear atmosphere their every scrap of tracery and fretwork, and every niche and loophole. All was lightness, brightness and promise, excepting in the street below, into which (for it lay yet in the shadow) the eye looked down into a dark trench, where, in the midst of so much life and hope and renewal of existence, stood the terrible instrument of death. It seemed as if the very sun forbore to look upon it.

“But it was better, grim and sombre in the shade, than when, the day being more advanced, it stood confessed in full glare and glory of the sun, with its black paint blistering and its nooses dangling in the light like loathsome garlands. It was better in the solitude and gloom of midnight, with a few forms clustering about it, than in the freshness and the stir of the morning, the centre of an eager crowd. It was better haunting the street like a spectre, when men were in their beds, and influencing, perchance, the city’s dreams, than braving the broad day, and thrusting its obscene presence upon the waking senses.

“Five o’clock had struck — six, seven and eight. Along the two main streets, at either end of the crossway, a living stream had now set in, rolling

to the marts of gain and business. Carts, coaches, wagons, trucks and barrows, forced a passage through the outskirts of the throng and clattered onward in the same direction. Some of these, which were public conveyances, and had come from a short distance in the country, stopped, and the driver pointed to the gibbet with his whip, though he might have spared himself the pains, for the heads of all the passengers were turned that way without his help, and the coach windows were stuck full of staring eyes. In some of the carts and wagons women might be seen, glancing fearfully at the same unsightly thing; and even little children were held up above the peoples' heads to see what kind of a toy a gallows was and to learn how men were hanged.

“Two rioters were to die before the prison, who had been concerned in the attack upon it; and one directly after in Bloomsbury Square. At nine o'clock a strong body of military marched into the street, and formed and lined a narrow passage into Holborn, which had been indifferently kept all night by constables. Through this another cart was brought (the one already mentioned had been employed in the construction of the scaffold), and wheeled up to the prison gate. These preparations made, the soldiers stood at ease; the officers lounged to and fro in the alley they had made, or talked together at the scaffold's foot; and the concourse which had been rapidly augmenting for some hours, and still received additions every minute, waited with an impatience which increased with every chime of St. Sepulchre's clock for twelve at noon.

“Up to this time they had been very quiet, comparatively silent, save when the arrival of some new party at a window, hitherto unoccupied, gave them something to look at or to talk of. But, as the hour approached, a buzz and a hum arose, which, deepening every moment, soon swelled into a roar, and seemed to fill the air. No words, or even voices, could be distinguished in this clamor, nor did they speak much to each other; though such as were better informed on the topic than the rest would tell their neighbors, perhaps, that they might know the hangman when he came out, by his being the shorter one; and that the man that was to suffer with him was named Hugh; and that it was Barnaby Rudge who would be hanged in Bloomsbury Square.

“The hum grew, as the time drew near, so loud that those who were at the windows could not hear the church clock strike, though it was close at hand. Nor had they any need to hear it either, for they could see it in the peoples'

faces. So surely as another quarter chimed there was a movement in the crowd — as if something had passed over it — as if the light upon them had been changed — in which the fact was readable as on a brazen dial, figured by a giant's hand. Three-quarters past eleven. The murmur now was deafening, yet every man seemed mute. Look where you would among the crowd, you saw strained eyes and lips compressed; it would have been difficult for the most vigilant observer to point this way or that, and say that yonder man had cried out. It were as easy to detect the motion of the lips in a sea-shell.

“Three-quarters past eleven. Many spectators who had retired from the windows came back refreshed, as though their watch had just begun. Those who had fallen asleep aroused themselves; and every person in the crowd made one last effort to better his position, which caused a press against the sturdy barriers that made them bend and yield like twigs. The officers, who until now had kept together, fell into their several positions, and gave the words of command. Swords were drawn, muskets shouldered, and the bright steel, winding its way among the crowd, gleamed and glittered in the sun like a river. Along this shining path two men were hurrying on, leading a horse, which was speedily harnessed to the cart at the prison door. Then a profound silence replaced the tumult that had so long been gathering, and a breathless pause ensued. Every window was now choked up with heads; the housetops teemed with people clinging to chimneys, peering over gable-ends, and holding on where the sudden loosening of any brick or stone would dash them down into the street. The church-tower, the church-roof, the churchyard, the prison-leads, the very waterspouts and lampposts, every inch of room swarmed with human life.

“At the first stroke of twelve the prison bell began to toll. Then the roar, mingled now with cries of ‘Hats off!’ and ‘Poor fellows!’ — and, from some specks in the great concourse, with a shriek or groan — burst forth again. It was terrible to see — if anyone in that distraction of excitement could have seen — the world of eager eyes all strained upon the scaffold and the beam.”

The Newgate gallows in “Barnaby Rudge” was set up for the ruffian Hugh, the bastard of Sir John Chester and his gypsy light-o-love, and for Dennis the hangman, who had been concerned as leaders in the attack on the prison by the Gordon Rioters. “Two cripples — both were boys — one with a leg of wood, one who dragged his twisted body along with the help

of a crutch, were hanged in Bloomsbury Square, where they had helped to sack Lord Mansfield's house, and other rioters in other parts of the town, in despoiling which they had been conspicuous." It may be recalled that the mother of Hugh herself had died on the scaffold, at Tyburn, for the crime of passing forged notes. To descend from the realm of romance to that of reality, the most memorable executions in the Old Bailey were those of Mrs. Phipoe, the murderess, in 1797; of Governor Wall of Trinidad, for murder, on Jan. 28, 1802; of Halloway and Haggerty, the murderers, on Feb. 22, 1807, when thirty spectators were trampled to death; of Bellingham, the assassin of a member of Parliament, Percival, on May 18, 1812; of the Cato Street Conspirators, who were cut down and decapitated on the scaffold in the presence of the multitude, on May 1, 1820; of Fauntleroy, the banker, hanged for forging in 1824; of the assassin Greenacre, in 1837; of Courvoiser, who murdered Lord William Russell, in 1840; and of Franz Müller, the railway murderer, who was extradited from this country, as will doubtless be remembered by many, and sent to his doom in 1864. That same year seven pirates were also suspended in the Old Bailey. Since then executions have been carried out privately within the walls of the prison.

A contemporary of Dickens, in the "Ingoldsby Legends," has given us a picture, in a different vein, of the same period and subject. He has told us, in his own rattling verse, how my Lord Tomnoddy, having nothing to do, and being deucedly bored, learned from his faithful Tiger Tim that Greenacre was to be hanged at Newgate; here was indeed a sensation for His Lordship: "To see a man swing, at the end of a string, with his neck in a noose, will be quite a new thing." So he hires the whole first floor of the Magpie and Stump, opposite the jail, and invites his friends to come and help him see a man die in his shoes. They help him so effectually during the night, what with "cold fowl and cigars, pickled onions in jars, Welsh rabbits and kidney, rare work for jaws, and very large lobsters with fine claws," and the like, not to mention gin-toddy and cold and hot punch, that they fall asleep and lose the show after all, when, as they cannot have the man hung over again, they go home to bed in hackney coaches and a state of deep disgust. Another contemporary, of more ample renown, Thackeray to wit, gave some attention to the matter. In July, 1840, he published, in Frazer's Magazine, a paper called "Going to see a man hanged." The man was

Courvoiser; and Thackeray, unlike Lord Tomnoddy, did not fall asleep over the feast, and so did see him mount the scaffold.

Surgeons' Hall used to stand close to Newgate and the Old Bailey, and the victims of the halter were handed over to the doctors for dissection. The corpse of wicked Lord Ferrers, who was executed in 1760 at Tyburn for murdering his steward, was taken in his own landau and six to the Burgeons' Theatre to be cut up. After having been disemboweled, in conformance with the sentence, the body of the bad lord was put on show in the first floor window, to be hissed and hooted at by the mob. The account of the Ferrers execution, by the way, provides a curious picture of the time. Ferrers dressed himself in his wedding suit to be hanged. He had the harness of his horses decorated with ribbons. On the way to Tyburn from the Tower, my Lord intimated a desire for some wine, being thirsty. The Sheriff, who was in the coach with him, declined to allow him to refresh himself. "Then," said the Earl, taking a bite of pigtail tobacco from a plug which he had in his pocket, "I must be content with this." He harbored no malice against the Sheriff, however, for he presented him with his watch as they neared Tyburn. To the Chaplain he gave five guineas, and to the executioner the same sum. The executioner had to pull him by the legs to effectually strangle him, and while the body swung for an hour on the gallows, the sheriffs and their friends had luncheon on the platform within reach of it. "The executioners fought for the rope," says the chronicler, "and the one who lost it, cried."

But we have wandered far from Newgate in this wicked company. Old Newgate, upon a portion of whose site the present jail stands, was built in the reign of King John. It derived its name from the fact that London was then a walled city, and the jail was erected close to the newest gate in the fortification. It was, in fact, at first a mere tower or appendage of the gate. Newgate was used as a State prison long before the Tower. One of the many captives of this sort which it held was William Penn. The founder of Pennsylvania spent six months there for the atrocious offense of street preaching. Defoe spent some time here on account of a political tract, and wrote several others while in confinement. Dr. Dodd wrote his successful comedy, "Sir Roger de Coverly," in Newgate. One of the last persons confined here for political offense was Mr. Hobhouse, afterward Lord Broughton. The street used to be filled with people when he took his exercise on the roof, who watched and cheered at his hat, which was all

they could see of him above the wall. An odd circumstance about Mr. Hobhouse's imprisonment is that Byron had prophesied it in the remark that "having foamed himself into a reformer, he would subside in Newgate." Among the famous prisoners here we find Savage, the poet, for murder; Jack Sheppard, whose remarkable escape, very much exaggerated upon fact, you may have read of from Mr. Ainsworth's pen; and Jonathan Wild, who, by the by, once lived nearly opposite the court-house, in the Old Bailey; Catherine Hayes, the abandoned heroine of Thackeray's novel; Mrs. Brownrigg, the fiend who tortured her serving-maids; Astlett, the Bank of England clerk, who committed forgeries for over \$1,500,000, and many more. Lord George Gordon, familiar to all who have read "Barnaby Rudge," died in 1793, of gaol-fever, in one of the cells of Newgate, after several years of confinement, for libelling the Queen of France. The poor, mad lord, whose rioters had turned the jail into a ruin once, found it strong enough to hold him and his fantastic visions securely in the end. Here is Dickens's description of the attack upon the prison, caused by him, commencing in the second volume of "Barnaby Rudge," Chapter Fifth.

"It was about six o'clock in the evening when a vast mob poured into Lincoln's Inn Fields by every avenue, and divided, evidently in pursuance of a previous design, into several parties. It must not be understood that this arrangement was known to the whole crowd, but that it was the work of a few leaders, who, mingling with these men as they came upon the ground, and calling to them to fall into this or that party, effected it as rapidly as if it had been determined on by a council of the whole number, and every man had known his place.

"It was perfectly notorious to the assemblage that the largest body, which comprehended about two-thirds of the whole, was designed for the attack on Newgate. It comprehended all the rioters who had been conspicuous in any of their former proceedings; all those whom they recommended as daring hands and fit for the work; all those whose companions had been taken in the riots; and a great number of people who were relatives or friends of the felons in the gaol. This last class included not only the most desperate and utterly abandoned villains in London, but some who were comparatively innocent. There was more than one woman there, disguised in man's attire, and bent on the rescue of a child or a brother. There were the two sons of a man who lay under the sentence of death, and who was to be executed, along with three others, the next day but one. There was a

great party of boys, whose fellow pickpockets were in the prison; and, at the skirts of all, a score of miserable women, outcasts from the world, seeking to release some other fellow creature as miserable as themselves, or moved by general sympathy, perhaps, God knows, with all who were without hope and wretched.

“Old swords, and pistols without ball or powder; sledge-hammers, knives, axes, saws, and weapons pillaged from the butcher shops; a forest of iron bars and wooden clubs; long ladders for scaling the walls, each carried on the shoulders of a dozen men; lighted torches, tow smeared with pitch, and tar, and brimstone; staves roughly plucked from a fence and paling; and even crutches taken from crippled beggars on the streets composed their arms. When all was ready, Hugh and Dennis, with Simon Tappertit between them, led the way. Roaring and chafing like an angry sea, the crowd pressed after them.”

They halt upon the way to drag Gabriel Varden from his shop, in order to compel him to pick the lock of the prison gate. They march him at the head of the mob to the jail. They find that their visit was not wholly unexpected, “for the governor’s house, which fronted the street, was strongly barricaded, the wicket of the prison gate was closed up, and at no loophole or grating was any person to be seen.” The governor, inspecting the mob from the roof of his house, is summoned to surrender his charge. He refuses. The rabble call on the locksmith to pick the locks. He defies them, and is dragged away barely in time to save his life by Joe Willets and Edward Chester, who are in the mob in disguise. Then the assault on the jail begins.

“Hammers began to rattle on the walls, and every man strove to reach the prison and be among the foremost rank. Fighting their way through the press and struggle as desperately as if they were in the midst of the enemies rather than their own friends, the two men retreated with the blacksmith between them, and dragged him through the very heart of the concourse.

“And now the strokes begin to fall like hail upon the gate and on the strong building; for those who could not reach the door spent their fierce rage on any thing, even on the great blocks of stone, which shivered their weapons into fragments, and made their hands and arms tingle as if the walls were active in their resistance and dealt them back their blows. The clash of the iron ringing upon iron mingled with the deafening tumult, and sounded high above it, as the great sledge-hammers rattled on the nailed and plated door; the sparks flew off in showers; men worked in gangs, and

at short intervals relieved each other, that all their strength might be devoted to the work; but there stood the portal still, as grim and dark and as strong as ever, and, saving for the dints on its shattered surface, quite unchanged.

“While some brought all their energies to bear upon this toilsome task, and some, rearing ladders against the prison, tried to clamber to the summit of the walls they were too short to scale; and some, again, engaged a body of police, and beat them back and trod them under foot by force of numbers; others besieged the house on which the gaoler had appeared, and, driving in the door, brought out his furniture and piled it up against the prison gate to make a low fire which should burn it down. As soon as this device was understood, all those who had labored hitherto cast down their tools and helped to swell the heap, which reached half way across the street, and was so high that those who threw more fuel on the top got up by ladders. When all the keeper’s goods were flung upon this costly pile to the last fragment, they smeared it with pitch and tar and rosin they had brought, and sprinkled it with turpentine. To all the woodwork round the prison doors they did the like, leaving not a joist or a beam untouched. This infernal christening performed, they fired the pile with lighted matches and with blazing tow, and then stood by and waited the result.

“The furniture being very dry, and rendered more combustible by wax and oil, besides the arts they had used, took fire at once. The flames roared high and fiercely, blackening the prison wall and twining up its lofty front like burning serpents. At first they crowded around the blaze, and vented their exultation only in their looks; but when it grew hotter and fiercer; when it crackled and leaped, and roared like a great furnace; when it shone upon the opposite houses, and lighted up not only the pale and wondering faces at the windows, but the inmost corners of each habitation; when through the deep red heat and glow the fire was seen sporting and toying with the door, now clinging to its obdurate surface, now gliding off with fierce inconstancy and roaring high into the sky, anon returning to fold it in its burning grasp and lure it to its ruin; when it shone and gleamed so brightly that the church clock of St. Sepulchre’s, so often pointing to the hour of death, was legible as in broad day, and the vane upon its steeple-top glittered in the unwonted light like some thing richly jeweled; when blackened stone and sombre brick grew ruddy in the deep reflection, and windows shone like burnished gold, dotting the longest distance in the fiery vista with their specks of brightness; when wall and tower and roof and

chimney-stack seemed drunk, and in the flickering glare appeared to reel and stagger; when scores of objects, never seen before, burst out upon the view, and things the most familiar put on some new aspect, then the mob began to join the whirl, and with loud yells and shouts and clamor, such as is happily seldom heard, bestirred themselves to feed the fire and keep it at its height.

“Although the heat was so intense that the paint on the houses over against the prison parched and crackled up, and swelling into boils, as it were, from an excess of torture, broke and crumbled away; although the glass fell from the window sashes, and the lead and iron on the roofs blistered the incautious hand that touched them, and the sparrows in the eaves took wing, and, rendered giddy by the smoke, fell fluttering down upon the blazing pile, still the fire was tended increasingly by busy hands, and round it men were going always. They never slackened in their zeal or kept aloof, but pressed upon the flames so hard that those in front had much ado to save themselves from being thrust in; if one man swooned or dropped, a dozen struggled for his place, and that, although they knew the pain and thirst and pressure to be unendurable. Those who fell down in fainting fits and were crushed or hurt were carried to an inn yard close at hand and dashed with water from a pump, of which buckets full were passed from man to man among the crowd; but such was the strong desire of all to drink, and such the fighting to be first, that, for the most part, the whole contents were spilled upon the ground, without the lips of a man being moistened.

“Meanwhile, and in the midst of all the roar and outcry, those who were nearest to the pile heaped up again the burning fragments that came toppling down, and racked the fire about the door, which, although a sheet of flame, was still a door, fast locked and barred, and kept them out. Great pieces of burning wood were passed, besides, above the people’s heads to such as stood above the ladders, and some of these, climbing up to the topmost stave, and holding on with one hand by the prison wall, exerted all their skill and force to cast these firebrands on the roof or down into the yards within. In many instances their efforts were successful, which occasioned a new and appalling addition to the horrors of the scene, for the prisoners within, seeing from between their bars that the fire caught in many places and thrived fiercely, and being all locked up in strong cells for the night, began to know that they were in danger of being burnt alive. This

terrible fear, spreading from cell to cell and from yard to yard, vented itself in such dismal cries and wailings, and in such dreadful shrieks for help, that the whole gaol resounded with the noise, which was loudly heard even above the shouting of the mob and roaring of the flames, and was so full of agony and despair that it made the boldest tremble.

“It was remarkable that these cries began in that quarter of the gaol which fronted Newgate street, where it was well known that the men who were to suffer death on Thursday were confined. And not only were these four, who had a short time to live, the first to whom the dread of being burnt occurred, but they were, throughout, the most importunate of all; for they could be plainly heard, notwithstanding the great thickness of the walls, crying that the wind set that way, and that the flames would shortly reach them; and calling to officers of the gaol to come and quench the fire from a cistern which was in their yard, and full of water. Judging from what the crowds from without the walls could hear from time to time, these four doomed wretches never ceased to call for help; and that with as much distraction, and in as great a frenzy of attachment to existence, as though each had an honored, happy life before him, instead of eight-and-forty hours of miserable imprisonment, and then a violent and shameful death.

“But the anguish and suffering of the two sons of one of these men, when they heard, or fancied they heard, their father’s voice, is past description. After wringing their hands, and rushing to and fro as if they were stark mad, one mounted on the shoulders of his brother, and tried to clamber up the face of the high wall, guarded at the top with spikes and points of iron. And when he fell among the crowd he was not deterred by his bruises, but mounted up again, and fell again, and when he found the feat impossible began to beat the stones and tear them with his hands, as if he could in that way make a breach in the strong building and force a passage in. At last they cleft their way among the mob about the door, though many men, a dozen times their match, had tried in vain to do so, and were seen in, yes in, the fire, striving to pry it down with crowbars.

“Nor were they alone affected by the outcry from within the prison. The women who were looking on shrieked loudly, beat their hands together, stopped their ears and many fainted; the men who were not near the walls and active in the siege, rather than do nothing, tore up the pavement of the street, and did so with a haste and fury that could not have been surpassed if that had been their gaol and they were near their object. Not one living

creature in the throng was for an instant still. The whole great mass were mad.

“A shout! Another! Another yet, though few knew why or what it meant. But those around the gate had seen it slowly yield and drop from its topmost hinge. It hung on that side but by one, but it was upright still, because of the bar and its having sunk of its own weight into the heap of ashes at its foot. There was now a gap at the top of the doorway through which could be descried a gloomy passage, cavernous and dark. Pile up the fire!

“It burnt fiercely. The door was red hot and the gap wider. They vainly tried to shield their faces with their hands, and standing, as if in readiness for a spring, watched the place. Dark figures, some crawling on their hands and knees, some carried in the arms of others, were seen to pass along the roof. It was plain that the gaol could hold out no longer. The keeper and his officers and their wives and children were escaping. Pile up the fire!

“The door sank down again; it settled deeper in the cinders, tottered, yielded, was down.

“As they shouted again they fell back for a moment and left a clear space about the fire that lay between them and the gaol entry. Hugh leaped upon the blazing heap, and scattering a train of sparks into the air, and making the dark lobby glitter with those that hung upon his dress, dashed into the gaol.

“The hangman followed. And then so many rushed upon their track that the fire got trodden down and thinly strewed about the street; but there was no need of it now, for, inside and out, the prison was in flames.”

The rioters celebrated the capture of Newgate in roaring style. They commanded and compelled the citizens all around the place to illuminate their houses from bottom to top, as if for a glorious national event, and at a time of public gayety and joy. “When this last task had been achieved the shouts and cries grew fainter; the clank of the fetters, which had resounded on all sides as the prisoners escaped, was heard no more; all the noises of the crowd subsided into a hoarse and sullen murmur as it passed into the distance; and when the human tide had rolled away, a melancholy heap of smoking ruins marked the spot where it had lately chafed and roared.” Among the spectators of the capture of Newgate was the poet Crabbe, then a young man seeking his fortune in London, and he has left a description of it in his journal. Dr. Johnson records the fact that “on Wednesday I walked with Dr. Scott (Lord Stowell) to look at Newgate and found it in ruins, with

the fire yet glowing. As I went by, the Protestants were plundering the Sessions House in the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed, in full day.”

At the period of the Gordon Riots, Newgate was in the course of reconstruction. The present prison was designed by George Dance, R. A., the architect of the Mansion House and other public buildings. The famous Lord Mayor Beckford, father of the author of “Vathek,” laid the foundation stone on May 23, 1770, this being his last public act. Work seems to have progressed slowly on it, for the newer portion was only in part completed when the Gordon mob stormed the older sections. This event served as a warning, however. Within two years Newgate was in stronger shape than ever; and substantially in the shape which, after the passage of more than a century, it still presents to the world.

Newgate serves to London the purpose of a reception prison for offenders awaiting trial and for those condemned to death, and the executions of the great city are performed within its walls. The Old Bailey Court, which is an adjunct to it, is practically a part of the mountain of masonry which sends its bleak shadow over Newgate street and the Old Bailey. It is separated from it only by a yard, across which prisoners are led to be tried. The courthouse, known colloquially, in London, as the Old Bailey, and politely as the Central Criminal Court, was built in 1773, was destroyed with Newgate in the Gordon Riots, but rebuilt and enlarged in 1809 by the taking in of Surgeons’ Hall. The Court is a square hall, with a gallery for visitors. At one side is the chief seat for the judge, with a canopy overhead surmounted by the royal arms, and a gilded sheathed sword on the crimson wall. Opposite is the prisoners’ dock, with the stairs descending into the covered passageway, which gives access by the way of the Press Yard to Newgate. To the left of the dock is the witness-stand, and further to the left the jury box. The counsel occupy the body of the court below. The Old Bailey Court formerly sat at seven in the morning, but now sittings do not commence until ten. It tries crimes of every kind, from treason to petty larceny and offenses on the high seas, but only the heaviest ones are brought to judgment before this branch of the Sessions. What is called the New Court, adjoining the old one, sits upon the lighter misdemeanors. The Judges at the Old Bailey are nominally the Lord Mayor, who is, in fact, only a gorgeous dummy to open the court with true dignity, the Sheriff, the Lord Chancellor,

and a long list of Judges, Aldermen, Recorders and so on. Of these the real Judges are the Recorder and Common Sergeant, and the Judge of the Sheriff's Court. The law Judges take part when knotty legal questions come in dispute, or when the trial is for a capital offense which may cost the prisoner his life. A curious old custom at the Bailey is that one Alderman must be present at every sitting of the Court.

Above the Old Court is a stately dining-room where, during the Old Bailey sittings, the Sheriffs used to give Judges and Court officials, and a few privileged visitors, dinners of rump steak and marrow puddings, according to a bill of fare provided by custom. The custom, I believe, is kept up still. There are two dinners, at 3 and 5 o'clock respectively, and a historic court chaplain is told of who for ten years ate both of these meals each day.

There is a reverse to this pleasant picture of the Old Bailey. For many years it was a most unhealthy place to hold court in. The jail fevers which decimated Newgate's population always found their way into the court room. In 1750 the fever caused the death of several judges and Lord Mayor Pennant himself, and whenever there was an epidemic there are records of its effect among the potentates of the Old Bailey. In Chapter 7 of "A Tale of Two Cities," in connection with the trial of Charles Darnay, Dickens writes of the Old Bailey Court: "They hanged at Tyburn in those days, so the street outside of Newgate had not obtained the infamous notoriety that has since attached to it. But the gaol was a vile place, in which most kinds of debauchery and villainy were practiced, and where dire diseases were bred, that came into the Court with the prisoners, and sometimes rushed straight from the dock at my Lord Chief Justice himself, and pulled him off the bench. It had more than once happened that the judge in the black cap pronounced his own doom as certainly as the prisoner's, and even died before him." In the course of the same chapter he describes the accused as standing quiet and attentive, with his hands resting on the slab of wood forming the shelf of the prisoner's dock, "so composedly that they had not displaced a leaf of the herbs with which it was strewn. The Court was all bestrewn with herbs, and sprinkled with vinegar, as a precaution against gaol air and gaol fever." In 1770, Mr. Ackerman, one of the keepers, testified before the House of Commons, which had the question of rebuilding the prison before it, that in the spring of 1750, the jail distemper had spread to the Sessions House, now the Old Bailey, and had caused the

death, in addition to two Judges, and the Lord Mayor already alluded to, of several of the jury and others to the number of over sixty persons.

The surroundings of Newgate are full of historical memories. Just off Giltspur street, but a step away, is Cock lane, where the ghost walked. Along Newgate street, going from the Old Bailey to Cheapside, was the noble old charity of Christ's Hospital, otherwise famous as the Blue-Coat School, rich in works of art and richer in the recollections of such scholars within its cloisters as Coleridge, Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Richardson, who wrote "Clarissa Harlowe," and many more. Along the same street opens Queen's Head Passage, in which Dolly's chop-house, which is a part of the commercial history of England, stands, and Ivy Lane, where Dr. Johnson established his club of that name. Newgate Market, between Newgate street and Paternoster Row, is the great meat market of London. It is what is known as the carcass market, and for many years was the chief source of slaughtered meat supply to the retail butchers of London. At a certain hour of the morning Newgate street was a veritable butchers' exchange. Newgate market was originally a meat market, but its convenient proximity to Smithfield, which lies on the other side of Newgate, only a few streets off, led to its conversion to its later uses. Smithfield was the historic cattle market of London. Here in the past were slaughtered beasts for food, and men and women for their opinions. The beasts had the better part of the bargain. They were killed before they were cooked. The human victims of Smithfield Shambles were roasted and boiled alive. In chapter 21 of "Oliver Twist" we find a description of Smithfield when Sykes is carrying Oliver off to assist in the burglary at Chertsey.

"It was market morning. The ground was covered nearly ankle deep with filth and mire, and a thick steam perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle, and mingling with the fog, which seemed to rest upon the chimney tops, hung heavily above. All the pens in the centre of the large area, and as many temporary ones as could be crowded into the vacant space, were filled with sheep; tied up to posts by the gutter side were long lines of beasts and oxen three or four deep. Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, vagabonds of every low grade, were mingled together in a dense mass; the whistling of the drovers, the barking of the dogs, the bellowing and the plunging of the oxen, the bleating of the sheep, the grunting and the squeaking of the pigs, the cries of the hawkers, the shouts, oaths, and quarreling on all sides, the ringing of bells and roar of

voices that issued from every public house, the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping, yelling, the hideous and discordant din that resounded from every corner of the market, and the unwashed, unshaven, squalid and dirty figures constantly running to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng, rendered it a stunning and bewildering scene which quite confounded the senses.”

It may be remembered too, vide “Great Expectations,” chapter 20, that when Pip came up to London to find his guardian, Mr. Jaggers, he beguiled that time while awaiting his return to his office by wandering about the neighborhood, and so “came into Smithfield, and the shameful place being all asmeared with filth and fat and blood and foam, seemed to stick to me. So I rubbed it off with all possible speed by turning into a street where I saw the great black dome of St. Paul’s bulging at me from behind a grim stone building which a bystander said was Newgate prison.” Whenever he writes of the jail, he does so in the same spirit. His earliest impressions of it struck the keynote for his whole life’s view of it. What those early impressions were one may discover in that paper of the “Sketches by Boz” which, in their collected shape, bears the number 24, and has for title, “Criminal Courts.”

“We shall never forget the mingled feelings of awe and respect with which we used to gaze on the exterior of Newgate in our schoolboy days. How dreadful its rough, heavy walls, and how massive the doors appeared to us — the latter looking as if they were made for the express purpose of letting people in and never letting them out again. Then the fetters over the debtor’s door, which we used to think were a bona fide set of irons just hung up there for convenience sake, ready to be taken down at a moment’s notice and rivetted on the limbs of some refractory felon. We were never tired wondering how the hackney coachman on the opposite stand could cut jokes in the presence of such horrors, and drink pots of half-and-half so near the last drop.

“Often have we strayed here in session’s time to catch a glimpse of the whipping place or that dark building on one side of the yard in which is kept the gibbet with all of its dreadful apparatus, and on the door of which we half expected to see a brass plate with the inscription, ‘Mr. Ketch,’ for we never imagined that the distinguished functionary could by possibility live anywhere else. The days of those childish dreams have passed away, and with them many other boyish ideas of gayer nature. But we shall retain

so much of our original feeling that to this hour we never pass the building without something like a shudder.”

CHAPTER II.

NEWGATE WITHIN.



The entrance to Newgate is through the keeper's lodge, which, with the house in which the keeper lives, occupies the centre of what has been well called "this vast quarry of stone." It fronts on the Old Bailey. The prisoner's quarters are in the wings, which extend from either side of the keeper's quarters. In the gloomy office, men with that indescribable prison air all such officials bear, lounge about, and come and go on business.

There is iron everywhere, from the huge bolts on the outer doors, and the door inside of them, to the barred windows and other doors beyond number, that open and shut with a sullen clangor that goes echoing through the stone passages as if it would never die away. The smell of the jail is as powerful in its way as these evidences of its actual strength. It blows into your face in a strong breath when the door opens for you, and you find it lingering about you hours after your visit has been made. Some scientist ought to analyze this odor of the prison. It is unique. A soldier's barracks, a hospital, a ship's fore-castle — all places, in short, where men live in close quarters — have an odor that tells of their origin; but the scent of the jail is different from all, and as horrible as the thing it recalls to you whenever you breathe it, or fancy you do.

"What London pedestrian is there," writes Dickens, in chapter 24 in the "Sketches by Boz," "who has not, at some time or other, cast a hurried glance through the wicket at which the prisoners are admitted into this gloomy mansion, and surveyed the few objects he could discern, with an indescribable feeling of curiosity. The thick door, plated with iron, and mounted with spikes just low enough to enable you to see leaning over them an ill-looking fellow, in a broad-brimmed hat, Belcher handkerchief and top-boots; with a brown coat, something between a great-coat and a 'sporting' jacket, on his back, and an immense key in his left hand. Perhaps you are lucky enough to pass just as the gate is being opened; then, you see

on the other side of the lodge another gate, the image of its predecessor, and two or three more turnkeys, who look like multiplications of the first one, seated around a fire, which just lights up the white-washed apartment sufficiently to enable you to catch a glimpse of these different objects.” In the next paper of the same series, he conducts us within the lodge. “One side is plentifully garnished with a choice collection of heavy sets of irons, including those worn by the redoubtable Jack Sheppard — genuine; and those said to have been graced by the sturdy limbs of the no less celebrated Dick Turpin — doubtful. From this lodge a heavy oaken gate, bound with iron, studded with nails of the same material, and guarded by another turnkey, opens on a few steps, if we remember right, which terminate in a narrow and dismal stone passage, running parallel with the Old Bailey and leading to the different yards, through a number of tortuous and intricate windings, guarded in their turn by huge gates and gratings, whose appearance is sufficient to dispel at once the slightest hope of escape that any newcomer may have entertained; and the very recollection of which, on eventually traversing the place again, involves one in a maze of confusion.”

The old Newgate which the Gordon rioters sacked was a horrible place. The cells were mere black caves, which riddled the tremendous masonry like a stone honeycomb. In these at one time, while a contagious fever was raging, 800 prisoners were confined. The captives were packed in these dens like slaves in the hold of their prison-ship. Mrs. Frye describes the women as “swearing, gaming, fighting, singing, dancing, drinking, and dressing up in men’s clothes,” and as late as 1838 gambling with cards, dice and draughts was common among the male prisoners. Jail distempers now and then purged this sink of vileness of a portion of its inmates, till at last, in 1858, the reconstruction of its cellular system was completed. Even with that, however, Newgate is anything but a perfect jail. In the earlier Dickens era it preserved many of its ancient characteristics. In “Great Expectations,” when Wemmick takes Pip to visit it, we read: “At that time gaols were much neglected, and the period of exaggerated reaction consequent on all public wrong-doing — and which is always its longest and heaviest punishment — was still far off. So, felons were not lodged and fed better than soldiers (to say nothing of paupers), and seldom set fire to their prisons with the excusable object of improving the flavor of their soup. It was visiting time when Wemmick took me in; and a potman was going his rounds with beer; and the prisoners behind the bars in the yards were

buying beer, and talking to friends; and a frowsy, ugly, disorderly, depressing scene it was." The earlier description, "A Visit to Newgate," in the Boz "Sketches," thus depicts the women's side of the jail:

"The buildings in the prison — or in other words the different wards — form a square, of which the four sides abut respectively on the Old Bailey, the old College of Physicians (now forming a part of Newgate Market), the Sessions House and Newgate street. The intermediate space is divided into several paved yards, in which the prisoners take such air and exercise as can be had in such a place. These yards, with the exception of that in which the prisoners under the sentence of death are confined, run parallel with Newgate street, and consequently from the Old Bailey, as it were, to Newgate Market. Turning to the right, we came to a door composed of thick bars of wood, through which were discernible, passing to and fro in a narrow yard, some twenty women. One side of this yard is railed at a considerable distance, and formed into a kind of iron cage, about five feet and ten inches in height, roofed at the top, and defended in the front by iron bars, from which the friends of the female prisoners communicate with them. Two or three women were standing at different parts of the grating conversing with their friends, but a very large portion of the prisoners appeared to have no friends at all, beyond such of their old companions as might happen to be within the walls. We were conducted up a clean and well lighted flight of stone steps to one of the wards. A description of one is a description of the whole.

"It was in a spacious, bare, whitewashed apartment, lighted, of course, by windows looking into the interior of the prison, but far more light and airy than one could reasonably expect to find in such a situation. There was a large fire, with a deal table before it, round which ten or a dozen women were seated on wooden forms at dinner. Along both sides of the room ran a shelf; below it, at regular intervals, a row of large hooks were fixed in the wall, on each of which was hung the sleeping mat of a prisoner; her rug and blanket being folded up, and placed on the shelf above. At night these mats are placed upon the floor, each beneath the hook on which it hangs during the day; and the ward is made to thus answer the purposes both of a day room and a sleeping apartment. Over the fireplace was a large sheet of pasteboard, on which were displayed a variety of texts from Scripture, which were also scattered about the room in scraps about the size and shape of the copy slips which are used in schools. On the table was a sufficient

provision of a kind of stewed beef and brown bread, in pewter dishes which are kept perfectly bright, and displayed on shelves in great order and regularity when not in use.

“In every ward of the female side a wards-woman is appointed to preserve order, and a similar regulation is adopted among the males. The wards-men and wards-women are all prisoners, selected for good conduct. They alone are allowed the privilege of sleeping on bedsteads: a small stump bedstead being placed in every ward for the purpose.”

This, in itself, was a vast improvement on the style of the last century in Newgate. Then the prisoner had no comfort unless he paid roundly for it. His cell contained a stone bench or two, on which the first comer might make his bed. The rest slept on the floor. Once in a great while a truss of straw was tossed in to them, as it might have been to a beast in a stall. This straw remained until it rotted to a pulp. Then another truss was used to scatter over it. So, in time, the prisoners slept on a veritable dunghill, the compost being generally left to fester till it bred a fever, when it would be carted off, to disseminate the germs of disease which it had engendered, outside the jail walls; and the same process was begun over again. In the matter of cleanliness a change for the better had been made in Dickens's time; but one great evil of the jail was the herding together of the prisoners in the wards. Here the possibly innocent learned evil lessons from the guilty; the depraved could deprave those not yet wholly debased; the gaol became, in short, not so much a place of punishment for crime as a powerful breeder of it, and many a man and boy, and woman and girl, who went into Newgate for a trivial offense, emerged from it a full-fledged and incorrigible lawbreaker. So outrageous did this condition of things become that many thoughtful men began seriously to question whether the means of restricting crime, as practiced in Newgate, were not really worse than the crime itself. In the sketch already quoted, Dickens says:

“They (the men's wards) are provided, like the wards of the women's side, with mats and rugs, which are disposed of in the same manner during the day; the only very striking difference between their appearance and that of the wards inhabited by the women is the utter absence of employment. Huddled on two opposite forms by the fireside sit twenty men, perhaps; here a boy in livery; there a man in a rough great-coat and top-boots; further on, a desperate-looking fellow in his shirtsleeves, with an old Scotch cap upon his shaggy head; near him again, a tall ruffian in a smock-frock; next

to him a miserable being of distressed appearance, with his head resting on his hand — all alike in one respect, all idle and listless; when they do leave the fire, sauntering moodily about, lounging in the windows, or leaning against the wall, vacantly swinging their bodies to and fro. With the exception of an old man reading a newspaper, in two or three instances this was the case in every ward we entered. The only communication these men have with their friends is through two close iron gratings, with an intermediate space of about a yard in width between the two, so that nothing can be handed across, nor can the prisoner have any communication by touch with the person who visits him. The married men have a separate grating at which to see their wives, but its construction is the same.”

When the prisoners had visitors a keeper always sat in the space between the gratings, so that private communication was practically impossible. The only exception was made in favor of lawyers in visiting their clients; but prisoners of note could secure the privilege of privacy through the pressure of official influence on the head keeper. In fact, during later years an effort, only partially successful, was made in Newgate to grade the prisoners according to their criminal standard, and to keep the classes apart. So, persistent and desperate offenders were assigned to one ward and those less confirmed in crime to another, while boys and youths were separated from the older prisoners, whose influence on them could not be but for evil. Under the more humane management of the present century Newgate was even provided with a school. “A portion of the prison,” says Boz, in his “Visit,” “is set apart for boys under fourteen years of age.” “In a tolerable sized room, in which were writing materials and some copybooks, was the school-master with a couple of his pupils; the remainder having been fetched from an adjoining apartment, the whole were drawn up in a line for our inspection. There were fourteen of them in all, some with shoes, some without; some in pinafores without jackets, others in jackets without pinafores, and one in scarce anything at all. The whole number, without an exception, we believe, had been committed for trial on charges of pocket-picking; and fourteen such terrible little faces we never beheld. There was not a glance of honesty, not a wink expressive of anything but the gallows and the hulks, in the whole collection. As to anything like shame or contrition, that was entirely out of the question. They were evidently quite gratified at being thought worth the trouble of looking at; their idea

appeared to be that we had come to see Newgate as a grand affair, and that they were an indispensable part of the show; and every boy as he 'fell in' to the line actually seemed as pleased and important as if he had done something excessively meritorious in getting there at all."

Dickens had made a close study of this type of London gamin, as we have discovered in his Artful Dodger, Master Bates, and other demoralizing and diverting characterizations. In the Boz sketch called "Criminal Courts" he describes the trial of such an imp at the Old Bailey court:

"A boy of thirteen is tried, say, for picking the pocket of some subject of Her Majesty, and the offense is about as clearly proved as an offense can be. He is called upon for his defence, and contents himself with a little declamation about the jurymen and his country; asserts that all the witnesses have committed perjury, and hints that the police force generally have entered into a conspiracy against him. However probable his statement may be, it fails to convince the Court, and some such scene as the following takes place:

"Court: Have you any witnesses to speak for your character, boy?

"Boy: Yes, my Lord; fifteen gen'lm'n is a vaten outside, and vos avaten all day yesterday, vich they told me the night afore my trial vos a coming on.

"Court: Inquire for these witnesses.

"Here a stout beadle runs out, and vociferates for the witness at the very top of his voice; for you hear his cry grow fainter and fainter as he descends the steps into the courtyard below. After an absence of five minutes he returns, very warm and hoarse, and informs the Court of what he knew perfectly well before — namely, that there are no such witnesses in attendance. Hereupon the boy sets up a most awful howling, screws the lower part of the palms of his hands into the corners of his eyes, and endeavors to look the picture of injured innocence. The jury at once find him 'guilty,' and his endeavors to squeeze out a tear are redoubled. The governor of the gaol then states, in reply to an inquiry from the bench, that the prisoner has been under his care twice before. This the urchin resolutely denies in some such terms as: 'S'elp me, gen'lm'n, I never vos in trouble afore — indeed, my Lord, I never vos. It's all a howen to my having a twin brother, vich has wrongfully got into trouble, and vich is so exactly like me, that no one ever knows the difference atween us.'

“This representation, like the defence, fails in producing the desired effect, and the boy is sentenced, perhaps, to seven years’ transportation. Finding it impossible to excite compassion, he gives vent to his feelings in an imprecation bearing reference to the eyes of ‘old big vig,’ and as he declines to take the trouble of walking from the dock, is forthwith carried out, congratulating himself on having succeeded in giving everybody as much trouble as possible.”

In a similar vein, when the Artful Dodger falls into the toils (“Oliver Twist,” Chapter 43) he asserts himself.

“It was indeed Mr. Dawkins, who, shuffling into the office with the big coat sleeves tucked up as usual, his left hand in his pocket, and his hat in his right hand, preceded the gaoler, with a rolling gait altogether indescribable, and taking his place in the dock, requested in an audible voice to know what he was placed in ‘that ‘ere disgraceful situation for.’

“‘Hold your tongue, will you?’ said the gaoler.

“‘I’m an Englishman, ain’t I?’ rejoined the Dodger. ‘Where are my privileges?’

“‘You’ll get your privileges soon enough,’ retorted the gaoler, ‘and pepper with ‘em.’

“‘We’ll see what the Secretary of State for the Home Affairs has got to say to the beaks, if I don’t,’ replied Mr. Dawkins.

“‘Now then. Wot is this here business? I shall thank the madg’strates to dispose of this little affair, and not to keep me while they read the paper, for I’ve got an appointment with a gentleman in the city, and as I’m a man of my word and very punctual in business matters, he’ll go away if I ain’t there to my time, and then p’raps there won’t be an action for damages against them as kept me away. Oh, no, certainly not.’

“At this point the Dodger, with a show of being very particular with a view to the proceedings to be had thereafter, desired the gaoler to communicate ‘the names of them two files as was on the bench,’ which so tickled the spectators, that they laughed almost as heartily as Master Bates could have done if he had heard the request.

“‘Silence there,’ cried the gaoler.

“‘What is this?’ inquired one of the magistrates.

“‘A pocket-picketing case, your worship.’

“‘Has the boy ever been here before?’

“‘He ought to have been, a many times,’ replied the gaoler. ‘He has been pretty well everywhere else. I know him well, your worship.’”

“‘Oh, you know me, do you?’ cried the Artful, making a note of the statement. ‘Werry good. That’s a case of deformation of character, any way.’”

“Here there was another laugh, and another cry for silence.

“‘Now then, where are the witnesses?’ said the clerk.

“‘Ah, that’s right,’ added the Dodger. ‘Where are they? I should like to see ‘em.’”

“This wish was immediately gratified, for a policeman stepped forward who had seen the prisoner attempt the pocket of an unknown gentleman in the crowd, and indeed take a handkerchief therefrom, which, being a very old one, he deliberately put back again, after trying it on his own countenance. For this reason he took the Dodger into custody as soon as he could get near him, and the said Dodger being searched, had upon his person a silver snuff-box, with the owner’s name engraved upon the lid. This gentleman had been discovered upon reference to the Court Guide, and being then and there present, swore that the snuff-box was his, and that he had missed it on the previous day, the moment he had disengaged himself from the crowd before referred to. He had also remarked a young gentleman in the throng, particularly active in making his way about, and that the young gentleman was the prisoner before him.

“‘Have you anything to ask this witness, boy?’ said the magistrate.

“‘I wouldn’t abase myself by descending to hold no conversation with him,’ replied the Dodger.

“‘Have you anything to say at all?’

“‘Do you hear his worship ask if you’ve anything to say?’ inquired the gaoler, nudging the silent Dodger with his elbow.

“‘I beg your pardon,’ said the Dodger, looking up with an air of abstraction.

“‘Did you mean to say anything, you young shaver?’

“‘No,’ replied the Dodger, ‘not here, for this ain’t the shop for justice; besides which, my attorney is a breakfasting this morning with the Wice-President of the House of Commons; but I shall have something to say elsewhere, and so will he, and so will a wery numerous and ‘spectable circle of acquaintances as’ll make them beaks wish they’d never been born,

or that they'd got their footman to hang 'em up to their own hat-pegs afore they let 'em come out this morning to try it upon me. I'll — —'

“‘There. He's fully committed,’ interposed the clerk. ‘Take him away.’

“‘Oh, ah. I'll come on,’ replied the Dodger, brushing his hat with the palm of his hand. ‘Ah (to the bench) it's no use your looking frightened; I won't show you no mercy, not a ha'porth of it. You'll pay for this, my fine fellers. I wouldn't be you for something; I wouldn't go free now, if you was to fall down on your knees and ask me. Here, carry me off to prison. Take me away.’

“‘With these last words, the Dodger suffered himself to be led off by the collar, threatening, till he got into the yard, to make a parliamentary business of it, and then grinning in the officer's face with glee and self approval.’”

To such scholars as these, all the schools that could be crowded into Newgate would be of no avail. Their biographies are summed up by Magwitch, in “Great Expectations,” who, blandly admitting to have been brought up to be “a warmint,” says:

“‘In gaol and out of gaol, in gaol and out of gaol, in gaol and out of gaol. That's my life. I've been done everything to, pretty well — except hanged. I've been locked up as much as a silver tea-kettle. I've been carted here and carted there, and put out of this town and put out of that town. I've no more notion where I was born than you have, if so much. I first became aware of myself down in Essex, a-thieving turnips for a living. Summun had run away from me — a man, a tinker — and he'd took the fire with him and left me very cold.

“‘I knowed my name to be Magwitch, christened Abel. How did I know it? Much as I knowed the birds' names in the hedges to be chaffinch, sparrer, thrush. I might have thought that it was all lies together, only, as the birds' names come out true, I suppose mine did.

“‘So fur as I could find, there warn't a soul that see young Abel Magwitch, with as little on him as in him, but what caught fright at him, and either drove him off or took him up. I was took up, took up, took up, to that extent that I reg'larly growed up took up.’”

One of the most curious episodes of Newgate is connected with the hanging of the Rev. W. Dodd, for forgery, on Friday, June 6, 1777. The clerical malefactor preached his own funeral sermon in the chapel of the prison before he was led out to die, the text being from Acts XV, 23. The

theatre of this remarkable valedictory went up in the smoke of the Gordon Riots, but there is a chapel in the reconstructed jail: “situated,” says Boz, “at the back of the governor’s house; the latter having no windows looking into the interior of the prison. Whether the associations connected with the place — the knowledge that here a portion of the burial is, on some dreadful occasions, performed over the quick and not over the dead — cast over it a still more gloomy and sombre air than art has imparted to it, we know not, but its appearance is very striking. The meanness of its appointments — the bare scanty pulpit, with the paltry painted pillars on either side — the women’s gallery with its great heavy curtains — the men’s with its unpainted benches and dingy front — the tottering little table at the altar, with the commandments on the wall above it, scarcely legible through lack of paint, and dust and damp — so unlike the velvet and gilding, the marble and the wood of a modern church — are strange and striking. There is one object, too, which rivets the attention and fascinates the gaze, and from which we may turn horror-stricken in vain, for the recollection of it will haunt us waking and sleeping for a long time afterward. Immediately below the reading desk, on the floor of the chapel, and forming the most conspicuous object in the little area, is the ‘condemned pew’: A huge black pen in which the wretched people, who are singled out for death, are placed on the last Sunday preceding their execution, in sight of all their fellow prisoners, from many of whom they may have been separated but a week before, to hear prayers for their own souls, to join in the responses of their own burial service, and to listen to an address warning their recent companions to take example by their own fate and urging themselves, while there is yet time — nearly four-and-twenty hours — to ‘turn and flee from the wrath to come.’ At one time — and at no distant period either — the coffins of the men about to be executed, were placed in that pew, upon the seat by their side, during the whole service.” The chapel has been rearranged since the time in which Boz wrote, and the ghastliest part of its show done away with.

In the condemned ward Boz found “five-and-twenty or thirty prisoners, all under sentence of death, awaiting the result of the recorder’s report — men of all ages and appearances, from a hardened old offender with swarthy face and grizzly beard of three days’ growth, to a handsome boy not fourteen years old, and of singularly youthful appearance even for that age, who had been condemned for burglary.” It must be remembered that

they hanged men for all sorts of offenses in England then, which made the population of the condemned ward abundant around sessions time, when the trials were on. The death penalty was as common then as it is now rare in its infliction. "The room was large, airy and clean. One or two decently dressed men were brooding with a dejected air over the fire; several little groups of two or three had been engaged in conversation at the upper end of the room, or in the windows; and the remainder were crowded around a young man seated at a table, who appeared to be engaged in teaching the younger ones to write. On the table lay a Testament, but there were no tokens of its having been in recent use. In the press-room below were the men, the nature of whose offense rendered it necessary to separate them, even from their companions in guilt. It is a long sombre room, with two windows sunk in the stone wall, and here the wretched men are pinioned on the mornings of their execution, before moving toward the scaffold."

"A few paces up the yard," he goes on, "and forming a continuation of the building, lie the condemned cells. The entrance is by a narrow and obscure staircase, leading to a dark passage, in which a charcoal stove casts a lurid light over the objects in its immediate vicinity, and diffuses something like a warmth around. Prior to the recorder's report being made, all the prisoners under the sentence of death are removed from the day room at five o'clock in the afternoon, and locked up in these cells, where they are allowed a candle until ten o'clock; and here they remain until seven the next morning. When the warrant for the prisoner's execution arrives, he is removed to the cells, and confined in one of them until he leaves it for the scaffold. He is at liberty to walk in the yard; but both in the walks and in his cell, he is constantly attended by a turnkey, who never leaves him on any pretence." The cell was "a stone dungeon eight feet long by six feet wide, with a bench at the upper end, under which were a common rug, a Bible and a prayer-book. An iron candle-stick was fixed into the wall at the side; and a small high window at the back admitted as much air and light as could struggle in between a double row of heavy, crossed iron bars." It was in one of these dens ("Oliver Twist," Chapter 52) that Fagin spent his last hours.

"They led him through a paved room under the court, where some prisoners were waiting till their turns came, and others were talking to their friends, who crowded around a gate which looked into the open yard. There was nobody there to speak to him; but, as he passed, the prisoners fell back to render him more visible to the people who were clinging to the bars; and

they assailed him with opprobrious names, and screeched and hissed. He shook his fist, and would have spat upon them; but his conductors hurried him on, through a gloomy passage lighted by a few dim lamps, into the interior of the prison.

“Here he was searched, that he might not have about him the means of anticipating the law; this ceremony performed, they led him to one of the condemned cells, and left him there — alone.

“He sat down on a stone bench opposite the door, which served for a seat and bedstead; and casting his bloodshot eyes upon the ground, tried to collect his thoughts. After a while, he began to remember a few disjointed fragments of what the judge had said; though it seemed to him, at the time, that he could not hear a word. These gradually fell into their proper places, and by degrees suggested more; so that in a little time he had the whole almost as it was delivered. To be hanged by the neck, till he was dead — that was the end. To be hanged by the neck till he was dead.

“As it came on very dark, he began to think of all the men he had known who had died upon the scaffold; some of them through his means. They rose up, in such quick succession, that he could hardly count them. He had seen some of them die — and had joked, too, because they died with prayers upon their lips. With what a rattling noise the drop went down; and how suddenly they changed from strong and vigorous men to dangling heaps of clothes.

“Some of them might have inhabited that very cell — sat upon that very spot. It was very dark; why didn’t they bring a light? The cell had been built for many years. Scores of men must have passed their last hours there. It was like sitting in a vault strewn with dead bodies — the cap, the noose, the pinioned arms, the faces that he knew, even beneath that hideous veil. Light — Light.

“At length, when his hands were raw with beating against the heavy door and walls, two men appeared: one bearing a candle, which he thrust into an iron candle-stick fixed against the wall; the other dragging a mattress on which to pass the night; for the prisoner was to be left alone no more.

“Then came night — dark, dismal, silent night. Other watchers are glad to hear the clocks strike, for they tell of life and coming day. To the Jew they brought despair. The boom of every iron bell came laden with one deep, hollow sound — Death. What availed the noise and bustle of cheerful

morning, which penetrated even there, to him? It was another form of knell, with mockery added to its warning.

“The day passed off — day. There was no day; it was gone as soon as come — and night came on again; night so long, and yet so short, long in its dreadful silence, and short in its fleeting hours. At one time he raved and blasphemed; and at another howled and tore his hair. Venerable men of his own persuasion had come to pray beside him, but he had driven them away with curses. They renewed their charitable efforts, and he beat them off.

“Saturday night. He had only one more night to live, and as he thought of this, the day broke — Sunday.

“It was not until the night of this last awful day, that a withering sense of his helpless, desperate state came in its full intensity upon his blighted soul; not that he had ever held any defined or positive hope of mercy, but that he had never been able to consider more than dim probability of dying so soon. He had spoken little to either of the two men, who relieved each other in attendance upon him; and they, for their parts, made no efforts to arouse his attention. He sat there, awake, but dreaming. Now he started up, every minute, and with gasping mouth and burning skin, hurried to and fro in such a paroxysm of fear and wrath that even they — used to such sights — recoiled from him with horror. He grew so terrible, at last, in all the tortures of his evil conscience that one man could not bear to sit there, eyeing him alone; and so the two kept watch together.

“He cowered down upon his stone bed, and thought of the past. He had been wounded with some missiles from the crowd on the day of his capture, and his head was bandaged with a linen cloth. His red hair hung down upon his bloodless face; his beard was torn and twisted into knots; his eyes shone with a terrible light; his unwashed flesh crackled with the fever that burnt him up. Eight — nine — ten. If it was not a trick to frighten him, and those were the real hours treading on each other’s heels, where would he be, when they came around again? Eleven! Another struck, before the voice of the previous hour had ceased to vibrate. At eight, he would be the only mourner in his own funeral train; at eleven — —

“Those dreadful walls of Newgate, which had hidden so much misery and unspeakable anguish, not only from the eyes, but, too often and too long, from the thoughts, of men, never held so dreaded a spectre as that. The few who lingered as they passed, and wondered what the man was

doing, who was to be hung to-morrow, would have slept but ill that night if they could have but seen him.

“From early in the evening until nearly midnight, little groups of two and three presented themselves at the lodge-gate, and inquired, with anxious faces, whether any reprieve had been received. These being answered in the negative, communicated the welcome intelligence to the clusters in the street, who pointed out to one another the door from which he must come out, and showed where the scaffold would be built, and, walking with unwilling steps away, turned back to conjure up the scene. By degrees they fell off, one by one; and for an hour in the dead of the night, the street was left to solitude and darkness.”

When Mr. Brownlow and Oliver appeared at the wicket, and presented an order of admission to the prisoner, signed by one of the Sheriffs, they were immediately admitted to the lodge.

“The condemned criminal was seated on his bed, rocking himself from side to side, with a countenance more like that of a snared beast than the face of a man. His mind was evidently wandering to his old life, for he continued to mutter, without appearing conscious of their presence otherwise than as a part of his vision.

“‘Fagin,’ said the gaoler.

“‘That’s me,’ cried the Jew, falling, instantly into the attitude of listening he assumed upon his trial. ‘An old man, my Lord; a very old man.’

“‘Here,’ said the turnkey, laying his hand upon his breast to keep him down. ‘Here’s somebody wants to see you, to ask you some questions, I suppose. Fagin, Fagin, are you a man?’

“‘I shan’t be one long,’ replied the Jew, looking up with a face retaining no human expression but rage and terror. ‘Strike them all dead! What right have they to butcher me?’”

Since hanging by wholesale went out in England, Newgate has had no use for condemned wards, nor for its great number of condemned cells. The former are now broken up into cells, or used as exercise rooms or offices. Most of the latter are now punishment cells, in which refractory prisoners are confined. The demoralizing system of confinement in gangs has been done away with also, the cells in which the prisoners froze in cold weather have been made comfortable, and the standard of the management of the jail raised in every way. Such prisoners as may be condemned to death — there are only a few a year now, where in Dickens’s boyhood there were

several every week — are kept apart from their fellows and from each other. They are confined in an ordinary cell until they are convicted. Then they are transferred to a strong cell in the old condemned cell ward, and thence they travel to the scaffold.

Between the Old Bailey Court House and the condemned ward of Newgate is a yard called the Press Yard. The name has a hideous origin. This spot was for many years the scene of one of the most terrible tortures ever inflicted by the cruelty of man upon his kind, the awful torture of “Pressing to Death.” This torture was imposed on prisoners held for higher crimes, like treason and felonies, who refused to answer in court. Nowadays, this would be construed into contempt of court. Until a century ago it was held an offense so hideous as to warrant death by torture. Nowadays we do not ask a prisoner to criminate himself. Then, if he did not, he was tortured; if he did he was punished anyway. The prisoner condemned to be pressed was stripped naked, except, for decency’s sake, a cloth around the loins, and laid on his back on the pavement. Then iron weights were piled upon a board placed on his body, in increasing number, and on a diet of three morsels of bread a day and three draughts of water, he was left to perish miserably. He never needed a full day’s rations. Sometimes he lasted for hours, and at others, as in the case of Mayor Strangeways, who was pressed for the murder of John Fussel in 1659, he died in a few moments. This poor wretch was stoned by the mob in the prison yard while undergoing the torture. Highwaymen, house-breakers, forgers, utterers of forged and counterfeit money, as well as murderers and traitors, were pressed to death. Brutal and callous as the era was, the shocking practice excited such denunciation in time that the victims were finally subjected to the torture privately in the room known as the Press Room whose door opens into the Press Yard. But the practice of pressing was kept up until as late as 1770.

The Press Yard to this day is devoted to quite as gloomy and deadly, if less revolting, service under sanction of the law. It is here that the executions of Newgate are performed. The gallows is set up close to the door out of which the prisoner is brought. There is no march to the gibbet through a throng of spectators as in most of our own jails. The doomed man gets his last glimpse of the sky through a stone funnel down which no ray of sunlight ever finds its way. As far as I remember, from my London days, the only sign the outer world has of the work going on within the prison walls

is the hoisting of a black flag over the lodge, and I know not if even this ceremonial is still observed. From the gallows to the grave in Newgate used to be but a step. There was an old burying ground in the prison, now disused, which was opened in 1820. Thistlewood and the other Cato Street Conspirators were the first criminals buried in it. They were buried in the night on the day of their execution, without services, and many others like them in after years. A pit and a shroud of quicklime were the appropriate Newgate epitaph.

The ingenious fancy of Mr. Ainsworth has made Jack Sheppard's escape from Newgate one of the chief episodes of his famous book. The simple facts of his hero's evasion from the gaol are much less romantic, considering the number of prisoners it held. The escapes from Newgate were very few, and in almost every instance they owed a great measure of their success to the connivance of officials within the walls. Until the tidal wave of prison reform swept it clean of its old, corrupt practices, Newgate was managed largely for the benefit and profit of its guardians, from the keeper down. Each official was an adept at the art of extortion, and every palm that held a key was troubled with the itch. The prisoner could purchase most things he might desire, and even the chance of liberty was not beyond price. It was only the chance to be sure; his keeper would wink at the effort, but he must take the risk of being stopped upon his way by others, unless he could fairly buy his passage from his dungeon to the lodge gate. A few — a very few — did this, and got away. Generally the escapes were mere attempts, frustrated before the last barrier was passed. The most remarkable escape made from the prison, because it was accomplished without aid within or without the walls, was that of the Sweep. This ruffian, from practice in his trade of climbing chimneys, actually contrived to scale the rough stone wall in an angle of one of the jail yards, by working himself up with his back and feet, until he reached the leads, over which he made his way to the roof of a house in Newgate street, which he entered through the scuttle, and so went down stairs and into the street. Since that time the inner walls of Newgate have been smoothed, so that even a fly could not crawl up them, and spiked at the top to make assurance doubly sure.

CHAPTER III.

THE FLEET PRISON.



Half a century ago, a stroller about the London streets whose loiterings carried him to the Fleet Market, could not but notice in the brick wall that extended along what is now entitled Farringdon street, facing the market, a wide-grated window, set in a framework of granite blocks. Under the arched top of the framework, between it and the grating, a stone slab or panel bore the carved inscription: "Please Remember Poor Debtors, Having No Allowance." Through the grating one might look into a squalid, dark room, with a rough wooden bench fastened to one wall, and during the hours of daylight some miserable human creature, like a caged and starved beast, always glared from behind the bars upon the street, repeating, in the voice of wheedling mendicancy, the appeal cut in the stone above his head. There was a broad sill to the window, and an opening in the bars, like those of the counter windows in a modern bank, through which the jailed beggar could pass out and draw in a wooden box, in which the charitably inclined might drop an obolus as they passed by.

This was what was called "the grate" of the Fleet Prison, one of the wickedest and most pestilential gaols that ever cursed the earth; and the grimmest satire upon this jail into which men were thrust for not paying money which they owed, was that among these debtors there were many whose absolute inability to pay was demonstrated by the fact that they would, literally, have starved there but for the chance charity of the public. Apropos of this point Dickens, in chapter xiv, volume II, of "Pickwick," says:

"The poor side of the debtors' prison is, as its name imports, that in which the most miserable and abject class of debtors are confined. A prisoner, having declared upon the poor, pays neither rent nor chummage. His fees upon entering and leaving the gaol are reduced in amount, and he

becomes entitled to a share of some small quantities of food — to provide which a few charitable persons have, from time to time, left trifling legacies in their wills. Most of our readers will remember that, until a very few years past, there was a kind of iron cage in the wall of the Fleet Prison, within which was posted some man who, from time to time, rattled a money box, and exclaimed in a mournful voice: ‘Pray remember the poor debtors.’ The receipts of this box, when there were any, were divided among the poor prisoners, and the men on the poor side relieved each other in this degrading office.

“Although this custom has been abolished and the cage is now boarded up, the miserable and destitute condition of these unhappy persons remains the same. We no longer suffer them to appeal at the prison gates to the charity and compassion of the passers-by; but we still have unblotted on leaves of our statute-book, for the reverence and admiration of the succeeding ages, the just and wholesome law which declares that the sturdy felon shall be fed and clothed, and that the penniless debtor shall be left to die in starvation and nakedness. This is no fiction. Not a week passes over our heads but, in every one of our prisons for debt, some of these men must inevitably expire in the slow agonies of want, if they were not relieved by their fellow prisoners.”

The custom of beggary at the prison gate, it may as well be remarked here, was a relic of the ancient prison of the Fleet, to which allusion is made in several of the old English comedies. Leigh Hunt, in his pleasant divagations upon London called “The Town,” remarks upon the practice in connection with Ludgate Prison, and, indeed, it was common to all the town jails in which debtors were incarcerated, without municipal provisions for their support. In the last century, as John Timbs tells us, there was additional provision for the relief of the paupers of the prison, in what was known as the “Running Box.” In this case a man ran to and fro in the neighboring streets to the prison, shaking a box, and begging passengers to put money into it for the poor prisoners in the Fleet, while on his back he carried a capacious covered basket, to hold such broken victuals as the charitable might choose to spare for him.

Hard by the paupers’ grating of the Fleet was a grimy and gloomy doorway, heavily framed in stone, which, like the brick of the prison wall, sweated a sort of fungoid scum, originally a rank, unhealthy green in color, but, thanks to London fogs and soft-coal smoke, soon converted into the

semblance of a thin glaze or varnish of liquid soot. The door stone was worn as smooth as glass, and even in the fairest weather was perilously greased with street slime. On either panel of the doorway was carved a huge numerical figure. The rude wit of the town called this the "Fleet Halter," which, once it was about a man's neck, held him almost as tight and fast as its rival noose at Tyburn. Fastidious debtors who preferred to preserve a fiction of respectability in their correspondence, were wont to have their letters addressed to them at 9 Fleet Market, for 9 was the halter-hinting number of the gateway to the gaol.

It was through this gateway that the tipstaff preceded Mr. Pickwick, as you may read in chapter xii. of the second volume which chronicles that immortal gentleman's adventures, "looking over his shoulder to see that his charge was following close at his heels;" and in the gate-lodge, which they entered through a door at the left, Mr. Pickwick sat for his portrait to the assembled turnkeys, so that he might be remembered should he take the fancy to stroll out of the doors without a license. There was in this lodge "a heavy gate guarded by a stout turnkey with the key in his hand," and when Mr. Pickwick's likeness was completed, he passed through this inner gate, and down a short flight of steps, and "found himself, for the first time in his life, within the walls of a debtor's prison."

The Fleet in those days consisted principally of one long brick pile, which ran parallel with the Fleet Market, now Farringdon street, with an open court around it, bounded by a lofty wall, over which, here and there, one could see the sooty chimney-tops and the smoky sky. The buildings were four stories in height above the ground, with a story half under ground among the foundations. No architectural art had been wasted on the exterior of the structure, and no sanitary ingenuity or sentimental seeking after the comfort of the inmates had been expended upon the interior. The one aim of the constructors had been to so divide the space as to cram within it the greatest possible number of persons. To this end, each floor was traversed by a single hallway or passage, "a long narrow gallery, dirty and low, and very dimly lighted by a window at each remote end," on either hand of which opened doors of innumerable single rooms, which rarely, however, failed to do duty as lodgings for less than several tenants. The floors, as Mr. Tom Roker explained to Mr. Pickwick when he inducted him into the prison, were distinguished as the hall flight, the coffee-room flight, the third flight and the top flight. All the rooms on these floors were let by the week,

at prices adjusted to their presumed desirability and the capacity of the lessee's purse, and governed by the number of tenants who entered upon them.

The basement rooms, even, formed a source of revenue to the warden. This sunken story, which received its light from the low-browed windows whose sills were level with the slabs of the prison yard, was known as Bartholomew Fair. Here misery might welter in its offal at the fee of one-and-threepence a week if it still held itself above the abject degradation of the Common Side, whose inmates took their turn at begging at the grate. The Common Side was a building apart from the main range, which latter was known as the Warden Side. Here there was no rent to pay. The prisoners bunked in gangs, like emigrants on an ocean passage. As to Bartholomew Fair, let Dickens describe it himself (vide "Pickwick," chapter xiii, volume II):

““Oh!” replied Mr. Pickwick, looking down a dark and filthy staircase which appeared to lead to a range of damp and gloomy stone vaults beneath the ground, ‘And these, I suppose, are the little cellars where the prisoners keep their small quantities of coals? Unpleasant places to have to go down to, but very convenient, I daresay.’ ‘Yes, I shouldn’t wonder if they was convenient,’ replied Mr. Roker, ‘seeing that a few people live there pretty snug. That’s the Fair, that is!’ ‘My friend,’ said Mr. Pickwick, ‘you don’t really mean to say that human beings live down these wretched dungeons?’ ‘Don’t?’ replied Mr. Roker, with indignant astonishment; ‘why shouldn’t I?’ ‘Live down there?’ exclaimed Mr. Pickwick. ‘Live down there? Yes, and die down there, too, wery often.’”

Nominally, each prisoner in the Fleet on the Warden Side was entitled to a room at the charge of 1s. 3d. a week. Actually, however, he never got one on any floor above the level of Bartholomew Fair. Each room was made to quarter from two to four tenants in the space designed for one, so that it, at full seasons, actually produced at least a crown a week rental. This system, which was excused on the plea of overcrowding of the jail by commitments of the courts, was called “chummage,” and the system produced another curious practice of prison life. If one or more prisoners occupied a room and another was “chummed” on them, they could buy him off by paying him a few shillings a week, and so keep the room to themselves. He, out of the money they paid him, paid in his turn for inferior quarters elsewhere. Thus, a prisoner who was willing to pay full rent for a room to the warden,

and buy off anyone who might be chummed upon him, could have a dirty box of a chamber to himself, at the average cost of a first-class parlor and bedroom outside the walls. Prisoners who had been a certain number of years in the jail had a prescriptive right to a room to themselves, and most of these rented their apartments at good rates to new comers, and took beds for themselves in the common lodgings.

When Mr. Pickwick entered the Fleet as a resident (vide volume II, chapter xiv) he was chummed on “27 in the third,” whose door was to be distinguished by the likeness of a man being hung and smoking a pipe the while, done in chalk upon the panel. Not liking his company of three here he, as may be recalled, rented the room of a chancery prisoner, in which he settled down. For the use of this room he paid £1 a week, and for the furniture, which he hired from a keeper, £1 3s. more. These figures may serve as an indication of the rates prevailing in the Fleet fifteen years before it was demolished. The episode of Mr. Pickwick’s investigatory experiences in this connection is worth quoting, as a part of the panorama of prison life. There was only one man in the room upon which he was chummed, and he “was leaning out of the window as far as he could without overbalancing himself, endeavoring, with great perseverance, to spit upon the crown of the hat of a personal friend upon the parade below.” He expressed his disgust at having had the newcomer chummed upon him, and summoned his two room-mates, who were a bankrupt butcher and a drunken chaplain out of orders, the expectoratory gentleman himself being a professional blackleg.

“‘It’s an aggravating thing, just as we got the beds so snug,’ said the chaplain, looking at the dirty mattresses, each rolled up in a blanket, which occupied one corner of the room during the day, and formed a kind of slab on which were placed an old cracked basin, ewer and soap-dish of common yellow earthenware with a blue flower; ‘very aggravating.’

“Mr. Martin (the butcher) expressed the same opinion, in rather stronger terms.

“Mr. Simpson (the ‘leg) after having let a variety of expletive adjectives loose upon society, without any substantive to accompany them, tucked up his sleeves and began to wash greens for dinner.

“While this was going on Mr. Pickwick had been eyeing the room, which was filthily dirty and smelt intolerably close. There was no vestige of either carpet, curtain or blind. There was not even a closet in it. Unquestionably, there were but few things to put away if there had been one, but, however

few in number, or small in individual amount, still, remnants of loaves, and pieces of cheese, and damp towels, and scraps of meat, and articles of wearing apparel, mutilated crockery, and bellows without nozzles, and toasting-forks without prongs, do present somewhat of an uncomfortable appearance when they are scattered about the floor of a small apartment, which is the common sitting and sleeping room of three idle men.

“I suppose that this can be managed somehow,” said the butcher, after a pretty long silence. “What will you take to go out?”

“I beg your pardon,” replied Mr. Pickwick, “what did you say? I hardly understood you.”

“What will you take to be paid out?” said the butcher. “The regular chummage is two-and-six; will you take three bob?”

“And a bender,” suggested the clerical gentleman.

“Well, I don’t mind that; it’s only a twopence apiece more,” said Mr. Martin; “What do you say now? We’ll pay you out for three-and-sixpence a week; come!”

“And stand a gallon of beer down,” chimed in Mr. Simpson. “There!”

“And drink it on the spot,” said the chaplain; “NOW!”

“After this introductory preface the three chums informed Mr. Pickwick, in a breath, that money was in the Fleet just what money was out of it; that it would instantly procure him almost anything he desired; and that supposing he had it, and had no objection to spend it; if he only signified his wish to have a room to himself, he might take possession of one, furnished and fitted to boot, in half an hour’s time.

“With this the parties separated, very much to their mutual satisfaction, Mr. Pickwick once more retracing his steps to the lodge, and the three companions adjourned to the coffee-room, there to expend the five shillings which the clerical gentleman, with admirable prudence and foresight, had borrowed of him for the purpose.

“I knowed it,” said Mr. Roker with a chuckle, when Mr. Pickwick stated the object with which he had returned. “Lord, why didn’t you say at first that you was willing to come down handsome?””

Those who could afford to sleep well in the Fleet, as sleeping went in such places, might feed well enough, too. They could be served in the coffee-room, and if they preferred to eat in privacy, there was a cookshop in the prison; and there were, besides, messengers who could be sent on errands of purchase outside the walls. In every case the charges were

extortionate, for the one object of the prison was to squeeze the debtor dry by fair means or foul. But when the law sanctions such outrages as the Fleet itself, the minor offenses by which the greater burden is mitigated to its victims may be condoned. There was a taproom in the prison where beer and wine were to be had, but the traffic in spirits was forbidden, and even the conveyance of them to the prisoners from without prohibited under heavy penalties; “and such commodities being highly prized by the ladies and gentlemen confined therein” (“Pickwick” volume II, chapter xvii), “it had occurred to some speculative turnkey to connive, for certain remunerative considerations, at two or three prisoners retailing the favorite articles of gin for their own profit and advantage.” The spirit dispensaries were known in the jargon of the jail as “whistling-shops,” and what with the strong waters they provided, and the malt liquors of the taproom, it was safe to assume that the bulk of such prisoners in the Fleet as were not dying for the want of sufficient food were perishing of a superfluity of drink.

The poor debtors who still had the price of “a chamber-pot of coals” and a scrag of mutton, could have it in from the market and cook it for themselves in their rooms or, for a penny or two, at the common kitchen in the prison-yard. In default of sufficient capital to this end they must live off bread and cheese, or cold meat, or hope, or, as many doubtless did, on the porter from the taproom. To secure the means of subsistence and indulgence they begged from the visitors. The sharper old residents borrowed from the shallower newcomers, and, as a matter of course, theft went hand in hand with mendicancy. Of this shadowy side of a picture, dark enough, in all conscience, in its lightest spots, Dickens gives us a glimpse in chapter xiv of volume II, where Mr. Pickwick encounters Mr. Alfred Jingle on the Common Side, and Mr. Jeb Trotter, returning from pawning his master’s last coat, with a scrap of meat for his dinner. And Mr. Jingle’s own summary of the prevailing state of things at that period and place may serve as a description of the condition and prospects of his neighbors.

“Lived on a pair of boots — whole fortnight. Silk umbrella — ivory handle — week. Nothing soon — lie in bed — starve — die — inquest — little bone-house — poor prisoner — common necessaries — hush it up — gentlemen of jury — warden’s tradesmen — keep it snug — natural death — coroner’s order — workhouse funeral — serve him right — all over — drop the curtain.”

In 1749 the son of the architect, Dance, who built old Buckingham House and Guy's Hospital, was imprisoned in the Fleet for debt. He wrote and published a poem called "The Humors of the Fleet," which has an interest for comparison with what the prison became later. The book had a frontispiece showing the prison-yard, a newcomer treating the jailer and cook and others to drink; racket-players at their game; and in one corner of the yard a pump and a tree. When the Fleet was rebuilt after the riots, there were two exercise grounds within the walls. One, the smaller, was on the side toward Farringdon street, denominated and called "The Painted Ground," from the fact of its walls having once displayed the "semblances of various men-of-war in full sail, and other artistical effects, produced, in bygone days, by some imprisoned draughtsman in his leisure hours." On the other side of the prison was the larger yard where racket was played and games of skittles bowled beneath a shed. Here might be seen the characterless "characters" of the place, in which every prison is sure to abound. Smokers and other idlers loitered about the steps leading to the racket ground, draining their pots as they watched the game. Here Mr. Smangle "made a light and wholesome breakfast on a couple of cigars" Mr. Pickwick had paid for, and here Mr. Weller, with a pint of beer and the day before yesterday's paper, divided his time between dipping into the news and the noggin, the skittle game and the affections of a young lady who was peeling potatoes at one of the jail windows, on that memorable morning when Mr. Stiggins called upon him and sampled the port wine in the coffee-room snuggerly. Here you might hear the roar of the great babel without; and from the same point see one or two of its churches aspiring above the 'chevaux-de-frise' of the prison walls. There was a torrent-like fury about the busy hum of the town in contrast with the stagnant life within the brick walls; and, as if to keep up the mockery, they verged upon the yard of the Belle Sauvage Inn, where travelers constantly came and went on their journeys, free, if they chose, to roam around the world. In chapter xvii of volume II, Dickens sketches a vivid picture of the daily scene in the jail-yard.

"Sauntering or sitting about, in every possible attitude of listless idleness, were a number of debtors, the major part of whom were waiting in prison until their day of 'going up' before the Insolvent Court should arrive, while others had been remanded for various terms, which they were idling away as they best could. Some were shabby, some were smart, many dirty, a few

clean; but there they all lounged, and loitered, and slunk about, with as little spirit or purpose as the beasts in the menagerie. Lolling from the windows which commanded a view of this promenade were a number of persons, some in noisy conversation with their acquaintances below, and others playing bat all with some adventurous throwers outside, and others looking on at the racket players, or watching the boys as they cried the game. Dirty, slipshod women passed and repassed on their way to the cooking house in one corner of the yard; children screamed, and fought, and played together in another; the tumbling of the skittles and the shouts of the players mingled perpetually with these and a hundred other sounds, and all was noise and tumult.”

To this picture of the Fleet by day, it is worth while to add one of the after dark, from chapter xii, of volume II.

“It was getting dark; that is to say, a few gas jets were kindled in this place, which was never light, by way of compliment to the evening which had set in outside. As it was rather warm some of the tenants of the numerous little rooms which opened into the gallery on either hand set their doors ajar. Mr. Pickwick peeped into them, as he passed along, with curiosity and interest. Here, four or five great hulking fellows, just visible through a cloud of tobacco smoke, were engaged in noisy and riotous conversation over half-emptied pots of beer, or playing at all fours with a very greasy pack of cards. In the adjoining room some solitary tenant might be seen poring, by the light of a feeble tallow candle, over a bundle of soiled and tattered papers, yellow with dust, and dropping with age, writing, for the hundredth time, some lengthened statement of his grievances for the perusal of some great man whose eyes it would never reach, or whose heart it would never touch. In a third a man and his wife and a whole crowd of children might be seen making up a scanty bed on the ground, or upon a few chairs for the younger ones to pass the night in. And in a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth, and a seventh the noise, and the beer, and the tobacco smoke, and the cards all came over again in greater force than before. In the galleries themselves, and more especially on the staircases, there lingered a great number of people who came there, some because their rooms were foul and hot, and the greater part because they were restless and uncomfortable and not possessed with the secret of knowing exactly what to do with themselves. There were many classes of people here, from the laboring man and his fustian jacket to the broken-

down spendthrift in his shawl dressing-gown, most appropriately out at the elbows; but there was the same air about them all — a sort of listless, gaol-bird, careless swagger; a vagabondish, who's-afraid sort of bearing which is wholly indescribable in words, but which any man can understand in a moment, if he wish, by setting foot in the nearest debtors' prison, and looking at the very first group of people he sees there.”

The Fleet Prison was staggering along on its last legs, like some gouty monster whose swollen joints were rotting asunder of internal corruption, when Dickens gave it a place in the fiction of picturesque fact. But it had a long history behind it, a history dating from the time when the Fleet creek, now a noisome sewer under the foundations of the jail, was a pretty little river, winding down from a verdant and fertile country. When the town had grown toward and around it, the Fleet river had become silted and clogged up into a foul and sluggish stream, and was such a nuisance that it was arched over, and a market built upon the arches. But below the market it still remained an open stream, where colliers' barges unloaded their cargoes at Sea-Coal lane, and what is now Bridge street was a sluggish, polluted canal, whose reek infected the air. The gaol took its name from the stream upon whose banks it was built. The exact date of its foundation is unknown, but by various records it was formerly held in conjunction with the Manor of Leveland, in Kent, and with “the King's House at Westminster,” the whole being a part of the ancient possessions of the See of Canterbury, traceable in a grant from the Archbishop Lanfranc, soon after the accession of William the Conqueror. The wardenship or sergeantry of the prison was anciently held by several eminent personages, who also had custody of the king's palace at Westminster. It was “a place,” in the worst sense of the phrase, for, as long ago as 1586, the persons to whom the warden had underlet it were guilty of cruelty and extortion, crimes, however, quite characteristic of the Court of Star Chamber, of which the Fleet was at this time the prison. Up to this period its history is little better than a sealed book, the burning of the prison by the followers of Wat Tyler seeming to have been the only very noticeable event during the above interval. In the reigns of Edward VI and of Mary, the Fleet was tenanted by several victims of religious bigotry. One of the most venerated of British martyrs, Bishop Hopper, was twice committed to the Fleet, which he only quitted in 1555 for the stake and the fire, in the chief town in his diocese, Gloucester. His captivity was truly wretched; he slept upon “a little pad of straw” with a

rotten covering; “his chamber was vile and stinking,” just as it might have been had he been a poor debtor in 1825.

The fees belonging to the warden of the Fleet and his officers, in the reign of Elizabeth, were very heavy. An archbishop, duke or duchess had to pay for a commitment fee and the first week’s “dyett,” £21 10s.; a lord, spiritual or temporal, £10 5s. 10d.; a knight, £5; an esquire, £3 6s. 8d.; and even a poor man in the wards, “that hath a part at the box, to pay for his fee, having no dyett, 7s. 4d.” The warden’s charge for lawful license “to go abroad” was 20d. per diem. Thus, as may be seen, the fleecing and flayings, the inhumanities and the injustices which characterized the later years of the prison were hereditary to it.

From the reign of Elizabeth to the sixteenth year of King Charles I, 1641, the Star Chamber Court was in full activity, and several bishops and other persons of distinction were imprisoned in the Fleet for their religious opinions. Thither, too, were consigned political victims of the Star Chamber, two of the most interesting cases of this period being those of Prynne and Lilburne. Prynne was taken out of the prison, and, after suffering pillory, branding, and mutilation of the nose and ears, was remanded to the Fleet. Lilburne — “Freeborn John” — and his printer were committed to the Fleet for libel and sedition; and the former was “smartly whipped” at the cart’s tail, from the prison to the pillory place between Westminster Hall and the Star Chamber; and he was subsequently “doubled ironed” in the prison wards. Another tenant of the Fleet at this period was James Howel, the author of the “Familiar Letters,” several of which are dated from the prison. From a letter “To the Earl of B — — ,” from the Fleet, Nov. 20, 1643, we gather that Howel was arrested “one morning betimes” by five men armed with “swords, pistols and bils,” and some days after committed to the Fleet; and he says, “as far as I see, I must lie at anchor in this Fleet a long time, unless some gentle gale blow thence to make me launch out.” Then we find him consoling himself in the reflection that the English “people” are in effect but prisoners, as all other islanders are. There are other letters by Howel, dated from the Fleet in 1645–1646 and 1647.

The prison was burnt on September 4, 1666, during the Great Fire, when the prisoners were removed to Carom or Caroon House, in South Lambeth, until the Fleet was rebuilt on the original site. After the abolition of the Star Chamber, in 1641, the Fleet had become a prison for debtors only, and for

contempt of the Court of Chancery, Common Pleas and Exchequer. It appears that the prison had been used for the confinement of debtors from the 13th century, at least, a petition from John Trauncy, a debtor in the Fleet, A. D. 1290, being still preserved. When the Star Chamber was abolished, the warden's power of exacting enormous fees by putting in irons does not appear to have ceased also, for the wardens continued to exercise their tyranny, "not only in extorting exorbitant fees, but in oppressing prisoners for debt, by loading them with irons, worse than if the Star Chamber were still existing." In 1696 the cruelties and the extortions of the wardens were made public, but it was not until 1727 that the enormity of the system of mismanagement came fully before the public, and indescribable was the excitement and horror it caused. A Parliamentary committee was then appointed, and the result of their labors was the committal of Wardens Bambridge and Huggins, and some of their servants, to Newgate. They were tried for different murders, yet all escaped by the verdict of "Not Guilty." Hogarth has, however, made them immortal in their infamy, in his picture of Bambridge under examination, whilst a prisoner is explaining how he has been tortured. Twenty years after, it is said, Bambridge cut his throat. In consequence of these proceedings the Court of Common Pleas, January 17, 1729, established a new list of fees to be taken, and modified the rules and orders for the government of the Fleet. The rents, perquisites, and profits of the office at the above period were £4,632 18s. 8d. per annum. James Gambier succeeded Bambridge in the wardenship, was succeeded by John Garth, and to him followed John Eyles, and in 1758 Eyles's son succeeded him in the office, which he held for sixty-two years. He was succeeded in 1821 by his deputy, Nixon, who died in 1822. The next appointed was W. R. H. Brown, he being the last of the wardens of the prison.

In the riots of 1780 the Fleet was destroyed by fire, and the prisoners liberated by the mob; consequently a great part of the papers and prison records were lost, though there remain scattered books and documents of several centuries back. Although he does not deal specifically with the attack on the prison at this period, Dickens in "Barnaby Rudge" (volume II, chapter ii) gives a brief but picturesque description of the surroundings of the gaol as they were at the time of the Gordon riots.

"Fleet Market at that time was a long, irregular row of wooden sheds and pent houses occupying the centre of what is now called Farringdon street.

They were jumbled together in a most unsightly fashion in the middle of the road to the great obstruction of the thoroughfare and the annoyance of passengers who were fain to make their way as best they could among the carts, barrows, baskets, trucks, casks, hulks, and benches, and to jostle with porters, hucksters, wagoners and a motley crowd of buyers, sellers, pickpockets, vagrants and idlers. The air was perfumed with the stench of rotten leaves and faded fruit, the refuse of the butchers' stalls, and offal and garbage of a hundred kinds. It was indispensable to most public conveniences in those days that they should be public nuisances likewise, and Fleet Market maintained the principle to admiration."

Further on, in chapter ix of the same work, he summarizes a peculiar episode in the history of the gaol at the same period.

"The gates of the King's Bench and the Fleet Prison, being opened at the usual hour, were found to have notices affixed to them announcing that the rioters would come that night to burn them down. The wardens, too well knowing the likelihood there was of this promise being fulfilled, were fain to set their prisoners at liberty, and gave them leave to move their goods; so all day such of them as had any furniture were occupied in conveying it, some to this place, some to that, and not a few to the brokers' shops, where they gladly sold it for any wretched price those gentry chose to give. There were some broken men among these debtors who had been in gaol so long, and were so miserable and destitute of friends, so dead to the world, and utterly forgotten and uncared for, that they implored their gaolers not to set them free, and to send them, if need were to some other place of custody. But they refusing to comply, lest they should incur the anger of the mob, turned them into the streets where they wandered up and down, hardly remembering the ways untrodden by their feet so long, and crying — such abject things those rotten-hearted gaols had made them — as they slunk off in their rags and dragged their slipshod feet along the pavement."

In spite of the concession of the Warden, the mob, as has been stated, burned the Fleet down, and it was in the successor to the den which had risen on the ruins left by the great fire of 1666 that Mr. Pickwick prosecuted his studies of prison life and character.

Among the curiosities of the London Archives are over a ton of books registering the Fleet Marriages between 1686 and 1754, which are in the Registry Office of the Bishop of London, where they were deposited by the Government, which purchased them in 1821. These Fleet Marriages were

the scandal and disgrace of their time. While they lasted the debtor's gaol was the Gretna Green of London. There were no end of hard-living parsons flung into the Fleet for debt, and as these men were always paupers in purse, they were put to strange shifts to keep themselves in meat and drink — especially the latter. The idea to convert clandestine marriages into a source of gain, once originated, with men who had neither money, character or liberty to lose, was not long in spreading. At first the ceremony was performed within the prison chapel. Then they became too numerous and the business too extensive for the confines of the gaol, and every tavern around the prison had its marriage mill, and a parson who in the rules of the prison was permitted to go at large within certain limits, to grind the mill for anyone who listed. These clerical vagabonds employed touts, who roved about the market and the adjacent streets drumming up custom for the parson, who sat swigging while he waited for trade, very much as the slop-shop salesman of to-day seeks for custom passing on the sidewalk. Tennant relates that in walking the street in his youth, on the side next to this prison: "I have often been tempted by the question, 'Sir, will you be pleased to walk in and be married.'" Along this most lawless space was frequently hung up the sign of a male and female hand conjoined, with "Marriages Performed Within" written beneath. A dirty fellow invited you in. The parson was seen walking before his shop, a squalid, profligate figure, clad in a tattered plaid night-gown, with a fiery face, and ready to couple you for a dram of gin or roll of tobacco. "The Grub Street Journal," in January, 1735, says: "There are a set of drunken, swearing parsons, with their myrmidons, who wear black coats and pretend to be clerks and registers of the Fleet, and who ply about Ludgate Hill, pulling or forcing people to some peddling ale-house or brandy shop to be married; even on a Sunday stopping them as they go to church and almost tearing the clothes off their backs."

Competition in the business was fierce. While the Fleet parsons sent their pullers-in forth to scour the streets, they hung their signs out in the windows under the shadow of the prison wall. Thus at one corner might be seen a window, "Weddings performed here cheap." The business was advertised in the newspapers. The marriage taverns lined Fleet Lane and Fleet Ditch. Two of them — the Bull and Garter and the King's Head — were kept by warders of the prison. The parson and the landlord divided the fee between them, after deducting a shilling for the tout who brought the customers in. If

a marriage was desired to be secret it was not entered on the register of the house. Otherwise it was, for a small fee, written down in a book which each tavern kept. Thus a profligate man could victimize a confiding girl with impunity. Men and women might commit bigamy at will, since any name they chose to give, along with their fee, satisfied the parson, and they could have the “ceremony” kept unregistered, or dated back as they chose. The law held a married woman free of the responsibility of her debts, while a single woman could be arrested and locked up for them. All a woman of free life had to do to defraud her creditors was to get some man to marry her at the Fleet. Then she could not be prosecuted. As for the man, the creditors had to find him before they could proceed against him.

Women of quality who had led extravagant lives did not hesitate at the same shift. There were parsons who kept husbands in hire at five shillings each. There is record of one fellow having been “married” to four women in one day. There is also a record of women, dressed as men, being hired out as mock husbands for the occasion. All classes were fish for the Fleet parson’s net. Drunken sailors and soldiers were united to the gin-perfumed fairies of the market; roués fetched their silly, girlish victims in coaches to the altar reeking of stale beer and brandy; and great men of the realm utilized the functions of the clerical mountebanks to a similar result. In five months — from October, 1704, to February, 1705 — 2,954 marriages were recorded at the Fleet. How many went unrecorded can only be surmised. The church strove in vain to eradicate the scandal, and it required an Act of Parliament to put an end to it in 1754.

The Fleet marriages provided Dickens with no material, although other and less distinguished romancers have found use for them, with more or less effect. In fact, Dickens rarely wrote without a distinct object, and in “Pickwick,” desultory and irregular as the thread of the narrative is, he had such a purpose when he took the Fleet in hand. At the time he wrote of it (1836) the monstrosity was at its worst. The prevalent system of imprisonment for debt rendered the hideous gaol a tool at the hands of a vengeful enemy, and in those of a rapacious and dishonest man. The outrages to which it lent itself, at the call of swindling lawyers and commercial extortioners, had commenced to attract public attention. That the chapters on the Fleet in “Pickwick” bore a share in arousing the general indignation which forced the Government into action cannot be questioned. They shaped the popular sentiment and gave it a war-cry. But the good

work was not to be done in a day. It required an Act of Parliament, debated on and contested with the usual ponderous procrastinateness, to rid the earth of the Fleet. The Act was at last passed in 1842, and by it the prison was abolished, and its inmates were drafted into the Queen's Prison. The Fleet was later sold to the Corporation of the City of London, and in the spring of 1846 it was razed to the ground. Its site to-day is marked by business buildings, whose ceaseless industry makes a strange monument for the stagnant and idle life of which the spot was once the scene.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MARSHALSEA.

It was a good seven years — or an evil seven — for many a poor debtor, after the Fleet was legislated out of existence, before its younger brother on the other side of the river followed it. The Marshalsea was not officially abolished until 1849, and even then it escaped the doom of extinction meted out to the Fleet, and prolonged its material existence into our own day. What had been a frowsy jail became a frowsy shelter for a community scarcely poorer than that which had once inhabited it; albeit this newer community enjoyed the advantage of being miserable in freedom from the restraint of barred windows and spike-topped walls.

Of the prison, Dickens sketches a good description in Chapter 6 of the first volume of "Little Dorrit." "Thirty years ago," he says, "there stood, a few doors short of the church of St. George, in the borough of Southwark, on the left-hand side of the way going southward, the Marshalsea Prison. It was an oblong pile of barrack buildings, partitioned into squalid rooms standing back to back, so that there were no back rooms; environed by a narrow paved yard, hemmed by high walls duly spiked on the top. Itself a close and confined prison for debtors, it contained within it a much closer and more confined gaol for smugglers. Offenders against the revenue laws, and defaulters to the excise or customs, who had incurred fines which they were unable to pay, were supposed to be incarcerated behind an iron-plated door, closing up a second prison, consisting of a strong cell or two, and a blind alley some yard and a half wide, which formed the mysterious termination of the very limited skittle ground in which the Marshalsea debtors bowled down their troubles. Supposed to be incarcerated there, because the time had rather outgrown the strong cells and the blind alley. In practice they come to be considered a little too bad, though in theory they were quite as good as ever; which may be observed to be the case at the present day with other cells that are not at all strong, and with other blind alleys that are stone blind. Hence the smugglers habitually consorted with the debtors (who received them with open arms) except at certain

constitutional moments when somebody came from some office, to go through the form of overlooking something, which neither he nor anybody else knew anything about. On these truly British occasions, the smugglers, if any, made a feint of walking into the strong cells and the blind alley, while this somebody pretended to do his something, and made a reality of walking out again as soon as he hadn't done it — nearly epitomising the administration of the most of the public affairs in our own right, tight little island.”

The Marshalsea had several notable neighbors in its own line of trade. One of these was Horsemonger Lane Gaol, the county jail for Surrey. It was a sturdy, thick-set prison, with a massive-looking lodge and powerful walls. Executions took place on the roof of the lodge, the gallows being set up there, and the drop cut in the roof itself. These hangings were a popular show in their day, and the tenants of the houses across the way from the jail used to reap a harvest by letting their front windows to sightseers. It is said that they would commonly make a year's rent, and often more, out of the morbid curiosity of the town on one of these occasions. What the occasions were like, Dickens has left us an idea in his famous letter to the “Times,” on the occasion of the execution of the Mannings, husband and wife, on November 13, 1849. Dickens and John Foster attended this ghastly raree-show. Here is a description of it:

“I was a witness to the execution of the Mannings in Horsemonger Lane. I went there with the intention of observing the crowd gathered to behold it, and I had excellent opportunities of doing so; at intervals all through the night, and continuously from daybreak until the spectacle was over. I believe that a sight so inconceivably awful as the wickedness and levity of the immense crowd collected at that execution could be imagined by no man, and could be presented in no heathen land under the sun. The horrors of the gibbet and of the crime which brought these wretched murderers to it, faded in my mind before the atrocious bearing, looks and language of the assembled spectators. When I came upon the scene, at midnight, the shrillness of the cries and howls that were raised from time to time, denoting that they came from a concourse of boys and girls already assembled in the best places, made my blood run cold. As the night went on, screeching and laughing and yelling, in strong chorus of parodies on negro melodies, with substitutions of ‘Mrs. Manning’ for ‘Susannah,’ and the like, were added to these. When the day dawned, thieves, low

prostitutes, ruffians and vagabonds of every kind flocked on to the ground, with every variety of offensive and foul behaviour. Fightings, faintings, whistlings, imitations of Punch, brutal jokes, tumultuous demonstrations of indecent delight when swooning women were dragged out of the crowd by the police with their dresses disordered, gave a new zest to the general entertainment. When the sun rose brightly, as it did, it gilded the thousands upon thousands of upturned faces, so inexpressibly odious in their brutal mirth or callousness, that a man had cause to feel ashamed of the shape he wore, and to shrink from himself, as fashioned in the image of the devil. When the two miserable creatures who attracted all this ghastly sight about them were turned quivering into the air, there was no more emotion, no more pity, no more thought that two immortal souls had gone to judgment, no more restraint in any of the previous obscenities than if the name of Christ had never been heard in the world, and there was no belief among men but that they perished like beasts. I have seen, habitually, some of the sources of general contamination and corruption, and I think there are not many phases of London life that could surprise me. I am solemnly convinced that nothing that ingenuity could devise to be done in this city, in the same compass of time, could work such ruin as one public execution, and I stand astounded and appalled by the wickedness it exhibits. I do not believe that any community can prosper where such a scene of horror and demoralization as was enacted this morning outside Horsemonger Lane Gaol is presented at the very doors of the good citizens, and is passed by unknown or forgotten.”

This letter created a tremendous sensation, and started a whole flood of literature, condemnatory and demanding the abolishment of public hangings; but they were not finally done away with until nearly twenty years later. Apropos of Horsemonger Lane, readers of “Little Dorrit” may recall that it was here that John Chivery resided, assisting his mother “in the conduct of a snug tobacco business, which could usually command a neat connection within the college walls” — the college being a polite title for the Marshalsea, whose inmates were, by natural association, technically known among themselves as collegians.

“The tobacco business around the corner of Horsemonger Lane was carried on in a rural establishment one story high, which had the benefit of the air from the yards of the Horsemonger Lane Gaol, and the advantage of a retired walk under the wall of that pleasant establishment. The business

was of too modest a character to support a life-sized Highlander, but it maintained a little one on the bracket on the door post, who looked like a fallen cherub that had found it necessary to take to a kilt."

It was from the stock of this establishment that John Chivery produced the cigars of which he made a Sunday offering on the altar of the Father of the Marshalsea, who not only "took the cigars and was glad to get them," but "sometimes even condescended to walk up and down the yard with the donor, and benignantly smoke one in his society." It was also from this establishment that he issued forth on the memorable Sunday, "neatly attired in a plum-colored coat, with as large a collar of black velvet as his figure could carry; a silken waistcoat, bedecked with golden sprigs, a chaste neckerchief much in vogue in that day, representing a preserve of lilac pheasants on a buff ground; pantaloons, so highly decorated with side stripes that each leg was a three-stringed lute; and a hat of state, very high and hard," not to mention a pair of white kid gloves, and a cane like a little finger post, surmounted by an ivory hand, to propose to Little Dorrit on the Iron Bridge.

Another of the famous Southwark gaols was the King's Bench, but in justice to Mr. Micawber, it demands a chapter to itself. To return to the Marshalsea, it may be remarked that Dickens knew it by such early experience that he was qualified to write about it, even more exhaustively than he did in "Little Dorrit." While he was still a boy, in 1822, his father endured a period of compulsory retirement behind its lock, and the future chronicler of the jail lodged in a cheap garret near by, an episode of his life which he has introduced in "David Copperfield," in connection with the Micawbers and the King's Bench. Every morning, as soon as the gates were opened, the boy went to the Marshalsea, where his mother had joined his father, to breakfast. In the evening he would go to the jail from the blacking factory, where he was employed, to get his supper. The family got along quite gayly while the elder Dickens's affairs were in the courts. He had an income on which they lived and kept a servant, a workhouse girl, from whom the novelist is said to have drawn his character of The Marchioness in "Old Curiosity Shop." The girl and the boy had to leave the prison before ten, when the gate was locked for the night, and they became great friends. On holidays he would go to the seminary on Tenterden street, where his sister Fanny was at school, and fetch her to spend the day in the family circle, escorting her back in the evening. How freely he used his Marshalsea

experiences in “David Copperfield,” and transferred to Mr. Micawber the actualities of his own family life, may be appreciated from the passage, written by himself and quoted by Foster, relating to his first visit to his father in the jail:

“My father was waiting for me in the lodge, and we went up to his room (on the top story but one) and cried very much, and he told me, I remember, to take warning by the Marshalsea, and to observe that if any man had twenty pounds a year, and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy; but that a shilling spent the other way would make him wretched. I see the fire we sat before now, with two bricks in the rusted grate, one on each side to prevent its burning too many coals. Some other debtor shared the room with him, who came in by-and-by; and, as the dinner was a joint-stock repast, I was sent up to Captain Porter in the room overhead, with Mr. Dickens’s compliments, and I was his son, and could he, Captain P., lend me a knife and fork. Captain P. lent me a knife and fork, with his compliments in return. There was a very dirty lady in his room, and two wan girls, his daughters, with shock heads of hair. I thought I should not have liked to borrow Captain Porter’s comb. The Captain himself was in the last extremities of shabbiness, and if I could draw at all, I would draw an accurate portrait of the old, old brown great-coat he wore, with no other coat below it. His whiskers were large. I saw his bed rolled up in a corner, and what plates and dishes and pots he had on a shelf; and I knew (God knows how) that the two girls with the shock heads were Captain Porter’s natural children, and that the dirty lady was not married to Captain P. My timid, wondering station on his threshold was not occupied more than a couple of minutes, I daresay; but I came down into the room below with all this as surely in my knowledge as the knife and fork were in my hand.”

It was into this familiar scene that Dickens introduced Mr. William Dorrit, a very amiable and very helpless middle-aged gentleman, who was “going out again directly. Necessarily he was going out again directly, because the Marshalsea lock never turned upon a debtor who was not. He brought in a portmanteau with him, which he doubted it worth while to unpack, he was so perfectly clear — like all the rest of them, the turnkey on the lock said — that he was going out again directly. He was a shy, retiring man, well-looking, though in an effeminate style; with a mild voice, curling hair, and irresolute hands — rings upon the fingers those days, not one of which was left” upon them a little while after — when the drunken doctor,

fetches in haste, ushered Little Dorrit into the world, with the assistance of Mrs. Bangham and the brandy bottle. The doctor was a type of one class of tenants to be found in every debtors' prison. He lived in a wretched, ill-smelling room under the roof, with a puffy, red-faced chum, who helped to pass the time playing all fours, with pipe and brandy trimmings. "The doctor's friend was in the positive stage of hoarseness, puffiness, all fours, tobacco, dirt and brandy; the doctor in the comparative — hoarser, puffier, more red-faced, more all foury, tobaccoer, dirtier and brandier. The doctor was amazingly shabby in a torn, darned, rough weather sea jacket, out at the elbows, and eminently short of buttons (he had been in his time the experienced surgeon carried by a passenger ship), the dirtiest white trowsers conceivable by mortal man, carpet slippers and no visible linen. 'Childbed?' said the doctor (to Mr. Dorrit, who had come to summon him) 'I'm the boy!' With that the doctor took a comb from the chimneypiece, and stuck his hair upright — which appeared to be his way of washing himself — produced a professional case or chest, of the most abject appearance, from the cupboard where his cup and saucer and coals were, settled his chin in a frowsy wrapper round his neck, and became a ghastly medical scarecrow."

To enter the public establishment of which he was destined to become the patriarch, Mr. William Dorrit had passed through an open outer gate on High street in the Borough, to give Southwark its more familiar name; had crossed a little court-yard, ascended a couple of stone steps, traversed a narrow entry, and been admitted by a string of locked doors into the prison lodge. Here he had waited, as the form and practice of the proceeding required, until his arrival was registered, and the tipstaff, who had kindly guided and guarded his feet to this harbor of refuge from the cares of the world which works for a living, had received a receipt for his safe delivery. Through another door at the rear of the lodge, which was built in the wall of the jail itself, he was conducted to what was to be his home for half the lifetime allotted to mortal man. Before him was the jail court, the aristocratic court, where the pump was; and facing the lofty wall which divided it from the street, the barrack, on the next to the top floor of which he found the shabby room in which the child of the Marshalsea was to be born. Debtors were playing at racket and skittles in the court, and grouped around the entrance to the snugery or tap-room at the further end of the barrack. There were "the collegian in the dressing gown, who had no coat,

the stout greengrocer collegian in the corduroy kneebreeches, who had no cares, the collegian in the seaside slippers, who had no shoes, and the lean clerk collegian in buttonless black, who had no hopes; the man with many children and many burdens, whose failure astonished everybody; the man of no children and large resources, whose failure astonished nobody; the people who were always going out to-morrow, and always putting it off; the slatternly women at the windows, gossiping shrilly, the smudgy children playing noisily; all those people in fine who belong to such a place, not forgetting the nondescript messengers, go-betweens and errand runners, who formed a class by themselves.”

Every debtors’ prison had its corps of such attendants, who came and went in the service of the inmates whose liberty ended at the lodge door. “The shabbiness of these attendants upon shabbiness, the poverty of the insolvent waiters on insolvency, was a sight to see. Such threadbare coats and trowsers, such fusty gowns and shawls, such squashed hats and bonnets, such boots and shoes, such umbrellas and walking sticks, never were seen in Rag Fair. All of them wore the cast-off clothes of other men and women; were made up of patches and pieces of other peoples’ individuality, and had no sartorial existence of their own proper. Their walk was the walk of a race apart. They had a peculiar way of doggedly slinking around the corner, as if they were eternally going to the pawnbroker’s. When they coughed, they coughed like people accustomed to be forgotten on the doorsteps and draughty passages, waiting for answers to letters in faded ink, which gave the recipients of those manuscripts great mental disturbance and no satisfaction. As they eyed the stranger in passing, they eyed him with borrowing eyes — hungry, sharp, speculative as to his softness if they were accredited to him, and the likelihood of his standing something handsome. Mendicity on commission stooped in their high shoulders, shambled in their unsteady legs, buttoned and pinned and darned and dragged their clothes, frayed their button-holes, leaked out of their figures in dirty ends of tape, and issued from their mouths in alcoholic breathings.”

In spite of occasional touches such as this, the comparative brightness of Dickens’s picture of the Marshalsea, as contrasted with the gloom and horror of his delineation of the Fleet, has been frequently commented upon, but there was a reason for this in fact. Squalid and miserable enough the Marshalsea was, but it was still more merciful and humane a house of

confinement than the other. Extortions were common to all such places, but they were carried to their worst extent at the Fleet. The Marshalsea, moreover, was a smaller prison, its population came and went at shorter intervals than that of the Fleet, and it did not include so heavy a percentage of the baser elements of society as festered in the social cesspool opposite the Fleet Market. Very few debtors remained in the gaol for an extended period. The average generation of a Marshalsea prisoner was, as Dickens himself says, three months. The case of the Father of Marshalsea — which, by the way, was based on that of a real prisoner in the last century — was unique. “The affairs of this debtor were perplexed by a partnership of which he knew no more than that he had invested money in it, by legal matters of assignment and settlement, conveyance here and conveyance there, suspicion of unlawful preference of creditors in this direction, and of mysterious spiriting away of property in that.” In short, Mr. William Dorrit’s affairs were so tangled up that even the lawyers could not untwist them, and finally they gave him up, and in the inextricable entanglement he remained fettered to the Marshalsea as if he had never been a part of any world beyond its confining wall. “Crushed at first by his imprisonment” (vide Chapter 6, Volume I, “Little Dorrit”), “he had soon found a dull relief in it. He was under lock and key; but the lock and key that kept him in kept numbers of his troubles out. If he had been a man with strength of purpose to face these troubles and fight them, he might have broken the net that held him, or broken his heart; but, being what he was, he languidly slipped into this smooth descent and never took one step upward. He had unpacked the portmanteau long ago; and his elder children played regularly about the yard, and everyone knew the baby and claimed a kind of proprietorship in her.” The title conferred upon him by a turnkey he came to hear with pride, and under it he levied the tribute of selfish and ungrateful beggary upon the goodnatured subjects over whom he presumed to rule.

There was a certain snugness about the Marshalsea which was not to be found in the Fleet. There the company was too numerous and heterogeneous to form any social combination. In the smaller prison a specie of club system was kept up. The tap-room, or snugery, was a public room where meat and drink might be procured, and where a fire was maintained for the use of the prisoners who did not wish to cook in their rooms. The furnace was kept fed by assessment of those who used it. At the club, which met nightly, each man paid his own scot. The requisite for

membership was the possession of the price of the potatoes served to the member. The club was of indefinite proportions and individuality. Its members came with the tipstaves and went with the orders of release issued by the courts. The general form of its management was that which used to be known as the "free and easy." If any person present was a mimic, a singer, a musician, or otherwise gifted with a pleasing or popular accomplishment, he might be called upon to display it for the general good. Poor debtors, who could do something to amuse, might have their beer free at the charge of the more solvent collegians whom they consented to divert. There is a legend of a comedian, broken down by drink, who was sent to the Marshalsea and who lived off the fat of the jail for several years, until he died of it, all through the discreet application of his mimetic and comic powers in the snugger club. Once in a while the club would perform a piece of serious business. Sometimes it would draft a memorial against imprisonment for debt to the Throne or Judges, which neither Throne nor Judges saw or read, of course. Sometimes it would issue patriotic manifestoes to Parliament, of which Parliament remained equally ignorant. When a popular member secured his release the club would present him with a memorial, properly engrossed and framed, of its esteem. Mr. Dorrit received such a memorial when he came into his fortune and resigned his paternal supremacy over the college; and in return he treated the whole jail to a refection in the Pump Yard, as you may read in the last chapter of the first volume of the record of his prison patriarchy. But one drop of bitterness flavored the cup of the Marshalsea Club. Its festivities were limited by the public hours of the prison. The clangor of the jail bell announced the closing of the gates at ten o'clock at night, and warned all visitors to retire or be locked in until morning. Such experience befell Mr. Arthur Clennam when he made his first visit to the Dorrits' at home.

"The stoppage of the bell, and the quiet in the prison, were a warning to depart. But he had remained too late. The inner gate was locked and the lodge closed. This brought them to the tavern establishment at the upper end of the prison, where the collegians had just vacated their social evening club. The apartment on the ground floor in which it was held was the Snuggery: the presidential tribune of the chairman, the pewter pots, glasses, pipes, tobacco ashes and general flavor of members were still as that convivial institution had left them on its adjournment. The Snuggery had two of the qualities popularly held to be essential for grog for ladies, in

respect that it was hot and strong; but in the third point of analogy, requiring plenty of it, the Snuggery was defective; being but a cooped-up apartment.

“The unaccustomed visitor from the outside naturally assumed everybody to be prisoners — landlord, waiter, barmaid, potboy and all. Whether they were or not did not appear; but they all had a weedy look. The keeper of the chandler’s shop in the front parlor, who took in gentlemen boarders, lent his assistance in making the bed. He had been a tailor in his time, and had kept a phaeton, he said. It was evident, from the general tone of the whole party, that they had come to regard insolvency as the normal state of mankind, and the payment of debts a disease that occasionally broke out. In this strange scene, and with these strange spectres flitting about him, Arthur Clennam looked on the preparations as if they were a part of a dream. Pending the while the long initiated Tip, with an awful enjoyment of the Snuggery’s resources, pointed out the common kitchen fire maintained by subscription of the collegians, the boiler for hot water, supported in the same manner, and other premises generally tending to the deduction that the way to be healthy, wealthy and wise was to come to the Marshalsea.

“The two tables put together in a corner were, at length, converted into a very fair bed; and the stranger was left to the Windsor chairs, the presidential tribune, the beery atmosphere, sawdust, pipelights, spittoons and repose. But the last item was long, long, long in linking itself to the rest. The novelty of the place, the coming upon it without preparation, the sense of being locked up, kept him waking and unhappy. Speculations, too, bearing on the strangest relations towards the prison, but always concerning the prison, ran like nightmares through his mind while he lay awake. Whether coffins were kept ready for people who might die there, where they were kept, how they were kept, where people who died in prison were buried, how they were taken out, what forms were observed, whether an implacable creditor could arrest the dead? As to escaping, what chances were there of escape? Whether a prisoner could scale the walls with a cord and grapple? How he would descend on the other side; whether he could alight on a housetop, steal down a staircase, let himself out at a door, and get lost in the crowd? As to fire in the prison, if one were to break out while he lay there?

“The morning light was in no hurry to climb the prison wall and look in at the Snuggery windows; and when it did come, it would have been more welcome if it had come alone, instead of bringing a rush of rain with it. But

the equinoctial gales were blowing out at sea, and the impartial southwest wind, in its flight, would not neglect even the narrow Marshalsea. While it roared through the steeple of St. George's church, and twirled all the cowls in the neighborhood, it made a swoop to beat the Southwark smoke into the gaol; and, plunging down the chimneys of the few collegians who were yet lighting their fires, half suffocated them.

“Heartily glad to see the morning through little rested by the night, he turned out as soon as he could distinguish objects about him, and paced the yard for two heavy hours before the gaol was opened. The walls were so near to one another, and the wild clouds hurried over them so fast, that it gave him a sensation like the beginning of seasickness to look up at the gusty sky. The rain, carried aslant by flaws of wind, blackened that side of the central building which he had visited last night, but left a narrow dry trough under the lee of the wall, where he walked up and down among the waifs of straw and dust and paper, the waste droppings of the pumps and the stray leaves of yesterday's greens. It was as haggard a view of life as a man need look upon.”

By the arrangement of the walls, all that the prisoners in the Marshalsea could see out of doors was the sky. The view from the barred windows of the uppermost rooms was cut off by the higher line of the wall topped with its chevaux-de-frise. But Little Dorrit's own room, being in the Warden's house, had a somewhat freer prospect. “A garret and a Marshalsea garret without compromise was Little Dorrit's room,” but “the housetops and the distant country hills were discernible over the walls in the clear morning.” Since the prison has been put to ordinary uses, such of the wall as is left has been lowered so that the view except from the lower windows is not obstructed. The sharp and cruel spikes that reddened in the sunrise like the bloody fangs of a savage beast, are gone. Poverty looks out of the old windows without having to peep between iron bars, and in the prison where the smugglers did not abide a factory is busy. The place, when I saw it, had changed but little since Dickens himself visited it in 1857, and wrote:

“I found the outer front court-yard, often mentioned here, metamorphosed into a butter shop; and I then almost gave up every brick of the gaol for lost. Wandering, however, down a certain adjacent ‘Angel Court, leading to Bermondsey,’ I came to ‘Marshalsea Place,’ the houses in which I recognized; not only the great block of the former prison, but as preserving the rooms that arose in my mind's eye when I became Little

Dorrit's biographer. A little further on, I found the older and smaller wall, which used to inclose the pent-up inner prison, where nobody was put except for ceremony. But whosoever goes into Marshalsea Place, turned out of Angel Court, leading to Bermondsey, will find his feet on the very paving stones of the extinct Marshalsea Gaol; will see its narrow yard to the right and to the left, very little altered, if at all, except that the walls were lowered when the place got free; will look upon the rooms in which the debtors lived; and will stand among the crowding ghosts of many years."

The Marshalsea has a history nearly as ancient as the Fleet. Stow tells us that it was so called as "pertaining to the Marshalls of England." In it were confined all manners of marauders, with a special tendency towards persons who had been guilty of piracy and other offenses on the high seas. Some authorities place its foundation as far back as the Twelfth Century. It was a prison of considerable extent in 1377, when a mob of sailors broke into it and murdered a gentleman who had been incarcerated there for killing one of their comrades in a pot-house brawl. Three years later, Wat Tyler, in the course of his rebellion, seized and hanged the Marshal of the Marshalsea. The official title of the Warden of the prison was, by the way, Marshal. When Bishop Bonner was deprived of his see of London for his adherence to the Church of Rome, he was sent to the Marshalsea. He lived there ten years, and there dying, in 1569, he was buried at midnight in St. George's Church hard by. This ancient prison occupied another site on the same street as the later structure. Under Henry VIII, Mary, and Elizabeth, it was the second prison in importance in London, being inferior only to the Tower. Here Christopher Brooke, the poet, was confined for being concerned in the wedding of Dr. Donne, and here George Wither was a prisoner for one of his satires against the Government aggressions and the abuse of the royal prerogative. The Nonconformist confessors were divided up among the Southwark prisons, and the Marshalsea received its share of them. John Udall, the Puritan martyr, fell a victim to its gaol fever. Its blight extended through many generations, and the shadow of its walls darkened many useful lives for no crime worse than the accident of failure that may come to any man. A false system ground its abject shabbiness, its haggard anxiety, and hopeless stupor of energies, into natures that might, but for it, have triumphed over care, and converted the defeat of to-day into the victory of to-morrow. "Changeless and barren, looking ignorantly at all seasons with its fixed, pinched face of poverty and care, the prison had not

a touch of any of these beauties in it. Blossom what would, its bricks and bars bore uniformly the same dead crop.”

Long before “Little Dorrit” was projected, Dickens introduced the Marshalsea to his readers; even before he introduced the Fleet, indeed. The ceremony was performed in Volume I chapter 21 of the “Pickwick Papers,” in the sketch called “The Old Man’s Tale about the Queer Client.” Here is the passage:

“In the Borough High street, near St. George’s Church, and on the same side of the way, stands, as most people know, the smallest of our debtors’ prisons — the Marshalsea. Although in later times it has been a very different place from the sink of filth and dirt it once was, even its improved condition holds out but little temptation to the extravagant or consolation to the improvident. The condemned felon has as good a yard for air and exercise in Newgate as the insolvent debtor in the Marshalsea Prison.

“It may be my fancy, or it may be that I cannot separate the place from the old recollections associated with it, but this part of London I cannot bear. The street is broad, the shops are spacious, the noise of the passing vehicles, the footsteps of a perpetual stream of people — all the busy sounds of traffic resound in it from morn to midnight, but the streets around are mean and close; poverty and debauchery lie festering in the crowded alleys; want and misfortune are penned up in the narrow prison; an air of gloom and dreariness seems, in my eyes at least, to hang about the scene, and to impart to it a squalid and sickly hue.

“Many eyes that have long since closed in the grave, have looked around upon that scene lightly enough, when entering the gate of the old Marshalsea Prison for the first time; for despair seldom comes with the first severe shock of misfortune. A man has confidence in untried friends, he remembers the many offers of assistance so freely made by his boon companions when he wanted them not, he has hope — the hope of happy inexperience — and however he may bend beneath the first shock, it springs up in his bosom, and flourishes there for a brief space, until it droops beneath the blight of disappointment and neglect. How soon have those same eyes, deeply sunken in the head, glared from faces wasted with famine, and sallow from confinement, in days when it was no figure of speech to say that the debtors rotted in prison, with no hope of release, and no prospect of liberty. The atrocity in its full extent no longer exists, but

there is enough of it left to give rise to occurrences that make the heart bleed.”

CHAPTER V.

THE KING'S BENCH.

In the "Pickwick Papers" the Fleet Prison was made to serve as an important feature of the story. In "Little Dorrit," the story as far as its human interest, humor and pathos are concerned, centres in the Marshalsea. The introduction of the King's Bench into "David Copperfield" is entirely episodic, but it makes one of the most brilliant chapters in the book, and, from its personal connection with the author's own life, one of the most important. That Dickens drew largely on his own experience for the material in "David Copperfield" has been abundantly shown by many commentators. Without being an autobiography, the book gives one many glimpses into the real life of its author. He transfers scenes and changes names a trifle, as he was fond of doing, but the private memoranda furnished by him of his early toil and trials afford a key to much that one reads in "Copperfield" in the flimsy disguise of fiction. Thus, he adapts the knowledge of the Marshalsea, which he acquired while his father was a prisoner there, to the fictitious figure and fortunes of old Dorrit; and he bestows on Mr. Micawber, in the King's Bench, the traits displayed by his father in the Marshalsea. A recent compiler of odds and ends of Dickens personalia, sapiently undertakes to show that the elder Dickens must have been incarcerated in the King's Bench and not in the Marshalsea, because Mr. Micawber was locked up there. Unfortunately for this arrangement, Dickens himself had distinctly disproved it in advance. Some years before he wrote "Copperfield" — probably before he even thought of writing it — he jotted down a number of personal facts, many of which were used in Forster's biography. These notes demonstrate positively that in it, as in "Dorrit," he pursued his favorite plan of interchanging occurrences, scenes and characters, without, however, departing from the main facts, which he had grafted in this fashion on the inventions of his fantasy. At the very commencement of the King's Bench interlude in "David Copperfield" this becomes apparent.

“At last Mr. Micawber’s difficulties came to a crisis, and he was arrested one morning and carried over to the King’s Bench Prison in the Borough. He told me, as he went out of the house, that the God of day had now gone down upon him — and I really thought his heart was broken, and mine too. But I heard, afterwards, that he was seen to play a lively game of skittles before noon.

“On the first Sunday after he was taken there I was to go and see him and have dinner with him. I was to ask my way to such a place, and just short of that place I should see such another place, and just short of that I should see a yard, which I was to cross, and keep straight on until I saw a turnkey. All this I did, and when at last I did see a turnkey (poor little fellow that I was), and thought how, when Roderick Random was in a debtor’s prison, there was a man there with nothing on but an old rug, the turnkey swam before my dimmed eyes and my beating heart.

“Mr. Micawber was waiting for me within the gate, and we went up to his room (top story but one) and cried very much. He solemnly conjured me, I remember, to take warning by his fate; and to observe that if a man had twenty pounds a year for his income, and spent nineteen pounds, nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy, but that if he spent twenty pounds one he would be miserable. After which he borrowed a shilling from me for porter, gave me a written order on Mrs. Micawber for the amount and put away his pocket handkerchief and cheered up.

“We sat before a little fire, with two bricks put within the rusted grate, one on each side, to prevent its burning too many coals until another debtor, who shared the room with Mr. Micawber, came in from the bakehouse with a loin of mutton, which was our joint stock repast. Then I was sent up to ‘Captain Hopkins,’ in the room overhead, with Mr. Micawber’s compliments, and I was his young friend, and would Captain Hopkins lend me a knife and fork.

“Captain Hopkins lent me a knife and fork with his compliments to Mr. Micawber. There was a very dirty little lady in his little room, and two wan girls, his daughters, with shock heads of hair. I thought it was better to borrow Captain Hopkins’s knife and fork than Captain Hopkins’s comb. The Captain himself was in the last extremity of shabbiness, with large whiskers, and an old, old brown great coat, with no other coat below it. I saw his bed rolled up in a corner; and what plates and dishes and pots he had, on a shelf; and I divined (God only knows how) that though the two

girls with the shock heads of hair were Captain Hopkins's children, the dirty little lady was not married to Captain Hopkins. My timid station on the threshold was not occupied more than a couple of minutes at most; but I came down again with all this in my knowledge as surely as the knife and fork were in my hand."

Compare this with Dickens's description of his actual visit to his father in the Marshalsea. The difference is only that of a slight rounding off or modifying of a sentence in the "Copperfield" version. In the case of Captain Hopkins, whose real name was Captain Porter, one may note how the actual suggested the fictitious title. The association between porter and hops is evident and direct. The real experiences of the Dickens's, at this period, in and out of jail, parallel those credited to the Micawbers. Mrs. Dickens and the family camped in Gower street just as Mrs. Micawber and the children camped in Windsor Terrace. The Dickenses even had a workhouse girl for servant, like the Micawbers, and little Charles made journeys to the pawnshop and the old book-stall in real life, just as David did in the story. Throughout this portion of biography and book the entries go side by side. For example:

Charles Dickens.

David Copperfield.

"At last my mother and her encampment in Gower street north, resolved to move into the prison, broke up and went to live in the Marshalsea. The key of the house was secured a room to himself. So I sent back to the landlord, who was very glad to get it; and I (small Cain that I was, except that I had never done harm to anyone) was handed over as a lodger to the King's Bench, except mine, to a reduced old lady, long known to our family, in Little College street, Camden outside the walls in the town. I felt keenly living so cut off from neighborhood of that institution, my parents, my brothers and sisters. One very much to my satisfaction, Sunday night I remonstrated with my father on this head, so pathetically and with so many tears, that his kind nature gave away. A back attic was found for Orfling me at the house of an insolvent court-agent, who lived in Lant street, in inexpensive lodging in the same

the Borough, where Bob Sawyer lodged neighborhood. Mine was a quiet many years afterwards. A bed and back garret, with a sloping roof, bedding were sent over for me and made commanding a pleasant prospect up on the floor. The little window had a view of a timber yard; and when I took possession of it, with the pleasant prospect of a timber yard; and possession of it, with the when I took possession of my new reflection that Mr. Micawber's abode I thought it was a paradise." troubles had come to a crisis at last, I thought it quite a paradise."

As Dickens told Forster, his family had no want of bodily comforts in the Marshalsea. His father's income, still going on, was amply sufficient for that; and in every respect, indeed, but elbow room, they lived more comfortably in prison than they had done for a long time while out of it. As he told the public in "David Copperfield": "I was now relieved of much of the weight of Mr. and Mrs. Micawber's cares; for some relatives or friends had engaged to help them at their present pass, and they lived more comfortably in the prison than they had lived for a long time out of it." As Forster tells us, directly from Dickens's own statements to him: "They were waited on still by the maid-of-all-work from Bayham street, the orphan girl of the Chatham workhouse, from whose sharp little worldly and also kindly ways he took his first impression of the Marchioness in the 'Old Curiosity Shop.' She also had a lodging in the neighborhood that she might be early on the scene of her duties; and when Charles met her, as he would do occasionally, in his lounging place by London bridge, he would occupy the time before the gates opened by telling her quite astonishing fictions about the wharves and the Tower." As David Copperfield tells us:

"I used to breakfast with them, now, in virtue of some arrangement, of which I have forgotten the details. I forget, too, at what hour the gates were opened in the morning, admitting of my going in, but I know that I was often up at six o'clock, and that my favorite lounging place in the interval was the old London Bridge, where I was wont to sit in one of the stone recesses, watching the people go by, or to look over the balustrades at the sun shining in the water, and lighting up the golden flame on the top of the Monument. The Orfling met me here sometimes, to be told some astonishing fictions respecting the wharves and the Tower; of which, I can say no more than I hope I believed them myself. In the evening I used to go back to the prison, and walk up and down the parade with Mr. Micawber; or

play casino with Mrs. Micawber and hear reminiscences of her mamma and her papa.”

Charles Dickens’s father’s “attempts to avoid going through the courts having failed, all needful ceremonies had to be undertaken to obtain the benefit of the Insolvent Debtors’ Act.” Mrs. Micawber informed David that “her family had decided that Mr. Micawber should apply for his release under the Insolvent Debtors’ Act, which would set him free, she expected, in about six weeks.” The elder Dickens, while awaiting his discharge from the Marshalsea, had drawn up a petition to the throne for the appropriation of a sum of money to enable the prisoners to drink His Majesty’s health on His Majesty’s forthcoming birthday. “I mention the circumstance,” writes Dickens in his autobiographical jottings, “because it illustrates to me my early interest in observing people. When I went to the Marshalsea of a night, I was always delighted to 143 hear from my mother what she knew about the histories of the different debtors in the prison; and when I heard of this approaching ceremony, I was so anxious to see them all come in, one after another (though I knew the greater part of them already, to speak to, and they me), that I got leave of absence on purpose, and established myself in the corner near the petition. It was stretched out, I recollect, on a great ironing board, under the window, which in another part of the room made a bedstead at night. The internal regulations of the place, for cleanliness and order, and for the government of a common room in the ale-house, where hot water and some means of cooking, and a good fire, were provided for all who paid a very small subscription, were excellently administered by a governing committee of debtors, of which my father was chairman for the time being. As many of the principal officers of this body as could be got into the small room without filling it up supported him, in front of the petition; and my old friend, Captain Porter (who had washed himself to do honor to the solemn occasion), stationed himself close to it, to read it to all who were unacquainted with its contents. The door was then thrown open, and they began to come in, in long file, several waiting on the landing outside, while one entered, affixed his signature, and went out. To everybody in succession Captain Porter said: ‘Would you like to hear it read?’ If he weakly showed the least disposition to hear it, Captain Porter, in a loud, sonorous voice, gave him every word of it. I remember a certain luscious roll he gave to such words as Majesty — gracious Majesty — your gracious Majesty’s unfortunate subjects — your Majesty’s well-known

munificence — as if the words were something real in his mouth, and delicious to taste; my poor father meanwhile listening with a little of an author's vanity, and contemplating (not severely) the spikes on the opposite wall. Whatever was comical in this scene, and whatever was pathetic, I sincerely believe I perceived in my corner, whether I demonstrated it or not, quite as well as I should perceive it now. I made out my own little character and story for every man who put his name to the sheet of paper. I might be able to do that now, more truly; not more earnestly or with closer interest. Their different peculiarities of dress, of face, of gait, of manner, were written indelibly upon my memory. I would rather have seen it than the best play ever played; and I thought about it afterwards over the pots of paste-blackening, often and often. When I looked, with my mind's eye, into the Fleet prison during Mr. Pickwick's incarceration, I wonder whether half-a-dozen men were wanting from the Marshalsea crowd that came filing in again to the sound of Captain Porter's voice." Here is the same scene, transferred to the King's Bench.

"By way of going in for anything that might be on the cards, I call to mind that Mr. Micawber, about this time, composed a petition to the House of Commons, praying for an alteration of the law of imprisonment for debt. I set down this remembrance here, because it is an instance to myself of the manner in which I fitted my old books to my altered life, and made stories for myself out of the streets, and out of men and women; and how some main points in the character I shall unconsciously develop, I suppose, in writing my life, were gradually forming all the time.

"There was a club in the prison, in which Mr. Micawber, as a gentleman, was a great authority. Mr. Micawber had stated his idea of this petition to the club, and the club had strongly approved the same. Wherefore Mr. Micawber (who was a thoroughly good-natured man, and as active a creature about anything but his own affairs as ever existed, and never so happy as when he was busy about something that could never be any profit to him) set to work at the petition, invented it, engrossed it on an immense sheet of paper, spread it out on the table, and appointed a time for all the club, and all within the wall if they chose, to come up to his room and sign it.

"When I heard of this approaching ceremony, I was so anxious to see them all come in, one after another, though I knew the greater part of them already, and they me, that I got an hour's leave of absence from Murdstone

and Grinby's, and established myself in a corner for that purpose. As many of the principal members of the club as could be got into the small room without filling it supported Mr. Micawber in front of the petition, while my old friend Captain Hopkins (who had washed himself to do honor to the solemn occasion) stationed himself close to it, to read it to all who were unacquainted with its contents. The door was then thrown open, and the general population began to come in, in a long file; several waiting outside, while one entered, affixed his signature, and went out. To everybody in succession Captain Hopkins said: 'Have you read it?' 'No.' 'Would you like to hear it read?' If he weakly showed the least disposition to hear it, Captain Hopkins, in a loud, sonorous voice, gave him every word of it. The Captain would have read it 20,000 times if 20,000 people would have heard him, one by one. I remember a certain luscious roll he gave to such phrases as; 'the peoples' representatives in Parliament assembled,' 'your petitioners therefore approach your honorable house,' 'His Gracious Majesty's unfortunate subjects,' as if the words were something real in his mouth and delicious to taste, Mr. Micawber, meanwhile, listening with a little of an author's vanity and contemplating (not severely) the spikes on the opposite wall.

"As I walked to and fro daily between Southwark and Blackfriars, and lounged about at meal times in obscure streets, the stones of which may, for anything I know, be worn at this moment by my childish feet, I wondered how many of these people were wanting in the crowd that used to come filing before me in review again, to the echo of Captain Hopkins's voice. When my thoughts go back now to that slow agony of my youth, I wonder how much of the histories I invented for such people hangs like a mist of fancy over well-remembered facts. When I tread the old ground, I do not wonder that I seem to see and pity, going on before me, an innocent romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experiences and sordid things."

The fortunate acquisition of a legacy of considerable amount released the elder Dickens from the Marshalsea. "In due time Mr. Micawber's petition was ripe for hearing, and that gentleman was ordered to be discharged under the Act. Mr. Micawber returned to the King's Bench when his case was over, as some fees were to be settled, and some formalities observed, before he could be actually released. The club received him with transport, and held a harmonic meeting that evening in his honor; while Mrs.

Micawber and I had a lamb's fry in private, surrounded by the sleeping family." But you may read all there is to be read of the Micawbers and the King's Bench in the first volume of "David Copperfield," Chapters 11 and 12, and compare it, if you choose, with the early passages of "The Life of Charles Dickens," by John Forster, Volume I.

Dickens's presentations of the Fleet and the Marshalsea had, it will be noted, the interest of description as well as of personal association with the characters of the stories for which they provided a part of the scenario. The King's Bench is an entirely personal episode. The figure of Mr. Micawber obscures all view of the prison. It poses on the merest suggestion of a background of barred windows and spiked walls. For this there are two reasons to be found. In the first place, all of the debtors' prisons of London were alike in their general features. They differed only in degrees and details of misery. In the Fleet and in the Marshalsea Dickens had exposed all that fell within his vocation to expose. Moreover, the necessity for invoking public obloquy upon the dens had passed away with the revision of the laws for debt. To have elaborated the material details of the life in the King's Bench would have been to repeat a twice-told tale. Apart from this, Dickens had made no special study of the King's Bench Prison. His memories of the Marshalsea were indelibly imprinted on his mind. It had been a part of his own life. He had explored the Fleet with the purpose of lending what aid he could toward its abolishment. His boyish wanderings had made him familiar enough with the external aspect of the King's Bench, and he had visited it on at least one occasion when an acquaintance was incarcerated there. But, after the Fleet and Marshalsea, its familiar features made no appeal to him. What could he say or write of it that had not been said or written by him already?

The King's Bench Prison of Micawber's time stood in the Borough Road. It was much more roomy and endurable than the Marshalsea, and much less wretched than the Fleet. It was enclosed by a wall thirty-five feet high, garnished with the usual chevaux-de-frise, and was entered through a stone lodge three stories in height. The jail buildings themselves carried four stories, and were broken up into nearly 250 rooms, with a chapel, and out-buildings for officials and for cookery and other necessities. The courtyard was comparatively spacious, and was especially famous for its racket games. Some champion scores of the day were scored by the collegians at the King's Bench, who certainly had time enough for practice to perfect

themselves in the sport. Like the Fleet and the Marshalsea, the King's Bench had its tap-room and its coffee-room, its poor side and its pay side, and its club, which nightly, over a pipe and pot, forgot for a few hours that the jail yard was not all out-of-doors. The prison derived its title from the fact that it was the gaol of the High Court of Justice, over which royalty was supposed to sit as supreme judge. So it became the Queen's Bench when England was ruled by a queen, and under the Commonwealth, when royalty was not recognized, bore the name of the Upper Bench Prison.

The original King's Bench Prison was situated in Southwark as early as the reign of Richard II. It was broken into and sacked by the Kentish rebels under Wat Tyler, who, on this occasion, performed a similar service to the old Marshalsea close at hand. It was to the King's Bench that Chief Justice Gascoigne so intrepidly committed the Prince of Wales, afterward Henry V; and down to the time of Oldys the room in which the wild young crony of Sir John Falstaff spent his term in gaol, was known as the Prince of Wales's Chamber. The old King's Bench seems to have been a decidedly easy-going jail. In 1579 we learn from the chronicles that the prisoners used to eat in a little low parlor next the street, and that they always had an audience staring at them through the barred windows, such as nowadays honors the repasts of the wild beasts in the zoo. During this year the prisoners petitioned for an enlargement of the prison and for a chapel, both of which requests seem to have been granted. Defoe, who sampled the King's Bench as well as Newgate and the Fleet, describes it as "not near so good" as the latter little prison, and complained that "to a man who had money the Bench was only the name of a prison." Indeed, the license of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries in the King's Bench would be hardly credible to persons accustomed only to the rigid discipline of modern jail management. In all the debtors' gaols of this period, the gambler and the swindler, the pickpocket, and even the footpads, who robbed by violence, plied their trades. Drunkenness was universal, and the commitment of loose women and the freedom of entry from without made worse debaucheries than those of the bottle easy of indulgence. At certain periods of their history the prisons seem to have been nothing less than vast bagnio-taverns, only the restriction upon the egress of the debtors distinguishing them from the common resorts of the town. The authorities of the jail were not supersensitive in their morality, provided their purses were kept filled. Wealth might riot, if it paid the piper, as readily and freely as poverty might

rot for the wherewithal to buy a crust of bread. Roderick Random's naked debtor shivering in a scrap of worn-out carpet was no fiction of the King's Bench, nor Captain Blazer's banquets to his fair friends from over the river a romance.

Smollet knew the Bench well enough. He had spent a term of probation behind its walls, and wrote "Sir Launcelot Greaves" within its rules. John Wilkes lay by the heels for one of his libels under its smoky roof, and hither came the mob to release him in 1768. The mob assembled in St. George's Field for the purpose, and thus in 1780 the Gordon Rioters gathered, who, a few days later, burst the prison gates and turned 700 prisoners loose before they put the rotten and reeking old jail to the torch. Combe was a prisoner under the rules of the King's Bench when he wrote "Dr. Syntax," and Haydon drew his idea of "The Mock Election" from a burlesque enacted among the prisoners while he was locked up in the jail for debt. A volume could be filled with the curious and characteristic events and personal episodes of the prison from the days of Wat Tyler down to 1862, when the last debtor passed out at the lodge gate, and the brief career of the King's Bench as a military prison began. Its history covered really that of two prisons, for after the attack of 1780 by the rioters, the old site was abandoned and another chosen for the rebuilding of the jail. In one of Dickens's last strolls in Southwark, he noticed the fact that no vestige of the King's Bench remained, but that a huge structure devoted to model homes for workingmen redeemed its unlamented grave from the uselessness which had made it a blight during many centuries. In Chapter 14 of Volume 2 of "Nicholas Nickleby," by the way, Dickens adverts to a feature of the law of which the King's Bench was one of the outgrowths, in connection with the first visit of Nicholas to Madeline Bray.

"The place to which Mr. Cheeryble had directed him was a row of mean and not over cleanly houses, situated within the 'Rules' of the King's Bench Prison, and not many hundred paces distant from the obelisk in St. George's Fields. The Rules are a certain liberty adjoining the prison, and comprising some dozen streets in which debtors who can raise money to pay large fees, from which their creditors do not derive any benefit, are permitted to reside by the wise provisions of the same enlightened laws which leave the debtor who can raise no money to starve in gaol, without food, clothing, lodging, or warmth, which are provided for felons convicted of the most atrocious crimes that can disgrace humanity. There are many pleasant fictions of the

law in constant operation, but there is not one so pleasant or practically humorous as that which supposes every man to be of equal value in its impartial eye, and the benefits of all laws to be equally obtainable by all men, without the smallest reference to the furniture of their pockets.

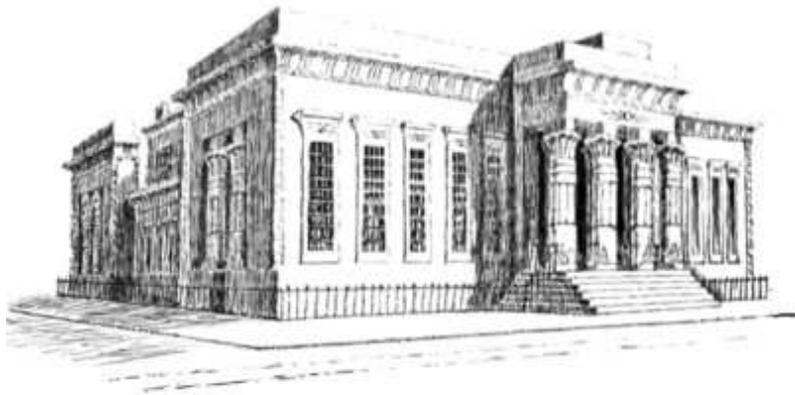
“To the row of houses indicated to him by Mr. Charles Cheeryble, Nicholas directed his steps without much troubling his head about such matters as these; and at this row of houses — after traversing a very dirty and dusty suburb of which minor theatricals, shell-fish, ginger-beer, spring vans, green grocery and brokers’ shops appeared to compose the main and most prominent features — he at length arrived with a palpitating heart. There were small gardens in the front which, being wholly neglected in all other respects, served as little pens for the dust to collect in, until the wind came around the corner and blew it down the road. Opening the rickety gate which, dangling on its broken hinges, before one of these, half admitted and half repulsed the visitor, Nicholas knocked at the street door with a faltering hand.

“It was, in truth, a shabby house outside, with very dim parlor windows and very small show of blinds, and very dirty muslin curtain dangling across the lower panes on very loose and limp strings. Neither, when the door was opened, did the inside appear to belie the outward promise, as there was a faded carpeting on the stairs and faded oil-cloth in the passage; in addition to which discomforts a gentleman Ruler was smoking hard in the front parlor (though it was not yet noon), while the lady of the house was busily engaged in turpentineing the disjointed fragments of a tent-bedstead at the door of the back parlor, as if in preparation for the reception of some new lodger who had been fortunate enough to engage it.”

The Fleet had its rules like the King’s Bench, but there was no such legalized stretching of the bounds of confinement tolerated at the Marshalsea. There the prisoner was supposed to remain a close prisoner within the walls until the courts ordained his release. In fact, however, if he had money he might buy sly periods of liberty under the eye of the keeper, and this abuse of his office brought the Marshal and his subordinates many a sovereign above their legitimate emoluments. One young gentleman of sporting proclivities, who was committed to the Marshalsea while his lawyer was settling up the wreck of his handsome patrimonial estate, afterwards published an account of his experiences as a detained debtor. From this it appears that during the entire term of his detention he was a

regular spectator at the cock fights, dog fights and prize fights, of the day, and that he kept his wherry on the Thames, and went out for a row whenever he felt the need of air and exercise. The keeper who accompanied him on these excursions, and who was of a sporting turn himself, left the prison to enter his employ, and was his faithful henchman at the time he printed his book, in the most genteel and elegant style, for circulation among his friends.

It is curious to note that even to our own day, and in our own country, this system of prison favoritism is not entirely unknown. If a man is arrested on a judgment for debt, he can, if he knows the way, save himself from being locked up for a night at least by paying the sheriff's deputy for it. To be sure the deputy will have to be in his company until he is duly handed over at Ludlow street Jail, and properly receipted for, but there are such things as double bedded rooms in New York hotels. In the same way, it is shrewdly suspected, prisoners in Ludlow street who can pay for it can enjoy a night out once in a while. It used to be so at least; and by the evidence brought out by investigations in the past it was not even an unusual occurrence. It is popularly believed, by the way, that there is no such thing in New York state as imprisonment for debt. Some native realist in the line of fiction ought to take a turn over to the east side of the commercial metropolis of the United States, and weave his experiences of the Ludlow street cage into some such shape as Dickens did his of the Fleet, the Marshalsea, and the King's Bench.



THE NEW YORK TOMBS

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW YORK TOMBS.



Dickens may fairly be said to have begun his sight-seeing in America by going to jail. He commenced with those in Boston, and wherever else he found a prison he had a look at it. The interest he took in penal reform, which rendered him familiar with nearly every gaol in England, did not desert him when he made his first voyage across the Atlantic. In the "American Notes," among a number of minor and comparatively unimportant observations, most of which are, in fact, long out of date, and lost in the changed conditions of jail construction, discipline and government, there are two descriptions, which retain their interest. The first in order of occurrence in the book, relates to a prison as famous throughout America as Newgate is in Great Britain, and which, indeed, is the closest approach we have to the gloomy criminal cage of London. You may find it in a description of a walk about New York in

Chapter 6:

"What is this dismal-fronted pile of bastard Egyptian, like an enchanter's palace in a melodrama? A famous prison called the Tombs. Shall we go in?"

"So. A long, narrow and lofty building, stove-heated as usual, with four galleries, one above the other, going round it, and communicating by stairs. Between the two sides of each gallery, and in its center, a bridge for the greater convenience of crossing. On each of these bridges sits a man, dozing or reading, or talking to an idle companion. On each tier are two opposite rows of small iron doors. They look like furnace doors, but are cold and black, as though the fires within had all gone out. Some two or three are open, and women with drooping heads bent down are talking to the inmates. The whole is lighted by a skylight, but it is fast closed; and from the roof there dangle, limp and drooping, two useless windsails.

"A man with keys appears to show us round. A good-looking fellow, and in his way civil and obliging.

“Are those black doors the cells?”

“Yes.’

“Are they all full?”

“Well, they’re pretty nigh full, and that’s a fact and no two ways about it.’

“Those at the bottom are unwholesome, surely.’

“Why, we do only put colored people in ‘em. That’s the truth.’

“When do the prisoners take exercise?”

“Well, they do without it pretty much.’

“Do they never walk in the yard?”

“Considerable seldom.’

“Sometimes, I suppose?”

“Well, it’s rare they do. They keep pretty bright without it.’

“But suppose a man were here for a twelve-month? I know this is only a prison for criminals who are charged with some grave offenses, while they are awaiting trial, or are under remand, but the law affords criminals many means of delay. What with motions for new trials, arrest of judgment and what not, a prisoner might be here for twelve months, I take it, might he not?”

“Well, I guess he might.’

“Do you mean to say that in all that time he would never come out at that little iron door for exercise?”

“He might walk some, perhaps — not much.’

“Will you open one of the doors?”

“All, if you like.’

“The fastenings jar and rattle, and one of the doors turns slowly on its hinges. Let us look in. A small, bare cell, into which the light enters through a high chink in the wall. There is a rude means of washing, a table, and a bedstead. Upon the latter sits a man of sixty, reading. He looks up for a moment, gives an impatient, dogged shake, and fixes his eyes upon his book again. As we withdraw our heads the door closes on him, and is fastened as before. This man has murdered his wife and will probably be hanged.

“How long has he been here?”

“A month.’

“When will he be tried?”

“Next term.’

“‘When is that?’

“‘Next month.’

“‘In England, if a man is under sentence of death even, he has air and exercise at certain periods of the day.’

“‘Possible?’

“With what stupendous and untranslatable coolness he says this, and how loungingly he leads on to the woman’s side, making, as he goes, a kind of castanet of the key on the stair rail.

“Each cell-door on this side has a square aperture in it. Some of the women peep anxiously through it at the sound of footsteps; others shrink away in shame. For what offense can that lonely child, of ten or twelve years old, be shut up here? Oh, that boy? He is the son of a prisoner we saw just now; is a witness against his father, and is detained here for safe keeping until the trial, that’s all.

“But it is a dreadful place for the child to pass the long days and nights in. This is rather hard treatment for a young witness, is it not? What says our conductor?

“‘Well, it ain’t a very rowdy life, and that’s a fact.’

“Again he clinks his metal castanet and leads us leisurely away. I have a question to ask him as we go.

“‘Pray, why do they call this place the Tombs?’

“‘Well, it’s the cant name.’

“‘I know it is. Why?’

“‘Some suicides happened here when it was first built. I expect it came about from that.’”

It did not “come about from that” by any means. The Tombs was a comparatively new prison when Dickens saw it first. It was erected under an authorization of the Common Council of the city of New York, issued in 1833. At that time, Mr. John L. Stevens, of the Hoboken family who still keep up seigneurial state on the bank of the Hudson, having recently returned from an extended tour through Asia and the Holy Land, issued an account of his travels, with many illustrations of the rare and curious things he had seen. Among these was a representation of an ancient Egyptian tomb, accompanied by a full and accurate description. The majestic proportions and sombre beauty of this mortuary structure so impressed the committee of the Common Council who had the selection of plans for the new jail that they adopted it as their model, and the general appearance and

construction of the building was made to conform as closely as the necessities of its use permitted to Stevens's design. As it stands it is probably the finest specimen of Egyptian architecture of its order to be found outside of Egypt itself, and the filth, squalor and grimy ugliness that hem it in only serve to accentuate its architectural beauty. Its official title is the City Prison, but the one by which it is best known was derived from the character of the edifice in "Stevens's Travels," after which it was planned.

From an artistic point of view the selection of a site for the Tombs was singularly unfortunate. At the date of its erection its location was upon the upper outskirts of the city. Now the town has grown beyond it miles upon miles. For years it stood in the heart of the lowest and most dangerous criminal district. Even now its surroundings of tenement-houses, workshops, dirty streets harboring dirty shops of the basest order, are anything but inviting to the sightseer. Through Leonard and Franklin streets, which bound its lower and upper ends, one catches eastward glimpses of Baxter street festooned with the sidewalk displays of the old clo' shops, and westward sees the passing life of Broadway. Elm street in the rear and Centre street in front of it abound in sour-savored grogeries and the shabby hang-dog offices of the lower order of criminal lawyers who practice at the bar of the Tombs court. The streets swarm with the children of the tenements, which line them with towering piles of unclean brick and mortar; and the pedestrians who navigate them, and who hang about the outside of the prison, as if held there by a spell and only awaiting their turn to pass within its walls, are for the most part of that skulking, evil class which knows the interior of the jail quite as well as its outer barriers, and the ways which lead to its frowning gate. For many years the passenger traffic of the New York Central Railroad was embarked at a depot occupying the block above the Tombs. Travelers were here taken on board cars which were dragged by mules or horses up to Fourth avenue and Twenty-sixth street, where the locomotive replaced the teams as a motor. As the town grew the railroad removed its station to the site of the present Madison Square Garden building, and converted the old depot into a freight-house, in and out of which lines of cars drawn by long tandems of mules clanked day and night the year round. Now the freight depot is gone, and an enormous granite structure, which accommodates the various criminal courts, rises on its site. Between this building and the Tombs an

enclosed bridge for the passage of prisoners to and from court spans the street.

The Tombs itself was built in the basin of a little lake which was once one of the romantic spots of Manhattan Island, and a favorite resort of the angler and the pleasure seeker. The lake was known as the Collect Pond, a corruption of the Dutch title "Kalckhoek," or Shell Point, from a beach of shells which existed on its margin. The Collect was a fresh-water pond, fed by natural springs, and having an outlet by small streams into both the North and East rivers. Thus the pond and its creeks actually cut Manhattan Island in half and made two islands of it. There were pleasure houses on the hillocks around the Collect, and on an island, in its centre, the city powder house was erected. The course of time worked the usual changes upon it for the worse. Tanners set up their tan pits near it, the city garbage was dumped into it, and among the marshes to the eastward the criminal colony, since infamous as the Five Points, commenced to form itself. There was still water enough in it in 1796 for John Fitch to experiment in navigating the first steamboat America ever saw, but a few years later, to give employment to clamorous and starving labor, at a period of industrial and commercial stagnation, the city ordered the hills around it to be leveled and the pond filled up with the earth removed from them. In spite of the reduction of the ground to the westward, the site remained much lower than the grade of Broadway, and the Tombs roof is scarcely above the line of that thoroughfare. To support the ponderous mass of Maine granite, which constituted the prison, a forest of piles was sunk deep in the sodden soil. The work of construction occupied five years, so that the prison had been in use scarcely four years when Dickens made his visit to it — and, while its outer walls remain substantially the same, its internal construction has been vastly augmented and improved. When he saw it the city watch-house occupied part of the building; and he makes a record of a night visit to "those black sties" where "men and women, against whom no crime is proved, lie all night in perfect darkness, surrounded by the noisome vapors which encircle that flagging lamp you light us with, and breathing this filthy and offensive stench." The watch-house was on the Franklin street side of the jail, and was long kept up as a police station. Now it is used as a common room for the confinement of vagrants and drunkards picked up on the streets, pending their confinement to the penal institutions.

Of another old and hideous institution which one cannot disassociate with the Tombs, in spite of the abolition of it which has been decreed by law, Dickens wrote:

“The prison yard, in which he pauses now, has been the scene of terrible performances. Into this narrow, grave-like place men are brought out to die. The wretched creature stands beneath the gibbet on the ground; the rope is about his neck; and when the sign is given a weight at its other end comes running down and swings him up into the air — a corpse. The law requires that there be present at this dismal spectacle the judge, the jury, and citizens to the amount of twenty-five. From the community it is hidden. To the dissolute and bad the thing remains a frightful mystery. Between the criminal and them the prison wall is interposed as a thick and gloomy veil. It is the curtain to his bed of death, his winding sheet and grave. From him it shuts out life and all the motives to unrepenting hardihood in that last hour, which its mere sight and presence is often all sufficient to sustain. There are no bold eyes to make him bold; no ruffians to uphold a ruffian’s name before. All beyond the pitiless stone wall is unknown space.”

At the time of Dickens’s visit (1842) London was still the scene of public hangings, and the privacy with which the executions in the Tombs were conducted furnished him with a text for one of his protests against the existing state of things at home. The Tombs hangings were private, as he stated, but they were not unattended by morbid interest on the part of the mob. On the morning of an execution, the obscene streets all about would swarm with obscene life. From their festering dens in the Five Points, and from the remoter haunts of vice and crime which had grown up with the growth of the town, the social banditti came in a scowling, ribald and revolting legion. They camped on doorsteps before dawn, and all the grogeries drove a roaring trade. They beguiled the time with gloating reminiscences of their criminal lives, and watched the jail roof for a signal that the ghastly work within was done. Curiously enough, nature had provided them with a sign as certain as the running up of the black flag upon the wall of Newgate. A great number of pigeons had found lodgment in the Tombs yard, nesting in cotes which had been put up for them along the inner jail walls and in the eaves of the buildings themselves. Long immunity from human aggressions had rendered them fearless, and when the audience gathered for an execution, under the gray shadow of the jail walls, the pigeons were equally certain to assemble, cooing and pluming

themselves in the sunlight above. When, at the fatal moment, the heavy thud of the executioner's axe denoted the severing of the cord which supported the counterweights and sent the victim whirling to his death, the birds, startled by the sound, would rise upward in flurried flight, circle about a couple of times and settle at their perches again. It was by this confused and frightened movement of the pigeons above the walls that the waiting rabble knew the unseen tragedy of the law was done.

A moment later the race of reporters and messenger boys from the prison gate to the newspaper offices close by would begin, and in half an hour all the ghastly details of the event, described with such circumstantiality and such sensational exaggeration as the horror-hungry public was expected to crave for, would be hawked at every street corner and carried by swift runners and overdriven wagons to the most distant quarters of the town. To such extreme was this practice stretched that, on the occasions of later executions in the Tombs, reporters would actually be sent to spend the night in prison, and to record the last hours of a worthless brute whose just doom should have been a swift death and complete oblivion. Evil as the influence of a public hanging may have been, it may be doubted if it was any worse than the practice of the press in investing the attendant circumstances of a vile and dangerous wretch's end with the mock heroism of cheap bravado and the clap-trap sentiment of literary fustian. The law providing for the execution of criminals by electricity, and in secret, has performed one public service, at least, in doing away with these outdoor gatherings at the Tombs on hanging day.



THE PHILADELPHIA BASTILLE

CHAPTER VII.

PHILADELPHIA'S BASTILE.

In Philadelphia Dickens made a special request for permission to visit the great prison of the State, remarking that it and the Falls of Niagara were the two objects he most wished to see in America. Exceptional facilities were afforded him to gratify his desire, and make his investigation as thorough as he chose. Nothing was concealed from him, and his account and opinion of the Eastern State Penitentiary ("American Notes," Chapter 7) created a vast deal of comment in their day. He put himself on record as a violent opponent of the solitary system, and while he intended to make this chapter the strongest, it was really one of the weakest in the book. He had assailed the outrages of the debtors' prisons of London manfully. Over the Philadelphia system he became almost hysterical. In the former he had actual evils and wrongs and outrages to combat. In the latter his grievance was largely founded on sentimentality and purely personal feeling. He describes his visit:

"In the outskirts stands a great prison called the Eastern Penitentiary, conducted on a plan peculiar to the State of Pennsylvania. The system here is rigid, strict and hopeless solitary confinement. I believe it, in its effects, to be cruel and wrong.

"I was accompanied to this prison by two gentlemen officially connected with its management, and passed the day in going from cell to cell and talking with the inmates. Every facility was afforded me that the utmost courtesy could suggest. Nothing was concealed or hidden from my view, and every piece of information that I sought was openly and frankly given. The perfect order of the building cannot be praised too highly, and of the excellent motives of all who are immediately concerned in the administration of the system there can be no kind of question.

"Between the body of the prison and the outer wall there is a spacious garden. Entering it by a wicket in the massive gate, we pursued the path before us to its other termination, and passed into a large chamber, from which seven long passages radiate. On either side of each is a long, long

row of low cell-doors with a certain number over every one. Above a gallery of cells like those below, except that they have no narrow yard attached (as those in the ground tier have), and are somewhat smaller. The possession of two of these is supposed to compensate for the absence of so much air and exercise as can be had in the dull strip attached to each of the others, in an hour's time every day; and, therefore, every prisoner in this upper story has two cells, adjoining and communicating with each other.

“Standing at the central point and looking down these dreary passages, the dull repose and quiet that prevails is awful. Occasionally there is a drowsy sound from some lone weaver's shuttle or shoemaker's last, but it is stilled by the thick walls and heavy dungeon door, and only serves to make the general stillness more profound. Over the head and face of every prisoner who comes into this melancholy house a black hood is drawn; and in this dark shroud, an emblem of the curtain dropped between him and the living world, he is led to the cell from which he never again comes forth until his whole term of imprisonment has expired. He never hears of wife or children, home or friends; the life or death of any single creature. He sees the prison officers, but, with that exception, he never looks upon a human countenance, or hears a human voice. He is a man buried alive, to be dug out in the slow rounds of years, and, in the meantime, dead to everything but torturing anxieties and horrible despair.

“His name, and crime, and term of suffering are unknown, even to the officer who delivers him his daily food. There is a number over his cell-door, and in a book, of which the governor of the prison has one copy and the moral instructor another, this is the index to his history. Beyond these pages the prison has no record of his existence; and though he live to be in the same cell ten weary years, he has no means of knowing, down to the very last hour, in what part of the building it is situated; what kind of men there are about him; whether in the long winter nights there are living people near, or he is in some lonely corner of the great gaol, with walls and passages, and iron doors between him and the nearest sharer in its solitary horrors.

“Every cell has double doors — the outer one of sturdy oak, the other of grated iron, wherein there is a trap through which his food is handed. He has a bible and a slate and pencil, and, under certain restrictions, has sometimes other books, provided for the purpose, and pen and ink and paper. His razor, plate and can, and basin hang upon the wall, or shine upon

the little shelf. Fresh water is laid on in every cell, and he can draw it at his pleasure. During the day his bedstead turns up against the wall and leaves more space for him to work in. His loom, or bench, or wheel is there, and there he labors, sleeps and wakes and counts the seasons as they change, and grows old.”

Over the inmates of this Philadelphia gaol Dickens exuded a great deal of sympathy and sentiment. He invested each man he wrote about with a pathos that made good reading at any rate, and no doubt sincerely believed all that he wrote. To a man of a convivial and companionable nature like himself the idea of a life of solitude was naturally horrible. To a man fond of long walks among other men the enforced absence of exercise as well as of companionship was naturally dreadful. To Charles Dickens, in short, a term of imprisonment in the Eastern Penitentiary would unquestionably have been the cruelest torture. He would, in all likelihood, have worn his life out speedily here, like a wild bird in a cage, or have laid violent hands upon himself, or have become a madman. To the felons whom he visited, men for the most part of blunt sensibilities and brutal natures, he credited the same qualities as belonged to his own refined and sensitive composition, and he put himself in their place and spoke for them from his own standpoint. How far he was led astray by this was shown by the case of the character long known as “Dickens’s Dutchman.” Of this fellow he wrote:

“In another cell there was a German, sentenced to five years’ imprisonment for larceny, two of which had just expired. With colors procured in the same manner (extracted from dyed yarn given him to weave) he had painted every inch of the walls and ceiling quite beautifully. He had laid out the few feet of ground behind him with exquisite neatness, and had made a little bed in the centre, that looked, by the bye, like a grave. The taste and ingenuity he had displayed in everything was most extraordinary, and yet a more dejected, heartbroken, wretched creature it would be difficult to imagine. I never saw such a picture of forlorn affliction and distress of mind. My heart bled for him, and when the tears ran down his cheeks, and he took one of the visitors aside to ask, with his trembling hands nervously clutching at his coat to detain him, whether there was no hope of his dismal sentence being commuted, the spectacle was really too painful to witness. I never saw or heard any kind of misery that impressed me more than the wretchedness of this man.”

This was the Dickensesque of it, and it gave its unfortunate subject an international notoriety. Now mark the plain, unvarnished facts.

The name of “Dickens’s Dutchman” was Charles Langheimer. He was sentenced to the Eastern Penitentiary for the first time on May 15, 1840, and it was while he was serving this term that Dickens saw him. On June 25, 1852, he came back on a year’s sentence, and on Feb. 24, 1855, he was a third time convicted, for two years on this occasion. On April 4, 1861, he came again for a year, on March 12, 1872, he was returned for two years, on Sept. 9, 1875, and on April 4, 1877, he began two terms of a year each. On Sept. 10, 1879, he received a three years’ term, and he was no sooner through with this than he was once more convicted and sent up for a year, in 1882. In the intervals of the sixteen years he spent in this one prison, since his first conviction, he had served five terms in other prisons, three in the County Jail, of Philadelphia, one in the Baltimore Penitentiary, and one in New York. In plain English, the man was a confirmed pauper and thief. He lived by mendicancy, and from time to time he would commit some larceny, for which offense all his sentences were imposed on him, merely in order to be sent to jail to be cared for — just as he might have gone on a vacation from his regular and miserable life upon the chance of charity.

In view of Dickens’s positive and unqualified expression of sentiment in regard to him, the most curious fact of his life remains to be noted. This is that, fourteen years after Dickens’s own death, he returned voluntarily to the penitentiary, where he had ended a year’s term only a few months before, and begged to be taken in. This place, so dreadful to the impressionable novelist, was the only approach to home the poor wretch knew. He was in a deplorable condition, was nearly eighty years of age, and had a horror of the almshouse. The inspectors consented that he should have his wish, and he was cared for for a month, until his death, which occurred on March 14, 1884. It is interesting to know that Dickens died at the age of fifty-eight years. This “picture of forlorn affliction and distress of mind,” this “dejected, heartbroken, wretched creature,” who was born eight years before Dickens, survived him nearly twice that period, and outlived him, in the mere number of his years, by twenty-two. It may be remembered, in connection with the Fleet Prison episode of “Pickwick,” that Sam Weller adverts to the almost identical case of an old prisoner, to whom the jail had become such a home that the fear of being locked out of it eventually

deterred him from taking the sly tastes of liberty which the turnkeys were willing to allow him.

The Eastern State Penitentiary is, in this day, admitted to be one of the model penal institutions of the world. When built it was in the northern suburb, but it is now in the heart of Philadelphia. It occupies an entire block, comprising ten or twelve acres, and its site was originally known as Cherry Hill, a name which is often locally applied to the jail itself. The ground is elevated, and from the gateway tower a fine panorama of the vast city, spreading about for miles, may be obtained. All that is visible externally is a massive granite wall, some thirty-five feet high, slightly relieved or buttressed with towers at the angles and on the front. The enclosure is square, and the entrance, in the centre of the front wall, is by a lofty portal, defended by a heavy outer gate, in which there is a wicket, and an inner gate, and dominated by a tower taller than the others. Within the walls the ranges of cells radiate from an octagonal central building, which is crowned with an observatory. To simplify the description it may be said that this central building forms the hub from which branch branch forth the spokes of this enormous wheel. A system of lighting the entire grounds by night is provided in a lantern of special ingenious construction, in the tower below the observatory or lookout. There are some detached buildings on the grounds, used for mechanical and culinary purposes. The living apartments of the warden and his family, offices, etc., are in the front building. The outer and inner gates of the prison are never opened at the same time. Even a visitor or an official becomes in a manner a prisoner when he leaves the street.

Dickens's general description of the prison is good enough, but some of his statements are more picturesque than precise. Prisoners are not shut off from intercourse by letter, or even personally, with their families. They do see various persons connected with the prison, although they cannot see other prisoners. Even this, which Dickens thought so cruel, and the concealment of their faces when they are brought in to the jail, is a precaution born of benevolence and mercy. The idea is that after a man has served a term at Cherry Hill and been discharged he may go where he will, and if he wishes to live an honest life no man can point him out as an ex-convict. Except in the private record of the prison, known only and accessible only to a few responsible persons, John Jimpson never existed in the Eastern State Penitentiary. The keepers, the doctor, the jail attendants

only knew him as No. 99. The librarian never issued books to John Jimpson, but to No. 99. The nurses in the infirmary never attended him when he was sick, but cared for No. 99. No one but the warden knew whether the letters sent to him by his wife or family or friends were meant for No. 99 or No. 199. As far as the stigma of his crime and its punishment can be effaced it is effaced. He loses his social identity when he enters the prison, and puts it on when he comes out, like a new suit of clothes.

It is a rule of the prison that each convict, when he enters, shall be taught a useful trade, if he has not one already. He then has a daily task set, and all that he can or cares to produce above this task is credited to him, and the money is paid to him when he departs. The illiterate convicts are taught to read and write. Those who display intelligence are encouraged to cultivate it. Convicts of superior education — such, for instance, as can produce literary work or paint pictures — are permitted the means to do so. The entire system of the prison is reformatory as well as punitive; the idea is not merely to cage a social beast, but to tame him and train him, so that he may be of use to the world when he has served his term of isolation.

The idea of separate confinement — the Philadelphia Idea, as it has been called — originated nearly a century ago. In an admirable sketch of the origin and history of the Eastern District Penitentiary, compiled by Mr. Richard Vaux, president of the board of Inspectors, the history of Pennsylvania's system of prison discipline and management is given in brief but interesting style. In 1776 the common jail of Philadelphia was as horrible a den as the worst of London jails at its worst. An attempt was made by Richard Wistar, one of the famous family of that name, to reform it, but in 1777 the British army occupied the city and the good work was, perforce, suspended. In 1787 it was taken up again, and the Philadelphia Prison Society was formed. The first president of the society was Bishop William White, the first Protestant Episcopal Archbishop of Pennsylvania, and he held the office for forty years. The society's first work was to have the chain gangs, employed at cleaning the streets and repairing the roads, abolished. The next was to secure a separation of the sexes in the common jail. Then the separation of actual criminals and of persons merely accused but not yet found guilty of crime demanded attention. So, by degrees, the idea of separate confinement took shape. In 1790 a law was passed by which this principle was put to the test, and finally, in 1821, the Legislature

authorized the construction of the State Penitentiary for the Eastern district of Pennsylvania.

At this date the site of the present Penitentiary was a farm, remarkable for its grove of fine cherry trees. It belonged to the Warner family. The farmhouse was a cheery old colonial mansion, and it is worth noting that when the Warners sold the land they reserved the right to remove the mantels and fireplaces from the house. The place was purchased in 1821. The plans of several competing architects were submitted to the board appointed by the Legislature, and that of John Haviland was selected. The cornerstone of the Penitentiary was laid in 1823, and it was opened for the reception of convicts in 1829. Up to that time about \$340,000 had been expended on it, but since then the necessary enlargements and improvements have brought its cost up to probably \$1,000,000 or more. If Dickens could revisit it in the flesh to-day he would find it a much more extensive establishment than the one he criticised so severely and unjustly; and his confidence in himself would perhaps be shaken when he read the record of his woebegone "Dutchman."

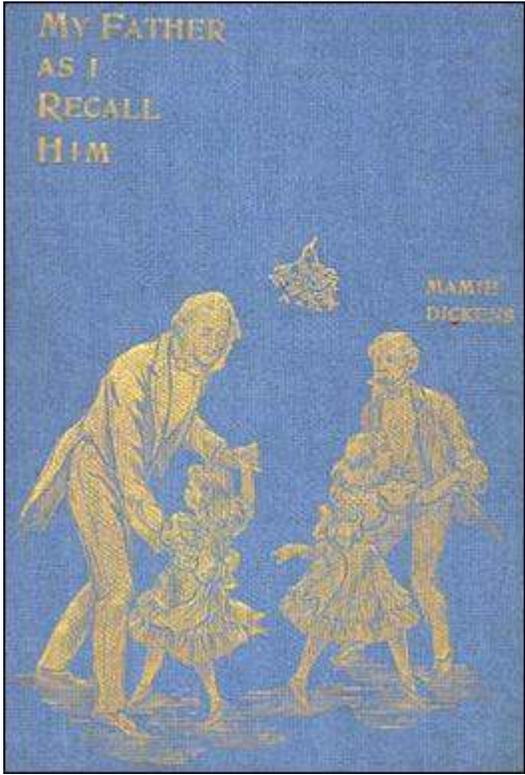
THE END.

MY FATHER AS I RECALL HIM by Mamie Dickens



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The pages of this little book were in type and about to be sent for correction to my sister — who had been for some months in very delicate health — when she suddenly became still more gravely ill. The hand which had traced the words of love and veneration dedicated to our father's memory grew too feeble to hold a pen, and before the proofs of her little volume could be submitted to her for revision, my dear sister died.

K. P.



MY FATHER AS I RECALL HIM.

by

MAMIE DICKENS.

the

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CHAPTER I.

Seeing "Gad's Hill" as a child. — His domestic side and home-love. — His love of children. — His neatness and punctuality. — At the table, and as host. — The original of "Little Nell."



If, in these pages, written in remembrance of my father, I should tell you my dear friends, nothing new of him, I can, at least, promise you that what I shall tell will be told faithfully, if simply, and perhaps there may be some things not familiar to you.

A great many writers have taken it upon themselves to write lives of my father, to tell anecdotes of him, and to print all manner of things about him. Of all these published books I have read but one, the only genuine "Life" thus far written of him, the one sanctioned by my father himself, namely: "The Life of Charles Dickens," by John Forster.

But in what I write about my father I shall depend chiefly upon my own memory of him, for I wish no other or dearer remembrance. My love for my father has never been touched or approached by any other love. I hold

him in my heart of hearts as a man apart from all other men, as one apart from all other beings.

Of my father's childhood it is but natural that I should know very little more than the knowledge possessed by the great public. But I never remember hearing him allude at any time, or under any circumstances, to those unhappy days in his life except in the one instance of his childish love and admiration for "Gad's Hill," which was destined to become so closely associated with his name and works.

He had a very strong and faithful attachment for places: Chatham, I think, being his first love in this respect. For it was here, when a child, and a very sickly child, poor little fellow, that he found in an old spare room a store of books, among which were "Roderick Random," "Peregrine Pickle," "Humphrey Clinker," "Tom Jones," "The Vicar of Wakefield," "Don Quixote," "Gil Blas," "Robinson Crusoe," "The Arabian Nights," and other volumes. "They were," as Mr. Forster wrote, "a host of friends when he had no single friend." And it was while living at Chatham that he first saw "Gad's Hill."

As a "very queer small boy" he used to walk up to the house — it stood on the summit of a high hill — on holidays, or when his heart ached for a "great treat." He would stand and look at it, for as a little fellow he had a wonderful liking and admiration for the house, and it was, to him, like no other house he had ever seen. He would walk up and down before it with his father, gazing at it with delight, and the latter would tell him that perhaps if he worked hard, was industrious, and grew up to be a good man, he might some day come to live in that very house. His love for this place went through his whole life, and was with him until his death. He takes "Mr. Pickwick" and his friends from Rochester to Cobham by the beautiful back road, and I remember one day when we were driving that way he showed me the exact spot where "Mr. Pickwick" called out: "Whoa, I have dropped my whip!" After his marriage he took his wife for the honeymoon to a village called Chalk, between Gravesend and Rochester.

Many years after, when he was living with his family in a villa near Lausanne, he wrote to a friend: "The green woods and green shades about here are more like Cobham, in Kent, than anything we dream of at the foot of the Alpine passes." And again, in still later years, one of his favorite walks from "Gad's Hill" was to a village called Shorne, where there was a quaint old church and graveyard. He often said that he would like to be

buried there, the peace and quiet of the homely little place having a tender fascination for him. So we see that his heart was always in Kent.

But let this single reference to his earlier years suffice, so that I may write of him during those years when I remember him among us and around us in our home.

From his earliest childhood, throughout his earliest married life to the day of his death, his nature was home-loving. He was a "home man" in every respect. When he became celebrated at a very early age, as we know, all his joys and sorrows were taken home; and he found there sympathy and the companionship of his "own familiar friends." In his letters to these latter, in his letters to my mother, to my aunt, and, later on, to us his children, he never forgot anything that he knew would be of interest about his work, his successes, his hopes or fears. And there was a sweet simplicity in his belief that such news would most certainly be acceptable to all, that is wonderfully touching and child-like coming from a man of genius.

His care and thoughtfulness about home matters, nothing being deemed too small or trivial to claim his attention and consideration, were really marvellous when we remember his active, eager, restless, working brain. No man was so inclined naturally to derive his happiness from home affairs. He was full of the kind of interest in a house which is commonly confined to women, and his care of and for us as wee children did most certainly "pass the love of women!" His was a tender and most affectionate nature.

For many consecutive summers we used to be taken to Broadstairs. This little place became a great favorite with my father. He was always very happy there, and delighted in wandering about the garden of his house, generally accompanied by one or other of his children. In later years, at Boulogne, he would often have his youngest boy, "The Noble Plorn," trotting by his side. These two were constant companions in those days, and after these walks my father would always have some funny anecdote to tell us. And when years later the time came for the boy of his heart to go out into the world, my father, after seeing him off, wrote: "Poor Plorn has gone to Australia. It was a hard parting at the last. He seemed to become once more my youngest and favorite little child as the day drew near, and I did not think I could have been so shaken. These are hard, hard things, but they might have to be done without means or influence, and then they would be far harder. God bless him!"

When my father was arranging and rehearsing his readings from "Dombey," the death of "little Paul" caused him such real anguish, the reading being so difficult to him, that he told us he could only master his intense emotion by keeping the picture of Plorn, well, strong and hearty, steadily before his eyes. We can see by the different child characters in his books what a wonderful knowledge he had of children, and what a wonderful and truly womanly sympathy he had with them in all their childish joys and griefs. I can remember with us, his own children, how kind, considerate and patient he always was. But we were never afraid to go to him in any trouble, and never had a snub from him or a cross word under any circumstances. He was always glad to give us "treats," as he called them, and used to conceive all manner of those "treats" for us, and if any favor had to be asked we were always sure of a favorable answer. On these occasions my sister "Katie" was generally our messenger, we others waiting outside the study door to hear the verdict. She and I used to have delightful treats in those summer evenings, driving up to Hampstead in the open carriage with him, our mother, and "Auntie," and getting out for a long walk through the lovely country lanes, picking wild roses and other flowers, or walking hand in hand with him listening to some story.

There never existed, I think, in all the world, a more thoroughly tidy or methodical creature than was my father. He was tidy in every way — in his mind, in his handsome and graceful person, in his work, in keeping his writing table drawers, in his large correspondence, in fact in his whole life.

I remember that my sister and I occupied a little garret room in Devonshire Terrace, at the very top of the house. He had taken the greatest pains and care to make the room as pretty and comfortable for his two little daughters as it could be made. He was often dragged up the steep staircase to this room to see some new print or some new ornament which we children had put up, and he always gave us words of praise and approval. He encouraged us in every possible way to make ourselves useful, and to adorn and beautify our rooms with our own hands, and to be ever tidy and neat. I remember that the adornment of this garret was decidedly primitive, the unframed prints being fastened to the wall by ordinary black or white pins, whichever we could get. But, never mind, if they were put up neatly and tidily they were always "excellent," or "quite slap-up" as he used to say. Even in those early days, he made a point of visiting every room in the

house once each morning, and if a chair was out of its place, or a blind not quite straight, or a crumb left on the floor, woe betide the offender.

And then his punctuality! It was almost frightful to an unpunctual mind! This again was another phase of his extreme tidiness; it was also the outcome of his excessive thoughtfulness and consideration for others. His sympathy, also, with all pain and suffering made him quite invaluable in a sick room. Quick, active, sensible, bright and cheery, and sympathetic to a degree, he would seize the "case" at once, know exactly what to do and do it. In all our childish ailments his visits were eagerly looked forward to; and our little hearts would beat a shade faster, and our aches and pains become more bearable, when the sound of his quick footstep was heard, and the encouraging accents of his voice greeted the invalid. I can remember now, as if it were yesterday, how the touch of his hand — he had a most sympathetic touch — was almost too much sometimes, the help and hope in it making my heart full to overflowing. He believed firmly in the power of mesmerism, as a remedy in some forms of illness, and was himself a mesmerist of no mean order; I know of many cases, my own among the number, in which he used his power in this way with perfect success.

And however busy he might be, and even in his hours of relaxation, he was still, if you can understand me, always busy; he would give up any amount of time and spare himself no fatigue if he could in any way alleviate sickness and pain.

In very many of my father's books there are frequent references to delicious meals, wonderful dinners and more marvellous dishes, steaming bowls of punch, etc, which have led many to believe that he was a man very fond of the table. And yet I think no more abstemious man ever lived.

In the "Gad's Hill" days, when the house was full of visitors, he had a peculiar notion of always having the menu for the day's dinner placed on the sideboard at luncheon time. And then he would discuss every item in his fanciful, humorous way with his guests, much to this effect: "Cock-a-leekie? Good, decidedly good; fried soles with shrimp sauce? Good again; croquettes of chicken? Weak, very weak; decided want of imagination here," and so on, and he would apparently be so taken up with the merits or demerits of a menu that one might imagine he lived for nothing but the coming dinner. He had a small but healthy appetite, but was remarkably abstemious both in eating and drinking.

He was delightful as a host, caring individually for each guest, and bringing the special qualities of each into full notice and prominence, putting the very shyest at his or her ease, making the best of the most humdrum, and never thrusting himself forward.

But when he was most delightful, was alone with us at home and sitting over dessert, and when my sister was with us especially — I am talking now of our grownup days — for she had great power in “drawing him out.” At such times although he might sit down to dinner in a grave or abstracted mood, he would, invariably, soon throw aside his silence and end by delighting us all with his genial talk and his quaint fancies about people and things. He was always, as I have said, much interested in mesmerism, and the curious influence exercised by one personality over another. One illustration I remember his using was, that meeting someone in the busy London streets, he was on the point of turning back to accost the supposed friend, when finding out his mistake in time he walked on again until he actually met the real friend, whose shadow, as it were, but a moment ago had come across his path.

And then the forgetting of a word or a name. “Now into what pigeon-hole of my brain did that go, and why do I suddenly remember it now?” And as these thoughts passed through his mind and were spoken dreamily, so they also appeared in his face. Another instant, perhaps, and his eyes would be full of fun and laughter.

At the beginning of his literary career he suffered a great sorrow in the death — a very sudden death — of my mother’s sister, Mary Hogarth. She was of a most charming and lovable disposition, as well as being personally very beautiful. Soon after my parents married, Aunt Mary was constantly with them. As her nature developed she became my father’s ideal of what a young girl should be. And his own words show how this great affection and the influence of the girl’s loved memory were with him to the end of his life. The shock of her sudden death so affected and prostrated him that the publication of “Pickwick” was interrupted for two months.

“I look back,” he wrote, “and with unmingled pleasure, to every link which each ensuing week has added to the chain of our attachment. It shall go hard I hope ere anything but death impairs the toughness of a bond now so firmly riveted. That beautiful passage you were so kind and considerate as to send to me has given me the only feeling akin to pleasure, sorrowful pleasure it is, that I have yet had connected with the loss of my dear young

friend and companion, for whom my love and attachment will never diminish, and by whose side, if it please God to leave me in possession of sense to signify my wishes, my bones whenever or wherever I die, will one day be laid.”

She was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, and her grave bears the following inscription, written by my father:

“Young, beautiful, and good, God in His mercy numbered her among His angels at the early age of seventeen.”

A year after her death, in writing to my mother from Yorkshire, he says: “Is it not extraordinary that the same dreams which have constantly visited me since poor Mary died follow me everywhere? After all the change of scene and fatigue I have dreamt of her ever since I left home, and no doubt shall until I return. I would fain believe, sometimes, that her spirit may have some influence over them, but their perpetual repetition is extraordinary.”

In the course of years there came changes in our home, inevitable changes. But no changes could ever alter my father’s home-loving nature. As he wrote to Mr. Forster, as a young man, so it was with him to the time of his death: “We shall soon meet, please God, and be happier than ever we were in all our lives. Oh! home — home — home!!!”

CHAPTER II.

Buying Christmas presents. — In the dance. — The merriest of them all. — As a conjurer. — Christmas at “Gad’s Hill.” — Our Christmas dinners. — A New Year’s Eve frolic. — New Year on the Green. — Twelfth Night festivities.



Christmas was always a time which in our home was looked forward to with eagerness and delight, and to my father it was a time dearer than any other part of the year, I think. He loved Christmas for its deep significance as well as for its joys, and this he demonstrates in every allusion in his writings to the great festival, a day which he considered should be fragrant with the love that we should bear one to another, and with the love and reverence of his Saviour and Master. Even in his most merry conceits of Christmas, there are always subtle and tender touches which will bring tears to the eyes, and make even the thoughtless have some special veneration for this most blessed anniversary.

In our childish days my father used to take us, every twenty-fourth day of December, to a toy shop in Holborn, where we were allowed to select our Christmas presents, and also any that we wished to give to our little companions. Although I believe we were often an hour or more in the shop before our several tastes were satisfied, he never showed the least impatience, was always interested, and as desirous as we, that we should choose exactly what we liked best. As we grew older, present giving was confined to our several birthdays, and this annual visit to the Holborn toy shop ceased.

When we were only babies my father determined that we should be taught to dance, so as early as the Genoa days we were given our first lessons. “Our oldest boy and his sisters are to be waited upon next week by a professor of the noble art of dancing,” he wrote to a friend at this time.

And again, in writing to my mother, he says: "I hope the dancing lessons will be a success. Don't fail to let me know."

Our progress in the graceful art delighted him, and his admiration of our success was evident when we exhibited to him, as we were perfected in them, all the steps, exercises and dances which formed our lessons. He always encouraged us in our dancing, and praised our grace and aptness, although criticized quite severely in some places for allowing his children to expend so much time and energy upon the training of their feet.

When "the boys" came home for the holidays there were constant rehearsals for the Christmas and New Year's parties; and more especially for the dance on Twelfth Night, the anniversary of my brother Charlie's birthday. Just before one of these celebrations my father insisted that my sister Katie and I should teach the polka step to Mr. Leech and himself. My father was as much in earnest about learning to take that wonderful step correctly, as though there were nothing of greater importance in the world. Often he would practice gravely in a corner, without either partner or music, and I remember one cold winter's night his awakening with the fear that he had forgotten the step so strong upon him that, jumping out of bed, by the scant illumination of the old-fashioned rushlight, and to his own whistling, he diligently rehearsed its "one, two, three, one, two, three" until he was once more secure in his knowledge.



No one can imagine our excitement and nervousness when the evening came on which we were to dance with our pupils. Katie, who was a very little girl was to have Mr. Leech, who was over six feet tall, for her partner, while my father was to be mine. My heart beat so fast that I could scarcely breathe, I was so fearful for the success of our exhibition. But my fears were groundless, and we were greeted at the finish of our dance with hearty applause, which was more than compensation for the work which had been expended upon its learning.

My father was certainly not what in the ordinary acceptance of the term would be called “a good dancer.” I doubt whether he had ever received any instruction in “the noble art” other than that which my sister and I gave him. In later years I remember trying to teach him the Schottische, a dance which he particularly admired and desired to learn. But although he was so fond of dancing, except at family gatherings in his own or his most intimate friends’ homes, I never remember seeing him join in it himself, and I doubt if, even as a young man, he ever went to balls. Graceful in motion, his dancing, such as it was, was natural to him. Dance music was delightful to his cheery, genial spirit; the time and steps of a dance suited his tidy nature, if I may so speak. The action and the exercise seemed to be a part of his abundant vitality.

While I am writing of my father's fondness for dancing, a characteristic anecdote of him occurs to me. While he was courting my mother, he went one summer evening to call upon her. The Hogarths were living a little way out of London, in a residence which had a drawing-room opening with French windows on to a lawn. In this room my mother and her family were seated quietly after dinner on this particular evening, when suddenly a young sailor jumped through one of the open windows into the apartment, whistled and danced a hornpipe, and before they could recover from their amazement jumped out again. A few minutes later my father walked in at the door as sedately as though quite innocent of the prank, and shook hands with everyone; but the sight of their amazed faces proving too much for his attempted sobriety, his hearty laugh was the signal for the rest of the party to join in his merriment. But judging from his slight ability in later years, I fancy that he must have taken many lessons to secure his perfection in that hornpipe.

His dancing was at its best, I think, in the "Sir Roger de Coverly" — and in what are known as country dances. In the former, while the end couples are dancing, and the side couples are supposed to be still, my father would insist upon the sides keeping up a kind of jig step, and clapping his hands to add to the fun, and dancing at the backs of those whose enthusiasm he thought needed rousing, was himself never still for a moment until the dance was over. He was very fond of a country dance which he learned at the house of some dear friends at Rockingham Castle, which began with quite a stately minuet to the tune of "God save the Queen," and then dashed suddenly into "Down the Middle and up Again." His enthusiasm in this dance, I remember, was so great that, one evening after some of our Tavistock House theatricals, when I was thoroughly worn out with fatigue, being selected by him as his partner, I caught the infection of his merriment, and my weariness vanished. As he himself says, in describing dear old "Fezziwig's" Christmas party, we were "people who would dance and had no notion of walking." His enjoyment of all our frolics was equally keen, and he writes to an American friend, *à propos* of one of our Christmas merry-makings: "Forster is out again; and if he don't go in again after the manner in which we have been keeping Christmas, he must be very strong indeed. Such dinings, such conjurings, such blindman's buffings, such theatre goings, such kissings out of old years and kissings in of new ones never took place in these parts before. To keep the Chuzzlewit going, and

to do this little book the Carol, in the odd times between two parts of it, was, as you may suppose, pretty tight work. But when it was done I broke out like a madman, and if you could have seen me at a children's party at Macready's the other night going down a country dance with Mrs. M. you would have thought I was a country gentleman of independent property residing on a tip-top farm, with the wind blowing straight in my face every day."

At our holiday frolics he used sometimes to conjure for us, the equally "noble art" of the prestidigitateur being among his accomplishments. He writes of this, which he included in the list of our Twelfth Night amusements, to another American friend: "The actuary of the national debt couldn't calculate the number of children who are coming here on Twelfth Night, in honor of Charlie's birthday, for which occasion I have provided a magic lantern and divers other tremendous engines of that nature. But the best of it is that Forster and I have purchased between us the entire stock-in-trade of a conjuror, the practice and display whereof is entrusted to me. And if you could see me conjuring the company's watches into impossible tea-caddies and causing pieces of money to fly, and burning pocket handkerchiefs without burning 'em, and practising in my own room without anybody to admire, you would never forget it as long as you live."

One of these conjuring tricks comprised the disappearance and reappearance of a tiny doll, which would announce most unexpected pieces of news and messages to the different children in the audience; this doll was a particular favorite, and its arrival eagerly awaited and welcomed.

That he loved to emphasize Christmas in every possible way, the following extract from a note which he sent me in December, 1868, will evidence. After speaking of a reading which he was to give on Christmas Eve, he says: "It occurs to me that my table at St. James' Hall might be appropriately ornamented with a little holly next Tuesday. If the two front legs were entwined with it, for instance, and a border of it ran round the top of the fringe in front, with a little sprig by way of bouquet at each corner, it would present a seasonable appearance. If you think of this and will have the materials ready in a little basket, I will call for you at the office and take you up to the hall where the table will be ready for you."

But I think that our Christmas and New Year's tides at "Gad's Hill" were the happiest of all. Our house was always filled with guests, while a cottage in the village was reserved for the use of the bachelor members of

our holiday party. My father himself, always deserted work for the week, and that was almost our greatest treat. He was the fun and life of those gatherings, the true Christmas spirit of sweetness and hospitality filling his large and generous heart. Long walks with him were daily treats to be remembered. Games passed our evenings merrily. "Proverbs," a game of memory, was very popular, and it was one in which either my aunt or myself was apt to prove winner. Father's annoyance at our failure sometimes was very amusing, but quite genuine. "Dumb Crambo" was another favorite, and one in which my father's great imitative ability showed finely. I remember one evening his dumb showing of the word "frog" was so extremely laughable that the memory of it convulsed Marcus Stone, the clever artist, when he tried some time later to imitate it.

One very severe Christmas, when the snow was so deep as to make outdoor amusement or entertainment for our guests impossible, my father suggested that he and the inhabitants of the "bachelors' cottage" should pass the time in unpacking the French chalet, which had been sent to him by Mr. Fetcher, and which reached Higham Station in a large number of packing cases. Unpacking these and fitting the pieces together gave them interesting employment, and some topics of conversation for our luncheon party.

Our Christmas Day dinners at "Gad's Hill" were particularly bright and cheery, some of our nearest neighbours joining our home party. The Christmas plum pudding had its own special dish of coloured "repoussé" china, ornamented with holly. The pudding was placed on this with a sprig of real holly in the centre, lighted, and in this state placed in front of my father, its arrival being always the signal for applause. A prettily decorated table was his special pleasure, and from my earliest girlhood the care of this devolved upon me. When I had everything in readiness, he would come with me to inspect the result of my labors, before dressing for dinner, and no word except of praise ever came to my ears.

He was a wonderfully neat and rapid carver, and I am happy to say taught me some of his skill in this. I used to help him in our home parties at "Gad's Hill" by carving at a side table, returning to my seat opposite him as soon as my duty was ended. On Christmas Day we all had our glasses filled, and then my father, raising his, would say: "Here's to us all. God bless us!" a toast which was rapidly and willingly drunk. His conversation, as may be imagined, was often extremely humorous, and I have seen the

servants, who were waiting at table, convulsed often with laughter at his droll remarks and stories. Now, as I recall these gatherings, my sight grows blurred with the tears that rise to my eyes. But I love to remember them, and to see, if only in memory, my father at his own table, surrounded by his own family and friends — a beautiful Christmas spirit.

“It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its Mighty Founder was a child himself,” was his own advice, and advice which he followed both in letter and spirit.

One morning — it was the last day of the year, I remember — while we were at breakfast at “Gad’s Hill,” my father suggested that we should celebrate the evening by a charade to be acted in pantomime. The suggestion was received with acclamation, and amid shouts and laughing we were then and there, guests and members of the family, allotted our respective parts. My father went about collecting “stage properties,” rehearsals were “called” at least four times during the morning, and in all our excitement no thought was given to that necessary part of a charade, the audience, whose business it is to guess the pantomime. At luncheon someone asked suddenly: “But what about an audience?” “Why, bless my soul,” said my father, “I’d forgotten all about that.” Invitations were quickly dispatched to our neighbours, and additional preparations made for supper. In due time the audience came, and the charade was acted so successfully that the evening stands out in my memory as one of the merriest and happiest of the many merry and happy evenings in our dear old home. My father was so extremely funny in his part that the rest of us found it almost impossible to maintain sufficient control over ourselves to enable the charade to proceed as it was planned to do. It wound up with a country dance, which had been invented that morning and practised quite a dozen times through the day, and which was concluded at just a few moments before midnight. Then leading us all, characters and audience, out into the wide hall, and throwing wide open the door, my father, watch in hand, stood waiting to hear the bells ring in the New Year. All was hush and silence after the laughter and merriment! Suddenly the peal of bells sounded, and turning he said: “A happy New Year to us all! God bless us.” Kisses, good wishes and shaking of hands brought us again back to the fun and gaiety of a few moments earlier. Supper was served, the hot mulled wine drunk in toasts, and the maddest and wildest of “Sir Roger de Coverlys” ended our evening and began our New Year.

One New year's day my father organized some field sports in a meadow which was at the back of our house. "Foot races for the villagers come off in my field to-morrow," he wrote to a friend, "and we have been hard at work all day, building a course, making countless flags, and I don't know what else, Layard (the late Sir Henry Layard) is chief commissioner of the domestic police. The country police predict an immense crowd."

There were between two and three thousand people present at these sports, and by a kind of magical influence, my father seemed to rule every creature present to do his or her best to maintain order. The likelihood of things going wrong was anticipated, and despite the general prejudice of the neighbours against the undertaking, my father's belief and trust in his guests was not disappointed. But you shall have his own account of his success. "We had made a very pretty course," he wrote, "and taken great pains. Encouraged by the cricket matches' experience, I allowed the landlord of the Falstaff to have a drinking booth on the ground. Not to seem to dictate or distrust, I gave all the prizes in money. The great mass of the crowd were laboring men of all kinds, soldiers, sailors and navvies. They did not, between half-past ten, when we began, and sunset, displace a rope or a stake; and they left every barrier and flag as neat as they found it. There was not a dispute, and there was no drunkenness whatever. I made them a little speech from the lawn at the end of the games, saying that, please God, we would do it again next year. They cheered most lustily and dispersed. The road between this and Chatham was like a fair all day; and surely it is a fine thing to get such perfect behaviour out of a reckless seaport town." He was the last to realize, I am sure that it was his own sympathetic nature which gave him the love and honor of all classes, and that helped to make the day's sports such a great success!

My father was again in his element at the Twelfth Night parties to which I have before alluded. For many consecutive years, Miss Coutts, now the Baroness Burdett Coutts, was in the habit of sending my brother, on this his birthday anniversary, the most gorgeous of Twelfth-cakes, with an accompanying box of bonbons and Twelfth Night characters. The cake was cut, and the favors and bonbons distributed at the birthday supper, and it was then that my father's kindly, genial nature overflowed in merriment. He would have something droll to say to everyone, and under his attentions the shyest child would brighten and become merry. No one was overlooked or forgotten by him; like the young Cratchits, he was "ubiquitous." Supper

was followed by songs and recitations from the various members of the company, my father acting always as master of ceremonies, and calling upon first one child, then another for his or her contribution to the festivity. I can see now the anxious faces turned toward the beaming, laughing eyes of their host. How attentively he would listen, with his head thrown slightly back, and a little to one side, a happy smile on his lips. O, those merry, happy times, never to be forgotten by any of his own children, or by any of their guests. Those merry, happy times!

And in writing thus of these dear old holidays, when we were all so happy in our home, and when my father was with us, let me add this little postscript, and greet you on this Christmas of 1896, with my father's own words: "Reflect upon your present blessings — of which every man has many — not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some. Fill your glass again with a merry face and contented heart. Our life on it, but your Christmas shall be merry and your New Year a happy one.

"So may the New Year be a happy one to you, happy to many more whose happiness depends on you! So may each year be happier than the last, and not the meanest of our brethren or sisterhood debarred their rightful share in what our great Creator formed them to enjoy."



CHAPTER III.

My father at his work. — Rooms in which he wrote. — Love for his child characters. — Genius for character drawing. — Nicholas Nickleby. — His writing hours. — His only amanuensis. — "Pickwick" and "Boz." — Death of Mr. Thackeray.

When at work my father was almost always alone, so that, with rare exceptions, save as we could see the effect of the adventures of his characters upon him in his daily moods, we knew but little of his manner of work. Absolute quiet under these circumstances was essential, the slightest sound making an interruption fatal to the success of his labors, although, oddly enough, in his leisure hours the bustle and noise of a great city seemed necessary to him. He writes, after an enforced idleness of two years, spent in a quiet place; "The difficulty of going at what I call a rapid pace is prodigious; indeed, it is almost an impossibility. I suppose this is partly the effect of two years' ease, and partly the absence of streets, and numbers of figures. I cannot express how much I want these. It seems as if they supplied something to my brain which, when busy, it cannot bear to lose. For a week or fortnight I can write prodigiously in a retired place, a day in London setting and starting me up again. But the toil and labor of writing day after day without that magic lantern is immense!"

As I have said, he was usually alone when at work, though there were, of course, some occasional exceptions, and I myself constituted such an exception. During our life at Tavistock House, I had a long and serious illness, with an almost equally long convalescence. During the latter, my father suggested that I should be carried every day into his study to remain with him, and, although I was fearful of disturbing him, he assured me that he desired to have me with him. On one of these mornings, I was lying on the sofa endeavouring to keep perfectly quiet, while my father wrote busily and rapidly at his desk, when he suddenly jumped from his chair and rushed to a mirror which hung near, and in which I could see the reflection of some extraordinary facial contortions which he was making. He returned rapidly to his desk, wrote furiously for a few moments, and then went again to the mirror. The facial pantomime was resumed, and then turning toward, but evidently not seeing, me, he began talking rapidly in a low voice. Ceasing

this soon, however, he returned once more to his desk, where he remained silently writing until luncheon time. It was a most curious experience for me, and one of which, I did not until later years, fully appreciate the purport. Then I knew that with his natural intensity he had thrown himself completely into the character that he was creating, and that for the time being he had not only lost sight of his surroundings, but had actually become in action, as in imagination, the creature of his pen.

His “studies” were always cheery, pleasant rooms, and always, like himself, the personification of neatness and tidiness. On the shelf of his writing table were many dainty and useful ornaments, gifts from his friends or members of his family, and always, a vase of bright and fresh flowers. The first study that I remember is the one in our Devonshire Terrace home, a pretty room, with steps leading directly into the garden from it, and with an extra baize door to keep out all sounds and noise. The study at Tavistock House was more elaborate; a fine large room, opening into the drawing-room by means of sliding doors. When the rooms were thrown together they gave my father a promenade of considerable length for the constant indoor walking which formed a favorite recreation for him after a hard day’s writing.

At “Gad’s Hill” he first made a study from one of the large spare sleeping rooms of the house, as the windows there overlooked a beautiful and favorite view of his. His writing table was always placed near a window looking out into the open world which he loved so keenly. Afterwards he occupied for years a smaller room overlooking the back garden and a pretty meadow, but this he eventually turned into a miniature billiard room, and then established himself, finally, in the room on the right side of the entrance hall facing the front garden. It is this room which Mr. Luke Fildes, the great artist and our own esteemed friend, made famous in his picture “The Empty Chair,” which he sketched for “The Graphic” after my father’s death. The writing table, the ornaments, the huge waste paper basket, which “the master” had made for his own use, are all there, and, alas, the empty chair!

That he was always in earnest, that he lived with his creations, that their joys and sorrows were his joys and sorrows, that at times his anguish, both of body and spirit, was poignant and heart-breaking, I know. His interest in and love for his characters were intense as his nature, and is shown nowhere more strongly than in his sufferings during his portrayal of the short life of

“Little Nell,” like a father he mourned for his little girl — the child of his brain — and he writes: “I am, for the time, nearly dead with work and grief for the loss of my child.” Again he writes of her: “You can’t imagine (gravely I write and speak) how exhausted I am to-day with yesterday’s labors. I went to bed last night utterly dispirited and done up. All night I have been pursued by the child; and this morning I am unrefreshed and miserable. I do not know what to do with myself.”

His love and care for this little one are shown most pathetically in the suggestions which he gave to Mr. George Cattermole for his illustrations of the “Old Curiosity Shop.” “Kit, the single gentleman, and Mr. Garland go down to the place where the child is and arrive there at night. There has been a fall of snow. Kit, leaving them behind, runs to the old house, and with a lantern in one hand, and the bird in its cage in the other, stops for a moment at a little distance, with a natural hesitation, before he goes up to make his presence known. In a window — supposed to be that of the child’s little room — a light is burning, and in that room the child (unknown, of course, to her visitors, who are full of hope), lies dead.”

Again: “The child lying dead in the little sleeping room, behind the open screen. It is winter time, so there are no flowers, but upon her breast and pillow there may be strips of holly and berries and such green things. A window, overgrown with ivy. The little boy who had that talk with her about the angels may be by the bedside, if you like it so; but I think it will be quieter and more peaceful if she is quite alone. I want the scene to express the most beautiful repose and tranquillity, and to have something of a happy look, if death can do this.”

Another: “The child has been buried within the church, and the old man, who cannot be made to understand that she is dead repairs to the grave and sits there all day long, waiting for her arrival to begin another journey. His staff and knapsack, her little bonnet and basket, lie beside him. ‘She’ll come to-morrow,’ he says, when it gets dark, and then goes sorrowfully home. I think an hour glass running out would keep up the notion; perhaps her little things upon his knee or in his hand. I am breaking my heart over this story, and cannot bear to finish it.”

In acknowledging the receipt of a letter concerning this book from Mr. John Tomlin, an American, he wrote: “I thank you cordially and heartily for your letter, and for its kind and courteous terms. To think that I have awakened among the vast solitudes in which you dwell a fellow feeling and

sympathy with the creatures of many thoughtful hours, is the source of the purest delight and pride to me; and believe me that your expressions of affectionate remembrance and approval, sounding from the green forests of the Mississippi, sink deeper into my heart and gratify it more than all the honorary distinctions that all the courts of Europe could confer. It is such things as these that make one hope one does not live in vain, and that are the highest rewards of an author's life."

His genius for character sketching needs no proof — his characters live to vouch for themselves, for their reality. It is ever amazing to me that the hand which drew the pathetic and beautiful creations, the kindly humored men, the lovely women, the unfortunate little ones, could portray also with such marvellous accuracy the villainy and craftiness of such characters as Bumble, Bill Sykes, Pecksniff, Uriah Heep and Squeers. Undoubtedly from his earliest childhood he had possessed the quick perception, the instinct, which could read in people's characters their tendencies toward good and evil, and throughout his life he valued this ability above literary skill and finish. Mr. Forster makes a point of this in his biography, speaking of the noticeable traits in him: "What I had most, indeed, to notice in him at the very outset of his career, was his indifference to any praise of his performances on their merely literary merit, compared with the higher recognition of them as bits of actual life, with the meaning and purpose on their part, and the responsibility on his, of realities rather than creatures of fancy."

But he was always pleased with praise, and always modest and grateful in returning it. "How can I thank you?" he writes to a friend who was expressing his pleasure at "Oliver Twist." "Can I do better than by saying that the sense of poor Oliver's reality, which I know you have had from the first, has been the highest of all praise to me? None that has been lavished upon me have I felt half so much as that appreciation of my intent and meaning. Your notices make me very grateful, but very proud, so have a care."

The impressions which were later converted into motives and plots for his stories he imbibed often in his earliest childhood. The crusade against the Yorkshire schools which is waged in "Nicholas Nickleby," is the working out of some of these childish impressions. He writes himself of them: "I cannot call to mind how I came to hear about Yorkshire schools, when I was not a very robust child, sitting in by-places near Rochester

Castle with a head full of Partridge, Strap, Tom Pipes and Sancho Panza, but I know my first impressions of the schools were picked up at this time.” We can imagine how deeply the wrongs must have sunk into the sensitive heart of the child, rankling there through many years, to bear fruit in the scourging of them and their abuses from the land. While he was at work upon “Nicholas Nickleby,” he sent one of his characteristic letters in reply to a little boy — Master Hasting Hughes — who wrote to ask him to make some changes in the story. As some of you may not have read this letter, and as it is so extremely amusing, I shall quote part of it:

“Doughty Street, London.

“December 12th, 1838.

“Respected Sir: I have given Squeers one cut on the neck, and two on the head, at which he appeared much surprised, and began to cry, which, being a cowardly thing, is just what I should have expected from him — wouldn't you?

“I have carefully done what you told me in your letter about the lamb and the two ‘sheeps’ for the little boys. They have also had some good ale and porter and some wine. I am sorry you did not say what wine you would like them to have. I gave them some sherry, which they liked very much, except one boy who was a little sick and choked a good deal. He was rather greedy, and that's the truth, and I believe it went the wrong way, which I say served him right, and I hope you will say so too. Nick has had his roast lamb, as you said he was to, but he could not eat it all, and says if you do not mind his doing so he should like to have the rest hashed to-morrow with some greens, which he is very fond of, and so am I. He said he did not like to have his porter hot, for he thought it spoilt the flavour, so I let him have it cold. You should have seen him drink it. I thought he never would have left off. I also gave him three pounds in money, all in sixpences to make it seem more, and he said directly that he should give more than half to his mamma and sister, and divide the rest with poor Smike. And I say he is a good fellow for saying so; and if anybody says he isn't, I am ready to fight him whenever they like — there!

“Fanny Squeers shall be attended to, depend upon it. Your drawing of her is very like, except that I do not think the hair is quite curly enough. The nose is particularly like hers, and so are the legs. She is a nasty, disagreeable thing, and I know it will make her very cross when she sees it,

and what I say is that I hope it may. You will say the same, I know — at least I think you will.”

The amount of work which he could accomplish varied greatly at certain times, though in its entirety it was so immense. When he became the man of letters, and ceased the irregular, unmethodical life of the reporter, his mornings were invariably spent at his desk. The time between breakfast and luncheon, with an occasional extension of a couple of hours into the afternoon, were given over to his creations. The exceptions were when he was taking a holiday or resting, though even when ostensibly employed in the latter, cessation from story writing meant the answering of letters and the closer attention to his business matters, so that but little of real rest ever came into his later life.

While in Italy he gave a fragmentary diary of his daily life in a letter to a friend, and the routine was there very much what it was at home. “I am in a regular ferocious excitement with the Chimes; get up at seven; have a cold bath before breakfast; and blaze away, wrathful and red-hot, until three o’clock or so, when I usually knock off (unless it rains) for the day. I am fierce to finish in a spirit bearing some affinity to that of truth and mercy, and to shame the cruel and the wicked, but it is hard work.” His entire discomfort under sound interruptions is also shown in the above, in his reference to the Chimes, and the effect which they had upon him.

Despite his regularity of working hours, as I have said, the amount of work which my father accomplished varied greatly. His manuscripts were usually written upon white “slips,” though sometimes upon blue paper, and there were many mornings when it would be impossible for him to fill one of these. He writes on one occasion: “I am sitting at home, patiently waiting for Oliver Twist, who has not yet arrived.” And, indeed, “Oliver” gave him considerable trouble, in the course of his adventures, by his disinclination to be put upon paper easily. This slowness in writing marked more prominently the earlier period of my father’s literary career, though these “blank days,” when his brain refused to work, were of occasional occurrence to the end. He was very critical of his own labors, and would bring nothing but the best of his brain to the art which he so dearly loved — his venerated mistress. But, on the other hand, the amount of work which he would accomplish at other times was almost incredible. During a long sojourn at Lausanne he writes: “I have not been idle since I have been here. I had a good deal to write for Lord John about the ragged schools; so I set to

work and did that. A good deal to Miss Coutts, in reference to her charitable projects; so I set to work and did that. Half of the children's New Testament to write, or pretty nearly. I set to work and did that. Next, I cleared off the greater part of such correspondence as I had rashly pledged myself to, and then — began Dombey!"

I know of only one occasion on which he employed an amanuensis, and my aunt is my authority for the following, concerning this one time: "The book which your father dictated to me was 'The Child's History of England.' The reason for my being used in this capacity of secretary was that 'Bleak House' was being written at the same time, and your father would dictate to me while walking about the room, as a relief after his long, sedentary imprisonment. The history was being written for 'Household Words,' and 'Bleak House' also as a serial, so he had both weekly and monthly work on hand at the same time." The history was dedicated: "To my own dear children, whom I hope it will help, by-and-by, to read with interest larger and better books upon the same subject."

My father wrote always with a quill pen and blue ink, and never, I think, used a lead pencil. His handwriting was considered extremely difficult to read by many people, but I never found it so. In his manuscripts there were so many erasures, and such frequent interlineations that a special staff of compositors was used for his work, but this was not on account of any illegibility in his handwriting. The manuscripts are most of them, exhibited at the South Kensington Museum in "the Forster Collection," and they all show I think, the extreme care and fastidiousness of the writer, and his ever-constant desire to improve upon and simplify his original sentence. His objection to the use of a lead pencil was so great that even his personal memoranda, such as his lists of guests for dinner parties, the arrangement of tables and menus, were always written in ink. For his personal correspondence he used blue note paper, and signed his name in the left-hand corner of the envelope. After a morning's close work he was sometimes quite pre-occupied when he came into luncheon. Often, when we were only our home party at "Gad's Hill," he would come in, take something to eat in a mechanical way — he never ate but a small luncheon — and would return to his study to finish the work he had left, scarcely having spoken a word in all this time. Again, he would come in, having finished his work, but looking very tired and worn. Our talking at these times did not seem to disturb him, though any sudden sound, as the

dropping of a spoon, or the clinking of a glass, would send a spasm of pain across his face.

The sudden, almost instantaneous, popularity of "Pickwick" was known to the world long before it was realized by its anxious young author. All the business transactions concerning its publication were modest to a degree, and the preparations for such a success as came to it were none. As to its popularity, Mr. Forster writes: "Judges on the bench, and boys in the streets, gravity and folly, the young and the old, those who were entering life, and those who were quitting it, alike found it irresistible." Carlyle wrote: "An archdeacon repeated to me, with his own venerable lips, the other evening, a strange, profane story of a solemn clergyman who had been summoned to administer consolation to a very ill man. As he left the room he heard the sick man ejaculate: "Well thank God, Pickwick will be out in ten days, anyway!" No young author ever sprang into more sudden and brilliant fame than "Boz," and none could have remained more thoroughly unspoiled, or so devoid of egotism under success. His own opinion of his fame, and his estimate of its value, may be quoted here: "To be numbered amongst the household gods of one's distant countrymen, and associated with their homes and quiet pleasures; to be told that in each nook and corner of the world's great mass there lives one well-wisher who holds communion with one in the spirit, is a worthy fame, indeed. That I may be happy enough to cheer some of your leisure hours for a long time to come, and to hold a place in your pleasant thoughts, is the earnest wish of 'Boz.'"

On the Christmas Eve of 1863 my father was greatly shocked and distressed to hear of the sudden death of Mr. Thackeray. Our guests, naturally, were full of the sad news, and there was a gloom cast over everything. We all thought of the sorrow of his two daughters, who were so devoted to him, and whom his sudden taking away would leave so desolate. In "The Cornhill Magazine" of the February following, my father wrote: "I saw Mr. Thackeray for the first time nearly twenty-eight years ago, when he proposed to become the illustrator of my earliest book. I saw him last shortly before Christmas, at the Athenæum Club, when he told me he had been in bed three days, and that he had it in his mind to try a new remedy, which he laughingly described. He was cheerful, and looked very bright. In the night of that day week he died. * * * * No one can be surer than I of the greatness and goodness of his heart. In no place should I take it upon myself at this time to discourse of his books, of his refined

knowledge of character, of his subtle acquaintance with the weakness of human nature, of his delightful playfulness as an essayist, of his quaint and touching ballads, of his mastery over the English language. But before me lies all that he had written of his latest story, and the pain I have felt in perusing it has not been deeper than the conviction that he was in the healthiest region of his powers when he worked on this last labor. The last words he corrected in print were ‘and my heart throbbed with an exquisite bliss.’ God grant that on that Christmas Eve, when he laid his head back on his pillow and threw up his arms as he had been wont to do when very weary, some consciousness of duty done, and of Christian hope throughout life humbly cherished, may have caused his own heart so to throb when he passed away to his rest.”

CHAPTER IV.

Fondness for Athletic Sports. — His love of bathing. — His study of the raven. — Calling the doctor in. — My father with our dogs. — The cats of “Gad’s Hill.” — ”Bumble” and “Mrs. Bouncer.” — A strange friendship.

As a child my father was prevented from any active participation in the sports and amusements of his boyish companions by his extreme delicacy and frequent illnesses, so that until his manhood his knowledge of games was gained merely from long hours of watching others while lying upon the grass. With manhood, however, came the strength and activity which enabled him to take part in all kinds of outdoor exercise and sports, and it seemed that in his passionate enjoyment and participation in those later years he was recompensed for the weary childhood years of suffering and inability. Athletic sports were a passion with him in his manhood, as I have said. In 1839 he rented a cottage at Petersham, not far from London “where,” to quote from Mr. Forster, “the extensive garden grounds admitted of much athletic competition, in which Dickens, for the most part, held his own against even such accomplished athletes as Maclise and Mr. Beard. Bar leaping, bowling and quoits were among the games carried on with the greatest ardor, and in sustained energy Dickens certainly distanced every competitor. Even the lighter recreations of battledore and bagatelle were pursued with relentless activity. At such amusements as the Petersham races, in those days rather celebrated, and which he visited daily while they lasted, he worked much harder than the running horses did.”

Riding was a favorite recreation at all times with my father, and he was constantly inviting one or another of his friends to bear him company on these excursions. Always fond, in his leisure hours, of companions, he seemed to find his rides and walks quite incomplete if made alone. He writes on one occasion: “What think you of a fifteen-mile ride out, ditto in, and a lunch on the road, with a wind-up of six o’clock dinner in Doughty Street?” And again: “Not knowing whether my head was off or on, it became so addled with work, I have gone riding over the old road, and shall be truly delighted to meet or be overtaken by you.” As a young man he was extremely fond of riding, but as I never remember seeing him on horseback

I think he must have deprived himself of this pastime soon after his marriage.

But walking was, perhaps, his chiefest pleasure, and the country lanes and city streets alike found him a close observer of their beauties and interests. He was a rapid walker, his usual pace being four miles an hour, and to keep step with him required energy and activity similar to his own. In many of his letters he speaks with most evident enjoyment of this pastime. In one he writes: "What a brilliant morning for a country walk! I start precisely — precisely, mind — at half-past one. Come, come, come and walk in the green lanes!" Again: "You don't feel disposed, do you, to muffle yourself up and start off with me for a good, brisk walk over Hampstead Heath?"

Outdoor games of the simpler kinds delighted him. Battledore and shuttlecock was played constantly in the garden at Devonshire Terrace, though I do not remember my father ever playing it elsewhere. The American game of bowls pleased him, and rounders found him more than expert. Croquet he disliked, but cricket he enjoyed intensely as a spectator, always keeping one of the scores during the matches at "Gad's Hill."

He was a firm believer in the hygiene of bathing, and cold baths, sea baths and shower baths were among his most constant practices. In those days scientific ablution was not very generally practised, and I am sure that in many places during his travels my father was looked upon as an amiable maniac with a penchant for washing.

During his first visit to America, while he was making some journey in a rather rough and uncomfortable canal boat, he wrote: "I am considered very hardy in the morning, for I run up barenecked and plunge my head into the half-frozen water by half-past five o'clock. I am respected for my activity, inasmuch as I jump from the boat to the towing path, and walk five or six miles before breakfast, keeping up with the horses all the time." And from Broadstairs: "In a bay window sits, from nine o'clock to one, a gentleman with rather long hair and no neckcloth, who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny, indeed. At one o'clock he disappears, presently emerges from a bathing machine, and may be seen a kind of salmon-colored porpoise, splashing about in the ocean. After that, he may be viewed in another bay window on the ground floor, eating a good lunch; and after that, walking a dozen miles or so, or lying on his back on the sand

reading. Nobody bothers him, unless they know he is disposed to be talked to; and I am told he is very comfortable, indeed.”

During the hottest summer months of our year’s residence in Italy, we lived at a little seaport of the Mediterranean called Albaro. The bathing here was of the most primitive kind, one division of the clear, dark-blue pools among the rocks being reserved for women, the other for men, and as we children were as much at home in the water as any known variety of fish, we used to look with wonder at the so-called bathing of the Italian women. They would come in swarms, beautifully dressed, and with most elaborately arranged heads of hair, but the slightest of wettings with them was the equivalent of a bath. In the open bay at Albaro the current was very strong, and the bathing most dangerous to even an experienced swimmer. I remember one morning the terrible fright we were given by an uncle of ours; he swam out into the bay, was caught by the current of an ebb tide and borne out of reach of our eyes. A fishing boat picked him up still alive, though greatly exhausted. “It was a world of horror and anguish crowded into four or five minutes of dreadful agitation,” wrote my father, “and to complete the terror of it the entire family, including the children, were on the rock in full view of it all, crying like mad creatures.”

He loved animals, flowers and birds, his fondness for the latter being shown nowhere more strongly than in his devotion to his ravens at Devonshire Terrace. He writes characteristically of the death of “Grip,” the first raven: “You will be greatly shocked and grieved to hear that the raven is no more. He expired to-day at a few minutes after twelve o’clock, at noon. He had been ailing for a few days, but we anticipated no serious result, conjecturing that a portion of the white paint he swallowed last summer might be lingering about his vitals. Yesterday afternoon he was taken so much worse that I sent an express for the medical gentleman, who promptly attended and administered a powerful dose of castor oil. Under the influence of this medicine he recovered so far as to be able, at eight o’clock, p.m., to bite Topping (the coachman). His night was peaceful. This morning, at daybreak, he appeared better, and partook plentifully of some warm gruel, the flavor of which he appeared to relish. Toward eleven o’clock he was so much worse that it was found necessary to muffle the stable knocker. At half-past, or thereabouts, he was heard talking to himself about the horse and Topping’s family, and to add some incoherent expressions which are supposed to have been either a foreboding of his

approaching dissolution or some wishes relative to the disposal of his little property, consisting chiefly of half-pence which he had buried in different parts of the garden. On the clock striking twelve he appeared slightly agitated, but he soon recovered, walked twice or thrice along the coach house, stopped to bark, staggered, and exclaimed 'Halloa, old girl!' (his favorite expression) and died. He behaved throughout with decent fortitude, equanimity and self-possession. I deeply regret that, being in ignorance of his danger, I did not attend to receive his last instructions.

"Something remarkable about his eyes occasioned Topping to run for the doctor at twelve. When they returned together, our friend was gone. It was the medical gentleman who informed me of his decease. He did it with caution and delicacy, preparing me by the remark that 'a jolly queer start had taken place.' I am not wholly free from suspicions of poison. A malicious butcher has been heard to say that he would 'do' for him. His plea was that he would not be molested in taking orders down the mews by any bird that wore a tail. Were they ravens who took manna to somebody in the wilderness? At times I hope they were, and at others I fear they were not, or they would certainly have stolen it by the way. Kate is as well as can be expected. The children seem rather glad of it. He bit their ankles, but that was in play." As my father was writing "Barnaby Rudge" at this time, and wished to continue his study of raven nature, another and a larger "Grip" took the place of "our friend" but it was he whose talking tricks and comical ways gave my father the idea of making a raven one of the characters in this book. My father's fondness for "Grip" was, however, never transferred to any other raven, and none of us ever forgave the butcher whom we all held in some way responsible for his untimely taking off.

But I think his strongest love, among animals, was for dogs. I find a delightful anecdote told by him of a dog belonging to a lady whom he knew well, "Of," an immense, black, good-humored, Newfoundland dog. He came from Oxford and had lived all his life in a brewery. Instructions were given with him that if he were let out every morning alone he would immediately find out the river, regularly take a swim and come gravely home again. This he did with the greatest punctuality, but after a little while was observed to smell of beer. His owner was so sure that he smelled of beer that she resolved to watch him. He was seen to come back from his swim round the usual corner and to go up a flight of steps into a beer shop.

Being instantly followed, the beer shopkeeper is seen to take down a pot (pewter pot) and is heard to say: "Well, old chap, come for your beer as usual, have you?" Upon which he draws a pint and puts it down and the dog drinks it. Being required to explain how this comes to pass the man says: "Yes, ma'am. I know he's your dog, ma'am, but I didn't when he first came. He looked in, ma'am, as a brick-maker might, and then he come in, as a brickmaker might, and he wagged his tail at the pots, and he giv a sniff round and conveyed to me as he was used to beer. So I draw'd him a drop, and he drunk it up. Next morning he come agen by the clock and I draw'd him a pint, and ever since he has took his pint reg'lar."

On account of our birds, cats were not allowed in the house; but from a friend in London I received a present of a white kitten — Williamina — and she and her numerous offspring had a happy home at "Gad's Hill." She became a favorite with all the household, and showed particular devotion to my father. I remember on one occasion when she had presented us with a family of kittens, she selected a corner of father's study for their home. She brought them one by one from the kitchen and deposited them in her chosen corner. My father called to me to remove them, saying that he could not allow the kittens to remain in his room. I did so, but Williamina brought them back again, one by one. Again they were removed. The third time, instead of putting them in the corner, she placed them all, and herself beside them, at my father's feet, and gave him such an imploring glance that he could resist no longer, and they were allowed to remain. As the kittens grew older they became more and more frolicsome, swarming up the curtains, playing about on the writing table and scampering behind the book shelves. But they were never complained of and lived happily in the study until the time came for finding them other homes. One of these kittens was kept, who, as he was quite deaf, was left unnamed, and became known by the servants as "the master's cat," because of his devotion to my father. He was always with him, and used to follow him about the garden like a dog, and sit with him while he wrote. One evening we were all, except father, going to a ball, and when we started, left "the master" and his cat in the drawing-room together. "The master" was reading at a small table, on which a lighted candle was placed. Suddenly the candle went out. My father, who was much interested in his book, relighted the candle stroked the cat, who was looking at him pathetically he noticed, and continued his reading. A few minutes later, as the light became dim, he looked up just in

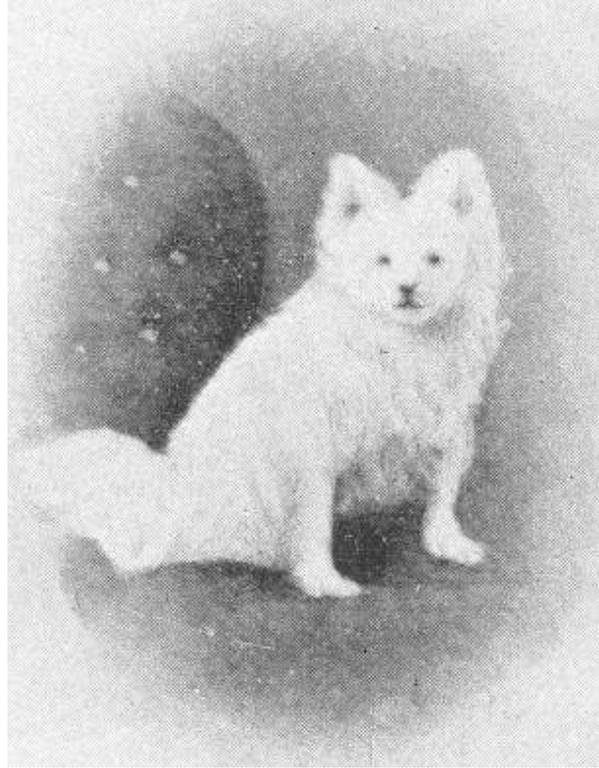
time to see puss deliberately put out the candle with his paw, and then look appealingly toward him. This second and unmistakable hint was not disregarded, and puss was given the petting he craved. Father was full of this anecdote when all met at breakfast the next morning.

Among our dogs were “Turk” and “Linda,” the former a beautiful mastiff and the latter a soft-eyed, gentle, good-tempered St. Bernard. “Mrs. Bouncer,” a Pomeranian, came next, a tiny ball of white fluffy fur, who came as a special gift to me, and speedily won her way by her grace and daintiness into the affections of every member of the household. My father became her special slave, and had a peculiar voice for her — as he had for us, when we were children — to which she would respond at once by running to him from any part of the house when she heard his call. He delighted to see her with the large dogs, with whom she gave herself great airs, “because,” as he said, “she looks so preposterously small.” A few years later came “Don,” a Newfoundland, and then “Bumble,” his son, named after “Oliver Twist’s” beadle, because of “a peculiarly pompous and overbearing manner he had of appearing to mount guard over the yard when he was an absolute infant.” Lastly came “Sultan,” an Irish bloodhound, who had a bitter experience with his life at “Gad’s Hill.” One evening, having broken his chain, he fell upon a little girl who was passing and bit her so severely that my father considered it necessary to have him shot, although this decision cost him a great deal of sorrow.

For a short time I had the care of a mongrel called “Gipsy.” She was not allowed to enter any of the family rooms, and used to spend her time lying contentedly on the rug outside the drawing-room. One afternoon a friend came from Chatham bringing with him a wonderful poodle who had been specially invited to perform all his tricks for my father’s enjoyment. On his arrival, “Mrs. Bouncer” became furious, and when he began his tricks she went deliberately into the hall and escorted “Gipsy” into the drawing-room, as much as to say: “I can’t stand this. If strange dogs are to be made much of, surely the dogs in the house may be at least permitted to enter the room.” She would not look at “Fosco,” the poodle, but sat throughout his performance with her back toward him, the picture of offended dignity. Just as soon, however, as he was fairly out of the house, and not until then, she escorted “Gipsy” back to her rug. My father was intensely amused by this behaviour of “Bouncer’s” and delighted in telling this story about her.

“Mrs. Bouncer” was honored by many messages from her master during his absences from home. Here is one written as I was convalescing from a serious illness: “In my mind’s eye I behold ‘Mrs. Bouncer,’ still with some traces of anxiety on her faithful countenance, balancing herself a little unequally on her forelegs, pricking up her ears with her head on one side, and slightly opening her intellectual nostrils. I send my loving and respectful duty to her.” Again: “Think of my dreaming of ‘Mrs. Bouncer,’ each night!!!”

My father’s love for dogs led him into a strange friendship during our stay at Boulogne. There lived in a cottage on the street which led from our house to the town, a cobbler who used to sit at his window working all day with his dog — a Pomeranian — on the table beside him. The cobbler, in whom my father became very much interested because of the intelligence of his Pomeranian companion, was taken ill, and for many months was unable to work. My father writes: “The cobbler has been ill these many months. The little dog sits at the door so unhappy and anxious to help that I every day expect to see him beginning a pair of top boots.” Another time father writes in telling the history of this little animal: “A cobbler at Boulogne, who had the nicest of little dogs that always sat in his sunny window watching him at his work, asked me if I would bring the dog home as he couldn’t afford to pay the tax for him. The cobbler and the dog being both my particular friends I complied. The cobbler parted with the dog heartbroken. When the dog got home here, my man, like an idiot as he is, tied him up and then untied him. The moment the gate was open, the dog (on the very day after his arrival) ran out. Next day Georgy and I saw him lying all covered with mud, dead, outside the neighbouring church. How am I ever to tell the cobbler? He is too poor to come to England, so I feel that I must lie to him for life, and say that the dog is fat and happy.”



Of horses and ponies we possessed but few during our childhood, and these were not of very choice breed. I remember, however, one pretty pony which was our delight, and dear old "Toby," the good sturdy horse which for many years we used at "Gad's Hill." My father, however, was very fond of horses, and I recall hearing him comment on the strange fact that an animal "so noble in its qualities should be the cause of so much villainy."

* * * * *

TO
MISS DICKENS' POMERANIAN.
"MRS. BOUNCER."



To
Miss Dickens' Pomeranian.

"MRS. BOUNCER."

Furry, lazy, warm and bright,
 Peeing from her fringe of white,
 She blinks and sleeps both day and night,
 A happy Spitz!

She need not fear the cruel stick,
 Nor has she learnt a single trick —
 Just deigns her mistress' hand to lick,
 As she knits.

She eats, and drinks, and eats again,
 Is never out in wind or rain, —
 Takes many a journey in the train,
 And her admits.

She has her own coquettish charms,
 Knows no sorrows, no alarms,

And dozes in her mistress' arms —
A sleepy Spitz.
How small and piquant are her feet —
Ben Allen's sister had as neat —
She looks so saucy, one could beat
Her into fits.

Quite ravishing when neat and clean,
Her cars seem lined with crinoline:
She rules the house, a haughty queen,
A saucy Spitz!

Just tolerates the frequent hug —
Snoozing all day upon the rug,
Complacent, philosophic — snug,
Her paws like mits.

At dinner — ah! that pleasant Babel!
Touch her paw beneath the table,
She'd bite your foot — were she but able —
A naughty Spitz.

To find her mistress how she flew!
Faithful the coming step she knew
Let others be as brave and true —
Lords or Wits!

When Sultan, Turk, and Linda fleet
The lost lov'd Master rushed to meet,
His kindly voice would always greet
The little Spitz!

Alas! so furry, warm, and white,
From this cold world she took her flight,
No more on rug, by fireside bright,
Dear Bouncer sits.

Percy FitzGerald.

CHAPTER V.

Interest in London birds. — Our pet bird “Dick.” — Devotion of his dogs. — Decision to visit America. — His arrival in New York. — Comments on American courtesies. — Farewell public appearances.

The warm affection which was so characteristic of my father toward people was also directed, as I have already told, towards animals and birds. A few further anecdotes occur to me, and I have ventured to give them here, before proceeding to tell of his visit to America, his readings, and the, to me, sad story of his last public appearance.

My father’s quick and amusing observation of London birds and their habits, and of their fondness for “low company,” is full of charm and quaint oddity. He writes: “That anything born of an egg and invested with wings should have got to the pass that it hops contentedly down a ladder into a cellar, and calls that going home, is a circumstance so amazing as to leave one nothing more in this connection to wonder at. I know a low fellow, originally of a good family from Dorking, who takes his whole establishment of wives in single file in at the door of the jug department of a disorderly tavern near the Haymarket, manœuvres them among the company’s legs, and emerges with them at the bottle entrance, seldom in the season going to bed before two in the morning. And thus he passes his life. But the family I am best acquainted with reside in the densest part of Bethnal Green. Their abstraction from the objects in which they live, or rather their conviction that these objects have all come into existence in express subservience to fowls, has so enchanted me that I have made them the subject of many journeys at divers hours. After careful observation of the two lords and of the ten ladies of whom this family consists, I have come to the conclusion that their opinions are represented by the leading lord and leading lady, the latter, as I judge, an aged personage, afflicted with a paucity of feather and visibility of quill that gives her the appearance of a bundle of office pens. They look upon old shoes, wrecks of kettles, saucepans and fragments of bonnets as a kind of meteoric discharge for fowls to peck at. Gaslight comes quite as natural to them as any other light; and I have more than a suspicion that in the minds of the two lords, the early public house at the corner has superseded the sun. They always begin

to crow when the public house shutters begin to be taken down, and they salute the pot-boy the instant he appears to perform that duty, as if he were Phoebus in person.”

During one of his walks through the slums, my father was so fascinated by the intelligence of a busy goldfinch drawing water for himself in his cage — he had other accomplishments as well — that he went in and bought it. But not a thing would the little bird do, not a trick would he perform when he got to his new home in Doughty Street, and would only draw up water in the dark or when he thought no one was looking. “After an interval of futile and at length hopeless expectation,” my father writes, “the merchant who had educated him was appealed to. The merchant was a bow-legged character, with a flat and cushiony nose, like the last new strawberry. He wore a fur cap and shorts, and was of the velveteen race velveteeny. He sent word that he would ‘look round.’ He looked round, appeared in the doorway of the room, and slightly cocked up his evil eye at the goldfinch. Instantly a raging thirst beset the bird, and when it was appeased he still drew several unnecessary buckets of water, leaping about the perch and sharpening his bill with irrepressible satisfaction.”

While at Broadstairs one summer, our bathing woman, who reared birds, gave a canary to my sister and myself. “Dick,” who was only a few weeks old when he came to us, grew to be a very king of birds, and became in time a most important member of the household. There was a fierce war waged against cats during his lifetime, and writing from Boulogne my father very funnily describes our troubles with the feline race: “War is raging against two particularly tigerish and fearful cats (from the mill, I suppose), which are always glaring in dark corners after our wonderful little ‘Dick.’ Keeping the house open at all points it is impossible to shut them out, and they hide themselves in the most terrific manner, hanging themselves up behind draperies like bats, and tumbling out in the dead of night with frightful caterwaulings. Hereupon French, the footman, borrows a gun, loads it to the muzzle, discharges it twice in vain, and throws himself over with the recoil exactly like a clown. But at last, while I was in town, he aims at the more amiable cat of the two and shoots that animal dead. Insufferably elated by this victory he is now engaged from morning to night in hiding behind bushes to get aim at the other. He does nothing else whatever. All the boys encourage him and watch for the enemy, on whose appearance they give an alarm, which immediately serves as a warning to

the creature, who runs away. They — the boys — are at this moment (ready dressed for church) all lying on their stomachs in various parts of the garden. I am afraid to go out lest I should be shot. Mr. Plornish, says his prayers at night in a whisper lest the cat should overhear him and take offence. The tradesmen cry out as they come up the avenue: '*Me Voici! C'est Moi — boulanger — me tirez pas, Monsieur Frenche!*' It is like living in a state of siege, and the wonderful manner in which the cat preserves the character of being the only person not much put out by the intensity of this monomania is most ridiculous. The finest thing is that immediately after I have heard the noble sportsman blazing away at her in the garden in front I look out of my room door into the drawing-room and am pretty sure to see her coming in after the bird, in the calmest manner possible, by the back window." But no harm ever came to "our wonderful little 'Dick,'" who lived to a ripe old age — sixteen years — and was buried under a rose tree at "Gad's Hill."

On his return from his last visit to America he wrote a charming account of his welcome home by the dogs at "Gad's Hill." "As you ask me about the dogs, I begin with them. When I came down first I came to Gravesend, five miles off. The two Newfoundland dogs coming to meet me with the usual carriage and the usual driver, and beholding me coming in my usual dress out at the usual door, it struck me that their recollection of my having been absent for any unusual time was at once cancelled. They behaved (they are both young dogs) exactly in their usual manner, coming behind the basket phaeton as we trotted along and lifting their heads to have their ears pulled, a special attention which they received from no one else. But when I drove into the stableyard, 'Linda' was greatly excited; weeping profusely, and throwing herself on her back that she might caress my foot with her great forepaws. Mamie's little dog, too, 'Mrs. Bouncer,' barked in the greatest agitation on being called down and asked: 'Who is this?' tore round me, like the dog in the Faust outlines."

My father brought with him, on his return from his first visit to America, a small, shaggy Havana spaniel, which had been given to him and which he had named "Timber Doodle." He wrote of him: "Little doggy improves rapidly and now jumps over my stick at the word of command." "Timber," travelled with us in all our foreign wanderings, and while at Albaro the poor little fellow had a most unfortunate experience — an encounter of some duration with a plague of fleas. Father writes: "'Timber' has had every hair

upon his body cut off because of the fleas, and he looks like the ghost of a drowned dog come out of a pond after a week or so. It is very awful to see him sidle into a room. He knows the change upon him, and is always turning-round and round to look for himself. I think he'll die of grief; it is to be hoped that the hair will grow again."

For many years my father's public readings were an important part of his life, and into their performance and preparation he threw the best energy of his heart and soul, practising and rehearsing at all times and places. The meadow near our home was a favorite place, and people passing through the lane, not knowing who he was, or what doing, must have thought him a madman from his reciting and gesticulation. The great success of these readings led to many tempting offers from the United States, which, as time went on, and we realized how much the fatigue of the readings together with his other work were sapping his strength, we earnestly opposed his even considering. However, after much discussion and deliberation he wrote to me on September 28th, 1867: "As I telegraphed after I saw you I am off to consult with Mr. Forster and Dolby together. You shall hear either on Monday or by Monday's post from London how I decide finally." Three days later: "You will have had my telegram that I go to America. After a long discussion with Forster and consideration of what is to be said on both sides, I have decided to go through with it, and have telegraphed 'yes' to Boston." There was, at first, some talk of my accompanying him, but when the programme of the tour was submitted to my father and he saw how much time must be devoted to business and how little, indeed almost no time could be given to sightseeing, this idea was given up.

A farewell banquet was given him in London on the second of November, and on the ninth he sailed. A large party of us went to Liverpool to see him sail, and with heavy hearts to bid him farewell. In those days a journey to America was a serious matter, and we felt in our hearts that he was about to tax his health and strength too cruelly. And so he did.

Soon after reaching the United States, my father contracted a severe cold which never left him during his visit, and which caused him the greatest annoyance. I will give you a few quotations from his letters to show how pluckily he fought against his ailment and under what a strain he continued his work. On his arrival at New York on Christmas Day, in response to a letter of mine which awaited him there, he wrote: "I wanted your letter

much, for I had a frightful cold (English colds are nothing to those of this country) and was very miserable.” He adds to this letter, a day or two later: “I managed to read last night but it was as much as I could do. To-day I am so unwell that I have sent for a doctor.” Again he writes: “It likewise happens, not seldom, that I am so dead beat when I come off the stage, that they lay me down on a sofa after I have been washed and dressed, and I lie there extremely faint for a quarter of an hour. In that time I rally and come right.” Again: “On the afternoon of my birthday my catarrh was in such a state that Charles Sumner coming in at five o’clock and finding me covered with mustard poultices and apparently voiceless, turned to Dolby and said: ‘Surely, Mr. Dolby, it is impossible that he can read to-night.’ Says Dolby: ‘Sir, I have told Mr. Dickens so four times to-day and I have been very anxious. But you have no idea how he will change when he gets to the little table.’ After five minutes of the little table I was not, for the time, even hoarse. The frequent experience of this return of force when it is wanted saves me much anxiety, but I am not at times without the nervous dread that I may some day sink altogether.”

But as a reward for his unstinted self-giving came the wonderful success of his tour, the pride and delight which he felt in the enthusiasm which greeted him everywhere, the personal affection lavished upon him, and the many dear friends he made. He writes from Boston, *à propos* of these rewards: “When we reached here last Saturday night we found that Mrs. Fields had not only garnished the room with flowers, but also with holly (with real red berries), and festoons of moss dependent from the looking-glasses and picture-frames. The homely Christmas look of the place quite affected us.”

Later, from Washington: “I couldn’t help laughing at myself on my birthday here; it was observed as much as though I were a little boy. Flowers and garlands of the most exquisite kind, arranged in all manner of green baskets, bloomed over the room; letters, radiant with good wishes, poured in. Also, by hands unknown, the hall at night was decorated; and after ‘Boots at the Holly Tree Inn’ the audience rose, great people and all, standing and cheering until I went back to the table and made them a little speech.”

He wrote home constantly, giving frequent commissions for improvements at “Gad’s Hill,” to be made before his return. He was much

impressed on his second visit, as on his first, I remember, with the beauty of the American women. “The ladies are remarkably handsome,” he wrote.



In the autumn of 1869 he began a series of farewell readings, which were another heavy tax upon his health and strength. During his tour at this time he writes to Mr. Forster after some rather alarming symptoms had developed: “I told Beard, a year after the Staplehurst accident, that I was certain that my heart had been fluttered and wanted a little helping. This the stethoscope confirmed; and considering the immense exertion I am undergoing, and the constant jarring of express trains, the case seems to me quite intelligible. Don’t say anything in the ‘Gad’s’ direction about my being a little out of sorts. I have broached the matter, of course, but very lightly.”

But even such warning as this failed to make him realize how much less was his strength, and with indomitable courage and spirit he continued his tour. The trouble in his feet increased, and his sufferings from this cause were very great. It became necessary at one time for him to have a physician in attendance upon him at every reading. But in spite of his perseverance, he became so ill that the readings had to be stopped.

CHAPTER VI.

Last words spoken in public. — A railroad accident in 1865. — At home after his American visit. — "Improvements" at "Gad's Hill." — At "Gad's Hill" once more. — The closing days of his life. — Burial at Westminster.

My father gave his last reading in St. James' Hall, London, on the fifteenth of March. The programme included "The Christmas Carol" and the "Trial" from "Pickwick." The hall was packed by an enormous audience, and he was greeted with all the warmth which the personal affection felt for the reader inspired. We all felt very anxious for him, fearing that the excitement and emotion which must attend upon his public farewell would have a bad effect upon him. But it had no immediate result, at any rate, much to our relief.

I do not think that my father ever — and this is saying a great deal — looked handsomer p. 104 nor read with more ability than on this, his last appearance. Mr. Forster writes: "The charm of his reading was at its height when he shut the volume of 'Pickwick' and spoke in his own person. He said that for fifteen years he had been reading his own books to audiences whose sensitive and kindly recognition of them had given him instruction and enjoyment in his art such as few men could have had; but that he nevertheless thought it well now to retire upon older associations, and in future to devote himself exclusively to the calling which first made him known. 'In but two short weeks from this time I hope that you may enter in your own homes on a new series of readings, at which my assistance will be indispensable; but from these garish lights I vanish now, for evermore, with a heartfelt, grateful, respectful, affectionate farewell.'"

There was a dead silence as my father turned away, much moved; and then came from the audience such a burst and tumult of cheers and applause as were almost too much to bear, mixed as they were with personal love and affection for the man before them. He returned with us all to "Gad's Hill," very happy and hopeful, under the temporary improvement which the rest and peace of his home brought him, and he settled down to his new book, "Edwin Drood," with increased pleasure and interest.

His last public appearances were in April. On the fifth he took the chair at the News-venders' dinner. On the thirtieth he returned thanks for

“Literature” at the Royal Academy banquet. In this speech he alluded to the death of his old friend, Mr. Daniel Maclise, winding up thus: “No artist, of whatsoever denomination, I make bold to say, ever went to his rest leaving a golden memory more pure from dross, or having devoted himself with a truer chivalry to the art-goddess whom he worshipped.” These words, with the old, true, affectionate ring in them, were the last spoken by my father in public.

About 1865 my dear father’s health began to give way, a peculiar affection of the foot which frequently caused him the greatest agony and suffering, appearing about this time. Its real cause — overwork — was not suspected either by his physicians or himself, his vitality seeming something which could not wear out; but, although he was so active and full of energy, he was never really strong, and found soon that he must take more in the way of genuine recreation. He wrote me from France about this time: “Before I went away I had certainly worked myself into a damaged state. But the moment I got away I began, thank God, to get well. I hope to profit from this experience, and to make future dashes from my desk before I need them.”

It was while on his way home after this trip that he was in the terrible railroad accident to which he afterwards referred in a letter to a friend, saying, that his heart had never been in good condition after that accident. It occurred on the ninth of June, a date which five years later was the day of his death.

He wrote describing his experiences: “I was in the only carriage which did not go over into the stream. It was caught upon the turn by some of the ruin of the bridge, and became suspended and balanced in an apparently impossible manner. Two ladies were my fellow-passengers, an old one and a young one. This is exactly what passed — you may judge from it the length of our suspense: Suddenly we were off the rail and beating the ground as the car of a half-emptied balloon might. The old lady cried out ‘My God!’ and the young one screamed. I caught hold of them both (the old lady sat opposite, and the young one on my left) and said: ‘We can’t help ourselves, but we can be quiet and composed. Pray, don’t cry out!’ The old lady immediately answered: ‘Thank you, rely upon me. Upon my soul I will be quiet.’ We were then all tilted down together in a corner of the carriage, which then stopped. I said to them thereupon: ‘You may be sure nothing worse can happen; our danger must be over. Will you remain

here without stirring while I get out of the window?’ They both answered quite collectedly ‘Yes,’ and I got out without the least notion of what had happened. Fortunately I got out with great caution, and stood upon the step. Looking down I saw the bridge gone, and nothing below me but the line of rail. Some people in the other two compartments were madly trying to plunge out at a window, and had no idea that there was an open, swampy field fifteen feet down below them, and nothing else. The two guards (one with his face cut) were running up and down on the down-track of the bridge (which was not torn up) quite wildly. I called out to them: ‘Look at me! Do stop an instant and look at me, and tell me whether you don’t know me?’ One of them answered: ‘We know you very well, Mr. Dickens.’ ‘Then,’ I said, ‘my good fellow, for God’s sake, give me your key, and send one of those laborers here, and I’ll empty this carriage.’ We did it quite safely, by means of a plank or two, and when it was done I saw all the rest of the train, except the two baggage vans, down the stream. I got into the carriage again for my brandy flask, took off my travelling hat for a basin, climbed down the brickwork, and filled my hat with water. Suddenly I came upon a staggering man, covered with blood (I think he must have been flung clean out of his carriage), with such a frightful cut across the skull that I couldn’t bear to look at him. I poured some water over his face, and gave him some to drink, then gave him some brandy, and laid him down on the grass.

He said ‘I am gone,’ and died afterwards. Then I stumbled over a lady lying on her back against a little pollard tree, with the blood streaming over her face (which was lead color) in a number of distinct little streams from the head. I asked her if she could swallow a little brandy, and she just nodded, and I gave her some and left her for somebody else. The next time I passed her she was dead. Then a man examined at the inquest yesterday (who evidently had not the least remembrance of what really passed) came running up to me and implored me to help him find his wife, who was afterward found dead. No imagination can conceive the ruin of the carriages, or the extraordinary weights under which the people were lying, or the complications into which they were twisted up among iron and wood, and mud and water. I am keeping very quiet here.”

This letter was written from “Gad’s Hill” four days after the accident. We were spared any anxiety about our father, as we did not hear of the accident until after we were with him in London. With his usual care and

thoughtfulness he had telegraphed to his friend Mr. Wills, to summon us to town to meet him. The letter continues: "I have, I don't know what to call it, constitutional (I suppose) presence of mind, and was not the least fluttered at the time. I instantly remembered that I had the MS. of a number with me, and clambered back into the carriage for it. But in writing these scanty words of recollection I feel the shake, and am obliged to stop."

We heard, afterwards, how helpful he had been at the time, ministering to the dying! How calmly and tenderly he cared for the suffering ones about him!

But he never recovered entirely from the shock. More than a year later he writes: "It is remarkable that my watch (a special chronometer) has never gone quite correctly since, and to this day there sometimes comes over me, on a railway and in a hansom-cab, or any sort of conveyance, for a few seconds, a vague sense of dread that I have no power to check. It comes and passes, but I cannot prevent its coming."

I have often seen this dread come upon him, and on one occasion, which I especially recall, while we were on our way from London to our little country station "Higham," where the carriage was to meet us, my father suddenly clutched the arms of the railway carriage seat, while his face grew ashy pale, and great drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead, and though he tried hard to master the dread, it was so strong that he had to leave the train at the next station. The accident had left its impression upon the memory, and it was destined never to be effaced. The hours spent upon railroads were thereafter often hours of pain to him. I realized this often while travelling with him, and no amount of assurance could dispel the feeling.

Early in May of 1868, we had him safely back with us, greatly strengthened and invigorated by his ocean journey home, and I think he was never happier at "Gad's Hill" than during his last two years there.

During that time he had a succession of guests, and none were more honored, nor more heartily welcomed, than his American friends. The first of these to come, if I remember rightly, was Mr. Longfellow, with his daughters. My father writes describing a picnic which he gave them; "I turned out a couple of postilions in the old red jacket of the old Royal red for our ride, and it was like a holiday ride in England fifty years ago. Of course we went to look at the old houses in Rochester, and the old Cathedral, and the old castle, and the house for the six poor travellers.

“Nothing can surpass the respect paid to Longfellow here, from the Queen downward. He is everywhere received and courted, and finds the working men at least as well acquainted with his books as the classes socially above them.”

Between the comings and goings of visitors there were delightfully quiet evenings at home, spent during the summer in our lovely porch, or walking about the garden, until “tray time,” ten o’clock. When the cooler nights came we had music in the drawing-room, and it is my happiness now to remember on how many evenings I played and sang all his favorite songs and tunes to my father during these last winters while he would listen while he smoked or read, or, in his more usual fashion, paced up and down the room. I never saw him more peacefully contented than at these times.

There were always “improvements” — as my father used to call his alterations — being made at “Gad’s Hill,” and each improvement was supposed to be the last. As each was completed, my sister — who was always a constant visitor, and an exceptionally dear one to my father — would have to come down and inspect, and as each was displayed, my father would say to her most solemnly: “Now, Katie, you behold your parent’s latest and last achievement.” These “last improvements” became quite a joke between them. I remember so well, on one such occasion, after the walls and doors of the drawing-room had been lined with mirrors, my sister’s laughing speech to “the master”: “I believe papa, that when you become an angel your wings will be made of looking-glass and your crown of scarlet geraniums.”

And here I would like to correct an error concerning myself. I have been spoken of as my father’s “favorite daughter.” If he had a favorite daughter — and I hope and believe that the one was as dear to him as the other — my dear sister must claim that honor. I say this ungrudgingly, for during those last two years my father and I seemed to become more closely united, and I know how deep was the affectionate intimacy at the time of his death.

The “last improvement” — in truth, the very last — was the building of a conservatory between the drawing and dining rooms. My father was more delighted with this than with any previous alteration, and it was certainly a pretty addition to the quaint old villa. The *châlet*, too, which he used in summer as his study, was another favorite spot at his favorite “Gad’s Hill.”

In the early months of 1870 we moved up to London, as my father had decided to give twelve farewell readings there. He had the sanction of the

late Sir Thomas Watson to this undertaking, on condition that there should be no railway journeys in connection with them. While we were in London he made many private engagements, principally, I know, on my account, as I was to be presented that spring.

During this last visit to London, my father was not, however, in his usual health, and was so quickly and easily tired that a great number of our engagements had to be cancelled. He dined out very seldom, and I remember that on the last occasion he attended a very large dinner party the effort was too much for him, and before the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room, he sent me a message begging me to come to him at once, saying that he was in too great pain to mount the stairs. No one who had watched him throughout the dinner, seeing his bright, animated face, and listening to his cheery conversation, could have imagined him to be suffering acute pain.

He was at "Gad's Hill" again by the thirtieth of May, and soon hard at work upon "Edwin Drood." Although happy and contented, there was an appearance of fatigue and weariness about him very unlike his usual air of fresh activity. He was out with the dogs for the last time on the afternoon of the sixth of June, when he walked into Rochester for the "Daily Mail." My sister, who had come to see the latest "improvement," was visiting us, and was to take me with her to London on her return, for a short visit. The conservatory — the "improvement" which Katie had been summoned to inspect — had been stocked, and by this time many of the plants were in full blossom. Everything was at its brightest and I remember distinctly my father's pleasure in showing my sister the beauties of his "improvement."

We had been having most lovely weather, and in consequence, the outdoor plants were wonderfully forward in their bloom, my father's favorite red geraniums making a blaze of color in the front garden. The syringa shrubs filled the evening air with sweetest fragrance as we sat in the porch and walked about the garden on this last Sunday of our dear father's life. My aunt and I retired early and my dear sister sat for a long while with my father while he spoke to her most earnestly of his affairs.

As I have already said my father had such an intense dislike for leave-taking that he always, when it was possible, shirked a farewell, and we children, knowing this dislike, used only to wave our hands or give him a silent kiss when parting. But on this Monday morning, the seventh, just as we were about to start for London, my sister suddenly said: "I *must* say

good-bye to papa,” and hurried over to the chalet where he was busily writing. As a rule when he was so occupied, my father would hold up his cheek to be kissed, but this day he took my sister in his arms saying: “God bless you, Katie,” and there, “among the branches of the trees, among the birds and butterflies and the scent of flowers,” she left him, never to look into his eyes again.

In the afternoon, feeling fatigued, and not inclined to much walking, he drove with my aunt into Cobham. There he left the carriage and walked home through the park. After dinner he remained seated in the dining-room, through the evening, as from that room he could see the effect of some lighted Chinese lanterns, which he had hung in the conservatory during the day, and talked to my aunt about his great love for “Gad’s Hill,” his wish that his name might become more associated with the place, and his desire to be buried near it.

On the morning of the eighth he was in excellent spirits, speaking of his book, at which he intended working through the day and in which he was most intensely interested. He spent a busy morning in the chalet, and it must have been then that he wrote that description of Rochester, which touched our hearts when we read it for the first time after its writer lay dead: “Brilliant morning shines on the old city. Its antiquities and ruins are surpassingly beautiful with the lusty ivy gleaming in the sun and the rich trees waving in the balmy air. Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods and fields, or rather, from the one great garden of the whole cultivated island in its yielding time, penetrate into the cathedral, subdue its earthly odor, and preach the Resurrection and the Life.”

He returned to the house for luncheon, seemingly perfectly well and exceedingly cheerful and hopeful. He smoked a cigar in his beloved conservatory, and went back to the chalet. When he came again to the house, about an hour before the time fixed for an early dinner, he was tired, silent and abstracted, but as this was a mood very usual to him after a day of engrossing work, it caused no alarm nor surprise to my aunt, who happened to be the only member of the family at home. While awaiting dinner he wrote some letters in the library and arranged some trifling business matters, with a view to his departure for London the following morning.

It was not until they were seated at the dinner-table that a striking change in the color and expression of his face startled my aunt. Upon her asking

him if he were ill, he answered "Yes, very ill; I have been very ill for the last hour." But when she said that she would send for a physician he stopped her, saying that he would go on with dinner, and afterward to London.

He made an earnest effort to struggle against the seizure which was fast coming over him, and continued to talk, but incoherently and very indistinctly. It being now evident that he was in a serious condition, my aunt begged him to go to his room before she sent for medical aid. "Come and lie down," she entreated. "Yes, on the ground," he answered indistinctly. These were the last words that he uttered. As he spoke, he fell to the floor. A couch was brought into the dining-room, on which he was laid, a messenger was dispatched for the local physician, telegrams were sent to all of us and to Mr. Beard. This was at a few minutes after six o'clock. I was dining at a house some little distance from my sister's home. Dinner was half over when I received a message that she wished to speak to me. I found her in the hall with a change of dress for me and a cab in waiting. Quickly I changed my gown, and we began the short journey which brought us to our so sadly-altered home. Our dear aunt was waiting for us at the open door, and when I saw her face I think the last faint hope died within me.

All through the night we watched him — my sister on one side of the couch, my aunt on the other, and I keeping hot bricks to the feet which nothing could warm, hoping and praying that he might open his eyes and look at us, and know us once again. But he never moved, never opened his eyes, never showed a sign of consciousness through all the long night. On the afternoon of the ninth the celebrated London physician, Dr. Russell Reynolds, (recently deceased), was summoned to a consultation by the two medical men in attendance, but he could only confirm their hopeless verdict. Later, in the evening of this day, at ten minutes past six, we saw a shudder pass over our dear father, he heaved a deep sigh, a large tear rolled down his face and at that instant his spirit left us. As we saw the dark shadow pass from his face, leaving it so calm and beautiful in the peace and majesty of death, I think there was not one of us who would have wished, could we have had the power, to recall his spirit to earth.

I made it my duty to guard the beloved body as long as it was left to us. The room in which my dear father reposed for the last time was bright with the beautiful fresh flowers which were so abundant at this time of the year,

and which our good neighbours sent to us so frequently. The birds were singing all about and the summer sun shone brilliantly.

“And may there be no sadness of farewell

When I embark.

For though when from out our bourne of Time and Place

The flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face

When I have crossed the bar.’

Those exquisite lines of Lord Tennyson’s seem so appropriate to my father, to his dread of good-byes, to his great and simple faith, that I have ventured to quote them here.

On the morning after he died, we received a very kind visit from Sir John Millais, then Mr. Millais, R.A. and Mr. Woolner, R.A. Sir John made a beautiful pencil drawing of my father, and Mr. Woolner took a cast of his head, from which he afterwards modelled a bust. The drawing belongs to my sister, and is one of her greatest treasures. It is, like all Sir John’s drawings, most delicate and refined, and the likeness absolutely faithful to what my father looked in death.

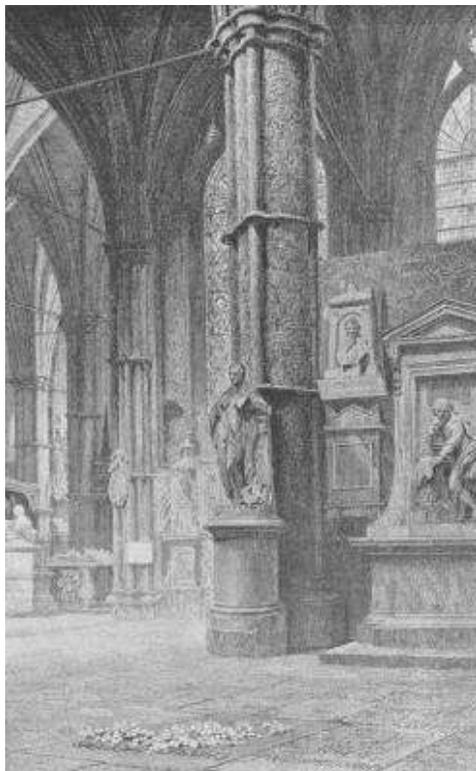
You remember that when he was describing the illustrations of Little Nell’s death-bed he wrote: “I want it to express the most beautiful repose and tranquillity, and to have something of a happy look, if death can.” Surely this was what his death-bed expressed — infinite happiness and rest.

As my father had expressed a wish to be buried in the quiet little church-yard at Shorne, arrangements were made for the interment to take place there. This intention was, however, abandoned, in consequence of a request from the Dean and chapter of Rochester Cathedral that his bones might repose there. A grave was prepared and everything arranged when it was made known to us, through Dean Stanley, that there was a general and very earnest desire that he should find his last resting-place in Westminster Abbey. To such a tribute to our dear father’s memory we could make no possible objection, although it was with great regret that we relinquished the plan to lay him in a spot so closely identified with his life and works.

The only stipulation which was made in connection with the burial at Westminster Abbey was that the clause in his will which read: “I

emphatically direct that I be buried in an inexpensive, unostentatious and and strictly private manner,” should be strictly adhered to, as it was.

At midday on the fourteenth of June a few friends and ourselves saw our dear one laid to rest in the grand old cathedral. Our small group in that vast edifice seemed to make the beautiful words of our beautiful burial service even more than usually solemn and touching. Later in the day, and for many following days, hundreds of mourners flocked to the open grave, and filled the deep vault with flowers. And even after it was closed Dean Stanley wrote: “There was a constant pressure to the spot and many flowers were strewn upon it by unknown hands, many tears shed from unknown eyes.”



And every year on the ninth of June and on Christmas day we find other flowers strewn by other unknown hands on that spot so sacred to us, as to all who knew and loved him. And every year beautiful bright-coloured leaves are sent to us from across the Atlantic, to be placed with our own flowers on that dear grave; and it is twenty-six years now since my father died!

And for his epitaph what better than my father's own words:

“Of the loved, revered and honoured head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, nor make one feature odious. It is not that the hand is

heavy and will fall down when released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still; but that the hand was open, generous and true, the heart brave, warm and tender, and the pulse a man's. Strike! shadow, strike! and see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal."

the end.



Footnotes:

When I write about my aunt, or "Auntie," as no doubt I may often have occasion to do, it is of the aunt *par excellence*, Georgina Hogarth. She has been to me ever since I can remember anything, and to all of us, the truest, best and dearest friend, companion and counsellor. To quote my father's own words: "The best and truest friend man ever had."

DICKENS-LAND by J.A. Nicklin



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**CHALK,
HOUSE WHERE DICKENS SPENT HIS
HONEYMOON**

DICKENS-LAND
Described by J. A. NICKLIN
Pictured by E. W. HASLEHUST





The central shrine of a literary cult is at least as often its hero's home of adoption as his place of birth. To the Wordsworthian, Cockermouth has but a faint, remote interest in comparison with Grasmere and Rydal Mount. Edinburgh, for all its associations with the life and the genius of Scott, is not as Abbotsford, or as that beloved Border country in which his memory has struck its deepest roots. And so it is with Dickens. The accident of birth attaches his name but slightly to Landport in South-sea. The Dickens pilgrim treads in the most palpable footsteps of "Boz" amongst the landmarks of a Victorian London, too rapidly disappearing, and through the "rich and varied landscape" on either side of the Medway, "covered with cornfields and pastures, with here and there a windmill or a distant church", which Dickens loved from boyhood, peopled with the creatures of his teeming fancy, and chose for his last and most-cherished habitation.

What Abbotsford was to Scott, that, almost, to Dickens in his later years was Gadshill Place. From his study window in the "grave red-brick house" "on his little Kentish freehold" — a house which he had "added to and stuck bits upon in all manner of ways, so that it was as pleasantly irregular and as violently opposed to all architectural ideas as the most hopeful man could possibly desire" — he looked out, so he wrote to a friend, "on as pretty a view as you will find in a long day's English ride.... Cobham Park and Woods are behind the house; the distant Thames is in front; the Medway, with Rochester and its old castle and cathedral, on one side." On every side he could not fail to reach, in those brisk walks with which he

sought, too strenuously, perhaps, health and relaxation, some object redolent of childish dreams or mature achievement, of intimate joys and sorrows, of those phantoms of his brain which to him then, as to hundreds of thousands of his readers since, were not less real than the men and women of everyday encounter. On those seven miles between Rochester and Maidstone, which he discovered to be one of the most beautiful walks in England, he might be tempted to strike off at Aylesford for a short stroll to such a pleasant old Elizabethan mansion as Cobtree Hall, the very type, it may be, of Manor Farm, Dingley Dell, or for a longer tramp to Town Malling, from which he may well have borrowed many strokes for the picture of Muggleton, that town of sturdy Kentish cricket. Sometimes he would walk across the marshes to Gravesend, and returning through the village of Chalk, would pause for a retrospective glance at the house where his honeymoon was spent and a good part of *Pickwick* planned. In the latter end of the year, when he could take a short cut through the stubble fields from Higham to the marshes lying further down the Thames, he would often visit the desolate churchyard where little Pip was so terribly frightened by the convict. Or, descending the long slope from Gadshill to Strood, and crossing Rochester Bridge — over the balustrades of which Mr. Pickwick leaned in agreeable reverie when he was accosted by Dismal Jemmy — the author of *Great Expectations* and *Edwin Drood* would pass from Rochester High Street — where Mr. Pumblechook's seed shop looks across the way at Miss Twinkleton's establishment — into the Vines, to compare once more the impression on his unerring "inward eye" with the actual features of that Restoration House which, under another name, he assigned to Miss Havisham, and so round by Fort Pitt to the Chatham lines. And there — who can doubt? — if he seemed to hear the melancholy wind that whistled through the deserted fields as Mr. Winkle took his reluctant stand, a wretched and desperate duellist, his thoughts would also stray to the busy dockyard town and "a blessed little room" in a plain-looking plaster-fronted house from which dated all his early readings and imaginings.

Between the "very small and not-over-particularly-taken-care-of boy" and the strong, self-reliant man whose fame had filled two continents, Gadshill Place was an immediate link. Everyone knows the story which Dickens tells of a vision of his former self meeting him on the road to Canterbury.

“So smooth was the old high road, and so fresh were the horses, and so fast went I, that it was midway between Gravesend and Rochester, and the widening river was bearing the ships, white-sailed or black-smoked, out to sea, when I noticed by the wayside a very queer small boy.

“‘Halloa!’ said I to the very queer small boy, ‘where do you live?’

“‘At Chatham,’ says he.

“‘What do you do there?’ say I.

“‘I go to school,’ says he.

“I took him up in a moment, and we went on. Presently, the very queer small boy says, ‘This is Gadshill we are coming to, where Falstaff went out to rob those travellers and ran away.’

“‘You know something about Falstaff, eh?’ said I.

“‘All about him,’ said the very queer small boy. ‘I am old (I am nine), and I read all sorts of books. But do let us stop at the top of the hill, and look at the house there, if you please!’

“‘You admire that house?’ said I.



GADSHILL PLACE FROM THE GARDENS

“‘Bless you, sir,’ said the very queer small boy, ‘when I was not more than half as old as nine, it used to be a treat for me to be brought to look at it. And now I am nine I come by myself to look at it. And ever since I can recollect, my father, seeing me so fond of it, has often said to me, If you were to be very persevering, and were to work hard, you might some day come to live in it. Though that’s impossible!’ said the very queer small boy, drawing a low breath, and now staring at the house out of window with all his might.

“I was rather amazed to be told this by the very queer small boy; for that house happens to be *my* house, and I have reason to believe that what he said was true.”

As the queer small boy in the *Uncommercial Traveller* said, Gadshill Place is at the very top of Falstaff’s hill. It stands on the south side of the Dover road; — on the north side, but a little lower down, is “a delightfully oldfashioned inn of the old coaching days”, the “Sir John Falstaff”; — surrounded by a high wall and screened by a row of limes. The front view, with its wooden and pillared porch, its bays, its dormer windows let into the roof, and its surmounting bell turret and vane, bears much the same appearance as it did to the queer small boy. But amongst the many additions and alterations which Dickens was constantly making, the drawing-room had been enlarged from a smaller existing one, and the conservatory into which it opens was, as he laughingly told his younger daughter, “positively the last improvement at Gadshill” — a jest to prove sadly prophetic, for it was uttered on the Sunday before his death. The little library, too, on the opposite side of the porch from the drawing-room and conservatory, was a converted bedroom. Its aspect is familiar to most Dickens-lovers from Sir Luke Fildes’s famous picture of “The Empty Chair”. In summer, however, Dickens used to do his work not in the library but in a Swiss chalet, presented to him by Fechter, the great actor, which stood in a shrubbery lying on the other side of the highroad, and entered by a subway that Dickens had excavated for the purpose. The chalet now must be sought in the terrace garden of Cobham Hall. When Dickens sat at his desk in a room of the chalet, “up among the branches of the trees”, the five mirrors which he had put in reflected “the leaves quivering at the windows, and the great fields of waving corn, and the sail-dotted river”. The birds and butterflies flew in and out, the green branches shot in at the open windows, and the lights and shadows of the clouds and the scent of flowers and of everything

growing for miles had the same free access. No imaginative artist, whether in words or colour, could have desired a more inspiring environment. The back of the house, looking southward, descends by one flight of steps upon a lawn, where one of the balustrades of the old Rochester Bridge had, when this was demolished, been fitted up as a sundial. The lawn, in turn, communicates with flower and vegetable gardens by another flight of steps. Beyond is "the much-coveted meadow" which Dickens obtained, partly by exchange, from the trustees — not of Watts's Charity, as Forster has stated, but of Sir Joseph Williamson's Free School at Rochester. It was in this field that the villagers from neighbouring Higham played cricket matches, and that, just before Dickens went to America for the last time, he held those quaint footraces for all and sundry, described in one of his letters to Forster. Though the landlord of the Falstaff, from over the way, was allowed to erect a drinking booth, and all the prizes were given in money; though, too, the road from Chatham to Gadshill was like a fair all day, and the crowd consisted mainly of rough labouring men, of soldiers, sailors, and navvies, there was no disorder, not a flag, rope, or stake displaced, and no drunkenness whatever. As striking a tribute, if rightly considered, as ever was exacted by a strong and winning personality! One of those oddities in which Dickens delighted was elicited by a hurdle race for strangers. The man who came in second ran 120 yards and leaped over ten hurdles with a pipe in his mouth and smoking it all the time. "If it hadn't been for your pipe," said the Master of Gadshill Place, clapping him on the shoulder at the winning-post, "you would have been first." "I beg your pardon, sir," he answered, "but if it hadn't been for my pipe, I should have been nowhere."

To the hospitable hearth of Gadshill Place were drawn, by the fame of the "Inimitable Boz", a long succession of brilliant men and women, mostly of the Anglo-Saxon race, whether English or American; and if not in the throngs for which at Abbotsford open house was kept, yet with a frequency which would have made literary work almost impossible for the host without remarkable steadiness of purpose and regularity of habits. For Longfellow and his daughters he "turned out", that they might see all of the surrounding country which could be seen in a short stay, "a couple of postilions in the old red jackets of the old red royal Dover road, and it was like a holiday ride in England fifty years ago".

In his study in the late and early months, and his Swiss chalet through the summer, Dickens would write such novels as *Great Expectations*, and the

unfinished *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, taking his local colour from spots which lay within the compass of a reasonable walk; and others, such as *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Our Mutual Friend*, to which the circumstances of time and place furnished little or nothing except their influence on his mood. Some of the occasional papers which, in the character of "The Uncommercial Traveller", he furnished to *All the Year Round*, have as much of the *genius loci* as any of his romances. Even to-day the rushing swarm of motor cars has not yet driven from the more secluded nooks of Kent all such idylls of open-air vagabondage as this: —

"I have my eyes upon a piece of Kentish road, bordered on either side by a wood, and having on one hand, between the road dust and the trees, a skirting patch of grass. Wild flowers grow in abundance on this spot, and it lies high and airy, with a distant river stealing steadily away to the ocean, like a man's life. To gain the milestone here, which the moss, primroses, violets, bluebells and wild roses would soon render illegible but for peering travellers pushing them aside with their sticks, you must come up a steep hill, come which way you may. So, all the tramps with carts or caravans — the gipsy tramp, the show tramp, the Cheap Jack — find it impossible to resist the temptations of the place, and all turn the horse loose when they come to it, and boil the pot. Bless the place, I love the ashes of the vagabond fires that have scorched its grass!"

The Kentish road that Dickens thus describes is certainly the Dover Road at Gadshill, from which, of course, there is a steep declivity whether the route is westward to Gravesend or eastwards to Strood and Rochester. In Strood itself Dickens found little to interest him, though the view of Rochester from Strood Hill is an arresting one, with the stately mediævalism of Castle and Cathedral emerging from a kind of haze in which it is hard to distinguish what is smoke-wreath and what a mass of crowding roofs. The Medway, which divides Strood from the almost indistinguishably overlapping towns of Rochester, Chatham, and Brompton, is crossed by an iron bridge, superseding the old stone structure commemorated in *Pickwick*. Mr. Pickwick's notes on "the four towns" do not require very much modification to apply to their present state.



ROCHESTER FROM STROOD

“The principal productions”, he wrote, “appear to be soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers, and dockyard men. The commodities chiefly exposed for sale in the public streets are marine stores, hard-bake, apples, flat-fish, and oysters. The streets present a lively and animated appearance, occasioned chiefly by the conviviality of the military.... The consumption of tobacco in these towns must be very great, and the smell which pervades the streets must be exceedingly delicious to those who are extremely fond of smoking. A superficial traveller might object to the dirt, which is their leading characteristic, but to those who view it as an indication of traffic and commercial prosperity, it is truly gratifying.”

This description is much less true of Rochester than of its three neighbours, and does no justice to the aspects which Dickens himself presented in the Market Town of *Great Expectations*, and the Cloisterham of *Edwin Drood*. Amid the rather sordid encroachments of a modern industrialism, Rochester still keeps something of the air of an old-world country town, and in the precincts of its Cathedral there still broods a cloistral peace. The dominating feature of the town, from whatever side approached, is the massive ruin of the Norman Keep of Bishop Gundulf, the architect also of London’s White Tower. Though the blue sky is its only roof, and on the rugged staircase the dark apertures in the walls, where

rafters and floors were once, show like gaping sockets from which the ravens and daws have picked out the eyes, it seems to stand with all the immovable strength of some solid rock on which the waves of rebellion or invasion would have dashed and broken. It is easy to believe the saying of Lambarde, in his *Perambulation of Kent*, that “from time to time it had a part in almost every tragedie”. But the grimness of its grey walls is relieved by a green mantle of clinging ivy, and though it can no longer be said of the Castle that it is “bathed, though in ruins, with a flush of flowers”, the beautiful single pink grows wild on its ramparts.

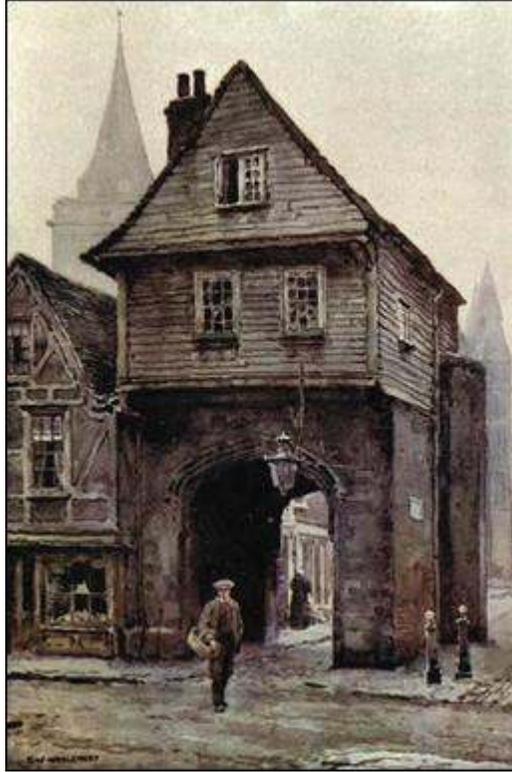
From the Castle to the “Bull” in the High Street is a transition which seems almost an anachronism. It is but to follow in the traces of the Pickwick Club. The covered gateway, the staircase almost wide enough for a coach and four, the ballroom on the first floor landing, with card-room adjoining, and the bedroom which Mr. Winkle occupied inside Mr. Tupman’s — all are there, just as when the club entertained Alfred Jingle to a dinner of soles, a broiled fowl and mushrooms, and Mr. Tupman took him to the ball in Mr. Winkle’s coat, borrowed without leave, and Dr. Slammer of the 97th sent his challenge next morning to the owner of the coat. The Guildhall, with its gilt ship for a vane, and its old brick front, supported by Doric stone columns, is not so memorable because Hogarth played hopscotch in the colonnade during his *Five Days’ Peregrination by Land and Water*, as for the day when Pumblechook bundled Pip off to be bound apprentice to Jo before the Justices in the Hall, “a queer place, with higher pews in it than a church ... and with some shining black portraits on the walls”. This was the Town Hall, too, which Dickens has told us that he had set up in his childish mind “as the model on which the genie of the lamp built the palace for Aladdin”, only to return and recognize with saddened, grown-up eyes — exaggerating the depreciation a little, for the sake of the contrast — “a mere mean little heap of bricks, like a chapel gone demented”. Close by the Guildhall is the Town Clock, “supposed to be the finest clock in the world”, which, alas! “turned out to be as moon-faced and weak a clock as a man’s eyes ever saw”.

On the north side of the High Street, not many yards from the Bull, is a Tudor two-storied, stone-built house, with latticed windows and gables. This is the Charity founded by the will of Richard Watts in 1579, to give lodging and entertainment for one night, and fourpence each, to “six poor travellers, not being rogues or proctors”. It furnished the theme to the

Christmas cycle of stories, *The Seven Poor Travellers*, the narrator, who treats the waifs and strays harboured one Christmas eve at the Charity to roast turkey, plum pudding, and “wassail”, bringing up the number to seven, “being”, as he says, “a traveller myself, though an idle one, and being withal as poor as I hope to be”.

Farther up the High Street towards Chatham, about a quarter of a mile from Rochester Bridge, are two sixteenth-century houses, with fronts of carved oak and gables, facing each other across the street. One has figured in both *Great Expectations* and *Edwin Drood*, for it is the house of Mr. Pumblechook, the pompous and egregious corn and seedsman, and of Mr. Sapsea, the auctioneer, still more pompous and egregious. The other — Eastgate House, now converted into a museum — is the “Nun’s House”, where Miss Twinkleton kept school, and had Rosa Bud and Helen Landless for pupils.

From the hum and traffic of the cheerfully frequented High Street to the calm and hush of the Cathedral precincts entrance is given by Chertsey’s or College Yard Gate, which abuts on the High Street about a hundred yards north of the Cathedral. It was this Gate which Sir Luke Fildes sketched, as he has recorded in an interesting letter published in *A Week’s Tramp in Dickens-Land*, by W. R. Hughes, for the background of his drawing of “Durdles Cautioning Sapsea”. There are, however, two other gatehouses, the “Prior’s”, a tower over an archway, containing a single room approached by a “postern stair”, and “Deanery Gate”, a quaint old house adjoining the Cathedral which has ten rooms, some of them beautifully panelled. Its drawing-room on the upper floor bears a strong resemblance to the room — as depicted by Sir Luke Fildes — in which Jasper entertained his nephew and Neville Landless, but the artist believes that he never saw the interior. It is not unlikely that Dickens took some details from each of the gatehouses to make a composite picture of “Mr. Jasper’s own gatehouse”, which seemed so to stem the tide of life, that while the murmur of the tide was heard beyond, not a wave would pass the archway.



JASPER'S GATEWAY

Rochester Cathedral, which overshadows, though in a less insistent and tragic manner, the whole human interest of *Edwin Drood* almost as much as Notre Dame overshadows the human interest in Victor Hugo's romance, preserves some remains of the original Saxon and Norman churches on the site of which it was erected. Its Early English and Decorated Gothic came off lightly from three restorations, but the tower is nineteenth-century vandalism. The Norman west front enshrines in the riches of its sculptured portal, with its five receding arches, figures of the Saviour and his twelve apostles, and on two shafts are carved likenesses of Henry I and his Queen. Freeman has pronounced it to be far the finest example of Norman architecture of its kind. The Chapter House door, a magnificent example of Decorated Gothic, is adorned with effigies representing the Christian and Jewish Churches, which are surrounded by Holy Fathers and Angels who pray for the soul, emblematically represented as a small nude form above them. But it is about the stone-vaulted crypt, where even by daylight "the heavy pillars which support the roof engender masses of black shade", with "lanes of light" between, and about the winding staircase and belfry of the

great tower that the spells of the Dickens magic especially cling, and Jasper and Durdles revisit these haunts by the glimpses of the moon as persistently as Quasimodo and the sinister Priest beset with their ghostly presences the belfry of the great Paris minster.

Of the historic imagination Dickens had little or none. He could not evoke, and never had the faintest desire to evoke, a Past that was divided from the Present by an unbridgable chasm. Thus Rochester Castle, though he seldom failed to bring his guests to view it, affected him only with a remote sense of antiquity such as he would have experienced, no more and no less, amongst the Pyramids. But he was keenly sensitive to the influences of a Past which still survived and, by the continuity of a corporate life, made an integral part in the Present. The Cathedral life, in which by virtue of their office canons and dean were living relics of antiquity, and as much the contemporaries as the successors of the ecclesiastics who lay crumbling in the crypt, stirred this sense in him as it had been stirred by the ancient Inns of London. Almost the last words that he wrote were a tribute to the beauty of the venerable fane in which, beneath the monument of the founder of that quaint Charity rendered so famous by his story of *The Seven Poor Travellers*, a simple brass records his birth, death, and burial-place, "To connect his memory with the scenes in which his earliest and his latest years were passed, and with the associations of Rochester Cathedral and its neighbourhood which extended over all his life".

In the old cemetery of St. Nicholas' Church, on the north side of the Cathedral, it was Dickens's desire to be buried, and his family would have carried out his wishes had it not been that the burial-ground had been closed for years and no further interments were allowed. On the south side of the Cathedral is the delightfully oldfashioned terrace known as Minor Canon Row — Dickens's name for it is Minor Canon Corner — where the Reverend Septimus Crisparkle kept house with the "china shepherdess" mother. The "Monks' Vineyard" of *Edwin Drood* exists as "The Vines". Here under a group of elms called "The Seven Sisters" Edwin Drood and Rosa sat when they decided to break their engagement, and opposite "The Seven Sisters" is the "Satis House" of *Great Expectations*, where the lonely and embittered Miss Havisham taught Estella the cruel lessons of a ruined life. It is really Restoration House — Satis House is on the site of the mansion of Master Richard Watts, to whose apologies for no better

entertainment of his Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth answered “Satis” — and it takes its name from having received the restored Merry Monarch under its roof on his way to London and the throne. Pepys, who was terrified by the steepness of the castle cliff and had no time to stay to service at the Cathedral, when he had been inspecting the defences at Chatham, found something more to his mind in a stroll by Restoration House, and into the Cherry Garden, where he met a silly shopkeeper with a pretty wife, “and did kiss her”.



RESTORATION HOUSE, ROCHESTER

Dickens would often follow this route of Pepys, but in the reverse direction, that is, through the Vines to Chatham and its lines of fortification, where Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass became so hopelessly entangled in the sham fight which they had gone over from Rochester to see. At No. 11 Ordnance Terrace the little Charles Dickens lived from 1817 to 1821, and at No. 18 St. Mary’s Place from 1821 to 1823, the financial troubles, which eventually drove the family into the Marshalsea debtors’ prison, and Charles himself into the sordid drudgery of the blacking-shop by Hungerford Stairs, having already enforced a migration to a cheaper and

meaner house. In Clover Street (then Clover Lane) the little Dickens went to a school kept by a Mr. William Giles, who years afterwards sent to him, when he was halfway through with *Pickwick*, a silver snuff-box inscribed to the “Inimitable Boz”. To the Mitre Inn, in the Chatham High Street, where Nelson had many times put up, Dickens was often brought by his father to recite or sing, standing on a table, for the amusement of parties of friends. He speaks of it in the “Holly Tree Inn” as

“The inn where friends used to put up, and where we used to go to see parents, and to have salmon and fowls, and be tipped. It had an ecclesiastical sign — the ‘mitre’ — and a bar that seemed to be the next best thing to a bishopric, it was so snug. I loved the landlord’s youngest daughter to distraction — but let that pass. It was in this inn that I was cried over by my little rosy sister, because I had acquired a black eye in a fight.”

When the little Charles Dickens was taken away to London inside the stage-coach Commodore — his kind master on the night before having come flitting in among the packing-cases to give him Goldsmith’s *Bee* as a keepsake — he was leaving behind for ever, in the playing-field near Clover Lane and the grounds of Rochester Castle and the green drives of Cobham Park, the untroubled dreams of happy childhood. And though he could not know this, yet, as he sat amongst the damp straw piled up round him in the inside of the coach, he “consumed his sandwiches in solitude and dreariness” and thought life sloppier than he had expected to find it. And in *David Copperfield* he has thrown back into those earlier golden days the shadow of his London privations by bringing the little Copperfield, footsore and tired, toiling towards dusk into Chatham, “which, in that night’s aspect is a mere dream of chalk and drawbridges and mastless ships in a muddy river, roofed like Noah’s arks”. No doubt the terrible old Jew in the marine-stores shop, who rated and frightened David with his “Oh, my eyes and limbs, what do you want? Oh, my lungs and liver, what do you want? Oh — goroo, goroo!” — until the helpless little fellow was obliged to close with an offer of a few pence instead of half a crown for his waistcoat, is the portrait of some actual Jew dealer whom, in one of the back streets of Chatham, the keen eyes of the precocious child, seeming to look at nothing, had curiously watched hovering like a hideous spider on the pounce behind his grime-encrusted window.

It was old associations that led Dickens so often in his walks from Gadshill Place to Chatham. But the neighbourhood which gave him most

pleasure, combining as it did with similar associations an exquisite beauty, was, Forster tells us, the sylvan scenery of Cobham Park. The green woods and green shades of Cobham would recur to his memory even in far-off Lausanne, and the last walk that he ever enjoyed — on the day before his fatal seizure — was through these woods, the charm of which cannot be better defined than in his own description in *Pickwick*:

“A delightful walk it was; for it was a pleasant afternoon in June, and their way lay through a deep and shady wood, cooled by the light wind which gently rustled the thick foliage, and enlivened by the songs of the birds that perched upon the boughs. The ivy and the moss crept in thick clusters over the old trees, and the soft green turf overspread the ground like a silken mat. They emerged upon an open park, with an ancient hall, displaying the quaint and picturesque architecture of Elizabeth’s time. Long vistas of stately oaks and elm trees appeared on every side; large herds of deer were cropping the fresh grass; and occasionally a startled hare scoured along the ground with the speed of the shadows thrown by the light clouds, which swept across a sunny landscape like a passing breath of summer.”

The mission on which Mr. Pickwick and his two disciples were engaged was, it will be remembered, to convert Mr. Tupman from his resolution to forsake the world in a fit of misanthropy, induced by the faithlessness of Rachel Wardle.

“‘If this,’ said Mr. Pickwick, looking about him — ‘If this were the place to which all who are troubled with our friend’s complaint came, I fancy their old attachment to this world would very soon return.’”

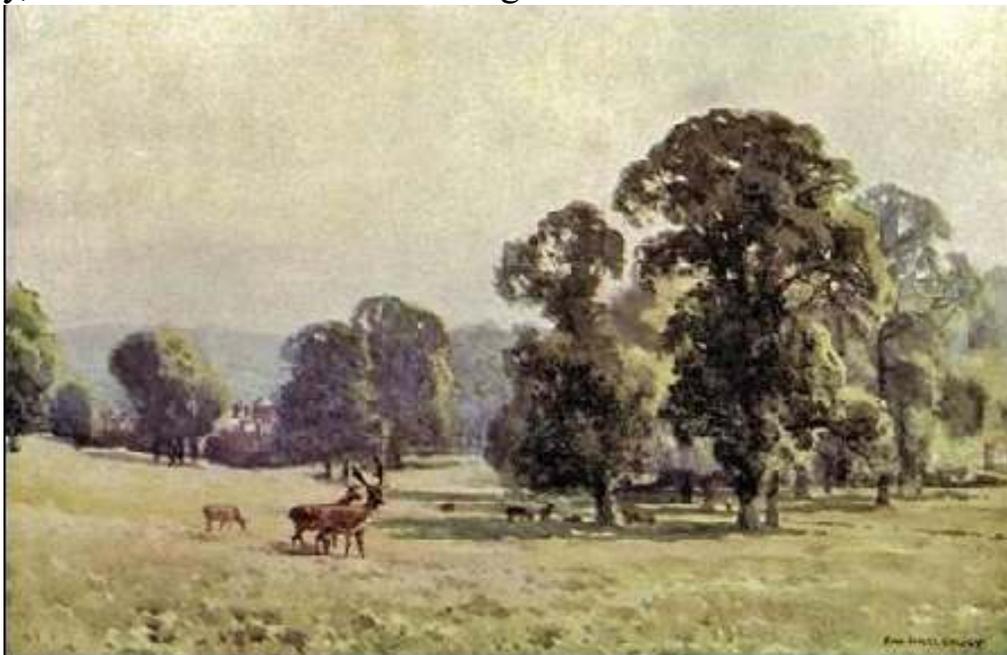
Mr. Pickwick was right, for when they arrived at the village, and entered that “clean and commodious village alehouse”, the “Leather Bottle”, they found Mr. Tupman set down at a table “well covered with a roast fowl, bacon, ale, and et ceteras”, and “looking as unlike a man who had taken leave of the world as possible”.



THE LEATHER BOTTLE, COBHAM

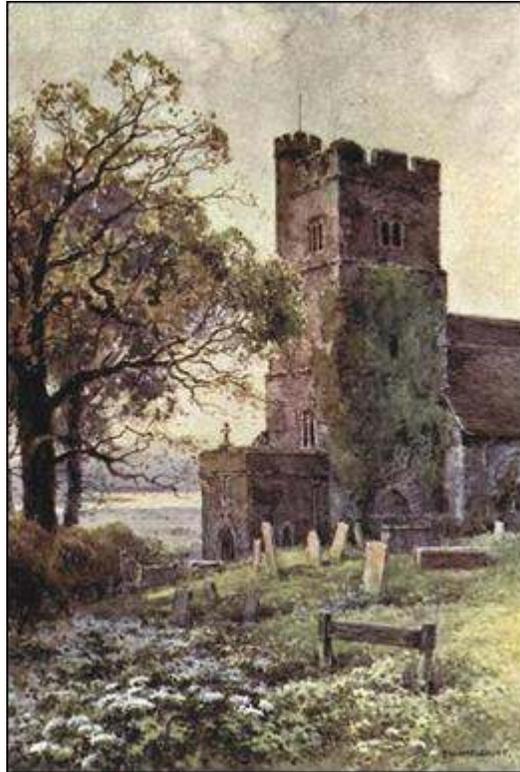
The “ancient hall” of Cobham consists of two Tudor wings, with a central block designed by Inigo Jones. It has a splendid collection of Old Masters, and a music room which the Prince Regent pronounced to be the finest room in England. In the terrace flower garden at the back of the Hall, it may be mentioned again here, is the Swiss chalet from Gadshill Place, which served Dickens for a study in the summer months. The circuit of Cobham Park is about seven miles, and it is crossed by the “Long Avenue”, leading to Rochester, and the “Grand Avenue”, which, sloping down from the tenantless Mausoleum, opens into Cobham village. The inn to which Mr. Tupman retired, in disgust with life, still retains the title of the “Leather Bottle”, but has mounted for its sign a coloured portrait of Mr. Pickwick addressing the Club in characteristic attitude. It was in Cobham village that Mr. Pickwick made his notable discovery of the stone with the mysterious inscription — an inscription which the envious Blotton maintained was nothing more than BIL STUMPS HIS MARK. Local tradition suggests that Dickens intended the episode for a skit upon archaeological theories about the dolmens known as Kit’s Coty House, and that a Strood antiquary keenly

resented the satire. However that may be, Kit's Coty House is not at Cobham, but some miles away, near Aylesford. In Cobham church there is perhaps the finest and most complete series of monumental brasses in this country, most of them commemorating the Lords of Cobham.



COBHAM PARK

Out of the Cobham woods it is not a long walk to the little village of Shorne, where Dickens was fond of sitting on a hot summer afternoon in its pretty, shaded churchyard. This is believed to be the spot which he has described in *Pickwick* as “one of the most peaceful and secluded churchyards in Kent, where wild flowers mingle with the grass, and the soft landscape around forms the fairest spot in the garden of England”. A picturesque lane leads into the road from Rochester to Gravesend, on the outskirts of the village of Chalk. Here, in a corner house on the south side of the road, Dickens spent his honeymoon, and many of the earlier chapters of *Pickwick* were written. In February of the following year — 1837 — Dickens and his wife returned to the same lodgings, shortly after the birth of his eldest son. Chalk church is about a mile from the village. There was formerly above the porch the figure of an old priest in a stooping attitude, holding an upturned jug. Dickens took a strange interest in this quaint carving, and it is said that, whenever he passed it, he took off his hat or gave it a nod, as to an old acquaintance.



CHALK CHURCH

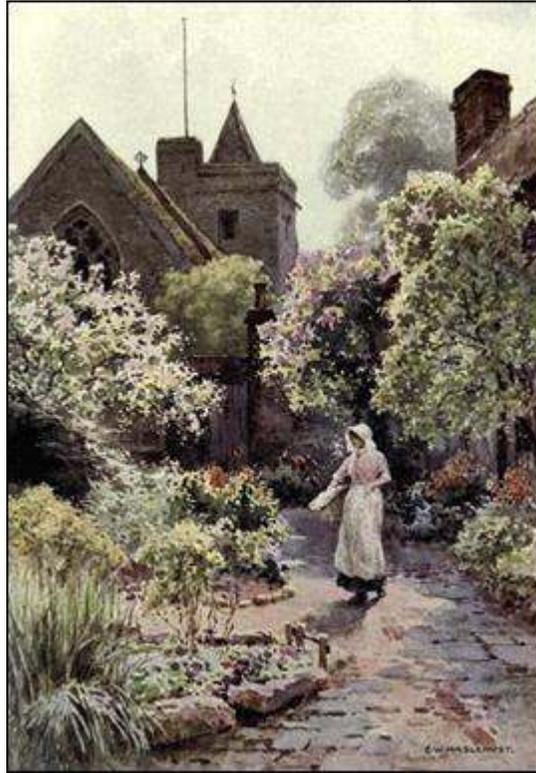
Very different to the soft and genial landscapes about Cobham is the grey and desolate aspect of another haunt which Dickens loved to frequent. This was the “meshes” around Cooling. In winter, when it was possible to make a short cut across the stubble fields, he would visit Cooling churchyard not less seldom than in summer he would go to sit in the churchyard of Shorne. First, however, he would have to pass through the village of Higham, where, too, was his nearest railway station, though he often preferred to walk over and entrain at Gravesend or Greenhithe. But the pleasant tinkle of harness bells was a familiar sound in the night to the Higham villagers, as the carriage was sent down from Gadshill Place to meet the master or his friends returning from London by the ten o’clock train. Dickens took a kindly and active interest in the affairs of the village, and the last cheque which he ever drew was for his subscription to the Higham Cricket Club.



SHORNE CHURCH

The flat levels that stretch away from beyond Higham towards the estuary of the Thames are more akin to the characteristics of Essex than of Kent. The hop gardens are dwarfed and stunted, and presently hops, corn, and pasture give place to fields of turnips, which show up like masses of jade on the chocolate-coloured soil. The bleak churchyard of Cooling, overgrown with nettles, lies amongst these desolate reaches, which resound at evening with the shrill, unearthly notes of sea-gulls, plovers, and herons. Beyond the churchyard are the marshes, “a dark, flat wilderness”, as Dickens has described it in *Great Expectations*, “intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it”; still farther away is the “low, leaden line” of the river, and the “distant, savage lair”, from which the wind comes rushing, is the sea. It was in this churchyard that the conception of the story sprang into life, and there are actually not five but ten little stone lozenges in one row, with three more at the back of them, which suggested to Dickens the five little prematurely cut off brothers of Pip. The grey ruins of Cooling Castle attracted him no less than the grey and weather-beaten churchyard. Besides some crumbling and broken walls there is a gate tower, with an inscription on fourteen copper plates, the writing in black, the ground of white enamel, with a seal and silk cords in their proper colours, which made known to all and sundry the purpose for

which Lord Cobham — whose granddaughter married, for one of her five husbands, Sir John Oldcastle, the Lollard martyr — had erected this castle.



COOLING CHURCH

“Knoweth that beth and schul be
That i am mad in help of the cuntre
In knowyng of whych thyng
This is chartre and witnessyng.”

No forge stands now on the site of Joe Gargery’s smithy, where, as the hammer rang on the anvil to the refrain —

“Beat it out, beat it out — Old Clem!
With a clink for the stout — Old Clem!
Blow the fire, blow the fire — Old Clem!
Roaring drier, soaring higher — Old Clem!” —

Pip would see visions of Estella’s face in the glowing fire or at the wooden window of the forge, looking in from the darkness of the night, and flitting away. But though the smithy has gone, the “Three Jolly Bargemen”, where Joe would smoke his pipe by the kitchen fire on a Saturday night, still survives as the “Three Horseshoes” — the inn to which the secret-

looking man who stirred his rum and water with a file, brought Magwitch's two one-pound notes for Pip, and the redoubtable Jaggers, the autocrat of the Old Bailey, with his burly form, great head, and huge, cross-examining forefinger announced to Pip his Great Expectations. Down the river in the direction of yonder "distant savage lair", from which the wind comes rushing, lie those long reaches, between Kent and Essex, "where the river is broad and solitary, where the waterside inhabitants are very few, and where lone public-houses are scattered here and there" — the lonely riverside on which Pip and Herbert sought a hiding-place for Magwitch until the steamer for Hamburg or the steamer for Rotterdam could be boarded, as she dropped down the tide from the Port of London. Whether on the Kent or the Essex side, the cast of the scenery corresponds with equal closeness to Dickens's description. Slimy stakes stick out of the mud, and slimy stones stick out of the mud, and red landmarks and tide-marks stick out of the mud, and old roofless buildings slip into the mud, and all about is stagnation and mud! The desolate flat marshes look still more weird by reason of the tall pollards that lean over them like spectres. Far away are the rising grounds, between which and the marshes there appears no sign of life except here and there in the foreground a melancholy gull. The course which the boat bearing the hunted man took from Mill Pond stairs through the crowded shipping of the Pool, past the floating Custom House at Gravesend, and onwards, skirting the little creeks and mudbanks where the Thames widens to the sea — when every sound of the tide flapping heavily at irregular intervals against the shore, and every ripple, were fraught with the terror of pursuit — exemplifies in the most striking way the rapidity and instinctive ease of Dickens's observation. Forster says: —

"To make himself sure of the actual course of a boat in such circumstances, and what possible incidents the adventure might have, Dickens hired a steamer for the day from Blackwall to Southend. Eight or nine friends, and three or four members of his family, were on board, and he seemed to have no care, the whole of that summer day (22nd of May, 1861), except to enjoy their enjoyment and entertain them with his own in shape of a thousand whims and fancies; but his sleepless observation was at work all the time, and nothing had escaped his keen vision on either side of the river."

Scattered amongst the deserted reaches along the riverside may be seen such lonely farmhouses or taverns as suggest the aspect of the alehouse,

“not unknown to smuggling adventurers” — for the “owling”, that is, the smuggling industry had flourished for centuries in these parts — to which the fugitives were led by a twinkling light in the window up a little cobbled causeway, and where Dickens placed that amphibious creature, “as slimy and smeary as if he had been low-water mark too”, who exhibited a bloated pair of shoes “as interesting relics that he had taken from the feet of a drowned seaman washed ashore”. This type of the gruesome long-shoremen whom Dickens had encountered in his waterside rambles, as he collected the materials for *Great Expectations*, was afterwards elaborated in the Rogue Riderhood of *Our Mutual Friend*.

“Swamp, mist, and mudbank” — if that is the dominant impression made by the view of the Thames off the Cooling marshes, it is not the only and the invariable impression. Even the bleak churchyard, at the foot of the cold, grey tower, is sometimes strewn by the light and flying gust “with beautiful shadows of clouds and trees”. And from the Old Battery, where Joe would smoke his pipe with a far more sagacious air than anywhere else, as Pip strove to initiate him into the mysteries of reading and writing by the aid of a broken slate and a short piece of slate pencil, it is “pleasant and quiet” to watch the vessels standing out to sea with their white sails spread, and the light struck aslant, afar off, upon a cloud or sail or green hillside or silvery water line.

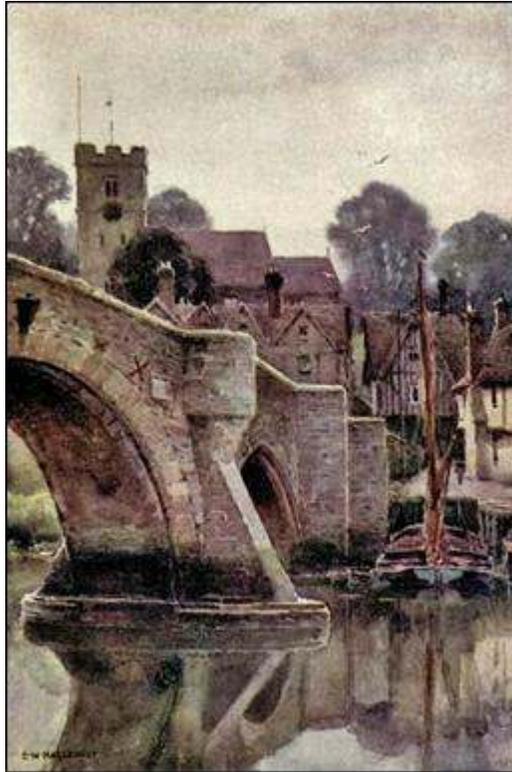
To the west of Cooling Castle, beyond wide fields — turnips or cabbages — of the colour of dark-green jade, the Church of Cliffe, with its lichgate, standing out boldly from its ridge of chalk, overlooks a straggling village of old and weather-boarded houses. It would be into the road from Cliffe to Rochester, at a point about half a mile from Cooling, that Uncle Pumblechook’s chaise-cart would debouch when he took Mrs. Joe to Rochester market “to assist him in buying such household stuffs and goods as required a woman’s judgment”.

Between the scenery about Cooling and Cliffe and the scenery of the valley of the Medway from Rochester to Maidstone there is all the difference between a November fog and a brilliant summer's day. At the foot of Rochester Castle, from which the long vista of the valley, lying between two chalk ranges of hills that form the watershed of the Medway, stretches far away to a distant horizon, the Esplanade extends along the east side of the river, and there it was that Edwin Drood and Rosa met for the last time and to speak of their separate plans. For a few miles along the valley the natural beauty of the scene is spoilt by the cement works of Borstal, Cuxton, and Wouldham, and the brickworks of Burham. The piles of clay and chalk, the beehive furnaces, and the chimneys vomiting smoke and flame, almost reproduce the characteristics of the Black Country or of a northern manufacturing district. But, when Burham has been left behind, the bright emerald pastures, the tender green of springing corn or the gold of waving harvests, and the orchards, a dazzling sight in May with the snowy clouds of pear and plum and cherry blooms, and the delicate pink-and-white of the apple blossom, more than justify the appellation claimed for Kent of the garden of England. Opposite to Cuxton, on the western bank, the village of Snodland stands at the junction of Snodland Brook with the Medway. It has been conjectured that Snodland Weir, a mile or so up the brook, was in Dickens's mind when he described Mr. Crisparkle's pilgrimages to Cloisterham Weir in the cold rimy mornings, and his discovery, first of Edwin Drood's watch in a corner of the weir, and then, after diving again and again, of his shirt-pin "sticking in some mud and ooze" at the bottom. The nearest weir on the Medway is at Allington, seven or eight miles above Rochester, and Cloisterham Weir was but "full two miles" away.

Before Allington can be reached, in ascending the Medway, the river is spanned by an ancient stone bridge, of pointed arches and triangular buttresses, at Aylesford. The ancient Norman church, and the red roofs and crowding gables of the picturesque and historic village, are set in a circle of elm trees, with a background of rising chalk downs beyond. Those who have investigated with perhaps "an excess" — as Wordsworth would say — "of scrupulosity" all the details of Pickwickian topography are inclined to believe that the wooden bridge, upon which the chaise hired by the Club to make the journey from Rochester to Dingley Dell came hopelessly to grief, was Aylesford Bridge, transmuted for the nonce from Kentish ragstone into

timber. However that may be, there is a matter of genuine history which has signalized in no common way this old-world village. At this ford, the lowest on the Medway, the Jutes under Hengist and Horsa routed the British in a battle which decided the predominating strain of race in future Men of Kent and Kentish Men: natives of Kent, that is, according as they dwell on the right or left bank of the Medway. A farmhouse with the name of Horsted, at the point farther back where the Rochester to Maidstone road is joined by the road from Chatham, stands, it is believed, on the grave of Horsa. And about a mile and a half north of Aylesford, a grey old cairn, set on a green sward in the midst of a cornfield, is also closely associated with the first great victory won by English people on the soil which they were destined to make their own and distinguish with their name. In his *Short History of the English People* J. R. Green says of this cromlech: —

“It was from a steep knoll on which the grey weather-beaten stones of this monument are reared that the view of their first battlefield would break on the English warriors; and a lane which still leads down from it through peaceful homesteads, would guide them across the ford which has left its name in the little village of Aylesford. The Chronicle of the conquering people tells nothing of the rush that may have carried the ford, or of the fight that went straggling up through the village. It only tells that Horsa fell in the moment of victory, and the flint heap of Horsted, which has long preserved his name, and was held in after-time to mark his grave, is thus the earliest of those monuments of English valour of which Westminster is the last and noblest shrine. The victory of Aylesford did more than give East Kent to the English; it struck the keynote of the whole English conquest of Britain.”



AYLESFORD

This cromlech, known as Kit's Coty House, consists of three upright dolmens of sandstone, with a fourth, much larger, crossing them above horizontally. In a neighbouring field there is another group of stones, scattered in disarray amongst the brushwood, to which, as also to Stonehenge and other so-called "Druidical" remains, there attaches the local superstition that they cannot be counted. It would be pleasanter to believe that the current story, to which reference has already been made, that Dickens was poking fun at the antiquarian's reverence for this hoary relic in his narrative of Mr. Pickwick's "BIL STUMPS" inscription, is altogether erroneous. Certainly it is open to anyone who wishes to be incredulous, for there is as much dissimilarity as possible between the massive cromlech near Aylesford and the small slab that Mr. Pickwick discovered at Cobham.

The most salient feature in the Medway valley between Rochester and Maidstone is the height of Blue Bell, or Upper Bell. Here Dickens, who, as he said, had come to realize that the Rochester to Maidstone road passed through some of the most beautiful scenery in England, would often picnic with his visitors. Undulating slopes of pasture and cornfields, hop gardens,

orchards, and woodlands, with many a deep-sunk lane embowered in overarching trees that rise from hedgerow clusters of dog-rose, ivy, and honeysuckle, and with snugly nestling homesteads and quaintly-cowled "oast-houses" sprinkled here and there, sweep across the valley, through which the river winds in sinuous curves, onwards to a long range of hills upon the skyline.

Somewhere in this district Dickens came across the types of the old-fashioned and jovially comfortable home of the English yeoman, represented by his Manor Farm, Dingley Dell, and of the little country town, represented by the Muggleton of *Pickwick*, in which local enthusiasm for cricket was ardent, if the standard of skill was somewhat low. The most plausible identification of the home of Mr. Wardle is with Cobtree Hall, which divides the parishes of Boxley and Allington, and it is probable that the original of Muggleton was Town Malling, which is also known as West Malling.

In the Jubilee Edition of *Pickwick* Mr. Charles Dickens the Younger introduced a woodcut of High Street, Town Malling, with a note to the following effect: —

"Muggleton, perhaps, is only to be taken as a fancy sketch of a small country town; but it is generally supposed, and probably with sufficient accuracy, that, if it is in any degree a portrait of any Kentish town, Town Malling, a great place for cricket in Mr. Pickwick's time, sat for it."

Town Malling does not correspond with the description of Muggleton in its distance from Rochester. It is only seven and a half, instead of fifteen miles, from Rochester. And it is not a corporate town. But:

"Everybody whose genius has a topographical bent knows perfectly well that Muggleton is a corporate town, with a mayor, burgess and freemen, and anybody who has consulted the addresses of the mayor to the freemen, or the freemen to the mayor, or both to the corporation, or all three to Parliament, will learn from thence what they ought to have known before, that Muggleton is an ancient and loyal borough, mingling a zealous advocacy of Christian principles with a devoted attachment to commercial rights; in demonstration whereof, the mayor, corporation, and other inhabitants have presented, at divers times, no fewer than one thousand four hundred and twenty petitions against the continuance of negro slavery abroad, and an equal number against any interference with the factory

system at home; sixty-eight in favour of the sale of livings in the Church, and eighty-six for abolishing Sunday trading in the street.”

If Town Malling has not had so distinguished a political history as that which Dickens assigned to Muggleton, it has a pretty cricket ground, not far removed from the High Street, and the reputation of having in past years distinguished itself in the local cricket of this district of Kent. It is not difficult to believe, then, that Dumkins and Podder here made their gallant stand for All Muggleton against the Dingley Dellers, and that at the Swan — otherwise the Blue Lion — the Pickwick fellowship shared the conviviality of the rival teams, until Mr. Snodgrass’s notes of the evening’s transactions faded away into a blur in which there was an indistinct reference to “broiled bones” and “cold without”. The stately ruins of a Benedictine Abbey, founded by Bishop Gundulf, give to the town an attraction of a severer kind.

From Town Malling to Cobtree Hall, supposing the double identification to be correct, should be a walk of not above two miles “through shady lanes and sequestered footpaths”, the delightful scenery of which made Mr. Pickwick feel regret to arrive in the main street of “Muggleton”. The distance, however, is in fact something more than two miles as the crow flies. Cobtree Hall is a green-muffled Elizabethan mansion, of red brick, faced with stone, and looks out over an undulating country of orchards and hop fields. It has been altered and enlarged since the days of *Pickwick*, but the kitchen is just such another large, old-fashioned kitchen as befits the Christmas games and wassail that had been kept up at Manor Farm, Dingley Dell, “by old Wardle’s forefathers from time immemorial”. The dining-room, though modernized, has a massive marble mantelpiece not unsuited to that “capacious chimney up which you could have driven one of the new patent cabs, wheels and all”, and in which a blazing fire used to roar every evening, not only when its warmth was grateful, but for a symbol, as it were, of old Wardle’s attachment to his fireside. This was the kind of antiquity which made the most direct appeal to Dickens’s sentiment and imagination — not a remote and historic antiquity, but the furthest extent of a living link between the Present and the Past. In many an old house of Kentish yeoman or squire Dickens would have seen some such long, dark-panelled room as the best sitting-room at Manor Farm, with four-branched, massive silver candlesticks in all sorts of recesses and on all kinds of brackets; with samplers and worsted landscapes of ancient date on the

walls; with a very old lady in lofty cap and faded silk gown in the chimney corner, where she had sat on her little stool as a girl more than half a century before, and with a hearty, rubicund host presiding over a mighty bowl of wassail, something smaller than an ordinary washhouse copper, in which the hot apples would “hiss and bubble with a rich look and a jolly sound that were perfectly irresistible”. Or when the carpet was up, the candles burning brightly, and family, guests, and servants were all ranged in eager lines, longing for the signal to start an old-fashioned country dance as, from a shady bower of holly and evergreens at the upper end of the room, the two best fiddles and only harp of the nearest market town prepared to strike up, it is no wonder that such a lover of unspoilt, natural manners as Boz declared, “If any of the old English yeomen had turned into fairies when they died, it was just the place in which they would have held their revels.”

A triangular piece of ground, with a sprinkling of elms about it, is all that is left of the rookery in which Mr. Tupman met with an accident from the unskilful marksmanship of Winkle. At the back of the house is the pond where Mr. Winkle’s reputation as a sportsman led him into another catastrophe, and his skating exposed itself as of anything but a graceful and “swan-like” style; where, too, Mr. Pickwick revived the sliding propensities of his boyhood with infinite zest until the ice gave way with a “sharp, smart crack”, and Mr. Pickwick’s hat, gloves, and handkerchief, floating on the surface, were all of Mr. Pickwick that anyone could see.

Cobtree Hall, it has been mentioned, divides the parishes of Boxley and Allington, the initials of which are carved on a beam in the kitchen that suggests Phiz’s plate of “Christmas Eve at Mr. Wardle’s”. In Aylesford the tomb of the prototype, according to local tradition, of “Mr. Wardle” bears the inscription, “Also to the memory of Mr. W. Spong, late of Cobtree, in the Parish of Boxley, who died November 15th, 1839”. Boxley village is near the ancient Pilgrims’ Road to Canterbury, and here Alfred Tennyson stayed in 1842. Park House, nearer the Medway, was the home of Edward Lushington, who married Tennyson’s sister Cecilia, and in its grounds Tennyson found the setting for the prologue to the “Princess”. The “happy faces” of “the multitude, a thousand heads”, by which the “sloping pasture” was “sown”, under “broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime”, had probably come from Maidstone on the annual jaunt of that town’s Mechanics’ Institute. The village of Allington stands on the other side of the Medway,

though the boundaries of the parish extend beyond the right bank of the river. Allington Castle, which the Medway half-encircles with a sweeping bend, was one of the seven chief castles of Kent. It was here that Sir Thomas Wyatt, the elder, diplomatist, poet, and lover of Anne Boleyn, who with the gallant and ill-fated Surrey “preluded”, in a more exact sense than it could be said of Chaucer, “those melodious bursts that fill the spacious times of great Elizabeth”, was able to proclaim, in an epistle to “Mine own John Poins”:

“I am here in Kent and Christendome,
Among the Muses where I read and rhyme”.

Hither there comes, in Tennyson’s “Queen Mary”, to Sir Thomas Wyatt, the younger, his man William, with news of “three thousand men on Penenden heath all calling after you, and your worship’s name heard into Maidstone market, and your worship the first man in Kent”. And Wyatt sets out to lead a rising which will end on Tower Hill, and setting out, looks back and cries:

“Ah, grey old castle of Allington, green field
Beside the brimming Medway, it may chance
That I shall never look upon you more”.

“The brimming Medway.” — the epithet is as just as Tennyson’s descriptive epithet almost invariably proves to be. For at Allington the Medway, which from Aylesford Bridge to Allington Lock has dwindled to a narrow stream, swells out into a broad expanse, where many boats can easily move abreast. If the Cloisterham Weir of *Edwin Drood* were really the nearest weir on the Medway to Rochester, then Allington Lock would be the place. But it has been pointed out on an earlier page that the distances do not tally in the novel and in actuality, and Dickens may have had in mind the weir on Snodland Brook.



MAIDSTONE, ALL SAINTS' CHURCH AND THE PALACE

The country round Maidstone abounds in the “happy valleys” portrayed in the epilogue to the “Princess”, with “grey halls alone among their massive groves”, and “here and there a rustic tower Half lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat”. The gyres and loops of the Medway, too, afford through the screen of woodlands and orchards “the shimmering glimpses of a stream”. To the credulous enthusiasm of an early eighteenth-century native of Strood, that Anne Pratt who did for English wild flowers what White of Selborne did for English wild birds, “travellers who have beheld in other lands the various scenes of culture — the olive grounds of Spain or Syria, the vineyards of Italy, the cotton plantations of India, or the rose fields of the East — have generally agreed that not one of them all equals in beauty our English hop gardens”. To Dickens himself such a panegyric of the Kentish hop gardens would have scarcely seemed exaggeration, but he would have hastened to add the dismal antithesis of the missionary bishop — “Only man is vile”. He had barely settled-in at Gadshill Place when he wrote: —

“Hop-picking is going on, and people sleep in the garden, and breathe in at the keyhole of the house door. I have been amazed, before this year, by the number of miserable base wretches, hardly able to crawl, who go hop-picking. I find it is a superstition that the dust of the newly picked hop, falling freshly into the throat, is a cure for consumption. So the poor

creatures drag themselves along the roads, and sleep under wet hedges, and get cured soon and finally.”

The county town of Kent is situated not only on the Medway, but on the pilgrim road to Canterbury, and of a monastic hospital for pilgrims and other poor travellers there still survive some relics. Overlooking the river stand some fine old houses, and the conspicuous grey square tower of All Saints, built by the proud Archbishop Courtenay, the enemy of Wicliffe, in the fourteenth century. Here is the tomb of Grocyn, that “lord of splendid lore Orient from old Hellas’ shore”, who was appointed master of the collegiate church in 1506. One of the sixteen palaces that the Archbishops of Canterbury could boast in days gone by is preserved as the local school of science and art, a dedication to public use which commemorates the Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887. The Corporation Museum is an even more interesting and beautiful structure. It was Chillington Manor House, a seat of the Cobham family, and, though it has had a new wing annexed to it, it is an exceptionally well preserved and beautiful example of Elizabethan domestic architecture, with its latticed windows, jutting gables, elaborately moulded timber, and pillared chimneys. In the panel of an oak fireplace is a carved head of Dickens, by a local carver named Hughes, who was employed at Gadshill Place. To Maidstone Jail Dickens proposed to carry Sir Luke Fildes, in order that he might make a picture of Jasper in the condemned cell, and do something which would surpass Cruikshank’s illustration to *Oliver Twist*, in which Fagin’s terror-stricken vigil in the murderer’s cell is portrayed.

At Maidstone the southern limit may be considered to have been reached of the district of Kent which can be distinguished as “Dickens-land” in the most intimate sense, as lying within the radius of the novelist’s habitual walks and drives from his residence at Gadshill. It does not enter into the scope of this brief essay to describe topographically other parts of Kent. But it will be excusable to glance very slightly at Dickens’s associations with Canterbury — though this is the subject of a separate monograph in this series — Broadstairs, Deal, Dover, and the famous London-to-Dover road through Rochester, Chatham, and Canterbury.

No one, perhaps, who has ever read *Little Dorrit*, whatever else in the novel may slip the memory, fails to recall the oracular utterance of Mr. F.’s aunt that “There’s milestones on the Dover road”. To the opening of *A Tale of Two Cities* the colour and atmosphere of the time in which it is set, and of

the drama which is to be developed, are given at once by the alarm of the passengers of the Dover coach as they walk up Shooter's Hill to ease the horses, when the furious galloping of a horseman is heard behind them — the supposed highwayman proving to be, however, Jerry Cruncher, messenger at Tellson's Bank by day, and at night an "agricooltural character" of ghoulish avocations. David Copperfield trudged the Dover road, footsore and hungry, when he left Murdstone and Grinby's blacking warehouse to throw himself on the compassion of Betsy Trotwood, "and got through twenty-three miles on the straight road" to Rochester and Chatham on a certain Sunday. Afterwards, when he had found a home and a protecting providence with his aunt, he met with his "first fall in life" on the Canterbury coach, being asked by the coachman to resign the box seat to a seedy gentleman, who proclaimed that "Orses and dogs is some men's fancy. They're wittles and drink to me."

"I have always considered this as the first fall I had in life. When I booked my place at the coach office, I had had 'Box Seat' written against the entry, and had given the bookkeeper half a crown. I was got up in a special greatcoat and shawl, expressly to do honour to that distinguished eminence; had glorified myself upon it a good deal; and had felt that I was a credit to the coach. And here, in the very first stage, I was supplanted by a shabby man with a squint, who had no other merit than smelling like a livery stables, and being able to walk across me, more like a fly than a human being, while the horses were at a canter."

Pip, in *Great Expectations*, makes many expeditions to and fro on the Dover road, between Rochester and London, and on one of them, riding outside, has the two convicts, bound for the hulks moored off the marshes, as fellow passengers on the back seat.

At Canterbury it is not possible to establish the identity of Dr. Strong's house — "a grave building in a courtyard, with a learned air about it that seemed very well suited to the stray rooks and jackdaws who came down from the Cathedral towers, and walked with a clerkly bearing on the grass plot" — but Canon Benham has asserted his conviction that Mr. Wickfield's house — where David made the acquaintance of Agnes and of Uriah Heap — is at the corner of Broad Street and Lady Wotton's Green, though it is another residence, by the West Gate, which is represented on the picture postcards.

The Royal Fountain Hotel in St. Margaret's Street (formerly the Watling Street) is recognized as the County Inn at which Mr. Dick used to sleep when he went over to Canterbury to visit David Copperfield at Dr. Strong's school. All the little bills which he contracted there, it will be remembered, were referred to Miss Trotwood before they were paid; a circumstance which caused David to think "that Mr. Dick was only allowed to rattle his money, and not to spend it". A less pretentious establishment, the "little inn" where Mr. Micawber put up on his first visit to Canterbury, and "occupied a little room in it partitioned off from the commercial, and strongly flavoured with tobacco smoke", is probably the Sun Inn in Sun Street. Here Mr. and Mrs. Micawber entertained David to "a beautiful little dinner" —

"Quite an elegant dish of fish; the kidney end of a loin of veal roasted; fried sausage meat; a partridge and a pudding. There was wine, and there was strong ale; and after dinner Mrs. Micawber made us a bowl of hot punch with her own hands."

Local tradition at Broadstairs used to point to Fort House, on the cliff by the Coastguard Station, as the holiday residence at which Dickens wrote most of *Bleak House*. But though it has been rechristened from the title of the novel, by an owner who demolished Dickens's summer home, and built the existing pseudo-Gothic structure on its foundations, no part of *Bleak House* was written at Broadstairs. Dickens, however, for many summers, visited the little town on the curving bay between Margate and Ramsgate; the Albion Hotel, where he notes that "the landlord has delicious hollands", No. 12 (now 31) High Street, and Lawn House, near Fort House, receiving him at different times. At Broadstairs he wrote a portion of *Pickwick*, of *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and he also stayed there while engaged on the *American Notes*, *Dombey and Son*, and *David Copperfield*. He forsook it at last, because it had become too noisy, but he has left an agreeable picture of it in *Our Watering Place*; but a passage in a letter to Forster invests it with still gayer colours:

"It is the brightest day you ever saw. The sun is sparkling on the water so that I can hardly bear to look at it. The tide is in, and the fishing boats are dancing like mad. Upon the green-topped cliffs the corn is cut and piled in shocks; and thousands of butterflies are fluttering about, taking the bright little red flags at the mastheads for flowers, and panting with delight accordingly."

To the characters and the *mise en scène* of his novels, however, Broadstairs appears to have contributed nothing, except that the lady whose aversion to donkeys furnished so strong an idiosyncrasy to Miss Betsy Trotwood's character was a native, not of Dover, as in the novel, but of Broadstairs.

Dover, besides giving a local habitation to David's aunt, is associated with *The Tale of Two Cities*, since it was here that Mr. Lorry made the startling revelation to Miss Manette that her father had been "Recalled to Life". The vignette of eighteenth-century Dover is executed with true Dickensian verve:

"The little narrow, crooked town of Dover hid itself away from the beach, and ran its head into the chalk cliffs like a marine ostrich. The beach was a desert of heaps of sea and stones tumbling wildly about, and the sea did what it liked, and what it liked was destruction. It thundered at the town, and thundered at the cliffs, and brought the coast down, madly. The air among the houses was of so strong a piscatory flavour that one might have supposed sick fish went up to be dipped in it, as sick people went down to be dipped in the sea. A little fishing was done in the port, and a quantity of strolling about by night, and looking seaward: particularly at those times when the tide made, and was near flood. Small tradesmen, who did no business whatever, sometimes unaccountably realized large fortunes, and it was remarkable that nobody in the neighbourhood could endure a lamplighter."

It was to Dover that Dickens went when he was labouring with unusual difficulty over *Bleak House*, and lamenting his inability to "grind sparks out of this dull anvil". At Dover, on his Second Series of Readings, he found "the audience with the greatest sense of humour", and "they laughed with such really cordial enjoyment, when Squeers read the boy's letters, that the contagion" was irresistible even to Dickens himself.

Deal, as it was in 1853, is rapidly but vigorously sketched in chapter xlv of *Bleak House*. Esther Summerson arrives from a night journey by coach, eager and anxious to help, if possible, Richard Carstone, the unhappy victim of the fatal chancery lawsuit:

"At last we came into the narrow streets of Deal; and very gloomy they were, upon a raw misty morning. The long flat beach, with its little irregular houses, wooden and brick, and its litter of capstans, and great boats, and sheds, and bare upright poles with tackle and blocks, and loose gravelly

waste places overgrown with grass and weeds, wore as dull an appearance as any place I ever saw. The sea was heaving under a thick white fog; and nothing else was moving but a few early rope-makers, who, with the yarn twisted round their bodies, looked as if, tired of their present state of existence, they were twisting themselves into cordage. But when we got into a warm room in an excellent hotel, and sat down, comfortably washed and dressed, to an early breakfast (for it was too late to think of going to bed), Deal began to look more cheerful... Then the fog began to rise like a curtain; and numbers of ships, that we had had no idea were near, appeared. I don't know how many sail the waiter told us were then lying in the Downs. Some of these vessels were of grand size: one was a large Indiaman, just come home; and when the sun shone through the clouds, making silvery pools in the dark sea, the way in which these ships brightened, and shadowed, and changed, amid a bustle of boats putting off from the shore to them, and from them to the shore, and a general life and motion in themselves and everything around them, was most beautiful."

That Dickens was essentially a "Kentish Man", in spite of the absence of a birth qualification, in spite, too, of his long residence in London, and of his peculiarly intimate knowledge of the byways and nooks and corners of London, ample proof has by this time been given. To this, however, may be added Forster's significant statement that, "Excepting always the haunts and associations of his childhood, Dickens had no particular sentiment of locality, and any special regard for houses he had lived in was not a thing noticeable in him". This was not surprising. The conditions of life in a modern capital under most circumstances, but especially for anyone who has made many removes, tend to produce the impression that a man's roofter only represents the transient shelter of a caravanserai, rather than an abiding habitation on which memory has stamped indelible traces. Nor can even the most extended associations of maturity take the place of the imperishable links forged in the most susceptible years of fresh and sensitive childhood. For Dickens this vital distinction was emphasized both by natural idiosyncrasy and by the pressure of events which shaped his destiny.

"If it should appear," he says, speaking of himself under the mask of David Copperfield, "from anything I may set down in this narrative, that I was a child of close observation, or that as a man I have a strong memory of my childhood, I undoubtedly lay claim to both of these characteristics."

The change from Chatham and Rochester to London was indissolubly connected in his mind with a change in the family fortunes that deprived him of the ordinary advantages and pleasures open to any average boy of even the lower middle classes. It ushered in a period of misery and degradation that he could never recall without acute suffering. The few years of happiness which he enjoyed before he was carried away to London in the stage coach “Commodore”, at the age of nine, were divided from a strenuous and successful manhood by so dark a gulf as to concentrate all the powers of recollection upon them with a desperate kind of intensity. It was the realization of a childish ambition conceived in that halcyon era which drew him to Gadshill, and he returned again and again to the contemplation of his earliest dreams and imaginings. He wrote from Gadshill of his old nurse — the original, it can hardly be doubted, of Peggotty: —

“I feel much as I used to do when I was a small child, a few miles off [i.e. at Ordnance Terrace, Chatham], and somebody — *who*, I wonder, and which way did *she* go when she died? — hummed the evening hymn, and I cried on the pillow — either with the remorseful consciousness of having kicked somebody else, or because still somebody else had hurt my feelings in the course of the day”.

For the second number of *Household Words*, when he “felt an uneasy sense of there being a want of something tender, which would apply to some universal household knowledge”, he composed a little paper about “a child’s dream of a star”. It was the story of a brother and sister, constant child companions, who used to make friends of a star, watching it together until they knew when and where it would rise, and always bidding it good-night, so that when the sister dies, the lonely brother still connects her with the star, which he then sees opening as a sea of light, and its rays making a shining pathway from earth to heaven. It was his sister Fanny, who had often wandered with him at night in St. Mary’s Churchyard, near their home at Chatham, looking up at the stars, and her death, shortly before the paper was written, had revived the fancy of childhood. In *The Uncommercial Traveller* he revisits “Dullborough”, and the first discovery he makes is that the station has swallowed up the playing field of the school to which he went during his last two years at Chatham.

“It was gone. The two beautiful hawthorn trees, the hedge, the turf, and all those buttercups and daisies, had given place to the stoniest of jolting roads; while, beyond the station, an ugly dark monster of a tunnel kept its

jaws open, as if it had swallowed them and were ravenous for more destruction. The coach that had carried me away, was melodiously called Timpson's Blue-eyed Maid [it was really called the 'Commodore'], and belonged to Timpson, at the coach office up street; the locomotive engine that had brought me back was called severely No. 97, and belonged to S.E.R., and was spitting ashes and hot water over the blighted ground.... Here, in the haymaking time, had I been delivered from the dungeons of Seringapatam, an immense pile (of haycock), by my countrymen, the victorious British (boy next door and his two cousins), and had been recognized with ecstasy by my affianced one (Miss Green), who had come all the way from England (second house in the terrace) to ransom me and marry me."

In playful vein Dickens professes to record his disappointment at failing to receive any recognition from a "native", in the person of a phlegmatic green grocer, when he revisits Rochester, and revives the associations of haunts beloved in childhood.

"Nettled by his phlegmatic conduct, I informed him that I had left the town when I was a child. He slowly returned, quite unsoftened, and not without a sarcastic kind of complacency, Had I? Ah! and did I find it had got on tolerably well without me? Such is the difference (I thought when I had left him a few hundred yards behind, and was by so much in a better temper) between going away from a place and remaining in it. I had no right, I reflected, to be angry with the greengrocer for his want of interest; I was nothing to him; whereas he was the town, the cathedral, the bridge, the river, my childhood, and a large slice of my life, to me."

That is one side of the medal, but the other is displayed in *David Copperfield*, when little Mr. Chillip, the doctor, welcomes David back to England:

"'We are not ignorant, sir,' said Mr. Chillip, slowly shaking his little head again, 'down in our part of the country, of your fame. There must be great excitement here, sir,' said Mr. Chillip, tapping himself on the forehead with his forefinger. 'You must find it a trying occupation, sir!'"

A feature of Dickens's literary manner, so insistent that the most superficial reader cannot miss it, is the individual and almost human aspect which a street or a landscape, a house or a room, takes on in his description. A typical example may be selected in Mr. Wickfield's house —

“A very old house bulging out over the road; a house with long, low lattice windows bulging out still farther, and beams with carved heads on the ends bulging out too, so that I fancied the whole house was leaning forward, trying to see who was passing on the narrow pavement below.”

It was the outcome of an acute nervous sensibility, amounting at times to an almost neurotic irritability, such as peeps out from his confession that the shape of Earl Grey’s head, when he was a Parliamentary reporter in the Gallery, “was misery to me and weighed down my youth”. This peculiarity of temperament had established itself when, a little delicate and highly strung child, he used to transfer the scenes and happenings of the novels to which he stole away from the other boys at their play, into the setting of his own existence, and “every barn in the neighbourhood, every stone in the church, and every foot of the churchyard, had some association of its own connected with these books, and stood for some locality made famous in them”.

There has seldom, perhaps, been such an absence of complexity in genius of a high order as there was in Dickens’s character. But though there was no complexity, there were two very different aspects — acute sensibility was not incompatible with a virile and buoyant spirit. And so Dickens’s associations with the country which he loved best and knew most intimately were, on the one side, those of a dreamy childhood, on the other, of a lusty zest in outdoor life and the rustic jollity of an old-world “Merry England”. The sports and revels of Manor Farm, Dingley Dell, have all the exuberance of Lever’s Irish novels. Dickens must have often taken part in merry-makings such as he describes, on flying visits that are not recorded in Forster, before he sat down to write about them during his honeymoon at Chalk. As the Master of Gadshill, his lithe, upright figure, clad in loose-fitting garments, and rather dilapidated shoes, was a familiar sight to all the country neighbours, as he swung along the shady lanes, banked high with hedges that were full of violets, purple and white, ferns, and lichens, and mosses. Often he would call at the old-fashioned “Crispin and Crispianus”, on the north side of the London road just out of Strood, for a glass of ale, or a little cold brandy and water, and sit in the corner of the settle opposite the fireplace, looking at nothing but seeing everything. In the chapter on “Tramps” in *The Uncommercial Traveller*, he imagines himself to be the travelling clockmaker, who sees to something wrong with the bell of the turret stable clock up at Cobham Hall, and after being regaled in the

enormous servants' hall with beef and bread, and powerful ale, sets off through the woods till the town lights appear right in front, and lies for the night at the ancient sign of Crispin and Crispianus. The floating population of the roads, — the travelling showman, the cheap jack, the harvest and hopping tramps, the young fellows who trudge along barefoot, their boots slung over their shoulders, their shabby bundles under their arms, their sticks newly cut from some roadside wood, and the truculently humorous tramp, who tells the Beadle: "Why, blow your little town! who wants to be in it? Wot does your dirty little town mean by comin' and stickin' itself in the road to anywhere?" — all are closely scanned and noted, as they mount or descend Strood Hill in perennial procession. Dickens was himself a sturdy and inveterate pedestrian. When he suffered from insomnia he would think nothing of rising in the middle of the night and taking a thirty miles' spin before breakfast.

"Coming in just now," he wrote in his third year at Gadshill, "after twelve miles in the rain, I was so wet that I have had to change and get my feet into warm water before I could do anything."

In February, 1865, he wrote:

"I got frost-bitten by walking continually in the snow, and getting wet in the feet daily. My boots hardened and softened, hardened and softened, my left foot swelled, and I still forced the boot on; sat in it to write, half the day; walked in it through the snow, the other half; forced the boot on again next morning; sat and walked again; and being accustomed to all sorts of changes in my feet, took no heed. At length, going out as usual, I fell lame on the walk, and had to limp home dead lame, through the snow, for the last three miles — to the remarkable terror, by the way, of the two big dogs."

It is hardly necessary to say that Dickens never so absorbed the local spirit and genius of that part of rural England which he knew and loved best as the Brontës absorbed the spirit of the Yorkshire moorlands, or Mr. Hardy the spirit of Wessex, or Mr. Eden Phillpotts the spirit of Dartmoor, or Sir A. Quiller-Couch the spirit of the "Delectable Duchy". He was too busy and preoccupied a man for this, and had too much of his life and work behind him, when he made his permanent home in "Dickens-land". And Gadshill was too near to the bustle and stir of Chatham to furnish a purely idyllic environment or entirely unsophisticated rusticity. But it is not unduly fanciful to discover the influence of Kentish scenery, with its bright, clear atmosphere, its undulating slopes of green woodland and green hop fields,

pink-and-white orchards, and golden harvests — the prettiest though not the most beautiful scenery in England — upon his conception of a typical “English home — grey twilight pour’d

On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep — all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace”.

Though no local name is attached to it, and no local tradition identifies it with any particular spot, there is no difficulty in fixing in the very heart of “Dickens-land” the picture upon which the “Battle of Life” is opened: the joyous dance of two girls, “quite unconstrained and careless”, “in one little orchard attached to an old stone house with a honeysuckle porch”, “while some half-dozen peasant women standing on ladders, gathering the apples from the trees, stopped in their work to look down, and share their enjoyment”.

“As they danced among the orchard trees, and down the groves of stems and back again, and twirled each other lightly round and round, the influence of their airy motion seemed to spread and spread, in the sunlit scene, like an expanding circle in the water. Their streaming hair and fluttering skirts, the elastic grass beneath their feet, the boughs that rustled in the morning air — the flushing leaves, their speckled shadows on the soft green ground — the balmy wind that swept along the landscape, glad to turn the distant windmill, cheerily — everything between the two girls, and the man and team at plough upon the ridge of land, where they showed against the sky as if they were the last things in the world — seemed dancing too.”

Something, too, of the love of good cheer, quaint old Christmas customs, of junketings in ancient farmhouse kitchens and the parlours of ancient hostleries, which has made Dickens the early Victorian apostle of Yuletide “wassail”, can be derived from his having “powlert up and down” in a county abounding with comfortable manor houses and cosy inns. It is a ripe and mellow tradition of good cheer, that is quite distinct from the bovine stolidity of a harvest home in George Eliot’s Loamshire or the crude animalism of Meredith’s Gaffer Gammon. For Kent, even from the time of Cæsar’s Commentaries, has been “the civil’st place of all the isle”.

That is the aspect of Dickens’s country on the one side — the side which, some years before he established himself at Gadshill, he mapped out, already knowing it intimately, to show to Forster in a brief excursion:

“You will come down booked for Maidstone (I will meet you at Paddock-wood), and we will go thither in company over a most beautiful little line of railroad. The eight miles walk from Maidstone to Rochester, and a visit to the Druidical altar on the wayside, are charming. This could be accomplished on the Tuesday; and Wednesday we might look about us at Chatham, coming home by Cobham on Thursday.”

The other side — the dreary marshes lying between the Medway and the Thames, a dark, flat wilderness intersected by dykes and mounds and gates — had associations not less intimate. In *David Copperfield* Dickens transferred the dreams and the events of his childhood to an alien setting. In *Great Expectations* he invents a fictitious story in harmony with scenes in which he delighted to retrace his childish memories. Again, the amphibian creatures which he lightly sketches in *Great Expectations*, and more elaborately in *Our Mutual Friend*, had first impressed themselves on his imagination as he rambled, a tiny, eager-eyed boy, about the dockyards and waterside alleys of Chatham, or made trips to Sheerness with “Mr. Micawber”, that is to say, his father, in the Navy Pay yacht, though he long afterwards pursued his studies of them more exhaustively at Wapping and the Isle of Dogs, and in expeditions with the Thames police. It was from a walk with Leech through Chatham by-streets that he gathered the hint of Charley Hexam and his father, for *Our Mutual Friend*, from the sight of “the uneducated father in fustian and the educated boy in spectacles”.

But when Dickens took Rochester once more for the background of a story in *Edwin Drood* there seems, to us in our knowledge of the event, something almost ominous. It suggests Waller’s famous simile of the stag that returns to die where it was roused. Dickens’s last visit to the town was to stimulate his imagination for the conference between Datchery and the Princess Puffer at the entrance to the “Monks’ Vineyard”. On the last day of his life he was busy, in the chalet in the garden at Gadshill Place, embodying the fancies which he had gathered and fused on that last visit. On the last page which he was to write he endeavoured to record — for the last time — his sense of the atmosphere of the old city.

“A brilliant morning shines on the old city. Its antiquities and ruins are surpassingly beautiful, with the lusty ivy gleaming in the sun, and the rich trees waving in the balmy air. Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods, and fields — or, rather, from the one great garden of the whole of the cultivated island in its

yielding time — penetrate into the Cathedral, subdue its earthy odour, and preach the Resurrection and the Life. The cold stone tombs of centuries ago grow warm, and flecks of brightness dart into the sternest marble corners of the building, fluttering there like wings.”

On the eve of that last day he had more than once expressed his satisfaction at having finally abandoned all intention of exchanging Gadshill for London. He had done this still more impressively a few days before.

“While he lived, he said, he should wish his name to be more and more associated with the place; and he had a notion that when he died, he should like to lie in the little graveyard belonging to the Cathedral at the foot of the Castle wall.”

Half of his wish had to go unfulfilled; the other half has been realized in a different but a profounder sense than that in which it is conceived. While he lives, in the creations of his humour and pathos, airy things of fun and frolic, tenderness and tears, his name is more and more associated “with the scenes” — to borrow the words of the memorial tablet in Rochester Cathedral — ”in which his earliest and his latest years were passed”, scenes that “from the associations ... which extended over all his life” have the best right to be known as “Dickens-land”.

PICKWICKIAN MANNERS AND CUSTOMS by

Percy Fitzgerald



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OF PICKWICK.

Pickwickian
Manners
and
Customs



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**PICKWICKIAN
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Inscribed
to
AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, M.P.

PICKWICKIAN MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

No English book has so materially increased the general gaiety of the country, or inspired the feeling of comedy to such a degree as, "The Pickwick Club." It is now some "sixty years since" this book was published, and it is still heartily appreciated. What English novel or story is there which is made the subject of notes and commentaries on the most elaborate scale; whose very misprints and inconsistencies are counted up; whose earliest "states of the plates" are sought out and esteemed precious? "Pickwick," wonderful to say, is the only story that has produced a literature of its own — quite a little library — and has kept artists, topographers, antiquaries, and collectors all busily at work.

There seems to be some mystery, almost miracle, here. A young fellow of four-and-twenty throws off, or rather "rattles off," in the exuberance of his spirits, a never-flagging series of incidents and characters. The story is read, devoured, absorbed, all over the world, and now, sixty years after its appearance, new and yet newer editions are being issued. All the places alluded to and described in the book have in their turn been lifted into fame, and there are constantly appearing in magazines illustrated articles on "Rochester and Dickens," "Dickens Land," "Dickens' London," and the rest. Wonderful! People, indeed, seem never to tire of the subject — the same topics are taken up over and over again. The secret seems to be that the book was a living thing, and still lives. It is, moreover, perhaps the best, most accurate picture of character and manners that are quite gone by: in it the meaning and significance of old buildings, old inns, old churches, and old towns are reached, and interpreted in most interesting fashion; the humour, bubbling over, and never forced, and always fresh, is sustained through some six hundred closely-printed pages; all which, in itself, is a marvel and unapproached. It is easy, however, to talk of the boisterousness, the "caricature," the unlicensed recklessness of the book, the lack of restraint, the defiance of the probabilities. It is popular and acceptable all the same. But there is one test which incontestably proves its merit, and supplies its title, to be considered all but "monumental." This is its prodigious fertility and suggestiveness.

At this moment a review is being made of the long Victorian Age, and people are reckoning up the wonderful changes in life and manners that have taken place within the past sixty years. These have been so imperceptibly made that they are likely to escape our ken, and the eye chiefly settles on some few of the more striking and monumental kind, such as the introduction of railways, of ocean steamships, electricity, and the like. But no standard of comparison could be more useful or more compendious than the immortal chronicle of Pickwick, in which the old life, not forgotten by some of us, is summarised with the completeness of a history. The reign of Pickwick, like that of the sovereign, began some sixty years ago. Let us recall some of these changes.

To begin: We have now no arrest for debt, with the attendant sponging-houses, Cursitor Street, sheriffs' officers, and bailiffs; and no great Fleet Prison, Marshalsea, or King's Bench for imprisoning debtors. There are no polling days and hustings, with riotous proceedings, or "hocussing" of voters; and no bribery on a splendid scale.

Drinking and drunkenness in society have quite gone out of fashion. Gentlemen at a country house rarely or never come up from dinner, or return from a cricket match, in an almost "beastly" state of intoxication; and "cold punch" is not very constantly drunk through the day. There are no elopements now in chaises and four, like Miss Wardle's, with headlong pursuit in other chaises and four; nor are special licenses issued at a moment's notice to help clandestine marriages. There is now no frequenting of taverns and "free and easies" by gentlemen, at the "Magpie and Stump" and such places, nor do persons of means take up their residence at houses like the "George and Vulture" in the City. No galleried inns (though one still lingers on in Holborn), are there, at which travellers put up: there were then nearly a dozen, in the Borough and elsewhere. There are no coaches on the great roads, no guards and bulky drivers; no gigs with hoods, called "cabs," with the driver's seat next his fare; no "hackney coaches," no "Hampstead stages," no "Stanhopes" or "guillotined cabriolets" — whatever they were — or "mail-carts," the "pwettiest thing" driven by gentlemen. And there are no "sedan chairs" to take Mrs. Dowler home. There are no "poke" or "coal-scuttle" bonnets, such as the Miss Wardles wore; no knee-breeches and gaiters; no "tights," with silk stockings and pumps for evening wear; no big low-crowned hats, no striped vests for valets, and, above all, no gorgeous "uniforms," light blue, crimson, and

gold, or “orange plush,” such as were worn by the Bath gentlemen’s gentlemen. “Thunder and lightning” shirt buttons, “mosaic studs” — whatever they were — are things of the past. They are all gone. Gone too is “half-price” at the theatres. At Bath, the “White Hart” has disappeared with its waiters dressed so peculiarly — “like Westminster boys.” We have no serjeants now like Buzfuz or Snubbin: their Inn is abolished, and so are all the smaller Inns — Clement’s or Clifford’s — where the queer client lived. Neither are valentines in high fashion. Chatham Dockyard, with its hierarchy, “the Clubbers,” and the rest, has been closed. No one now gives *déjeûnés*, not *déjeuners*; or “public breakfasts,” such as the authoress of the “Expiring Frog” gave. The “delegates” have been suppressed, and Doctors’ Commons itself is levelled to the ground. The “Fox under the Hill” has given place to a great hotel. The old familiar “White Horse Cellars” has been rebuilt, made into shops and a restaurant. There are no “street keepers” now, but the London Police. The *Eatanswill Gazette* and its scurrilities are not tolerated. Special constables are rarely heard of, and appear only to be laughed at: their staves, tipped with a brass crown, are sold as curios. Turnpikes, which are found largely in “Pickwick,” have been suppressed. The abuses of protracted litigation in Chancery and other Courts have been reformed. No papers are “filed at the Temple” — whatever that meant. The Pound, as an incident of village correction has, all but a few, disappeared.

Then for the professional classes, which are described in the chronicle with such graphic power and vivacity. As at this time “Boz” drew the essential elements of character instead of the more superficial ones — his later practice — there is not much change to be noted. We have the medical life exhibited by Bob Sawyer and his friends; the legal world in Court and chambers — judges, counsel, and solicitors — are all much as they are now. Sir Frank Lockwood has found this subject large enough for treatment in his little volume, “The Law and Lawyers of Pickwick.” It may be thought that no judge of the pattern of Stareleigh could be found now, but we could name recent performances in which incidents such as, “Is your name Nathaniel Daniel or Daniel Nathaniel?” have been repeated. Neither has the blustering of Buzfuz or his sophistical plaintiveness wholly gone by. The “cloth” was represented by the powerful but revolting sketch of Stiggins, which, it is strange, was not resented by the Dissenters of the day, and also by a more worthy specimen in the person of the clergyman at

Dingley Dell. There are the mail-coach drivers, with the “ostlers, boots, countrymen, gamekeepers, peasants, and others,” as they have it in the play-bills. Truly admirable, and excelling the rest, are “Boz’s” sketches — actually “living pictures” — of the fashionable footmen at Bath, beside which the strokes in that diverting piece “High Life below Stairs” seem almost flat. The simperings of these gentry, their airs and conceit, we may be sure, obtain now. Once coming out of a Theatre, at some fashionable performance, through a long lane of tall menials, one fussy aristocrat pushed one of them out of his way. The menial contemptuously pushed him back. The other in a rage said, “How dare you? Don’t you know, I’m the Earl of — -” “Well,” said the other coldly, “If you *be* a Hearl, can’t you be’ave as sich?”

After the wedding at Manor Farm we find that bride and bridegroom did not set off from the house on a wedding tour, but remained for the night. This seemed to be the custom. Kissing, too, on the Pickwickian principles, would not now, to such an extent, be tolerated. There is an enormous amount in the story. The amorous Tupman had scarcely entered the hall of a strange house when he began osculatory attempts on the lips of one of the maids; and when Mr. Pickwick and his friends called on Mr. Winkle, sen., at Birmingham, Bob Sawyer made similar playful efforts — being called an “odous creetur” by the lady. In fact, the custom seemed to be to kiss when and wherever you could conveniently. Getting drunk after any drinking, and at any time of the day, seemed to be common enough. There was a vast amount of open fields, &c., about London which engendered the “Cockney sportsman.” He disappeared as the fields were built over. We have no longer the peculiar “stand-up” collars, or “gills,” and check neck-cloths.

But Mr. Bantam’s costume at the Bath Assembly, shows the most startling change. Where is now the “gold eye glass?” — we know that eye glass, which was of a solid sort, not fixed on the nose, but held to the eye — a “quizzing glass,” and folding up on a hinge — ”a broad black ribbon” too; the “gold snuffbox;” gold rings “innumerable” on the fingers, and “a diamond pin” on his “shirt frill,” a “curb chain” with large gold seals hanging from his waistcoat — (a “curb chain” proper was then a little thin chain finely wrought, of very close links.) Then there was the “pliant ebony cane, with a heavy gold top.” Ebony, however, is not pliant, but the reverse — black was the word intended. Then those “smalls” and stockings to match. Mr. Pickwick, a privileged man, appeared on this occasion, indeed

always, in his favourite white breeches and gaiters. In fact, on no occasion save one, when he wore a great-coat, does he appear without them. Bantam's snuff was "Prince's mixture," so named after the Regent, and his scent "*Bouquet du Roi*." "Prince's mixture" is still made, but "*Bouquet du Roi*" is supplanted.

Perker's dress is also that of the stage attorney, as we have him now, and recognize him. He would not be the attorney without that dress. He was "all in black, with boots as shiny as his eyes, *a low white neckcloth*, and a *clean* shirt with a frill to it." This, of course, meant that he put on one every day, and is yet a slight point of contact with Johnson, who described someone as being only able to go out "on clean shirt days;" a gold watch and seals depended from his *Fob*. "Depended" is a curious use of the word, and quite gone out.

Another startling change is in the matter of duels. The duels in *Pickwick* come about quite as a matter of course, and as a common social incident. In the "forties" I recall a military uncle of my own — a gentleman, like uncle Toby — handing his card to some one in a billiard room, with a view to "a meeting." Dickens' friend Forster was at one time "going out" with another gentleman. Mr. Lang thinks that duelling was prohibited about 1844, and "Courts of Honour" substituted. But the real cause was the duel between Colonel Fawcett and Lieut. Munro, brothers-in-law, when the former was killed. This, and some other tragedies of the kind, shocked the public. The "Courts of Honour," of course, only affected military men.

Mr. Pickwick, himself, had nearly "gone out" on two or three occasions, once with Mr. Slammer, once with Mr. Magnus; while his scuffle with Tupman would surely have led to one. Winkle, presumed to be a coward, had no less than three "affairs" on his hands: one with Slammer, one with Dowler, and one with Bob Sawyer. At Bob Sawyer's Party, the two medical students, tendered their cards. For so amiable a man, Mr. Pickwick had some extraordinary failings. He seems to have had no restraint where drink was in the case, and was hopelessly drunk about six times — on three occasions, at least, he was preparing to assault violently. He once *hurled an inkstand*; he once struck a person; once challenged his friend to "come on." Yet the capital comedy spirit of the author carries us over these blemishes.

When Sam was relating to his master the story of the sausage maker's disappearance, Mr. Pickwick, horrified, asked had he been "Burked?" There *Boz* might have repeated his apologetic footnote, on Jingle's share in

the Revolution of 1830. "A remarkable instance of his force of prophetic imagination, etc." For the sausage story was related in the year of grace 1827, and Burke was executed in 1829, some two years later.

Mr. Lang has suggested that the bodies Mr. Sawyer and his friend subscribed for, were "snatched," but he forgets that this traffic was a secret one, and the bodies were brought to the private residence of the physicians, the only safe way (*Vide* the memoirs of Sir A. Cooper). At a great public Hospital the practice would be impossible.

"Hot elder wine, well qualified with brandy and spice," is a drink that would not now be accepted with enthusiasm at the humblest wedding, even in the rural districts: we are assured that sound "was the sleep and pleasant were the dreams that followed." Which is not so certain. The cake was cut and "passed through the ring," also an exploded custom, whatever its meaning was. In what novel now-a-days would there be an allusion to "Warren's blacking," or to "Rowland's oil," which was, of course, their famous "Macassar." These articles, however, may still be procured, and to that oil we owe the familiar interposing towel or piece of embroidery the "antimacassar," devised to protect the sofa or easy chair from the unguent of the hair. "Moral pocket handkerchiefs," for teaching religion to natives of the West Indies, combining amusement with instruction, "blending select tales with woodcuts," are no longer used.

Old Temple Bar has long since disappeared, so has the Holborn Valley. The Fleet was pulled down about ten years after Pickwick, but imprisonment for debt continued until 1860 or so. Indeed Mr. Lang seems to think it still goes on, for he says it is now "disguised as imprisonment for contempt of Court." This is a mistake. In the County Courts when small debts under £3 10s. are sued for, the judge will order a small weekly sum to be paid in discharge; in case of failure to pay, he will punish the disobedience by duress not exceeding fifteen days — a wholly different thing from imprisonment for debt.

Where now are the *Pewter Pots*, and the pot boy with his strap of "pewters?" — we would have to search for them now. Long cut glasses have taken their place. Where, too, is the invariable Porter, drunk almost exclusively in Pickwick? Bass had not then made its great name. There is no mention of Billiard tables, but much about Skittles and Bagatelle, which were the pastimes at Taverns.

Then the Warming Pan! Who now “does trouble himself about the Warming Pan?” — which is yet “a harmless necessary and I will add a comforting article of domestic furniture.” Observe *necessary*, as though every family had it as an article of their “domestic furniture.” It is odd to think of Mary going round all the beds in the house, and deftly introducing this “article” between the sheets. Or was it only for the old people: or in chilly weather merely? On these points we must be unsatisfied. The practice, however, points to a certain effeminacy — the average person of our day would not care to have his bed so treated — with invalids the “Hot Water Bottle” has “usurped its place.” We find this superannuated instrument in the “antique” dealers’ shops, at a good figure — a quaint old world thing, of a sort of old-fashioned cut and pattern. There only do people appear to trouble themselves about it.

“Chops and tomato sauce.” This too is superannuated also. A more correct taste is now chops *au naturel*, and relying on their own natural juices; but we have cutlets, with tomatos.

Again, are little boys no longer clad in “a tight suit of corduroy, spangled with brass buttons of very considerable size:” indeed corduroy is seldom seen save on the figures of some *chic* ladies. And how fortunate to live in days when a smart valet could be secured for twelve pounds a year, and two suits; and not less.

Surprising too was the valet’s accustomed dress. “A grey coat, a black hat, with a cockade on it, a pink striped waistcoat, light breeches and gaiters.” What too were “bright *basket* buttons” on a brown coat? Fancy Balls too, like Mrs. Leo Hunter’s, were given in the daytime, and caused no astonishment. Nor have we lodging-houses with beds on the “twopenny rope” principle. There are no “dry arches” of Waterloo Bridge: though here I suspect Boz was confounding them with those of the Adelphi.

Gone too are the simple games of childhood. Marbles for instance. We recall Serjeant Buzfuz’s pathetic allusion to little Bardell’s “Alley Tors and Commonneys; the long familiar cry of ‘knuckle down’ is neglected.” Who sees a boy playing marbles now in the street or elsewhere? Mr. Lang in his edition gives us no lore about this point. “Alley Tors” was short for “Alabaster,” the material of which the *best* marbles were made.

“Tor” however, is usually spelt “Taw.” “Commonneys” were the inferior or commoner kind. “Knuckle down,” according to our recollections, was the laying the knuckle on the ground for a shot. “Odd and even” was also

spoken of by the Serjeant. Another game alluded to, is mysteriously called “Tip-cheese” — of which the latest editor speculates “probably Tip-cat was meant: the game at which Bunyan was distinguishing himself when he had a call.” The “cat” was a plain piece of wood, sharpened at both ends. I suppose made to jump, like a cat. But *unde* “cheese,” unless it was a piece of rind that was struck.

“Flying the garter” is another of the Pickwickian boy games. Talking with a very old gentleman, lately, I thought of asking him concerning “Flying the garter:” he at once enlightened me. It was a familiar thing he remembered well “when a boy.” It was a sort of “Leap Frog,” exercise — only with a greater and longer spring: he spoke also of a shuffle of the feet during the process.

And again. There is a piquant quaintness in the upside-down turning of every thing in this wonderful Book. Such as Perker’s eyes, which are described as playing with his “inquisitive nose” a “perpetual game of” — what, think you? Bo-Peep? not at all: but “peep-bo.” How odd and unaccountable! We all knew the little “Bo-peep,” and her sheep — but “peep-bo” is quite a reversal.

Gas was introduced into London about the year 1812 and was thought a prodigiously “brilliant illuminant.” But in the Pickwickian days it was still in a crude state — and we can see in the first print — that of the club room — only two attenuated jets over the table. In many of the prints we find the dip or mould candle, which was used to light Sam as he sat in the coffee room of the Blue Boar. Mr. Nupkins’ kitchen was *not* lit by gas.

As to this matter of light — it all depends on habit and accommodating. When a boy I have listened to “Ivanhoe” read out — O enchantment! by the light of *two* “mould” candles — the regular thing — which required “snuffing” about every ten minutes, and snuffing required dexterity. The snuffers — laid on a long tray — were of ponderous construction; it was generally some one’s regular duty to snuff — how odd seems this now! The “plaited wicks” which came later were thought a triumph, and the snuffers disappeared. They also are to be seen in the Curio Shops.

How curious, too, the encroachment of a too practical age on the old romance. “Fainting” was the regular thing in the Pickwickian days, in any agitation; “burnt feathers” and the “sal volatile” being the remedy. The beautiful, tender and engaging creatures we see in the annuals, all fainted regularly — and knew *how* to faint — were perhaps taught it. Thus when

Mr. Pickwick was assumed to have “proposed” to his landlady, she in business-like fashion actually “fainted;” now-a-days “fainting” has gone out as much as duelling.

In the travellers’ rooms at Hotels — in the “commercial” room — we do not see people smoking “large Dutch pipes” — nor is “brandy and water” the only drink of the smoking room. Mr. Pickwick and his friends were always “breaking the waxen seals” of their letters — while Sam, and people of his degree, used the wafer. (What by the way was the “fat little boy” — in the seal of Mr. Winkle’s penitential letter to his sire? Possibly a cupid.) Snuff taking was then common enough in the case of professional people like Perker.

At this moment there is to be seen in the corner of many an antique Hall — Sedan chair laid up in ordinary — of black leather, bound with brass-nails. We can well recall in our boyish days, mamma in full dress and her hair in “bands,” going out to dine in her chair. On arriving at the house the chair was taken up the steps and carried bodily into the Hall — the chair men drew out their poles, lifted the head, opened the door and the dame stepped out. The operation was not without its state.

Gone too are the “carpet bags” which Mr. Pickwick carried and also Mr. Slurk — (why he brought it with him into the kitchen is not very clear).

Skates were then spelt “Skaits.” The “Heavy smack,” transported luggage — to the Provinces by river or canal. The “Twopenny Postman” is often alluded to. “Campstools,” carried about for use, excited no astonishment. Gentlemen don’t go to Reviews now, as Mr. Wardle did, arrayed in “a blue coat and bright buttons, corduroy (Boz also spells it *corderoy*) breeches and top boots,” nor ladies “in scarfs and feathers.” It is curious, by the way, that Wardle talks something after the fashionable manner of our day, dropping his g’s — as who should say “huntin’,” or “rippin’” — “I spent some evnins” he says “at your club.” “My gals,” he says also. “Capons” are not much eaten now. “Drinking wine” or “having a glass of wine” has gone out, and with it Mr. Tupman’s gallant manner of challenge to a fair one, *i.e.* “touching the enchanting Rachel’s wrist with one hand and gently elevating his bottle with the other.” “Pope Joan” is little played now, if at all; “Fish” too; how rarely one sees those mother-of-pearl fish! The “Cloth is not *drawn*” and the table exposed to view, to be covered with dessert, bottles, glasses, etc. The shining mahogany was always a brave show, and we fear this comes of using cheap made up tables

of common wood. Still we wot of some homes, old houses in the country, where the practice is kept up. It is evident that Mr. Wardle's dinner was at about 3 or 4 o'clock, for none was offered to the party that arrived about 6. This we may presume was the mode in old fashioned country houses. Supper came at eleven.

A chaise and four could go at the pace of fifteen miles an hour.

A "1000 horse-power" was Jingle's idea of extravagant speed by steam agency. Now we have got to 4, 5, and 10 thousand horsepower. Gentlemen's "frills" in the daytime are never seen now. Foot gear took the shape of "Hessians" "halves," "painted tops," "Wellington's" or "Bluchers." There are many other trifles which will evidence these changes. We are told of the "common eighteen-penny French skull cap." Note *common* — it is exhibited on Mr. Smangle's head — a rather smartish thing with a tassel. Nightcaps, too, they are surely gone by now: though a few old people may wear them, but then boys and young men all did. It also had a tassel. There is the "Frog Hornpipe," whatever dance that was: the "pousette;" while "cold srub," which is not in much vogue now, was the drink of the Bath Footmen. "Botany Bay ease, and New South Wales gentility," refer to the old convict days. This indeed is the most startling transformation of all. For instead of Botany Bay, and its miserable associations, we have the grand flourishing Australia, with its noble cities, Parliaments and the rest. Gone out too, we suppose, the "Oxford-mixture trousers;" "Oxford grey" it was then called.

Then for Sam's "Profeel machine." Mr. Andrew Lang in his notes wonders what this "Profeel machine" was, and fancies it was the silhouette process. This had nothing to do with the "Profeel machine" — which is described in "Little Pedlington," a delightful specimen of Pickwickian humour, and which ought to be better known than it is. "There now," said Daubson, the painter of "the all but breathing Grenadier," (alas! rejected by the Academy). "Then get up and sit down, if you please, mister." "He pointed to a narrow high-backed chair, placed on a platform; by the side of the chair was a machine of curious construction, from which protruded a long wire. 'Heady stiddy, mister.' He then slowly drew the wire over my head and down my nose and chin." Such was the "Profeel machine."

There are many antiquated allusions in Pickwick — which have often exercised the ingenuity of the curious. Sam's "Fanteegs," has been given

up in despair — as though there were no solution — yet, Professor Skeat, an eminent authority, has long since furnished it.

“Through the button hole” — a slang term for the mouth, has been well “threshed out” — as it is called. Of “My Prooshian Blue,” as his son affectedly styled his parent, Mr. Lang correctly suggests the solution, that the term came of George IV’s intention of changing the uniform of the Army to Blue. But this has been said before.

Boz in his Pickwickian names was fond of disguising their sense to the eye, though not to the ear. Thus Lady Snuphanuph, looks a grotesque, but somewhat plausible name — snuff-enough — a further indication of the manners and customs. So with Lord Mutanhed, *i.e.* “Muttonhead.” Mallard, Serjeant Snubbin’s Clerk, I have suspected, may have been some Mr. Duck — whom “Boz” had known — in that line.

“A MONUMENTAL PICKWICK.”

The fruitfulness of Pickwick, and amazing prolificness, that is one of its marvels. It is regularly “worked on,” like Dante or Shakespeare. The Pickwickian Library is really a wonder. It is intelligible how a work like Boswell’s “Johnson,” full of allusions and names of persons who have lived, spoken, and written, should give rise to explanation and commentaries; but a work of mere imagination, it would be thought, could not furnish such openings. As we have just seen, Pickwick and the other characters are so real, so artfully blended with existing usages, manners, and localities, as to become actual living things.

Mere panegyric of one’s favourite is idle. So I lately took a really effective way of *proving* the surprising fertility of the work and of its power of engendering speculation and illustration. I set about collecting all that has been done, written, and drawn on the subject during these sixty years past, together with all those lighter manifestations of popularity which surely indicate “the form and pressure” of its influence. The result is now before me, and all but fills a small room. When set in proper order and bound, it will fill over thirty great quartos — “huge armfuls” as Elia has it. In short, it is a “Monumental Pickwick.”

The basis of *The Text* is of course, the original edition of 1836. There are specimens of the titles and a few pages of every known edition; the first cheap or popular one; the “Library” edition; the “Charles Dickens” ditto; the *Edition de Luxe*; the “Victoria”: “Jubilee,” edited by C. Dickens the younger; editions at a shilling and at sixpence; the edition sold for one penny; the new “Gadshill,” edited by Andrew Lang; with the “Roxburghe,” edited by F. Kitton, presently to be published. The *Foreign Editions in English*; four American editions, two of Philadelphia, and two of New York; the Tauchnitz (German) and Baudry (French); the curious Calcutta edition; with one of the most interesting editions, viz., the one published at Launceston in Van Diemen’s Land in the year 1839, that is before the name of the Colony was changed. The publisher speaks feelingly of the enormous difficulties he had to encounter, and he boasts, with a certain pride, that it is “the largest publication that has issued from either the New South Wales or the Tasmanian Press.” Not only this, but the whole of the

work, printing, engraving, and binding, was executed in the Colony. He had to be content with lithography for the plates, and indeed, could only manage a selection of twenty of the best. He says, too, that even in England, lithography is found a process of considerable difficulty. They are executed in a very rough and imperfect way, and not very faithfully by an artist who signs himself "Tiz." The poor, but spirited publisher adds that the expense has been enormous — "greater than was originally contemplated," but he comforts himself with the compliment that "if any publication would repay the cost of its production, it would be the far-famed Pickwick Papers." On the whole, it is a very interesting edition to have, and I have never seen a copy save the one I possess. I have also an American edition, printed in Philadelphia, which has a great interest. It was bought there by Mrs. Charles Dickens, and presented by her to her faithful maid, Anne. I possess also a copy of the Christmas Carol given by his son, the author, to his father John. Few recall that "Boz" wrote a sequel to his Pickwick — a rather dismal failure — quite devoid of humour. He revived Sam and old Weller, and Mr. Pickwick, but they are unrecognizable figures. He judiciously suppressed this attempt, after making it a sort of introduction to Humphrey's Clock. Of course, we have it here.

Translations: Of these there are some twenty in all, but I have *only* the French, German, Russian, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, Hungarian.

Then come *Selections*: "Readings" from "Pickwick"; "Dialogues" from ditto; "Wellerisms," by Charles Kent and Mr. Rideal.

Dramatic Versions: "The Pickwickians," "Perambulations," "Sam Weller," etc. The "Pickwick" opera, by Burnand; "The Trial in 'Pickwick'"; "Bardell v. Pickwick." There are "Play Bills" — various. Connected with this department is the literature of the "Readings" — "Charles Dickens as a Reader," by Kent, and "Pen Photographs," by Kate Field. Also Dolby's account of the Reading Tours, and the little prepared versions for sale in the rooms in green covers; also bills, tickets, and programmes *galore*.

In *Music* we have "The Ivy Green" and "A Christmas Carol."

Imitations: "Pickwick Abroad," by G. W. Reynolds; "Pickwick in America," the "Penny Pickwick," the "Queerfish Chronicles," the "Cadger Club," and many more.

In the way of *Commentaries*: The "History of Pickwick," "Origin of Sam Weller": Sir F. Lockwood's "The Law and Lawyers of Pickwick"; Kent's

“Humour and Pathos of Charles Dickens”; accounts from “Forster’s Life” and from the “Letters,” “Controversy with Seymour” (Mrs. Seymour’s rare pamphlet is not procurable), “Dickensiana,” by F. Kitton; “Bibliographies” by Herne Shepherd, Cook and also by Kitton.

Criticisms: The *Quarterly Review*, the *Westminster Review*, *Fraser’s Magazine*, Taine’s estimate, “L’inimitable Boz” by Comte de Heussey, with many more.

Topographical: Hughes’ “Tramp in Dickens-Land,” “In Kent with Charles Dickens,” by Frost; “Bozland,” by Percy Fitzgerald; “The Childhood and Youth of C. Dickens,” by Langton; “Dickens’s London,” by Allbutt; “About England with Dickens,” by Rimmer; Papers in American and English Magazines; “A Pickwickian Pilgrimage,” by Hassard; “Old Rochester,” and others.

Commentaries on the Illustrations: Here is a regular department — Account of “Phiz,” by Kitton; “Life of Hablot K. Browne,” by Croal Thomson; “Life of G. Cruikshank,” Mr. Dexter’s book, and another by Charles P. Johnson.

Next we refer to the *Illustrations* themselves: The plates to the original edition are by Seymour (7), Buss (2), Phiz-Seymour (7), and by “Phiz” (35). Variations, by “Phiz”; variations, coloured by Pailthorpe; facsimiles of original drawings — altogether about 200. There are *Extra Plates* by Heath, Sir John Gilbert, Onwhyn (“Sam Weller”), Sibson, Alfred Crowquill, Antony (American), Onwhyn (Posthumous) and Frost, Frederick Barnard (to popular edition); also some folio plates; C. J. Leslie (a frontispiece). “Phiz” published later a series of six, and also a large number of coarse woodcuts to illustrate a cheap edition.

There are also a series of clever extra illustrations by Pailthorpe and others, coloured by the same. We have seen F. Barnard’s illustrations coloured by Pailthorpe. There are here also the original plates re-drawn in Calcutta. They were also reproduced in Philadelphia, with additional ones by Nast. Others were issued in Sydney. There are a number of German woodcut illustrations to illustrate the German translations; some rude woodcuts to illustrate Dicks’ edition: ditto to Penny edition. There is also a set of portraits from “Pickwick” in *Bell’s Life*, probably by Kenny Meadows; and coloured figures by “Kyd.”

There are many pictures in colours — Pickwick, Weller, &c. — to illustrate Christmas calendars, chiefly “made in Germany.”

The most curious tribute is the issue by the Phonographic Society of “Pickwick” in shorthand; and, finally, “Pickwick” in raised characters on the Braille system for the blind.

This odd publication of “Pickwick” for the Blind came about in a quaint way enough. As we know, the author issued at his own expense one of his works in raised characters, as a present to these afflicted persons. A rich old gentleman had noticed a blind beggar seated with the Bible open on his knees, droning out the passages in the usual fashion. Some of the impostor sort learn the lines by heart and “make believe” to read, as they pass their fingers over the characters. The rich old gentleman’s blind reader read in the genuine way, and got through about fifty chapters a day. No one, however, is much improved by the lecture. They merely wonder at the phenomenon and go their way. The rich old gentleman presently spoke to the blind reader: “Why don’t you read ‘Pickwick’ or some other book that the public will listen to?” “Sir,” he replied — he must have been of the stock of Silas Wegg — ”give me ‘Pickwick’ in raised characters and I will read it.”

The rich old gentleman went his way and inquired at the proper places, but the work was not known. He gave an order for a hundred copies of “Pickwick” in “Wait’s Improved Braille Type,” and in about six months it was delivered to him — not the whole work, but a selection of the more effective episodes. The blind reader was pleased; the old gentleman insisted on a private rehearsal; select passages were chosen which were calculated to take about twenty minutes each. When he arrived on the morning fixed for the first attempt, he found his friend at his post with quite a crowd gathered round him, in convulsions of laughter. The “poor blind” was reading, or feeling out, old Mr. Weller’s ejection of the red-nosed man. The hat was overflowing with coppers and even silver. So things went on prospering for a while. “Pickwick” was a magnificent success, and the blind man was never without a crowd round him of some fifteen to fifty persons. But the other blind readers found the demand for the sacred text vanishing; and people would unfeelingly interrupt them to inquire the way to the “Pickwick man.” Eventually the police began to interfere, and required him to “move on;” “he was obstructing the pavement” — not, perhaps, he, but “Pickwick.” He *did* move on to Hyde Park, but there were others there, performers young and up-to-date, and with full use of their eyes, who did the same thing with action and elocution. So he fairly gave

the thing up, and returned to his Scriptures. This tale would have amused “Boz” himself.

Of a more miscellaneous kind are “The Pickwick Songster,” “Sam Weller’s Almanac,” “Sam Weller’s Song Book,” “The Pickwick Pen,” “Oh, what a boon and a blessing to men,” etc., — to say nothing of innumerable careless sheets, and trifles of all kinds and of every degree. Then we have adapted advertisements. The Proprietors of Beecham’s Pills use the scene of Mr. Pickwick’s discovery of the Bill Stumps inscription. Some carpet cleaners have Sam and the pretty housemaid folding the carpet. Lastly comes the author, “Boz” himself, with letters, portraits, pictures of his homes, etc., all more or less connected with the period when he was writing this book, a facsimile of his receipt for copy money, a copy of his agreement with Chapman and Hall, and many more items.

I have often wondered how it was that “the inimitable Boz,” took so little interest in his great Book. It always seemed to me that he did not care for praise of it, or wish much that it should be alluded to. But he at once became interested, when you spoke of some of his artful plots, in Bleak House, or Little Dorrit — then his eye kindled. He may have fancied, as his friend Forster also did, that Pickwick was a rather *jejune* juvenile thing, inartistically planned, and thrown off, or rather rattled off. His *penchant*, as was the case with Liston and some of the low comedians, was for harrowing tragedy and pathos.

Once when driving with him on a jaunting car in Dublin, he asked me, did I know so-and-so, and I answered promptly in Mr. Winkle’s words, “I don’t know him, but I have seen him.” This *apropos* made him laugh heartily. I am now inclined to think that the real explanation of his distaste was, that the Book was associated with one of the most painful and distracting episodes of his life, which affected him so acutely, that he actually flung aside his work in the full tumult of success, and left the eager public without its regular monthly number. “I have been so unnerved” he writes, in an unpublished letter to Harrison Ainsworth, “and hurt by the loss of the dear girl whom I loved, after my wife, more dearly and fervently than anyone on earth, that I have been compelled for once to give up all idea of my monthly work, and to try a fortnight’s rest and quiet.”

In this long book, there are found allusions to only two or three other works. What these are might form one of the questions “set” at the next Pickwick examination. Fielding is quoted once. In the dedication allusion

is made to Talfourd's three speeches in Parliament, on the copyright question; these were published in a little volume, and make, fairly enough, one of the illustrative documents of "Pickwick." In the first number of the first edition there is an odd note, rather out of place, but it was withdrawn later — meant to ridicule Mr. Jingle's story of "Ponto's" sagacity; it states that in Mr. Jesse's gleanings, there are more amazing stories than this.

Mr. Jesse was a sort of personage living at Richmond — where I well remember him, when I was there as a boy. "Jesse's gleanings" was then a well-known and popular book; and his stories of dogs are certainly extraordinary enough to have invoked Boz's ridicule. We are told of the French poodle, who after rolling himself in the mud of the Seine, would rub himself against any well-polished boots that he noticed, and would thus bring custom to his master, who was a shoe black on the *Pont Neuf*. He was taken to London by an English purchaser, but in a few days disappeared, and was discovered pursuing his old trade on the Bridge. Other dogs, we were told, after being transported long distances, would invariably find their way back. These prodigies, however, do not appear so wonderful now, after the strange things about dogs and cats that have been retailed in a well-known "weekly." A third allusion is to Sterne's *Maria of Moulines*, made, of all people in the world, by Sam Weller.

“BOZ” AND “BOZZY.”

It may seem somewhat far-fetched to put “Pickwick” beside Boswell’s also immortal work, but I think really the comparison is not a fanciful one. No one enjoyed the book so much as “Boz.” He knew it thoroughly. Indeed, it is fitting that “Boz” should relish “Bozzy;” for “Bozzy” would certainly have relished “Boz” and have “attended him with respectful attention.” It has not been yet shown how much there is in common between the two great books, and, indeed, between them and a third, greater than either, the immortal “Don Quixote.” All three are “travelling stories.” Sterne also was partial to a travelling story. Lately, when a guest at the “Johnson Club,” I ventured to expound minutely, and at length, this curious similarity between Boswell and Dickens. Dickens’ appreciation of “Bozzy” is proved by his admirable parody which is found in one of his letters to Wilkie Collins, and which is superior to anything of the sort — to Chalmers’, Walcot’s, or any that have been attempted: —

“Sir,” as Dr. Johnson would have said, “if it be not irrational in a man to count his feathered bipeds before they are hatched, we will conjointly astonish them next year.” *Boswell*. “Sir, I hardly understand you.” *Johnson*. “You never understood anything.” *Boswell* (in a sprightly manner). “Perhaps, sir, I am all the better for it.” *Johnson*. “I do not know but that you are. There is Lord Carlisle (smiling) — he never understands anything, and yet the dog is well enough. Then, sir, there is Forster — he understands many things, and yet the fellow is fretful. Again, sir, there is Dickens, with a facile way with him — like Davy, sir, like Davy — yet I am told that the man is lying at a hedge alehouse by the seashore in Kent as long as they will trust him.” *Boswell*. “But there are no hedges by the sea in Kent, sir.” *Johnson*. “And why not, sir?” *Boswell* (at a loss). “I don’t know, sir, unless — ” *Johnson* (thundering). “Let us have no unlessees, sir. If your father had never said unless he would never have begotten you, sir.” *Boswell* (yielding). “Sir, that is very true.”

To begin, the Christian names of the two great men were the same. Sam Johnson and Samuel Pickwick. Johnson had a relation called Nathaniel, and Pickwick had a “follower” also Nathaniel. Both the great men founded Clubs: Johnson’s was in Essex Street, Strand, to say nothing of the Literary

or Johnson Club; the other in Huggin Lane. Johnson had his Goldsmith, Reynolds, Boswell, Burke, and the rest, as his members and “followers:” Mr. Pickwick had his Tupman, Snodgrass, Winkle, and others. These were the “travelling members,” just as Dr. Johnson and Boswell were the travelling members of their Club. Boswell was the notetaker, so was Snodgrass. When we see the pair staying at the Three Crowns at Lichfield — calling on friends — waited on by the manager of the local Theatre, etc., we are forcibly reminded of the visits to Rochester and Ipswich.

Boswell one night dropped into a tavern in Butcher Row, and saw his great friend in a warm discussion with a strange Irishman, who was very short with him, and the sketch recalls very forcibly Mr. Pickwick at the Magpie and Stump, where old Jack Bamber told him that he knew nothing about the mysteries of the old haunted chambers in Clifford’s Inn and such places. The Turk’s Head, the Crown and Anchor, the Cheshire Cheese, The Mitre, may be set beside the Magpie and Stump, the George and Vulture, and White Horse Cellars.

More curious still in Boswell’s life, there is mentioned a friend of Johnson’s who is actually named — Weller! I leave it as a pleasant crux for the ingenious Pickwickian to find out where.

Johnson had his faithful servant, Frank: Mr. Pickwick his Sam. The two sages equally revelled in travelling in post-chaises and staying at inns; both made friends with people in the coaches and commercial rooms. There are also some odd accidental coincidences which help in the likeness. Johnson was constantly in the Borough, and we have a good scene with Mr. Pickwick at the White Hart in the same place. Mr. Pickwick had his widow, Mrs. Bardell; and Johnson his in the person of the fair Thrale. Johnson had his friend Taylor at Ashbourne, to whom he often went on visits, always going down by coach; while Mr. Pickwick had his friend Wardle, with whom he stayed at Manor Farm, in Kent. We know of the review at Rochester which Mr. Pickwick and friends attended, and how they were charged by the soldiery. Oddly enough Dr. Johnson attended a review also at Rochester, when he was on a visit to his friend Captain Langton. Johnson, again, found his way to Bath, went to the Assembly Rooms, etc.; and our friend Mr. Pickwick, we need not say, also enjoyed himself there. In Boswell’s record we have a character called Mudge, an “out of the way” name; and in Pickwick we find a Mudge. George Steevens, who figures so much in Boswell’s work, was the author of an antiquarian hoax played off

on a learned brother, of the same class as “Bill Stumps, his mark.” He had an old inscription engraved on an unused bit of pewter — it was well begrimed and well battered, then exposed for sale in a broker’s shop, where it was greedily purchased by the credulous virtuoso. The notion, by the way, of the Club button was taken from the Prince Regent, who had his Club and uniform, which he allowed favourites to wear.

There is a story in Boswell’s Biography which is transferred to “Pickwick,” that of the unlucky gentleman who died from a surfeit of crumpets; Sam, it will be recollected, describes it as a case of the man “as killed hisself on principle.”

“He used to go away to a coffee-house after his dinner and have a small pot o’ coffee and four crumpets. He fell ill and sent for the doctor. Doctor comes in a green fly vith a kind o’ Robinson Crusoe set o’ steps as he could let down ven he got out, and pull up arter him ven he got in, to perwent the necessity o’ the coachman’s gettin’ down, and thereby undeceivin’ the public by lettin’ ‘em see that it wos only a livery coat he’d got on, and not the trousers to match. ‘How many crumpets at a sittin’ do you think ‘ud kill me off at once?’ said the patient. ‘I don’t know,’ says the doctor. ‘Do you think half a crown’s vurth ‘ud do it?’ says the patient. ‘I think it might,’ says the doctor. ‘Three shillin’ ‘s vurth ‘ud be sure to do it, I s’pose?’ says the patient. ‘Certainly,’ says the doctor. ‘Wery good,’ says the patient; ‘good-night.’ Next mornin’ he gets up, has a fire lit, orders in three shillin’s’ vurth o’ crumpets, toasts ‘em all, eat ‘em all, and blows his brains out.”

“What did he do that for?” inquired Mr. Pickwick abruptly; for he was considerably startled by this tragical termination of the narrative.

“Wot did he do it for, sir?” reiterated Sam. “Wy, in support of his great principle that crumpets was wholesome, and to show that he vouldn’t be put out of his vay for nobody!”

Thus Dickens marvellously enriched this quaint story. It may be found amusing to trace the genesis of the tale. In Boswell it runs: “Mr. Fitzherbert, who loved buttered muffins, but durst not eat them because they disagreed with his stomach, resolved to shoot himself, and then eat three buttered muffins for breakfast, knowing that he should not be troubled with indigestion.” We find that De Quincey, in one of his essays, reports the case of an officer holding the rank of lieutenant-colonel who could not tolerate a breakfast without muffins. But he suffered agonies of

indigestion. "He would stand the nuisance no longer, but yet, being a just man, he would give Nature one final chance of reforming her dyspeptic atrocities. Muffins therefore being laid at one angle of the table and pistols at the other, with rigid equity the Colonel awaited the result. This was naturally pretty much as usual; and then the poor man, incapable of retreating from his word of honour, committed suicide, having left a line for posterity to the effect, "that a muffinless world was no world for him."

It will be recollected that, during the Christmas festivities at Manor Farm, after a certain amount of kissing had taken place under the mistletoe, Mr. Pickwick was "standing under the mistletoe, looking with a very pleased countenance on all that was passing round him, when the young lady with the black eyes, after a little whispering with the other young ladies, made a sudden dart forward, and putting her arm round Mr. Pickwick's neck, saluted him affectionately on the left cheek, and before he distinctly knew what was the matter he was surrounded by the whole bevy, and kissed by every one of them." Compare with this what happened to Dr. Johnson in the Hebrides:

"This evening one of our married ladies, a lively, pretty little woman, good-humouredly sat down upon Dr. Johnson's knee, and being encouraged by some of the company, put her hands round his neck and kissed him. "Do it again," said he, "and let us see who will tire first." He kept her on his knee some time while he and she drank tea. He was now like a *buck* indeed. All the company were much entertained to find him so easy and pleasant. To me it was highly comic to see the grave philosopher — the Rambler — toying with a Highland beauty! But what could he do? He must have been surly, and weak too, had he not behaved as he did. He would have been laughed at, and not more respected, though less loved."

Was not this Mr. Pickwick exactly?

Or, we might fancy this little scene taking place at Dunvegan Castle, on the night of the dance, when Johnson was in such high good-humour. His faithful henchman might have come up to him and have said jocosely, "*You, sir, in silk stockings?*"

"And why not, sir — why not?" said the Doctor warmly. "Oh, of course," I answered, "there is no reason why you should not wear them." "I imagine not, sir — I imagine not," said the Doctor in a very peremptory tone. I had contemplated a laugh, but found it was a serious matter. I looked grave, and said they were a pretty pattern. "I hope they are," said

Dr. Johnson, fixing his eyes upon me. "You see nothing extraordinary in these stockings *as* stockings, I trust, sir?" "Certainly not; oh, certainly not," I replied, and my revered friend's countenance assumed its customary benign expression.

Now, is not this Pickwickian all over? Yet it is the exact record of what occurred at Manor Farm, in "Pickwick," with a change only in the names, and would pass very fairly as an amiable outburst of the redoubtable Doctor's.

Or, again, let us put a bit of "Boz" into "Bozzy's" work. The amiable "Goldy" was partial to extravagant dress, and to showing himself off.

When a masquerade at Ranelagh was talked of, he said to Doctor Johnson, "I shall go as a Corsican." "What!" said the Doctor, with a sudden start. "As a Corsican," Dr. Goldsmith repeated mildly. "You don't mean to say," said the Doctor to him, gazing at him with solemn sternness, "that it is your intention to put yourself into a green velvet jacket with a two-inch tail?" "Such *is* my intention, sir," replied Goldsmith warmly; "and why not, sir?" "Because, sir," said the Doctor, considerably excited, "you are too old." "Too old!" exclaimed Goldsmith. "And if any further ground of objection be wanting," said Dr. Johnson, "You are too fat, sir." "Sir," said Dr. Goldsmith, his face suffused with a crimson glow, "this is an insult." "Sir," said the sage in the same tone, "it is not half the insult to you, that your appearance in my presence in a green velvet jacket with two-inch tail would be to me." "Sir," said Dr. Goldsmith, "you're a fellow." "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "you're another!"

Winkle in a very amusing way often suggests Boswell; and Mr. Pickwick treats him with as great rudeness as did Johnson *his* Winkle. When that unhappy gentleman, or follower exhibited himself on the ice, Mr. Pickwick, we are told, was excited and indignant. "He beckoned to Mr. Weller and said in a stern voice: Take the skates off." "No, but I had scarcely began," remonstrated Mr. Winkle. "Take his skates off," repeated Mr. Pickwick, firmly. The command was not to be resisted. "Lift him up," said Mr. Pickwick — Sam assisted him to rise. Mr. Pickwick retired a few paces apart from the by-standers and beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look on him and uttered in a low, but distinct and emphatic tone, these remarkable words: "You're a humbug, sir." "A what?" said Mr. Winkle, starting. "A humbug, sir, I will speak plainer if you wish it — an impostor, sir." With these words Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel

and rejoined his friends. Was not this exactly the Sage's treatment of his "Bozzy" on many occasions?

There is yet another odd coincidence. Everyone knows how Bob Sawyer's party was disturbed by Mrs. Raddle's angry expostulations, and the guests had to disperse. Well, Mr. Boswell, who had much of the Sawyer tone — gave a party at his rooms in Downing Street, and his landlord behaved so outrageously, that he gave him notice, and the next day quitted his rooms. "I feel I shall have to give my landlady notice," said Mr. Sawyer with a ghastly smile. Mr. Boswell had actually to take some of the invited guests to the Mitre and entertain them there.

There is a pleasant passage connected with Dr. Johnson's visit to Plymouth, with his old friend Sir Joshua. He was much pleased with this jaunt and declared he had derived from it a great accession of new ideas. . . "The magnificence of the Navy the ship building and all its circumstances afforded him a grand subject of contemplation." He contemplated it in fact, as Mr. Pickwick contemplated Chatham and the Medway. The commissioner of the dockyard paid him the compliment, etc. The characteristic part, however, was that the Doctor entered enthusiastically into the local politics. "There was a new town rising up round the dockyard, as a rival to the old one, and knowing from the sagacity and just observation of human nature, that it is certain if a man hates at all, he will hate his next neighbour, he concluded that this new and rising town could but excite the envy and jealousy of the old. He therefore set himself resolutely on the side of the old town, the *established* town in which he was. Considering it a kind of duty to *stand* by it. He accordingly entered warmly into its interests, and upon every occasion talked of *the Dockers* as "upstarts and aliens." As they wanted to be supplied with water from the old town, not having a drop themselves, Johnson affecting to entertain the passions of the place, was violent in opposition; and half laughing at himself for his pretended zeal, and where he had no concern, exclaimed: "No! I am against the *Dockers*; I am a Plymouth man. Rogues! let them die of thirst; they shall not have a drop. I *hate* a Docker!"

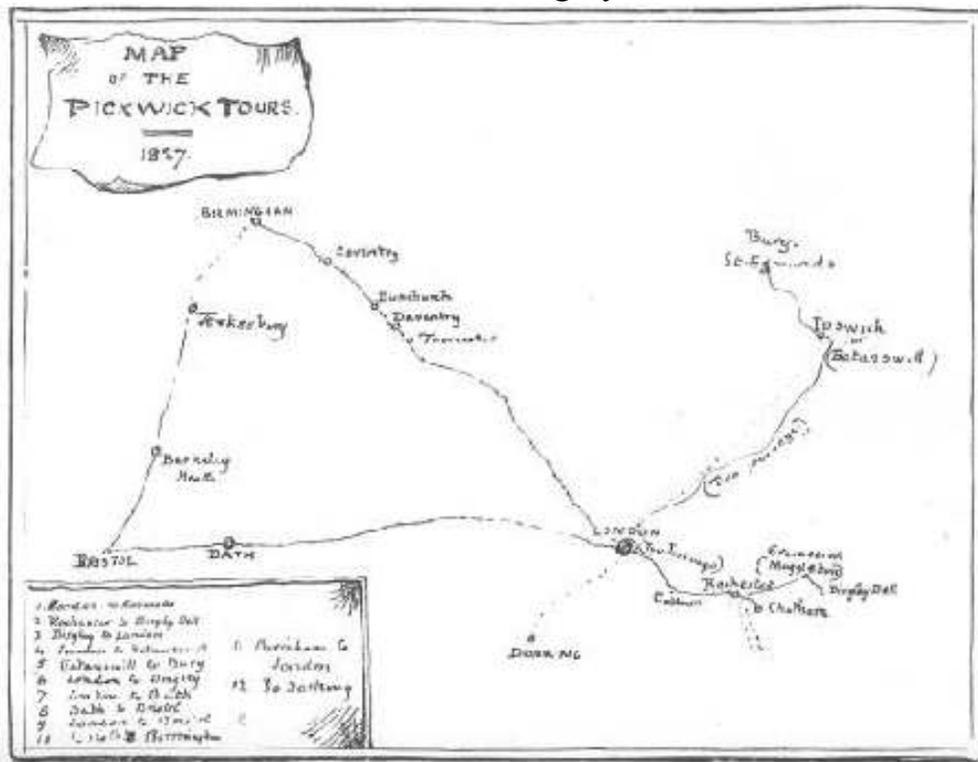
Now all this is very like what the amiable Pickwick would have done; in fact like something he *did* do and felt, when he repaired to Eatanswill for the election. On entering the town he at once chose his party, and took it up enthusiastically. "With his usual foresight and sagacity," like Dr. Johnson, he had chosen a fortunately desirable moment for his visit. "Slumkey for

ever,” roared the honest and independent. “Slumkey for ever!” echoed Mr. Pickwick, taking off his hat. “No Fizkin,” roared the crowd. “Certainly not,” shouted Mr. Pickwick. “Who is Slumkey?” whispered Mr. Tupman. “I don’t know,” said Mr. Pickwick, in the same tone. “Hush! don’t ask any questions. It’s always best on these occasions to do what the mob do.” “But suppose there are two mobs,” suggested Mr. Snodgrass. “Shout with the largest,” replied Mr. Pickwick. Volumes could not have said more. On asking for rooms at the Town Arms, which was the Great White Horse, Mr. Pickwick was asked “was he Blue.” Mr. Pickwick in reply, asked for Perker. “He is blue I think.” “O yes, sir.” “Then *we* are blue,” said Mr. Pickwick, but observing the man looked rather doubtful at this accommodating account he gave him his card. Perker arranged everything. “Spirited contest, my dear sir,” he said, “I am delighted to hear it,” said Mr. Pickwick. “I like to see sturdy patriotism, on whatever side it is called forth.” Later, we are told, Mr. Pickwick entered heart and soul into the business, and, like the sage, caught the prevailing excitement. “Although *no great partisan of either side*, Mr. Pickwick was sufficiently fired by Mr. Pott’s enthusiasm to apply his whole time and attention to the proceedings, etc.” All this, of course, does not correspond exactly, but the spirit of the selections are the same.

The Doctor it is known, would go out at midnight with his friends Beauclerk and Layton to have what he called “a rouze,” and Garrick was humorously apprehensive that he would have to bail out his old friend from the watchhouse. Mr. Pickwick had many a “rouze” with his followers. And Johnson himself, in the matter of drink, was at one time as bad as Mr. Pickwick, only he had a better head, and could “carry his liquor discreetly,” like the Baron of Bradwardine. He had actually to give up drink on account of this tendency to excess.

PICKWICKIAN ORIGINALS.

There is a shrewd remark of the late Bishop Norwich, Dean Stanley's father, that to catch and describe the tone and feeling of a place gives a better idea of it than any minute or accurate description. "Some books," he says, "give one ideas of places without descriptions; there is something which suggests more vivid and agreeable images than distinct words. Would *Gil Blas* for instance? It opens with a scene of history, chivalry, Spain, orange trees, fountains, guitars, muleteers; there is the picturesque and the sense of the picturesque, as distinct as the actual object." Now this exactly applies to "Pickwick," which brings up before us Rochester, Ipswich, Muggleton, Birmingham, and a dozen other places to the tourist. The night of the arrival at Birmingham for instance, and the going out after dinner to call on Mr. Winkle, sen., is strangely vivid.



So real is our Pickwickian Odyssey that it can be followed in all its stages as in a diary. To put it all in "ship shape" as it were and enhance this practical feeling I have drawn out the route in a little map. It is wonderful how much the party saw and how much ground they covered, and it is not a

far-fetched idea that were a similar party in our day, good humoured, venturesome and accessible, to visit old-fashioned, out of the way towns, and look out for fun, acquaintances and characters, they might have a good deal of the amusement and adventure that the Pickwickians enjoyed.

The Pickwickians first went to Rochester, Chatham, Dingley Dell, and perhaps to Gravesend. Mr. Pickwick with Wardle then pursued Jingle to town, returning thence to the Dell, which he at once left for Cobham, where he found his friend Tupman. The party then returned to town. Next we have the *first* visit to Ipswich — called Eatanswill — from which town Mr. Pickwick and Sam posted to Bury St. Edmunds; thence to London. Next came their third expedition to Dingley Dell for the Christmas festivities. Then the second visit to Ipswich. Then the journey to Bath, and that from Bath to Bristol. Later a second journey to Bristol — another from Bristol to Birmingham, and from Birmingham to London, Mr. Pickwick's final junketing before retiring to Dulwich.

Yet another interesting side of the Pickwick story is its almost biographical character. Boz seems to take us with him from his very boyhood. During the old days when his father was at Chatham he had seen all the Rochester incidents, sat by the old Castle and Bridge, noted with admiring awe the dockyard people, the Balls at "The Bull," the Reviews on the Lines. The officers — like Dr. Slammer, all the figures — fat boy included — were drawn from this stage of his life. The Golden Cross, which figures also in *Copperfield*, he had constantly stopped at. He knew, too, the inns in the Boro'. The large legal element and its odd incidents and characters he had learned and studied during his brief apprenticeship to the Law. The interior economy of the Fleet Prison he had learned from his family's disastrous experiences; the turnkeys, and blighted inhabitants he had certainly taken from life. But he shifted the scene from the Marshalsea to the King's Bench Prison — the former place would have been too painful a reminiscence for his father. To his reporting expeditions we owe the Election scenes at Ipswich, and to another visit for the same object, his Bath experiences. Much of the vividness and reality of his touchings, particularly in the case of Rochester and its doings, is the magnifying, searching power resulting from a life of sorrow in childhood, family troubles working on a keen, sensitive nature; these made him appreciate and meditate on all that was going on about him, as a sort of relief and relaxation. All the London scenes the meetings at taverns — were personal

experiences. Among his friends were medical students and many odd beings. We can trace his extraordinary appreciation of Christmas — and its genial, softening festivities — which clung to him till it altogether faded out, to the same sense of relief; it furnished an opportunity of forgetting for a time (at least), the dismal, gloomy home.

Boz, if he drew his characters from life, did not draw wholesale; he would take only a portion of a character that pleased him and work it up in combination with another distinct character. It was thus he dealt with Leigh Hunt, borrowing his amusing, airy frivolity, and combining it with the meanness and heartlessness of Skimpole. I have always fancied that Dowler in “Pickwick” was founded — after this composite principle — on his true-hearted but imperious friend, Forster. Forster was indeed also a perfect reproduction of Dr. Johnson and had the despotic intolerance — in conversation certainly — of that great man. Like him “if his pistol missed fire, he knocked you down with the butt end of it.” He could be as amiable and tender-hearted as “old Sam” himself. Listening to Dowler at the coach office in Piccadilly we — who knew Forster well — seemed to hear his very voice. “It was a stern-eyed man of about five-and-forty, who had large black whiskers. He was buttoned up to the chin in a brown coat and had a large seal-skin cap and a cloak beside him. He looked up from his breakfast as Mr. Pickwick entered with a fierce and peremptory air, *which was very dignified*, and which seemed to say that he rather expected *somebody wanted to take advantage of him, but it wouldn't do*” . . . “Are you going to Bath?” said the strange man. “I am, sir,” replied Mr. Pickwick. “And these other gentleman?” “They are going also,” said Mr. Pickwick. “Not inside — I'll be damned if you're going inside,” said the strange man. “Not all of us,” said Mr. Pickwick. “No — not all of you,” said the strange man, emphatically. “We take two places. If they try and squeeze six people into an infernal box that only holds four I'll take a post-chaise and bring an action. It won't do,” etc. This recalls the pleasant story about Forster and the cabman who summoned him. The latter was adjudged to be in the wrong and said he knew it, but “that he was determined to show him up, he were *such a harbitrary cove*.” None enjoyed this story more than Forster himself, and I have heard him say to a lady humorously, “Now you must. You know I am ‘*such a harbitrary cove*.’” Dear good old Forster!

I must confess all Pickwickians would like to know biographical details, as one might call them, about the personages engaged in the trial. I need

not repeat that Judge Stareleigh was drawn from Mr. Justice Gazalee, or that Buzfuz was founded on Mr. Serjeant Bompas, or Bumpus. Charles Carpenter Bompas was his full designation. He was made a Serjeant in 1827, the very year of the memorable trial. He obtained a Patent of Precedence in 1834. "Buzfuz's son" — Mr. W. Bompas, Q.C., who will pardon the freedom of the designation — was born in the year of the celebrated trial. He was the youngest son and had a very distinguished career both at College and at the Bar, being a "leader" on his circuit, revising barrister, bencher, recorder, and was last year appointed a County Court judge.

Who were Serjeant Snubbin, Skimpin, and Phunkey? No traditions have come to us as to these gentlemen. Skimpin may have been Wilkins, and Snubbin a Serjeant Arabin, a contemporary of Buzfuz. But we are altogether in the dark.

We should have liked also to have some "prehistoric peeps" at the previous biography of Mr. Pickwick before the story began. We have but a couple of indications of his calling: the allusion by Perker at the close of the story — "The agent at Liverpool said he had been obliged to you many times when you were in business." He was therefore a merchant or in trade. Snubbin at the trial stated that "Mr. Pickwick had retired from business and was a gentleman of considerable independent property."

In the original announcement of the "Pickwick Papers" there are some scraps of information about Mr. Pickwick and the Club itself. This curious little screed shows that the programme was much larger than the one carried out: —

"On the 31st of March, 1836, will be published,
to be continued Monthly, price One
Shilling, the First Number of
THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS
of
THE PICKWICK CLUB;
containing a faithful record of the
Perambulations, Perils, Travels,
Adventures, and Sporting Transactions
of the Corresponding Members.
EDITED BY "BOZ."
And each Monthly Part embellished with

four illustrations by Seymour.

“The Pickwick Club, so renowned in the annals of Huggin Lane, and so closely entwined with the thousand interesting associations connected with Lothbury and Cateaton Street, was founded in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two, by Samuel Pickwick — the great traveller — whose fondness for the useful arts prompted his celebrated journey to Birmingham in the depth of winter; and whose taste for the beauties of nature even led him to penetrate to the very borders of Wales in the height of summer.

“This remarkable man would appear to have infused a considerable portion of his restless and inquiring spirit into the breasts of other members of the Club, and to have awakened in their minds the same insatiable thirst for travel which so eminently characterized his own. The whole surface of Middlesex, a part of Surrey, a portion of Essex, and several square miles of Kent were in their turns examined and reported on. In a rapid steamer they smoothly navigated the placid Thames; and in an open boat they fearlessly crossed the turbid Medway. High-roads and by-roads, towns and villages, public conveyances and their passengers, first-rate inns and road-side public houses, races, fairs, regattas elections, meetings, market days — all the scenes that can possibly occur to enliven a country place, and at which different traits of character may be observed and recognized, were alike visited and beheld by the ardent Pickwick and his enthusiastic followers.

“The Pickwick Travels, the Pickwick Diary, the Pickwick Correspondence — in short, the whole of the Pickwick Papers’ — were carefully preserved, and duly registered by the secretary, from time to time, in the voluminous Transactions of the Pickwick Club. These Transactions have been purchased from the patriotic secretary, at an immense expense, and placed in the hands of ‘Boz,’ the author of “Sketches Illustrative of Every Day Life and Every Day People” — a gentleman whom the publishers consider highly qualified for the task of arranging these important documents, and placing them before the public in an attractive form. He is at present deeply immersed in his arduous labours, the first fruits of which will appear on the 31st March.

“Seymour has devoted himself, heart and graver, to the task of illustrating the beauties of Pickwick. It was reserved to Gibbon to paint, in colours that will never fade, the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire — to Hume to chronicle the strife and turmoil of the two proud houses that divided

England against herself — to Napier to pen, in burning words, the History of the War in the Peninsula — the deeds and actions of the gifted Pickwick yet remain for ‘Boz’ and Seymour to hand down to posterity.

“From the present appearance of these important documents and the probable extent of the selections from them, it is presumed that the series will be completed in about twenty numbers.”

From this it will be seen that it was intended to exhibit all the humours of the social amusements with which the public regaled itself. Mr. Pickwick and friends were to be shown on board a steamer; at races, fairs, regattas, market days, meetings — ”at all the scenes that can possibly occur to enliven a country place, and at which different traits of character may be observed and recognized.” This was a very scientific and well drawn scheme; and it was, on the whole, most faithfully and even brilliantly carried out. But with infinite art Boz emancipated himself from the formal hide-bound trammels of Syntax tours and the like, when it was reckoned that the hero and his friends would be exhibited like “Bob Logic” and “Tom and Jerry” in a regular series of public places. “Mr. Pickwick has an Adventure at Vauxhall,” “Mr. Pickwick Goes to Margate,” etc.: we had a narrow escape, it would seem, of this conventional sort of thing, and no doubt it was this the publishers looked for. But “Boz” asserted his supremacy, and made the narrative the chief element.

It was interesting thus to know that Mr. Pickwick had visited the borders of Wales — I suppose, Chester — but what was his celebrated journey to Birmingham, prompted by his “fondness for the useful arts”? This could hardly refer to his visit to Mr. Winkle, sen. The Club, it will be seen, was founded in 1822, and its place of meeting would appear to have been this Huggin Lane, City, “so intimately associated with Lothbury and Cateaton Street.” The picture of the meeting of the Club shows us that it consisted of the ominous number of *thirteen*. There is not room for more. They seem like a set of well-to-do retired tradesmen; the faces are such as we should see on the stage in a piece of low comedy: for the one on the left Mr. Edward Terry might have sat. The secretary sits at the bottom of the table, with his back to us, and the chairman, with capacious stomach, at the top. Blotton, whom Mr. Pickwick rather unhandsomely described as a “vain and disappointed haberdasher,” may have followed this business. He is an ill-looking fellow enough, with black, bushy whiskers. The Pickwickians are decidedly the most gentlemanly of the party. But why was it necessary for

Mr. Pickwick to stand upon a chair? This, however, may have been a custom of the day at free and easy meetings.

“Posthumous *papers*” — moreover, did not correctly describe the character of the Book, for the narrative did not profess to be founded on documents at all. He was, however, committed to this title by his early announcement, and indeed intended to carry out a device of using Snodgrass’s “Note Books,” whose duty it was during the course of the adventures to take down diligently all that he observed. But this cumbrous fiction was discarded after a couple of numbers. “Posthumous papers” had been used some ten years before, in another work.

Almost every page — save perhaps a dismal story or two — in the 609 pages of Pickwick is good; but there are two or three passages which are obscure, if not forced in humour. Witness Mr. Bantam’s recognition of Mr. Pickwick, as the gentleman residing on Clapham Green — not yet Common — “who lost the use of his limbs from imprudently taking cold after port wine, who could not be moved in consequence of acute suffering, and who had the water from the King’s Bath bottled at 103 degrees, and *sent by waggon to his bedroom in Town*; when he bathed, sneezed, and same day recovered.” This is grotesque enough and farcical, but without much meaning. On another occasion we are told that Tupman was casting certain “*Anti-Pickwickian glances*” at the servant maids, which is unmeaning. No doubt, *Un-Pickwickian* was intended.

Why is there no “Pickwick Club” in London? It might be worth trying, and would be more successful than even the Johnson Club. There is surely genuine “stuff” to work on. Our friends in America, who are Pickwickian *quand même*, have established the “All-Around Dickens Club.” The members seem to be ladies, though there are a number of honorary members of the other sex, which include members of “Boz’s” own family, with Mr. Kitton, Mr. W. Hughes, Mr. Charles Kent, myself, and some more. The device of the club is “Boz’s” own book-plate, and the “flower” of the club is his favourite geranium. The President is Mrs. Adelaide Garland; and some very interesting papers, to judge from their titles, have been read, such as “Bath and its Associations with Landor,” “The City of Bristol with its Literary Associations,” “The Excursion to the Tea Gardens of Hampstead,” prefaced by a description of the historic old inn, “Poem by Charles Kent,” “Dickens at Gad’s Hill,” “A Description of Birmingham, its Institutions, and Dickens’ Interest therein”; with a “Reading of Mr.

Pickwick's Mission to Birmingham, Coventry and the adjacent Warwickshire Country," etc. There is also a very clever series of examination questions by the President in imitation of Calverley's.

"Had Mr. Pickwick loved?" Mr. Lang asks; "it is natural to believe that he had never proposed, never. His heart, however bruised, was neither broken nor embittered." His temperament was certainly affectionate — if not absolutely amatory: he certainly never missed an opportunity where a kiss was practicable.

But stay! has anyone noted that on the wall of his room at Dulwich, there hangs the portrait of a lady — just over this might seem to mean something. But on looking close, we see it is the dear filial old fellow's mother. A striking likeness, and she has spectacles like her celebrated son.

As all papers connected with the Pickwick era are scarce and meagre — for the reason that no one was then thinking of "Boz"; any that have come down to us are specially interesting. Here are a few "pieces," which will be welcomed by all Pickwickians. The first is a letter of our author to his publishers.

"Furnival's Inn,
"Friday Morning.

"Dear Sir, — I am very glad to find I shall have the pleasure of celebrating Mr. Pickwick's success with you on Sunday. When you have sufficiently recovered from the fatigues of publication, will you just let me know from your books how we stand. Drawing £10 one day, and £20 another, and so forth, I have become rather mystified, and jumbled up our accounts in my brain, in a very incomprehensible state.

"Faithfully yours,
"Charles Dickens."

This must have been written at the conclusion of the story in 1837, and is in a very modest tone considering how triumphant had been the success. Connected with this is a paper of yet more interest, a receipt for payment for one of the early numbers.

Memorandum. March 29th 1836. Received
of Messrs. Chapman & Hall the
sum of Twenty five Pounds, for the
two first numbers of the Pickwick
Papers



For this Pickwickian Banquet, he had reluctantly to give up one at the home of his new friend Forster. In an unpublished letter, he writes to him as "Dear Sir" — the beginning of a four-and-thirty years' friendship — "I have been so much engaged in the pleasing occupation of moving." He was unable to go to his new friend to dinner because he had been "long engaged to the Pickwick publishers to a dinner in honour of that hero, which comes off to-morrow."

In an interesting letter of Dickens' — Pickwickian ones are rare — sold at Hodgson's rooms, July, 1895, he writes: "Mr. Seymour shot himself before the second number of the Pickwick papers, not the third as you would have it, was published. While he lay dead, it was necessary the search should be made in his working room for the plates to the second number, the day for publication of which was drawing near. The plates were found unfinished, with their faces turned to the wall." This scrap brought £12 10s. Apropos of prices, who that was present will forget the scene at Christie's when the six "Pickwick Ladles" were sold? These were quaint things, like enlarged Apostle Spoons, and the figures well modelled. They had been made specially, and presented to "Boz" on the conclusion of his story, by his publishers. The Pickwick Ladle brought £69. Jingle, £30. Winkle, £23. Sam, £64. Old Weller, £51; and the Fat Boy, £35 14s., or over £280 in all. Nay, the leather case was put up, and brought three guineas. We recall Andrew Halliday displaying one to us, with a sort of triumph. Charles Dickens, the younger, got two, I think; Messrs. Agnew the others.

CONCERNING THE PLATES AND EXTRA PLATES AND “STATES” OF PICKWICK.

It is an interesting question what should be the relation of illustration to the story, and of the artist to the story-teller; and what are the limitations of their respective provinces. Both should work independently of each other; that is, the artist should tell the story from his own point of view — he is not merely to servilely translate the situations into “black and white.” He should be, in fact, what the actor is to a drama. When Eugene Delacroix’s illustrations to Goethe’s “Faust” were shown to the great author, he expressed admiration of their truth and spirit; and on his secretary saying that they would lead to a better understanding of his poem, said: “With that we have naught to do; on the contrary, the more complete imagination of such an artist compels us to believe that the situations as he represents them are preferable to them as described. It is therefore likely that the readers will find that he exerts a strong force upon their imagination.” This shows, allowing something for the compliment, what a distinct force the great writer attributed to the artist, that he did not consider him an assistant or merely subsidiary. The actor becomes, after his fashion, a distinct creator and originator, supplying details, etc., of his own, but taking care that these are consistent with the text and do not contradict it in any way.

This large treatment was exactly “Phiz’s.” He seems to “act” “Boz’s” drama, yet he did not introduce anything that was not warranted by the spirit of the text. He found himself present at the scene, and felt how it *must* have occurred. He had a wonderful power of selecting what was essential and what should be essential. Nor did he make a minute inventory of such details as were mentioned in the text. Hence the extraordinary vitality and spirit of his work. There is action in all, and each picture tells its own story. To see the merit of this system, we have only to contrast with it such attempts as we find in modern productions, where the artist’s method is to present to us figures grouped together, apparently talking but not *acting* — such things as we have week by week in *Punch*. The late Sir John Millais and other artists of almost equal rank used to furnish illustrations to serial stories, and all their pictures were of this kind — two or three figures — well drawn, certainly — one standing, the others sitting down, it may be,

engaged in conversation. This brought us “no forrarder” and supplied no dramatic interest.

It should be said, however, that it is only to “Pickwick” that this high praise can be extended. With every succeeding story the character of the work seemed to fall off, or rather the methods of the artist to change. It may have been, too, the inspiration from a dramatic spirited story also failed, for “Boz” had abandoned the free, almost reckless style of his first tale. There was a living distinctness, too, in the Pickwickian *coterie*, and every figure, familiar and recognizable, seemed to have infinite possibilities. The very look of them would inspire.

In this spirit of vitality and reality also, “Phiz” rather suggests a famous foreign illustrator, Chodowiecki, who a century ago was in enormous request for the illustration of books of all kinds, and whose groups and figures, drawn with much spirit and roundness, arrested the eye at once and told the situation. Later “Phiz” fell off in his work and indeed adopted quite new and more commercial methods, such as would enable him to get through the vast amount of work that came to him. There were no longer these telling situations to limn which spoke for themselves, and without straw, bricks are not to be made. In this later manner we seem to have bid adieu to the inspiration — to the fine old *round* style of drawing — where the figures “stand out” completely. He adopted a sort of sketchy fashion; his figures became silhouettes and quite flat. There was also a singular carelessness in finish — a mere outline served for a face. The result was a monotony and similarity of treatment, with a certain unreality and grotesqueness which are like nothing in life. In this, however, he may have been inspired by the grotesque personages he was put to illustrate — the Smallweeds and the like.

It would be an interesting speculation to consider what would have become of “Pickwick” had this artist not been forthcoming. Would we have really known our Mr. Pickwick and his “followers” as we do now, or, indeed, would we have so keenly appreciated the humorous situations? I believe not. It was the graven figures of these personages, and the brilliant way in which the situations were concentrated, as it were, into a point, that produced such striking effect: without these adjuncts the Head of the Club and his friends would have been more or less abstractions, very much what the characters in Theodore Hook’s “Gilbert Gurney” are. Take Mr. Pickwick. The author supplied only a few hints as to his personal

appearance — he was bald, mild, pale, wore spectacles and gaiters; but who would have imagined him as we have him now, with his high forehead, bland air, protuberant front. The same with the others. Mr. Thackeray tried in many ways to give some corporeal existence to his own characters to “Becky,” Pendennis, and others; but who sees them as we do Mr. Pickwick? So with his various “situations” — many most dramatic and effective, but no one would guess it from the etchings. The Pickwick scenes all tell a story of their own; and a person — say a foreigner — who had never even heard of the story would certainly smile over the situations, and be piqued into speculating what could be the ultimate meaning.

At the exhibition “illustrating a century and a half of English humorists,” given by the Fine Art Society — under the direction of Mr. Joseph Grego — in October, 1896, there was a collection of original Pickwick drawings no less than fifty-six in number. There were three by Seymour, two by Bass and thirty-four by Phiz, all used in the book; while of those unused — probably found unsuitable, there were five by Buss, including a proposed title-page, and two of the Fat Boy “awake on this occasion only.” There were also five by Phiz, which were not engraved, and one by Leech. The drawing of the dying clown, Seymour was engaged upon when he committed suicide. Of Buss’ there were two of Mr. Pickwick at the Review, two of the cricket match, two of the Fat Boy “awake,” “the influence of the salmon” — unused, “Mr. Winkle’s first shot” — unused, studies of character in Pickwick, and a study for the title-page. The poor, discarded Buss took a vast deal of pains therefore to accomplish his task. Of Phiz’s unused designs there was “Mr. Winkle’s first shot” and two for the Gabriel Grub story, also one for “the Warden’s room.” Most interesting of all was his “original study” for the figure of Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Grego, himself an excellent artist, placed at the door of the society a very telling figure of Mr. Pickwick displayed on a poster and effectively coloured. It was new to find our genial old friend smiling an invitation to us — in Bond Street. This — which I took for a lithographed “poster” — was Mr. Grego’s own work, portrayed in water colours.

There have been many would-be illustrators of the chronicle, some on original lines of their own; but these must be on the whole pronounced to be failures. On looking at them we somehow feel that the figures and situations are wholly strange to us; that we don’t know them or recognize them. The reason is possibly that the artists are not in perfect sympathy or

intelligence with the story; they do not know every turning, corner and cranny of it, as did “Phiz” — and indeed as did everyone else living at that time; they were not inspired, above all, by its author. But there was a more serious reason still for the failure. It will be seen that in Phiz’s wonderful plates the faces and figures are more or less *generalized*. We cannot tell exactly, for instance, what were Mr. Winkle’s or even Sam Weller’s features. Neither their mouths, eyes, or noses, could be put in distinct shape. We have only the general air and tone and suggestion — as of persons seen afar off in a crowd. Yet they are always recognizable. This is art, and it gave the artist a greater freedom in his treatment. Now when an illustrator like the late Frederick Barnard came, he drew his Jingle, his Pickwick, Weller, and Winkle, with *all* their features, in quite a literal and particular fashion — the features were minutely and carefully brought out, with the result that they seem almost strange to us. Nor do they express the characters. There *is* an expression, but it seems not the one to which we are accustomed. Mr. Pickwick is generally shown as a rather “cranky” and testy old gentleman in his expressions, whereas the note of all “Phiz’s” faces is a good softness and unctuousness even. Now this somewhat philosophical analysis points to a principle in art illustration which accounts in a great measure for the unsatisfactory results where it is attempted to illustrate familiar works — such as those of Tennyson, Shakespeare, etc. The reader has a fixed idea before him, which he has formed for himself — an indistinct, shapeless one it might be, but still of sufficient outline to be disturbed. Among the innumerable presentments of Shakespeare’s heroines no one has ever seen any that satisfied or that even corresponded. They are usually not generalized enough. Again, the readers of “Pickwick” grew month by month, or number by number, more and more acquainted with the characters: for the figures and faces appeared over and over and yet over again.

The most diverting, however, of all these imitators and extra-illustrators is assuredly the artist of the German edition. The series is admirably drawn, every figure well finished, but figures, faces, and scenes are unrecognizable. It is the Frenchman’s idea of Hamlet. Mr. Pickwick and his friends are stout Germans, dressed in German garments, sitting in German restaurants with long tankards with *lids* before them. The incidents are made as literal and historical as possible. The difficulty, of course, was that none of their adventures could have occurred in a country like

Germany, or if they did, would have become an affair of police. No German could see humour in that. Notwithstanding all this, the true Pickwickian will welcome them as a pleasant contribution to the Pickwickian humour, and no one would have laughed so loudly at them as Boz himself.

The original illustrations form a serious and important department of Pickwickian lore, and entail an almost *scientific* knowledge. Little, indeed, did the young “Boz” dream, when he was settling with his publishers that the work was to contain forty-two plates — an immense number it might seem — that these were to fructify into such an enormous progeny. We, begin, of course, with the regular official plates that belong strictly to the work. Here we find three artists at work — each succeeding the other — the unfortunate Robert Seymour coming first with his seven spirited pictures; next the unlucky Buss, with his two condemned productions, later to be dismissed from the book altogether; and finally, “Phiz,” or Hablot K. Browne, who furnished the remaining plates to the end. As is well known, so great was the run upon the book that the plates were unequal to the duty, and “Phiz” had to re-engage them several times — often duplicates on the one plate — naturally not copying them very closely. Hence we have the rather interesting “variations.” He by-and-by re-engraved Seymour’s seven, copying them with wonderful exactness, and finally substituted two of his own for those of the condemned Buss. The volume, therefore, was furnished with seven Seymours, and their seven replicas, the two Buss’s, their two replicas, and the thirty-three “Phiz” pictures, each with its “variation.”

These variations are very interesting, and even amusing. On an ordinary careless glance one would hardly detect much difference — the artist, who seemed to wish to have a certain freedom, made these changes either to amuse himself or as if resenting the monotony of copying. In any case they represent an amount of patient labour that is quite unique in such things.

The Pickwickian “student” may be glad to go with us through some of the plates and have an account of these differences. We must premise that the first state of the plates may be considered “proofs before letters” — the descriptive titles being only found in the later editions.

1. “The Frontispiece.” (We shall call the second state *b*, the first *a*.) In *a* the signature “Phiz,” “fct.” or “fecit” is on the left, in *b* it is divided half on each side. The harlequin painting has a full face in *a*, a side face in *b*. The

face at the apex of the picture has a mouth closed in *b*, and open in *a*. There are variations in nearly all the grotesque faces; and in *b* the faces of Mr. Pickwick and Sam are fuller and more animated. In *b* the general treatment of the whole is richer.

2. "The Title-page." In *a* the sign has Veller, in *b* Weller. Old Weller's face in *b* is more resolved and animated; in *a* water is flowing from the pail.

3. "Mr. Pickwick Addressing the Club." Mr. Pickwick in *b* is more cantankerous than in *a* — all the faces scarcely correspond in expression, though the outlines are the same. The work, shading, etc., is much bolder in *b*.

4. "Scene with the Cabman." Very little difference between the plates, save in the spectacles lying on the ground. These are trivialities.

5. "The Sagacious Dog." *b* is more heavily shaded, but *a* is much superior in the dog and face of the sportsman. Trees in *b* more elaborate.

6. "Dr. Slammer's Defiance." The figures on the top of the stairs are much darker and bolder in *b*. Jingle's and Tupman's faces are better in *b* than in *a*, and Jingle's legs are better drawn in *b*.

7. "The Dying Clown." A most dramatic and tragic conception, which shows that Seymour would have been invaluable later on for Dickens' more serious work. The chief differences are in the face of the man at his bedside and the candle.

8. "Mr. Pickwick in Search of his Hat." The drawing of Mr. Pickwick's legs is rather strange. The right leg could hardly be so much twisted back while Mr. Pickwick runs straight forward; his left hand or arm is obscure in both. All the faces differ — the hat in *b* has much more the look of being blown along than that in *a*.

9. "Mr. Winkle Soothes a Refractory Steed." Seymour's horse is infinitely more spirited and better drawn than Phiz's. Its struggling attitude is admirable. Seymour's landscape is touched more delicately; the faces differ in both.

10. "The Cricket Match." First Buss plate. He introduced a farcical incident not in the text — the ball knocking off the fielder's hat, who is quite close to the batsman. A very poor production. Observe the "antediluvian" shape of the bat — no paddings on the legs. The sketch is valuable as showing how *not* to interpret Dickens' humour, or rather how to interpret it in a strictly *literal* way — that is, without humour.

11. "Tupman in the Arbour." Second Buss plate — rather ostentatiously signed "Drawn and etched by R. W. Buss." Tupman appears to be tumbling over Miss Wardle.

12. The same subject by "Phiz." A remarkable contrast in treatment; there is the suggestion of the pair being surprised. We see how the fat boy came on them. The old Manor Farm in the background, with its gables, etc., is a pleasing addition, and like all "Phiz's" landscapes, delicately touched in. The scared alarm on the two faces is first-rate — even Miss Wardle's foot as well as Tupman's is expressive. There appears to be no "variation" of this plate.

13. "The Influence of the Salmon." A truly dramatic group overflowing with humour. Note no fewer than ten faces in the background, servants, etc., all expressing interest according to their class and degree. The five chief characters express drunkenness in five different fashions: the hopeless, combative, despairing, affectionate, etc. Wardle's stolid calm is good.

14. "The Breakdown." This was "Phiz's" *coup d'essai* after he was called in, and is a most spirited piece. But the variations make the second plate almost a new one. The drawing, grouping, etc., in *b* are an enormous improvement, and supply life and animation. The three figures, Pickwick, Wardle, and the postillion, are all altered for the better. In *b* Mr. Pickwick's nervousness, as he is extricated from the chaise, is well shown. The postillion becomes a round spirited figure, instead of a mere sketch; Wardle, as in the text, instead of stooping down and merely showing his back, is tramping about gesticulating. A very spirited white horse is introduced with a postillion as spirited; the single chaise in the distance, the horses drawn back, and Jingle stretching out, is admirable. It is somehow conveyed in a clever way in *b* that Miss Wardle is peeping through the hind window at the scene. There is a wheel on the ground in *b*, and one hat; in *a* there are two hats — Mr. Pickwick's, which is recognizable, and Wardle's.

15. "First Appearance of Mr. S. Weller." In the first issue a faint "Nemo" can be made out in the corner, and it is said the same signature is on the preceding plate, though I have never been able to trace it clearly. This plate, as is well known, represents the court of the Old White Hart Inn in the Borough, which was pulled down some years ago. On this background — the galleries, etc., being picturesquely indicated — stand out brilliantly the four figures. The plate was varied in important ways. In the

b version some fine effects of light and shade are brought out by the aid of the loaded cart and Wardle's figure. Wardle's hat is changed from a common round one to a low broad-leafed one, his figure made stouter, and he is clothed with dark instead of white breeches, his face broadened and made more good-humoured. Sam's face in *b* is made much more like the ideal Sam; that in *a* is grotesque. Perker's face and attitude are altered in *b*, where he is made more interrogative. Mr. Pickwick in *b* is much more placid and bland than in *a*, and he carries his hat more jauntily. Top-boots in *b* are introduced among those which Sam is cleaning. He, oddly, seems to be cleaning a *white* boot. A capital dog in *b* is sniffing at Mr. Pickwick's leg; in *a* there is a rather unmeaning skulking animal. All the smaller figures are altered.

16. "Mrs. Bardell Faints." The first plate is feeble and ill-drawn, though Mrs. Bardell's and Tupman's faces are good, the latter somewhat farcical; the boy "Tommy" is decidedly bad and too small. Mr. Pickwick's face in *a* is better than in *b*. In the second attempt all is bolder and more spirited. The three Pickwickians are made to express astonishment, even in their legs. There is a table-desk in *a*, not in *b*. A clock and two vases are introduced, and a picture over the mirror representing a sleeping beauty with a cupid.

17. "The Election at Eatanswill." The first plate represents an election riot in front of the hustings, which is wild and fairly spirited. But no doubt it appeared somewhat confused to the artist. In his second he made it quite another matter. Over the hustings he introduced a glimpse of the old Ipswich gables. He changed the figure and dress of Fizkin, the rival candidate. He had Perker sitting on the rail, but substituted a standing-up figure, talking — presumably Perker, but taller than that gentleman. In *b*, Mr. Pickwick's face expresses astonishment at the disorder; in *a* he is mildly placid. In *b* the figure behind Mr. Pickwick is turned into Sam by placing a cockade on his hat. Next to Fizkin is a new portly figure introduced. The figures in the crowd are changed in wholesale fashion, and yet the "root idea" in both is the same. An artist, we fancy, would learn much from these contrasts, seeing how strikingly "Phiz" could shift his characters. In the first draft there was not sufficient movement. To the left there was a stout sailor in a striped jacket who was thrusting a pole into the chest of a thin man in check trousers. This, as drawn, seemed too tranquil, and he substituted a stouter, more jovial figure with gymnastic action — the

second was made more contrasted. Next him was a confused group — a man with a paper cap, in place of which he supplied a stout man on whom the other was driven back, and who was being pushed from behind. The animation of the background is immensely increased by hats, and arms, and sticks being waved. Everything is bolder and clearer. The second trombone player, however, is not so spirited as the first, and the drum-beater becomes rather a “Punch and Judy” showman. An artistic effect of light is produced by this drum. There are a great many more boards, too, introduced in *b*.

“Mrs. Leo Hunter’s Fancy dress Déjeuné.” In *b* the finish and treatment are infinitely improved. Mr. Pickwick’s face and figure is more refined and artistic. The way he holds his hat in his right hand and his left also are improved; both are more extended. Mr. Snodgrass’s left leg is brought behind Mr. Pickwick’s in *b*. Water — a pond perhaps — is in front. Tupman’s hat is altered in *b*, and feathers added; his face is more serious and less grotesque. Mrs. Pott is more piquant, as the author suggested to the artist. The birdcage, instead of being high in the tree, is lowered and hangs from it. The most curious change is that of Pott, who in *a* is out of all scale, seeming to be about seven feet high. He was lowered in *b*, and given a beard and a more hairy cap. It was said, indeed, that the original face was too like Lord Brougham’s, but the reason for the change was probably what I have given.

“The Young Ladies’ Seminary.” All details are changed. The rather “cranky” face of Mr. Pickwick, utterly unlike him, was improved and restored to its natural benevolence; more detail put into the faces, notably the cook’s. The girls are made more distinct and attractive — the lady principal at the back made effective; all the foliage treated differently, a tree on the left removed. In *a* there is a sort of hook on the inside of the door to hold a bell, which is absent; in *b* it is added. The bolts, etc., are different.

“Mr. Pickwick in the Pound.” *b* is more brilliant and vastly improved; the smaller donkey is removed, the three reduced to two; the sweep’s cap is made *white*; the faces are altered, and made more animated. Mr. Pickwick’s figure in the barrow is perhaps *not* improved, but his face is.

“Mr. Pickwick in the Attorney’s Office.” Sam’s face in *a* was quite unlike, and was improved; the position of his legs altered. The other points are much the same.

“Last Visit of Heyland to the Old Man.” This is a sort of anticipation of “Phiz’s” later treatment of tragic subjects, as supplied for “Bleak House” and such stories. Heyling’s cloak in *b* is draped over his left arm, the boards of the door are outlined differently. In *a* the face of the old man a side one, with little expression; in *b* it was made three-quarters, and contorted with horror — the attitude powerfully expressive, indeed. The figures of both are worth comparing.

“The Double-bedded Room.” In *b* the lady’s face is refined, and made less of the “nut-cracker” type. The comb is removed, her feet are separated, and the figure becomes not ungraceful. A white night-gown in *b* is introduced; in *a* it is her day-gown, and dark; the back of the chair in *b* is treated more ornamentally; in *a* a plain frilled nightcap is hung on the chair, changed in *b* to a more grotesque and “Gamp-like” headgear. Nothing can be better in *a* than the effect of light from the rushlight on the floor. This is helped by the lady’s figure, which is darkened in *a*, and thrown out by the white curtains behind. Mr. Pickwick’s face in *a* is not good, and much improved in *b*. It will be noted that the artist often thus failed in his hero’s face — “missing his tip,” as it were. This picture admirably illustrates the artist’s power of *legitimately* emphasizing details — such as the night-cap — to add to the comic situation.

“Mr. Weller Attacks the Executive of Ipswich.” There is scarcely any alteration worth notice.

“Job Trotter Encounters Sam.” The two plates are nearly the same, except that Mary’s face is made prettier. Sam’s is improved, and Job Trotter’s figure and face more marked and spirited.

“Christmas Eve at Mr. Wardle’s.” The changes here are a cat and dog introduced in the foreground in *b*, instead of the dog which in *a* is between Mr. Pickwick and the old lady.

“Gabriel Grubb.” A face is introduced into a branch or knot of the tree — an odd, rather far-fetched effect. The effectively outlined church in the background is St. Albans Abbey.

“Mr. Pickwick Slides.” In *b* Mr. Winkle’s skates are introduced. In one version there are *five* stakes instead of four, and Miss Allen’s fur boots and feet are depicted differently in each.

“Conviviality at Bob Sawyer’s.” The two plates correspond almost exactly — save for a slight alteration in the arrangement of the books in the case.

“Mr. Pickwick Sits for his Portrait.” Slight alterations in the faces and in the bird-cage. The arrangement of the panes in the window is also different. Mr. Pickwick’s face is made more intelligent. A handle is supplied to a pewter pot on the floor.

“The Warden’s Room.” Almost exactly the same in both. But why has Mr. Pickwick his spectacles on when just roused from sleep? There is a collar to the shirt hanging from the cord.

“The Meeting with Jingle.” Very slight changes in the faces. The child’s face in *b* is admirable, and, like one of Cruikshank’s miniatures, it conveys alarm and grief. The face of the woman watering her plant is improved. Note the Hogarthian touch of the initials carved on the window, sufficiently distinct and yet not intrusively so. This is a most skilfully grouped and dramatic picture, and properly conveys the author’s idea.

“The Ghostly Passenger.” This illustration of what is one of the best tales of mystery is equally picturesque and original. The five figures in front are truly remarkable. The elegant interesting figure of the woman, the fop with his hat in the air, the bully with the big sword, the man with the blunderbuss, and the bewildered rustic, to say nothing of the muffled figures on the coach, make up a perfect *play*. There seems a flutter over all; it is like, as it was intended to be, a scene in a dream.

“Mr. Winkle Returns under Extraordinary Circumstances.” There is little difference between the plates, save as to the details of the objects in the cupboard. In *b* some bottles have been introduced on the top shelf. Mrs. Winkle’s is a pleasing, graceful figure in both, and improved and refined in *b*. More spirit, too, is put into Mr. Pickwick’s figure as he rises in astonishment. It may be noted what a graceful type of womanhood then prevailed, the face being thrown out by “bands” of hair and ringlets, the large spreading bonnets and white veils. Mary wears an enormous bonnet or hat like her mistress.

“Mr. Sawyer’s Mode of Travelling.” The amazing spirit and movement of this picture cannot be too much praised. The chaise seems whirling along, so that the coach, meeting it, seems embarrassed and striving to get out of the way. The Irish family, struggling to keep up with the chaise, is inimitable. There are some changes in *b*. The man with the stick behind has a bundle or bag attached. The mother with her three children is a delightful group, and much improved in the second plate. The child

holding up flowers is admirably drawn. The child who has fallen is given a different attitude in *b*. The dog, too, is slightly altered.

“The Rival Editors.” There is little change made, save that more plates, jugs, etc., are introduced. The “row” is shown with extraordinary spirit. Note the grotesque effect of Pott’s face, shown through the cloth that Sam has put over his head. The onions have got detached from the hank hung to the ceiling, and are tumbling on the combatants, and — a capital touch this — the blackbird, whose cage has been covered over to secure its repose, is shown in *b* dashing against the bars. We might ask, however, what does the cook there, and why does she “trouble herself about the warming-pan”?

“Mary and the Fat Boy.” Both plates nearly the same, the languishing face of the Fat Boy admirable. Mary’s figure, as she draws the chair, charming, though somewhat stout at the back. The cook is present, and a plate laid for her, which is contrary to the text.

“Mr. Weller and his Friends Drinking to Mr. Pell.” Plates almost the same, save for a slight alteration in the faces, and a vinegar cruet introduced next to Mr. Pell’s oysters. Admirable and most original and distinct are the figures of the four coachmen, even the one of whom we have only a back view.

Perhaps no one of the plates displays Phiz’s vivid power so forcibly as the one of the trial “Bardell v. Pickwick.” Observe the dramatic animation, with the difficulty of treating a number of figures seated in regular rows. The types of the lawyers are truly admirable. In this latter piece there are no less than thirty-five faces, all characteristic, showing the peculiar smug and pedantic cast of the barristerial lineaments. Note specially the one at the end of the third bench who is engrossed in his brief, the pair in the centre who are discussing something, the two standing up. But what is specially excellent is the selection of faces for the four counsel concerned in the case. Nothing could be more appropriate or better suit the author’s description. What could excel, or “beat” Buzfuz with his puffed, coarse face and hulking form? His brother Serjeant has the dried, “peaked” look of the overworked barrister, and though he is in his wig we recognize him at once, having seen him before at his chambers. Mr. Phunkey, behind, is the well-meaning but incapable performer to be exhibited in his examination of Winkle; and Mr. Skimpin is the alert, unscrupulous, wide-awake practitioner who “made such a hare” of Mr. Winkle. The composition of this picture is indeed a work of high art.

In "Mr. Pickwick sliding," how admirably caught is the tone of a genial, frosty day at a country-house, with the animation of the spectators — the charming landscape. In the scene of "Under the Mistletoe" at Manor Farm, the Fat Boy, by some mistake of size, cannot be more than five or six years old, and Tupman is shown on one knee "making up" to one of the young ladies. Beaux seemed to have been very scarce in the district where stout, elderly gentlemen were thus privileged.

The curious thing is that hardly a single face of Mr. Pickwick's corresponds with its fellows, yet all are sufficiently like and recognizable. In the first picture of the club he is a cantankerous, sour, old fellow, but the artist presently mellowed him. The bald, benevolent forehead, the portly little figure, the gaiters, eye-glass and ribbon always put on expressively, seem his likeness. The "Mr. Pickwick sliding" and the "Mr. Pickwick sitting for his portrait in the Fleet" have different faces.

There has always been a sort of fascination in tracing out and identifying the Pickwickian localities. It is astonishing the number of persons that have been engrossed with this pursuit. Take Muggleton for instance, which seems to have hitherto defied all attempts at discovery. The younger Charles Dickens fancied that town, Malling, which lies to the south of Rochester. Mr. Frost, Mr. Hughes, and other "explorers" all have their favourite town. I, myself, had fixed on Maidstone as fulfilling the necessary conditions of having a Mayor and Corporation; as against this choice and that of all the towns that were south of Rochester there was always this fact, that Boz describes the party going up the street as they left Rochester, a route that led them north-east. But the late Miss Dickens — "Mamie" as she was affectionately called — in her pleasing and very natural little book, "My Father as I Recall Him," has casually dropped a hint which puts us on the right track. When driving with her on the "beautiful back road to Cobham once, he pointed out a spot. There it was, he said, where Mr. Pickwick dropped his whip." The distressed travellers had to walk some twelve or fourteen miles — about the distance of Muggleton — which was important enough to have a Mayor and Corporation, etc. We ourselves have walked this road, and it led us to — Gravesend. Gravesend we believe to be Muggleton — against all competitors. Further, when chasing Jingle, Wardle went straight from Muggleton to town, as you can do from Gravesend; from which place there is a long walk to Cobham.

For abundance of editions the immortal Pickwick can hold its own with any modern of its “weight, age, and size.” From the splendid yet unwieldy *edition de luxe*, all but Bible-like in its proportions, to the one penny edition sold on barrows in Cheapside, every form and pattern has been supplied.

The Gadshill Edition, with Introduction by Andrew Lang, has recently been issued by Messrs. Chapman and Hall, and is all that can be desired. Print, paper, and size are excellent, perfect, even captivating. The old illustrations, from the original plates, are bright and clear, unworn and unclogged with ink. The editor has been judiciously reserved in his introduction and annotations. While Mr. Lang’s lack of sympathy with Dickens is well-known, and, like Sam Weller after leaving the witness-box, he has said just as little respecting Mr. Pickwick as might be, “which was precisely the object he had in view all along.” But it almost seems as though one required to be “brought up” in Pickwick, so to speak, thoroughly to understand him. No true Pickwickian would ever have called Tuckle the Bath Footman, “Blazer,” or Jingle, “Jungle.” It were better, too, not to adopt a carping tone in dealing with so joyous and irresponsible a work. “Dickens,” we are told, “knew nothing of cricket.” Yet in his prime the present writer has seen him “marking” all day long, or acting as umpire, with extraordinary knowledge and enthusiasm. In Pickwickian days the game was not what it is now; it was always more or less irregular and disorderly. As proof of “Boz’s” ignorance, Mr. Lang says it is a mystery why Podder “missed the bad balls, blocked the doubtful ones, took the good ones, and sent them flying, etc.” Surely nothing could be plainer. He “missed” — that is, did not strike — the balls of which nothing could be made, blocked the dangerous ones, and hit the good ones all over the field. What more or what better could Dr. Grace do?

* * * * *

The original agreement for “Pickwick” I have not seen, though it is probably in existence, but there is now being shown at the Earl’s Court Victorian Era Exhibition a very interesting Pickwickian curio. When the last number had appeared, a deed was created between the two publishers, Edward Chapman and William Hall, giving them increased control over the book. It is dated November 18th, 1837, and sets out that the property consisted of three shares held by the two publishers and author. It was contracted that the former should purchase for a period of five years the author’s third share. And it was further stipulated that at the end of that

term, they, and no one else, should have the benefit of any new arrangement. There was also an arrangement about purchasing the “stock,” etc., at the end of the term. No mention, however, is made of the terms or “consideration,” for which reference is made to another deed. The whole is commendably short and intelligible.

CHRISTMAS EVE WITH THE SPIRITS



THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF SCROOGE AND TINY TIM

Bull, Simmons and Co. 1870

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“CHRISTMAS EVE” WITH THE SPIRITS.



THE CATHEDRAL CLOSE.

“CHRISTMAS EVE” WITH THE SPIRITS;
OR,
The Canon’s Wanderings
Through Ways Unknown
With some Further Tidings of the Lives of
Scrooge and Tiny Tim
With Original Illustrations
Drawn and Engraved by Messrs. A. R. Dorrington and
Co.



P R E F A C E.

To The Reader, — "Pleasant Christmas Greetings." I regret that my story has lost the pleasant side with which I had endowed it when first I had it shadowed forth to me, but as my subject expanded itself before me, I felt it would be more desirable to try to do some little good where so much is needed, than to flatter the good already existing, by some highly-coloured picture of its success. Of the scenes and characters I have only to say that many may be deemed improbable and unreal; I regret to add, they are only too real, and that each scene has had an origin in the life which is around and about us: every actor — a living counterpart.

I have always esteemed anonymous publications as only to be excused for two purposes. First, for any Author who, having written and published many works with his name attached, wishing to test whether his writing deteriorates or improves, publishes one anonymously, and consequently without any *prestige* attaching to his name.

Secondly, for any Author publishing his first work and wishing it to be fairly tested by its own merits alone. All other anonymous publications I deem most inexcusable, and to signify, in one word, "cowardice." For one of these reasons, therefore, I have published this work without any other name than that of

THE AUTHOR.
Christmas, 1869.

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CHRISTMAS EVE WITH THE SPIRITS.

CHAPTER I.

SLEEP reigned over the world: all mortals succumbed to its beneficent influence, excepting those nightly wanderers who turn the darkness of night into a still deeper darkness of their guilt, and those for whom duty forbids their relaxing to its happy influence.

I, too, "Henry Matthews," Canon to the Cathedral and in residence, naturally succumbed to its influence also, and laid my head upon its pillow.

What impels me forward, and to where? Am I asleep or awake? Asleep? No, I cannot be, and yet! why seeking the Cathedral at this hour? It is no midnight service of the Old Year passing into the New, the only time in the year upon which we open these time-honoured doors. But see! a light illumines those storied windows, richly dight, so others must be there before me, strange as it may be. The doors locked, and yet all alight! I must enter and find how this gross negligence of the rules has been perpetrated. The door creaks! even louder than the key did in the lock. I divide the sanctuary hangings before the door, and, O Heaven ! what a scene meets my sight! A brilliancy which has no need of such minor effects as gas, or daylight, lights, I might say, fires up the vast edifice, showing every rounded column and sculptural detail in their most vivid outlines. Above, below, around, sounds indescribable; the very air harmonious and yet so drear: the very atmosphere seems thick with existence! A congregation such as never before witnessed ; not seats alone occupied, every space, and even the air, eloquent with life. Life, and yet what life? Such as I had never before witnessed, such as it is not given to mortals to understand!

Forms I had known long since; Faces, whose outlines, once so familiar, seemed as the breaking in of a dream, so long absent had they been from my vision: none are the usual attendants of the Cathedral, not even inhabitants of the city, and yet they have been. Yes, "have been!" A light dawns upon me — these are those who "once were!" I am with the dead, the dead and yet alive! Am I one of them? When did I die? I cannot

remember! All seems as awful as it is inexplicable. A form approaches — one quite recently taken from his post on earth, his. post a sacred one and my chief.

My Lord Bishop?

Take back thine hand, mortal: the inhabitants of the tomb have done with familiar greetings. No longer either “My Lord Bishop,” I am now spirit with spirit: you are to me only mortal — the representative of mortality!

Spirit, then, Good Spirit, tell me where I am? why is this? who am I?

Spirit alone, call me not Good Spirit! Know you not, (and yet how could mortality know) that humility was the chief Christ-like influence that I possessed so little of when living, and now repent the want so bitterly? where you are is Christ’s earthly mansion, his priests’ spiritual home, called amongst mortals “Cathedral “: familiar to you, it should be most loved, most holy. Why is this? Know, mortal, that we herald the sacred feast of The Nativity, Holy Christmas, a time of worldly revel for mortals, for immortals it is a time for jubilant adoration, that Christ alone most merciful, most holy, most pure, permits the Church triumphant, with one voice, to raise the Sanctus and the Alleluia, before the sacred manger of His birth. Once more the Sacred Feast draws nigh. Who are you? A man of earth, earthy. Why permitted thus to enter here at such a time I know not, it is not permitted. To me you bring back the awful memories of the past — my so-called priesthood, ministry to the world, hollow hypocrisy. In my hands “the Bread of Life” permitted to dwell,- and yet those hands greedy after lucre! awful desecration! From my lips the words of absolution permitted to utter forth, how rarely penitents sought by me to be brought back to the love of Christ. Shepherd and Bishop of souls indeed! — Shepherd, rather, of sloth. Minister of absolution and needing it myself, yet seeking it not. I was called “That holy man:” my life was called “holy,” and yet I was a Prince of the world alone: I in riches, my life one of ease, the lambs of my flock were starved in those Sacraments which I was appointed Christ’s Shepherd to minister. The priests who called me “Lord,” often in most dread poverty, and I, in possession of the mammon of the world, yet withheld it, are now with riches most precious, whilst I in poverty!

But in life you were esteemed most noble, most generous, most learned, Spirit!

Yes, noble, because I served the world: generous, because my name always accompanied my gifts for the world’s adulation: learned, in that

which is now the wildest folly. A childlike love of Christ, outside the world's notice, would have left me now, indeed, most noble: to have lived thus, would have shown, the wisest of learning: but why speak I of the past? There is no past road to be retrodden by me, filled with that which should make it a holy path.

I cannot understand, surely your life was a blameless one? Your name was in men's mouths as one who fulfilled his duties worthily — doubt was expressed that an able successor could be found to you! A great orator, no extreme man, high in courtly influence, you were a main instrument in passing laws to curb the enthusiasm of your clergy, your diocese was a stranger to excesses in zeal, of course most misguided and misdirected when found to run counter to public opinion.

Yea, your recital I dispute not: all these things were my attributes, but in nothing was I Apostolical. That which was expected from me by those who raised me to that high dignity, I fulfilled. God expected much more, that I fulfilled not. The measure of our opportunities is Heaven's scale of what is expected from us. Mine so great, and yet so fruitless! I was an orator, I was not unconscious of my power, and to the full I exercised it, but mainly its subjects were alas, the laws which perish — fit subject for others' oratory, not for a Shepherd of souls! When I preached, I preached for greatness. Before the earthly throne I was often summoned as a courtly priest, who avoided home questions, failed to rebuke vice, known openly though it were, but chose fields of oratory, which were suited to develop my powers, and "please:" neither was I an extreme man: my caution was an attribute much trusted by Ministers of State, of which I myself was very proud: energy in my eyes was esteemed heresy, a most erroneous thing, from which preferments were to be held, at which anathemas were to be hurled, for which laws made to crush: this very lukewarmness was needed on my part by earth, by Heaven, it is disowned: and God requires not of any man to be fearful in His warfare. Would to Heaven that I had been as a fisherman's son, like the saintly father's of the Church — been called in my poverty to be indeed a "Shepherd of the sheep:" had held the gold and the power that perisheth in their true value, and made my sure foundation on a rock.

The stately form, robed in the priestly garments in which he had ministered when in life, slowly passed away: his voice mingling with the multitude. Now, I noticed that as he slowly moved along, his shadowy form

displayed distinctly through the vestments in which he was habited; and that yet within, the gaunt skeleton form, showed distinctly under the form of flesh: thus three shadowy outlines — first, the form as in life: secondly, the form as in nature: and thirdly, the form as in the tomb: and thereat I marvelled greatly, my spirit failing me also with fear.

Many brushed past me, and yet I felt no touch: some barred my passage, but no resistance was apparent: amidst them all, I was yet unharmed, therefore I feared not so greatly. I noticed that every form was alike constituted — no face had even the semblance of a smile, or aught of lightheartedness, — all seemed impressed with some mighty purpose, their minds with serious meditations. Although the light was most brilliant, and, to ordinary mortals, the heat would have been intense, still a chill as of ice, struck through my frame, and as the shadowy troops moved the air with their progress — a feeling as of a winter wind, made me draw my garments closer around me.

I marvelled greatly, to see men and women who had been intimates and friends in life, now pass each other coldly: others, who had been received and looked up to as men and women of no ordinary mould, were now looked down upon and spurned: enemies, and those estranged, were now reconciled — in many cases, I was told afterwards, because they could not find out here the subject of their quarrels, so less than nothing had they been. Some forms, I noticed, selecting the most shaded passages, with averted heads: these, I learnt, had slandered their neighbours with false accusations, and now feared the accused. Nearing the Altar, I noticed that the countenances of those I saw there grew less downcast. Many of these were of the poor, some of them the very poor. Here, their poverty had ceased to trouble them: their rags and tatters, seemed to have changed in my eyes to beautiful vestments, although they still bore the aspect they had in life. Cripples, too, who in life I had often pitied, here seemed to have been endowed with a wondrous grace and beauty — the faulty member was still there, but I could not have termed them cripples, so changed had they become. An old familiar face came before me: a voice well known to me broke the silence! A poor boy had had an ailing mother, bed-ridden and helpless for several years. He had worked with all his energy to support her sinking frame. What little he obtained, he gave to her, starving himself, but telling her he lived well and sumptuously. She believed the harmless deception, recovered slowly, and was received into the workhouse. His

work done, his frame exhausted, he fell asleep in Jesus. No cross marked his burial place, no memoir vaunted his worth. One of Christ's mighty nameless heroes, he feared not to cross the river of death, and put off the changing garments of mortality, for the unchanging robes of immortality.

A feeling of awe came upon me, far greater than had ever seized my spirits before any of the great of the earth, and I bowed myself at his feet. Gently his voice came to me as the sound of rippling water.

Mortal, bow not before me, I am but a poor boy, saved by Christ, taken home before he had reached the full stature of manhood. So, so unworthy, with nothing of my own to recommend me: but filthy rags to cover my form, and ignorance to fill my mind, for I never received any education. I was only taught never to miss my prayers, and never to steal: but, you know, mother was ignorant too, at least everyone said so. Perhaps if we had been educated, we should have loved God less, — thought more of ourselves, less of Him: have loved our life on earth, and missed the life of Heaven. All is so happy here, I wish mother could come. She told me always to say

“Teach me to live that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed,”

and although I had no bed to dread, still I never feared to die. It was very wicked of me I know, but I could not help praying to die, and now I only want her to come too, and I shall have all I have ever wished for.

My head sank upon my breast, and bitter thoughts struck home. This Saint had lived within a few yards of my comfortable residence. I had wanted for nothing, he had starved — and died — to live for ever! I shall die, too, some day, for — for what? My limbs quivered beneath me, and I sank upon the ground!

CHAPTER II.

THE clock striking the hour awoke me from my reverie — still the same scene, the unwearied passage of Spirits, the shining effulgence of light! High aloft, above the high Altar, two motionless angels hold the chosen vessels of Sacramental grace, whilst above, below, around, the wondering Spirits bend in adoration; pictures of Saints seemed to lose their painted fixedness, and relapse into being. The very windows, mocked me into the belief that the Saints they pictured, the holy scenes they depicted, were scenes and beings of life, having lost their fixity. I slowly passed down the aisle, away from the altar, where I seemed to be treading on ground too holy, in company too pure, for mortals, for I noticed the brightness of face paled and faded away, the farther away I was from it.

A statesman of noble mien, and who had but quite recently been taken from his eminent station on earth, at the very zenith of his power, drew near with bended head and faltering step. When near to me, raising his head, he said, fixing his piercing, glassy glance upon me:

Art thou from the world in life?

I am.

Knowest thou how fares it with the one good action of my life?

How is it possible, Spirit? You, in life, must have given thousands: how know I then to which you refer?

Mortal, I forgot. Good actions, are in the world, estimated by metal, and number of pieces. Follow me.

Tremblingly I followed him, knowing not whither I went.

Under the transept appeared two mighty tablets, upon the head of which were inscribed, on the one "Heaven," on the other, "Earth!"

Stay thy footsteps, said the Spirit.

Then I saw him gaze at the stones, upon which appeared, dimly at first, afterwards most vividly; the letters on the tablet headed "Heaven," being, as it were, in gold: and those on the other tablet, being of a deep black. I followed his eyes, and read that which was contained in them. The one named "Heaven" bore upon its surface but few entries, and those dated many years ago, when the Spirit by my side had been a child.

Here you read the record of my life, said the Spirit: “there” you read the record of my death: first pointing to the tablet “Heaven,” then to the other, “Earth.”

I read, at first frequently, (but less and less frequently as the dates were more recent) of prayers, more or less earnest, of little kindnesses rendered, of genial human sympathies, of love to Christ, of obedience to parents. I read also, of prayers by parents, and of love fairly earned, from them and others, by thoughtfulness and care. The records grew less frequent, until I came to early manhood: the contest seemed to grow more difficult, the victories won less and less frequent. A record of a great victory, by prayer and repentance, over self — its fruits recorded also: a suicide had been rescued, and gently, but firmly, urged to lead a better life, apart from temptation: this also, had several prayers offered up for it, and the life had been saved through their instrumentality. A few more entries of prayers, less and less frequent, and soon they ceased altogether: a few ejaculations, and frequent thoughts of remorse, were all that were left, and the record ended. I turned to the other: what a vast sheet! crowded with facts, brilliant speeches, vanity, pride, worldly pomp, adulation, envy, and selfishness! Here were recorded noble acts; but all destroyed, because of their wanting the accessories of noble intents and earnest prayer.

A memorial, signed by thousands, in gratitude for the distinguished man’s influence in the cause of virtue and sobriety, through the introduction of a measure to check open immorality, here failed in its effect, and was destroyed by the fact, that the distinguished man lived in immorality himself! A similar measure to put down theft, was rendered futile for good by the assistance given to large business frauds; and the ruin of thousands, by the promotion of bubble companies, in which the thousands had read his name, and rested their trust upon it. I also noticed, that not only did evil motives cancel the good act itself, but more flagrant hypocrisy not only destroyed its outer coat of seeming goodness, but deducted largely from the good that had gone before. Thus, the presiding at a meeting, with prayer, for the reformation of fallen women at a time when he had discarded his former mistress, turning her adrift without house or home merely to renew his liason with another, had almost destroyed the whole of the little good in his life! I turned away sickened, and sickening, with loathing from him.

You turn away, but with no feelings of pity, said the Spirit, with subdued voice.

How can I have pity? Has not your life been one of open revolt against God?

Stay! remember that you also have a page — one of “Earth,” if you have also one of “Heaven.”

And is the Record open to my eyes? Oh, God, it cannot contain such dread truths as I have just witnessed! Mercy, oh mercy, if it is not yet too late!

“Remember” that you are yet in life. Your record is not yet closed. Your page of “Earth” may not contain my sins and failings, but it fails not to contain others, less, perhaps, even more heinous. To you, the page is not yet open, — only to those who have passed the border land. Your time will soon come: see you to it, that you make ready for its coming. The being I worshipped in life was Self: from boyhood its canker was eating into my life: in manhood, it bore its fruit, and I fell away, deeper and deeper! A crisis came — the crisis which comes to everyone sometime or other in their life — in which I had the alternative of two roads, good or evil. For a time I chose the good, as my Record shows. It was then that I felt, a desire to transmit to others the love of Christ I felt myself. I trusted too much in my own strength, and, as such who trust, I fell — fell deeper and deeper until death! I legislated for others and failed to legislate for myself while it was within my power: my legislations are now enforced on earth, whilst I — wander — lost — knowing that for me all legislation is past! Too late! too late ! — his voice, faltering towards the end, when it uttered the words “too late,” reached a higher note, !and with it his form seemed convulsed with a mighty throe as he passed away from me, and I saw him no more.

All time, and all degree, were represented in this ghostly company. Stately forms of the dead, from ages, that I knew not, except as history, were there: stalwart men and fair women, whose names were mingled with their Country’s, helping to build its fair name by their lives and deeds. I feared to know more, and yet the dread recitals had an interest and a lesson, passing the petty interests and lessons of earth. On earth, I had seen and heard, what they seemed: here, I saw them stripped of their self-consciousness and deceit. What need, I thought, for tragedy and the stage, when every man is a living tragedian, acting his part to the world? What need, our seeming to be others than we are, when in personating ourselves, we are not real beings, but performing our parts, to please and to deceive.

Full of these thoughts, I passed along: before me, on a side wall, was a board I had often read before, "Bequests and Donations" was its heading. It contained a list of bequests to the Cathedral Chapter, and the poor of the City. But what a transformation! "Charles Waller, Esq., citizen, some time mayor of this city, the sum of £1,000." That is as of old: but this is unknown to me — "Forfeited, in compensation of a daily robbery for thirty years, by false weights and measures, whilst following the trade of a milk and butter dealer." Again: Robert Clowes, gentleman, also for some time mayor of this city, the sum of £1,500, "A portion of £10,000 left in ward for a niece, who never received any portion of it, and who subsisted on the supposed charity of her uncle, most grudgingly bestowed." And these men, we had revered, and thought endowed with noble hearts, generosity, — now fatally explained. Here are some insertions, which have not been inserted previously, on the blank spaces left upon the board: "Sarah Whiteman, an aged spinster, of her poverty, is. and many prayers." "John Mason, 15s. money received in return for sheltering a poor outcast, stricken down with fever, for the space of more than two months." A many others of a like nature. My heart felt lightened, with the thought that the Godlike side of our nature had not yet been quite crushed out, as previous evidences had tended to make me believe.

I passed on, looking at the old familiar tombstones.

In these also the commentary had not been omitted.

A tablet, stating the death of Ann Morgan, the lamented wife of George Morgan, tradesman of this City, also explained, in hideous contrast, that her death had been hastened by his cruelty, and that ere she was cold in her grave, he had married her successor, with whom he had made the compact previous to her death.

A handsome and expensively finished monument, "Sacred to the Memory of Sir P. Trevannion, Bart.," &c, erected by his disconsolate widow, and nine fatherless children, also set forth, that the disconsolate widow had anticipated nearly all his property to meet her extravagant debts, and had early anticipations of being consoled by a consolatory widower: and that of the children, two of the sons had hastened his death, by his unavailing efforts to redeem them, from a vicious and immoral life: of the others, one had expressed his satisfaction at, "the old governor having gone," two of the daughters, "thought black became them better than anything," and that it was very convenient this sad event had happened just

now, when they were likely to be proposed to by M. C. and W. E., who would thus have the opportunity of witnessing their heightened charms. Only four out of the nine, sincerely lamented their father, and these so young, that, of course, as the world would term it, “such weakness as sympathy was excusable.” Few with monuments, seemed to leave much regret behind them, few seemed to be worthy of the fulsome adulation bestowed upon them. A modest stone let in at the base of the wall with only the initials B. M. S. upon it, and which the guide to the Cathedral referred to as the supposed tomb of a well-known dishonest man and public swindler, who had been buried, through interest in the Cathedral, and who, it was supposed, only dare thus modestly to note its site (quite an error on the part of the chronicler, for I found his stone, a handsome marble tablet, in a very conspicuous spot afterwards, only, out of fear of its destruction by public indignation, it had been covered up). The tomb B. M. S. stated its owner to have been, a Godly and pious man, who for the greater portion of his life, worshipped God sincerely in this Cathedral, in life most generous — he lived, denying self, and devoting himself to the sick and suffering, until God called him hence, to live with Him for ever.

Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER III.

MY steps were hastily retraced, as I heard the beautiful chime of the bells ringing' out, as it were, for the service of the morrow, Christmas Day; but looking out of a side window I saw that morn had not yet given token of its presence, so, with wonder, I hastened to the nave. What glorious music the bells rang out! It seemed to me that a hundred peals were mingling their joyous melody, with Angel ringers to attune each harmonious note into one grand melody of chaos, and yet of perfect harmony. Not distinct notes only, as tolled by weary ringers paid for their work, and stimulated with some of earth's decoctions, but one unbroken chime of — as it were — untiring praise and holy thankfulness. Methinks, too, that in their chime I could detect heavenly summonses to serve the Lord, earnest petitions to wandering sinners, calls for erring lambs of the fold, loving Saviour's words; the melody takes a sadder strain — they seem in gentle entreaty with subdued voices, to whisper, "Why will ye stray? The Home is ready, the Shepherd welcomes; Come, Come, Come. Home for the weary; Rest for the wanderer; Peace for the troubled one; Home, Home, Home." But a change comes over their strain, and wilder and wilder ring they out their message to the world, with jubilant voice and musically-clamorous tongue. Christ is Born. Unto us a Son is given, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! King of Heaven, Born in Humility, Saviour and Lord of all — Holy, Holy, Holy!

My senses seemed dulled and bewildered by their heavenly music, and I felt that they had their message to deliver, that they who thus chimed were ministers of God in their vocation, and before my eyes in revolting remembrance passed the scenes which I knew were perpetrated in that same belfry by man. No wonder the bells were dispirited in their message when used by such sacrilegious hands, and mingled with, and deadening their melody, were some of the vile words of earth, uttered close to their echoing mouths. The bells have ceased, but they leave a fit successor.

The organ, played by no mortal fingers, raises its wild chant in unity with a myriad voices in one mighty burst of thanksgiving, and the melodious strains re-echo from roof to roof, as if too small, too insignificant to retain their fulness. Christ is Born!

Now I listened, and mingling with the mighty shout, I heard thanksgivings innumerable, praises numberless, and hearts eloquent unto their God; yet no voice as of creature — all ascended in the one cry, resulting from but coalescing with its cause, one speechless worship rendered unto their God, its cause and end, “Christ is Born!”

Clad in white raiment, a mighty throng moves onward in procession unto the altar, whilst around, above, below, myriads bend the knee in prayer. Standing or kneeling, all worshipped untiringly; no seats were needed, cushions ignored; all indolence, and mindwandering, was forgotten. Arrayed in white garments, no thought of their appearance dulled their petitions, no word or whisper to other, they felt the presence of the Mighty One, and fell down and worshipped It. High upon the altar towered the Sacred “Crucifix.” Before it, as the Sacred Symbol of their salvation, every eye and form was prostrate. I saw the “Spirit,” who, on earth, had held office as Bishop, gazing with dimmed and longing eyes towards it. In life he had condemned its use as a means of devotion. I, too, had called it “idolatrous,” yet here I felt it not, knew it not. A symbol of things unseen, yet hoped for, on earth; it was here, still the same, heralding the consummation of all things. I stayed not to question its legality, but, filled by it with its sacred memories, I knelt in meditation. How despicable to me now seemed the arguments I had used against it. I had inhibited my curate for bowing at the name of “Jesus.” Who was I, to arrogate to myself the curtailment of the honour due unto His Sacred name? I tried to recall my reasons, to remember my arguments — I could not. Here they could not return to me; they were of earth, earthy. Angels were ministering at the Sacred Mysteries, the silence of awe stilled every voice, not a breath disturbed the Sacred Office.

No form of words was heard, the same ceremony, but hallowed with sanctity, made glorious by its freedom from defect, by its sacred silence, one thought and feeling united all; in unison were heart, mind, tongue — Holiness unto the Lord.

Stealing upon the ear, came at last a subdued strain, rising in volumes of sound, until all voices were mingled. It spoke of sorrows healed, and pains removed; of tears wiped away for ever, of love unspeakable; of joy, peace, and thanksgiving; the strain was one — ” Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, Grant us Thy peace.” I felt as if I, too, could sing thus for ever, if but my voice were attuned to the everlasting song. I knew then

of the City whose Builder is God, wherein is no darkness, and no sorrow; where the streets are as pure gold, and the habitations as crystal, whose inhabitants cease not day or night, singing "Holy, Holy, Holy." Angels with censers, swung on high clouds of incense, ascending on high with the prayers of the adoring multitude.

The bell's solemn toll conveys to all without the solemn act of Consecration, the very angels veil their faces and fall in adoration. All sense of being leaves me. Mortal, bereft of that which is mortality, I worship as a Spirit before the Throne!

Morn breaks. Impelled aloft, helpless and unconscious, I am conveyed along, borne by unseen hands swiftly, and without motion on my part. Again the bells ring out — not the whole peal, but two solitary bells, which, however, bear low and sweet music over hill and dale, summoning to "Communion." Long years had passed away, and no such service had been offered, as the first fruits to God upon His Holy Day, as the early seeking of Him, which He loveth. Priests had excused themselves by saying that "of value in years gone by, it had ceased to be so now," when at the time the world was growing more and more evil, the times waxing nearer and nearer the coming of the Son of Man. At last, one priest, zealous for his Master, with a heart full of love for Him, had undertaken it solely by himself. He was told the bells disturbed the sleepers; only two low-toned ones must therefore be used. He answered that bells were no necessity — "Souls needed The Presence," they came not for accessories.

No organ, no white-robed choristers, no crowded congregation — a gathering together of a few earnest, loving hearts, such as their Master loveth. The murmuring prayers sounded as sweet music ascending unto us, the low tones were mingled with blessings, and became mighty voices. Here was "self" forgotten — all were before The Presence, and became — equal; all sought the same precious benefit — regeneration; all alike received a blessing, and became "temples of the Holy Ghost." A man clad in fine raiment led up to the altar, a man, poor in this world's goods, and bereft of vision. Divine pity was here expressed in the lives of humanity, here were souls clothed in the garments of righteousness. Faltering footsteps in the highway of life were here strengthened and sanctified. Half-formed resolutions for good, prayers for reformation, here became rules for life. Not a few had the mark of "The Lamb" on their foreheads, others were

striving hard to obtain it; all, for the time, were bereft of things earthly, and had a fore-knowledge of the Communion of Heaven.

Again the bells ring out loudly — the full peal, but the music is not the same. It is now advanced morning, and crowds are wending their way to service. I am carried away within the porch of the Cathedral, from whence the voices of those entering are quite audible. I seem to have lost my being, and to be a Spirit amongst Spirits, for my individuality is lost, and although gazed at, or the space in which I am, no sign of recognition or alarm is expressed. “We listen.” Approaching are two gentlemen, one an intimate friend, the other well known to me.

We shall be bored this morning by one of old Matthews’ sermons; I hear he is in residence.

Well, for myself, I always like Canon Matthews, answered my friend. Of all the Canons, he preaches the shortest sermons, and, I must say, very much to the point.

Why, you rascal! you sleep through them, so you can’t be much of a judge.

Which remark seemed to tickle the fancy of them both, and with the laugh upon their lips, they entered — the House of God!

My love! I assure you the one thing I admire in Mr. Matthews, is, that his discourses omit all topics upon which there is any degree of doubt, such as Baptism, Confirmation, and, I may say, all the so-called Sacraments. Besides, his arguments are of so peaceful a nature, he never harrows up the feelings, advises us to live in the station in which we are placed with complacency and ease, shutting our eyes to the sins and iniquities of all around us.

I here made an effort to contradict these base libels and contortions, but found my voice speechless, my presence not possible to be made manifest.

Matilda, my dear, how dare you walk to church with that low, ill-bred man, William Yorke.

He is neither low nor ill-bred, mamma.

He has not a penny.

He is none the worse for that, mamma; when shall we estimate people rightly?

I heard of his taking up with some low “Ragged-Schools,” and actually assisting to his home, a drunken man, he met late one night in the streets.

Yes, mamma, but you forget the boys were treating him most cruelly.

No I do not. Why did he not call for the police?

But he could not, mamma, for he was quite unconscious. Besides, none were near, or William would have called them.

I don't care; it was no concern of his. The man shouldn't get intoxicated. But I insist upon your not speaking to him again.

Father, follow me, said a girl of about twelve years of age, leading a man cleanly, but plainly dressed.

But, lassie, this is no place for such as we; all folks here's fine dressed, and gentlefolks.

Yes, it is, father. I know a corner where we can sit, away from the beadle, and I love to come here; and you will, too, father, when it isn't new to you, as it is to-day.

God bless thee, lassie. Three-and-twenty year to-day since I went to Church, and now my little girl's a bringing of me!

You must kneel down, father, and say what I told you out of my book.

Lord! to think the old 'ooman died afore seeing us two here, said the man, brushing away a tear.

Papa, I want you.

Well, Charlie?

Why do people dress up to go to church?

I don't know, Charlie, unless it is to appear in their best before God in His house.

But wasn't God very poor?

Hush, Charlie — yes, when on earth.

Then He wouldn't love rich people.

Yes, my boy, He loved all.

But Old Crowe says he doesn't love rich people, because they let him starve; and, you know, Old Crowe's very poor, too.

The child-like voice again broke the silence.

Papa! How is it God shuts His house up all the week?

God doesn't shut it up, my boy; man both shuts it up, and opens it.

But why isn't it open all the week? I don't mean this big Church, but all Churches. I know why this Church is open all through the week: Mary, the housemaid told me, because the beadles had to get their living out of it, by showing the building.

No, Charlie, that was wrong; Mary should not tell you such tales. The reason why all Churches are not open every day is, that some clergymen do not think it necessary; and again, they have so much else to attend to.

Is it necessary to play “croquet,” papa?

No, my child, except as pastime.

Well, papa, I heard of two clergymen being called “the best players of croquet anywhere,” and, you know, Mr. Wilson, the clergyman, plays on our lawn for whole days together, with Katey and Lottie.

I can only tell you, John, that if you persist in your determination to enter the Church, you are a bigger fool than I took you for.

But, father, surely in these matters, one does not estimate, first one’s pockets.

Don’t act blindly! The prestige of a clergyman is not what it was in my time. Deacons are admitted now to ordination from Theological Colleges.

But you do not give them the credit of their motives being as good as those graduates, who hail from some University?

My dear boy, I do not doubt their motives; I only question their prestige.

I care less for the prestige, even, than I do for “the Church viewed as a speculation.”

But, my dear John, you do put such dreadful constructions on things! I did not call it a speculation. Then, again, you will want to marry, and if you don’t get help from me you’ll starve.

No, father, you mistake me. If I enter the Church, I enter as an unfettered priest. No qualms of conscience shall seize me that my wife is being dressed, however fine or however lowly, upon the Church’s patrimony — my children depending for bread upon the alms of “the faithful.”

But, John, we must look at these things from a common sense point of view; in fact, from the world, not from the sky.

I look upon it as, I believe, from God’s estimation of them. Remember the passage, “Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the Sacrifice? and they who wait at the Altar are partakers with the Altar? Even so hath the Lord also ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.” (i Corinthians, ix.) I believe, that neither in that, nor anywhere else, you will find any mention of a wife or children also being included as to be “supported by the Altar.”

CHAPTER IV.

I WAS carried within, and ascended, as before, amongst the Angels and Spirits, who thronged the roof, unseen by the crowded congregation below. I recognised our usual congregation at the Morning Service. The buzz of conversation was distinctly heard, although nothing could be distinguished; yet I am wrong, for from a man bowed in prayer, whose form was an object of remark to several, surprised at such a remarkable phenomenon as a man kneeling in prayer, where not actually enjoined by the Liturgy, arose a fervent petition for mercy. "My God, my God, have pity upon me; I have deserted Thine Altar from boyhood, I have neglected Thine ordinances, scoffed at Thy holy religion, but now I am stricken; Thou hast at last broken my heart — bind and heal it; Thou hast taken from me my child whom I have idolised, my wife, whom I have loved with my life, and now, I have Thee alone for refuge, come unto me, and stay with me, I beseech Thee; let Thy light beam upon my path, and take away from me my desolation and misery."

An Angel bending over me said in gentle tones, Mortal, it is given to you, and such as you, to bear the King's message to such as he. In what manner do you deliver it? He needs not disquisitions — homilies for him are futile; he needs the earnest entreaty and loving guidance of an unworldly spirit; one who, in his soul, sups daily of his Father's grace, and thinks his life too short, to pass it in that Father's courts fulfilling His ministry. I answered not, knowing that in silence I alone could find refuge from the crying claims of my neglect, and unfitness for such a guidance.

I looked below — many lips were moving, but no sound ascended from them. In the least public places of the sanctuary were some from whose hearts ascended heartfelt prayers, others prayed earnestly for a time, but afterwards suffered their attention to wander when their moving lips gave forth no sound, for I noticed that all sincerity, however brief, and however low it was whispered, even if the lips moved not, ascended distinctly as in a loud voice unto us, and was recorded in the tablets I had before seen.

Amongst the prayers I heard the childlike voice of little Charlie.

“Please bless papa and mamma, and little Charlie, and make him a good boy. He never wants to tell any more stories, for papa says all little boys who tell stories never go to Heaven, and he wants to come there. Let us all come, for Jesus Christ’s sake.” Surely golden keys to unlock the heavenly gates.

And from a corner — the corner where freedom from beads was promised to him by his daughter, came the following prayer from the father:

“Oh, Lord, I am a poor ignorant man, and don’t know how to pray, but my girl is a good girl, and I pray you to bless her, and to bless me too, if such as me can be blessed. I work for her with all my might, and am thankful that we want for nought; but, O Lord, take care on her when I’m gone, and be a Father to her, for there be some as calls themselves men who’ll take advantage of the poor with their money, and lead ‘em wrong, when the only t’other thing they’ve got to do is to starve. If she can’t do no other without that, let her starve, Lord, and come up to me, where you’ve promised to bring those who’ll pray to Thee when they die.

The prayers of those whose lips moved only, I heard not; they may have deemed it a beneficial pastime, but it was a useless one, except to their own condemnation, for I observed that the time thus spent was entered in Earth’s tablet as so much desecration in

God’s edifice. I felt impelled to cry unto them, to shout them an alarm, that they were hastening to the precipice blindfold, from which they must be recalled, at any hazard, at any cost. I implored the Angel to make my voice heard, to leave me space, if but for a few minutes, to sound them such a summons as should waken their dead hearts with fears for their safety.

He said, sadly and gently — I cannot; my mission is given to me — this belongs not to it. To you have been given golden opportunities for such a purpose; even this very morn, you will minister unto them — in what manner, judge for thyself.

I stretched forth mine hands, with such yearnings as had never before been known to me in my ministry, my head felt fevered with a sense of the awful responsibility which I had borne.

All now rose from their knees, and their voices joined in a well-known hymn upon the Nativity. I observed that a much larger proportion of earnestness was manifested in the singing than in the prayers, a greater incentive probably being offered to devotion through it as a medium, although I noticed with pain, that the increase was of a more transitory nature; still, although it had this drawback, it was cheering to note, as a means of reaching the hearts of the vast number of indifferent worshippers. I observed throughout the service that in the portions endowed with most life, the Angels had most to record in the tablet called "Heaven" — even the poorest seeming to have their feelings raised in the ascriptions of praise. I marked with most intense joy the much louder swell in this Hymn, approaching, in some minor sense, to the harmony of the Spirit-choirs, although mingled with the faltering notes and want of the intense feeling manifested in that mighty sound. I looked with eager interest to see and hear what followed, hoping that some strong influence might impress this precious seed deeper into the ground of their hearts. Why should my spirits falter, my expectations be blunted, by seeing myself, in life, or my semblance of it, ascend the pulpit? Surely it was not fear! No, it was not fear. The awful scenes through which I had passed — the awful company in which I even then was — made no fresh change any alarm, no transformation impossible! I could not deceive myself. I felt that, for the work before me, I was unfitted; that indifference before me would remain indifference still. Shamefaced, I hid my face, as I listened to a short historical research into the statistical numbers of the men destroyed, on either side, in the battles between the Philistines and the Israelites, and in which, I laboured to create fancied discrepancies in the received version of the account contained in the Old Testament. This concluded, the congregation rose to disperse. My intense consciousness of what my companions must think of me, and infinitely more than this, of what God must think of me, mingled with the desire never more to presume to teach that which I had not myself first learned, kept me silent, and I was left alone. No need of words of condemnation, — my conscience, my ears, were mine accusers; abased and humiliated, I would have taken the humblest station, have retired anywhere, to be alone, to make known my contrition unto God.

Mortal, to thee has been unfolded, by the omnipotent wisdom of Heaven, the fulfilment of thy vows, as a priest of God, as they appear unto Him that

judgest the hearts and actions of men whether they be of God. Wilt thine bear the scrutiny? Hast thou not challenged the very basis of the throne of the Most High, by thy doubts, without foundation, and yet callest thyself — a priest of the Eternal God? Fit custodian of the keys of Heaven, verily! Wouldest thou be answered in thy frailties by annihilation? Speak — art thou ready to meet thy God? Canst thou render up an account of thy priesthood unto Him who is an High Priest for ever? Speak.

Spirit, my life has been revealed unto me. I answer nothing. Extenuation I plead not; I only pray for life — implore for a little time before I go hence for ever, that I may plead for mercy, call aloud for pardon.

Mercy, is extended, even to you! By all the laws of Heaven and earth, thou hast forfeited thy stewardship; yet, it remains unto you. Thou hast incurred the wrath of Heaven; yet, unto thee is yet given time. Thou has trifled with the opportunities of grace, which have been given to thee for others. Thine own are still thine own. Forget not that thou art a brand plucked from the burning. Follow me.

The Angel checked his flight again over the doorway, and I was conveyed by his side, dreading to hear more of my condemnation.

What a strange sermon this morning by the Canon, said an old lady, walking past with her daughter.

Yes, mamma; but you know, Canon Matthews, is said to be a Broad Churchman.

What do they mean by Broad Churchman? Such names were never heard of when I was a girl. Then, a Churchman was a Churchman simply — neither Broad, Low, or High!

They mean by Broad, his tendencies to doubt received belief.

But if he doubts, why does he receive the Church's pay, and yet undermine her doctrines?

That I can't say, mamma; you must refer to Canon Matthews for a solution of that question.

I've heard of High and Low before, but never of Broad. What is the point of difference between High and Low?

The High say they differ from the Low, merely in question of degree. The Low say they differ from the High because, as you may say, at their "height" they border on Romanism.

But what of the law of the Church?

The law of the Church is made secondary by the State, to the law of equity, so that questions of doctrine are determined by laymen — this satisfies neither party.

But how is that? If my house is robbed I suppose I must not send to the Bishop?

Oh, no mamma; but you see the Church has let itself get subservient to the State.

What was he driving at? I tell you the man must have meant something.

Yes, Sam, he meant as how as that account was wrong, about the men, you know.

Well, but if the number's wrong, how is it we're to know whether the whole tale ain't a make up?

But he didn't say so, and if as how that's wrong, it doesn't say as all's wrong.

But, I tell you, if he ses as how that's wrong and he's right, who does he think will go and believe all as Gospel truth that he ses of the tother portion on it? Why, its nothing but whims and fancies.

Well, Sam, you know he knows better than you or I.

Better nor me, but not better nor my old mother; for she knew it right off by heart, nearly every word on it; and ses she, Sam, ses she, believe I never cared for you, believe I stole every bit of food I put in your mouth, but never believe nought agin your Bible, and I'm blest if I do, so help me die if I do.

But he only tells you that the figures are wrong, and who's to know about figures?

That's just it. It's just like a man getting at the back of an hedge to shoot at yer in the back as ye pass. I ses "all or nothin'." Who does he think, with only one idea at a time in their 'eds, can follow him through his dirty little ways?

No, Elizabeth, decidedly not. I have entered Church for the last time. I attend St. Saviour's, and am informed that I must attend the clergy in the vestry before I attend Communion again, because of the notorious scandal (only that little affair of Smith's, you are aware Elizabeth) which had been created by my conduct in the parish. I informed them, (with mild benignity, restraining my indignation within Christian limits) "Decidedly not, sir's: decidedly not. If I want a Christening, a Marriage, or a Burial (for which,

you are aware, they follow the admirable rule of omitting the usual fees) I will avail myself of your offices, but your advice I do not solicit.”

Really, Abraham, I think you are too hard upon the Rector. He said it in the most gentlemanly way, and said it was advisable for your own character’s sake.

All to no purpose, Elizabeth. Again I am assailed. Numbers smashed this Sunday. Deuteronomy escaped with a severe wound the Sunday before last, an anticipated attack during the week upon the first chapter of Genesis. I have only one refuge. The New United Primitive Methodists have long looked towards me; as a deacon I could look with scorn upon these Rectors and Curates! As a local preacher my talents are well known — I mean would develope!

Ah, friend Monro! said an old gentleman, shaking hands with an aged clergyman.

Age tells upon me you see, friend, yet I repine not. God is good: He still permits me to get out to Church.

Don’t you think with such sermons as we heard this morning it is as well to stay at home — nay, even better?

No, no: remember, friend, it is God’s house — it is His service we attend; yes, attend most thankfully. Poor Matthews! I knew him as a little boy, when his mother said to me, Doctor, I have one for the Church, you see, I always longed to have a son a clergyman; and now he is fast going astray, poor, poor fellow.

But I can’t see he merits pity so much as the congregation; see the harm he does.

Yes, but others are not necessarily influenced; they have the Prayers, and believe in them; they have the Sacraments, and live in them. But Matthews — poor Matthews! has nothing! Then his punishment, not only a life’s work thrown away; but what defence can be made — what excuse offered? Educated, he cannot plead ignorance: ordained, he cannot escape responsibility. A priest killing himself with his own weapons! I cannot conceive a more pitiable spectacle! You cannot, then, ask me why I pity him more than the congregation.

That clergyman, until his death, afterwards became my teacher. How I revelled in his pity! I, the proud scholar, how I hung upon his simple words! I noticed coming towards us, the young man intended for the Church; who I

afterwards pleaded to train in his studies, although declining to train him for his sacred office. Others may by this time know my reason.

Now, that is a repetition of what I was arguing before we entered Church, father. That man has entirely mistaken his vocation.

I cannot agree with you, John. Every man's mind is not constituted alike, and I can tell you in the Church we want variety.

How do you explain the passage in Revelations, then — ” For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this Book, If any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this Book.” Here, to me, is the issue — Is God a faithful teacher, or is Canon Matthews? One or the other, — both it cannot be. Canon Matthews states facts of the Bible to be erroneous. God states, under the penalty of an awful curse, that he who taketh away or addeth unto is alike cursed, neither more nor less. Not one Book inspired and the others uninspired, but all inspired.

But how explain the Canon's facts? Two and two make four, don't they?

Certainly; but remember that, in the first place, to state one argument, the Bible has been translated and re-translated again and again; differences of language cause difficulties in that translation. That meanings have been wrongly expressed is a fact well known. How much more easy to omit or to add a numeral, quite by error and unintentionally; such mistakes are of daily occurrence with printers. It cannot be otherwise. The arguments for such trifling errors being taken as contradictory of inspiration, I consider as futile as they are childish. Then, of such doubters none should prove themselves cowards and deserters. All should do it conscientiously; how, then, can priests extenuate a living, flagrant lie to the vows of their priesthood by remaining in their offices as priests?

Again the Spirit uttered the words “Follow me,” and again we glided aloft, but not to remain; away into space, swiftly and silently, I was borne in the wake of the Angel, whose retinue consisted of countless Spirits, above, below, around; encircled, I lay unconscious of everything except my past, gone for ever!

CHAPTER V.

I WAS awoke from my reverie of wretchedness, by the Angel's taking me into a house of a superior class; how, I cared not to enquire. To me the power seemed to be given, when in the Spirit's company, of seeing yet not being seen; of entering anywhere in spite of doors, windows, or any other obstacles. The purpose with which we had entered here, I knew not, — that, Time or the Angel alone could unfold. Stretched upon a couch, with dishevelled hair and disordered dress, and head hanging over its side, was a man in the prime of life, whose surroundings and dress bespoke the position of a gentleman, although he was not one at the present moment, because he had surrendered brain, morality, position, self-respect, and Godliness to one vile influence — "Drink," and now, under its fatal power, he lay as one dead. The room bore witness of the mad riot which had been carried on the previous night. The remains of a sumptuous meal remained upon the tables, broken wine glasses lay about, wine stains upon the snowy table-cloths, chairs overturned, the very flowers seemed to droop their innocent heads with shame to be in such company. A fair-haired youth lay upon the floor alike unconscious. The first faint beams of dawn stole through the curtains, and mumbling to himself intelligibly, the man upon the couch slowly rose, and rubbed his bleared eyes. With eyes, from which the pure light of vision had almost departed, he surveyed the scene, and rising with faltering steps and trembling hands he poured himself out some soda-water, which stood near, and by its influence a little sober realisation of the scene came upon him. His ears caught a murmuring sound as of the rambling thoughts of the dreamer. He listened, and observed they proceeded from the lips of the fair-haired youth, upon whose face the first dawnings of manhood had left their imprint.

"Ah, Elly, Elly, don't send me away from you — don't Elly, have pity on me; you have my future in your hands ; you'll be the making of me, Elly. What, no! You can't mean no. You don't know how I need you. I am getting into bad company; you can save me from it if you will. I know I'm poor, but I will work — work! Yes, work until I'm dead for you, Elly. No? Yet tell me how I can win you. Save me from myself. I have been led away, but

I will reform. If you will become my wife, my love, I will leave the past for ever. Oh, Heaven you refuse! You believe me not! Mercy! Don't leave me to myself — to those who have made me what I am.

His words faltered, and ended with a sudden cry, which cry awoke him.

You seem to have been troubled with a bad dream, Georgy, said the man.

The youth gazed vacantly around him, then slowly raised himself, saying — I had fancied myself far away from this hell.

Yes, with Elly! said the man, sneeringly, although the broken utterances seemed to have disturbed him strangely, a feeling which was, however, soon driven from his face. You're complimentary, I must say.

Complimentary! hissed the youth. Yes, I owe you thanks for — ruin. My life has been accursed, by — you!

That's right, go ahead, said the man. Did I seek you — did I tempt you here? No, no. Such tales as that will not do. But since you can't be polite, go; I say, go.

Go where? To destruction? For your guidance — your influence has no other sign-post.

Anywhere, so that you rid me of your presence, or I'll make you feel my influence.

Complete it then, I care not. I reck not. You made my name a polluted one ; and from me has passed the hope of happiness. As a hideous vampire you have sucked the very existence from my life, and now you coolly tell me — Go.

The man sprang forward to arrest the crash of a candelabra seized by the youth, and flung at him with terrific force, and with clenched fist struck him unpitifully to the earth.

Bending over the body he thought he had killed him, and fear took hold of his mind. To this, then, have I come — Murder! Oh, what a life, and all caused by drink! Drunkard! My wife sued for divorce from me, to seek refuge from my violence. Drunkard! my very children, shrank from me with dread, and feared me! Drunkard! my fair-haired child, little Rosy, poor little Rosy, fled before my approach with terror, and fell — crippling herself for life. Drunkard! my soul is lost, my senses are degraded! Worship! I know no worship but the bottle! Drunkard! My hand has struck its last blow, and I am a murderer ! A drunkard's death before me; for the scaffold shall receive me not. I hail it! I drink to it! My ruin! Ha, ha! I am mad!

Filled with horror by the scene I saw not not the Angel pointing with outstretched arm to the gibbering maniac, until his voice broke the silence, only disturbed by the madman's utterance.

This man's soul was under thy guidance as its minister. For seven years minister of this parish, an opportunity was given to you to preach against the vice of drunkenness — to plead in private, to heal the growing evil which has resulted thus — in a family's ruin, a



father's destruction, a soul lost! Tell me not that you knew it not — you did; only he was a rich man; he subscribed largely to your charities; you hoped for the best, and did — nothing; once only — you spoke of drunkenness in public! It was to your poor, you feared not to speak to them; the wealthy, this man, you feared to tell his sin. You see the end. Follow me.

A darkness as of night, a distance which had no measurement, passed beneath our feet, a mighty crowd surrounds a lofty hill; the dress of all, most strange unto me. I knew it not, and yet it seemed familiar. Like unto the pictures in the Bible, it brought to mind scenes long past. The hoarse murmur of a multitude, the mighty swaying to and fro of a host, numberless as the sand upon the sea shore, which no man can number. Upon the eminence two crosses, and, awful sight, two men distended upon them, their hands and feet nailed unto the wood. Between, a cloud most dense,

concealing all else. Around the hill, soldiers; the dress, those of ancient Romans; the hill, the scene, the men upon the crosses! The vision is revealed before me, and I see the thieves who died in Crucifixion. A voice, most agonising, breaks upon the ear, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom," and as heavenly music comes the answer, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The scene faded from my sight, and I saw no more.

Mercy is thus displayed to thee, Mortal, to teach thee, that unto the mercy of God, there is no limit. Truly, a bounteous, overflowing store! Even in death, the limit of a God-like pity, has not denied its pardon. To thee, and to such as thee, it is permitted that you appear to men as the ambassador of your God. Your offers — mercy, peace, a Crown of Life, to live with Him for ever. How often does the language fit the theme, judge ye. Follow me.

Flaunting along the street, almost deserted of its traffic, and with the hush of falling night o'erspreading it, passes, what was once, a woman. Poor daughters of Eve! sinned against and sinning! Thy lives are dread witnesses to the weakness, even to vice, of man. Where dost thou come from? To where art thou going? What can thy mind consist of, that it can be so deadened to every God-like sense, thus to submit to thy fate, with a sickly, deadly smile upon thy lips?

Boys, youths, men, alike besotted in thy folly; for vice makes all alike. Beware of her that lurkest at the street corners! Thy God commands thee; for her pathway leadeth unto destruction, and the end of those who follow in her steps is — death. Yet scoff not at her, let no unseemly jest pass thy lips, brush not past her, as if thine own life were so pure, so sinless, that such contamination soiled thee; rather let a gentle "God forgive thee," sink into ears that hear nought else but lies and flatteries, and the very cultivation of all filthinesses. Some e'en think it manly (God forgive, the perversion of a noble word) to insult and taunt them with their fall, to degrade them, if possible, even to a lower depth of infamy. Yet such may have sisters. Mothers they must have had, and reverence for the sex that gave them birth, if nought else, should spare their shame a taunt! Poor wandering souls, degraded ones; to what base use has thy maternity, which gave unto a Saviour birth, and still gives unto the world the existence, for which a God thought it no ignominy to die to save, been prostituted. To thee, O erring daughters, — "Christmas" — that glorious Mother's Festival, has its message, for it brought forgiveness for repentance. Upon

the Christmas-day was born He who, writing silently upon the sands when manhood's stature had been reached, without one sin, one impure thought or deed, proclaimed that impurity was condemned, not for ever, if forsaken, that even for the lost of womanhood He had reserved a pardon. To those, too, who have followed in her ways and yet forsake them, before all conscience has been obliterated into guilt, and their manliness into the animalism of sensuality, He also reserves a pardon.

This is a subject which mortals think too delicate a one for their fastidious hypocrisies, and yet the very Angels of Heaven weep to see so many led astray, and continue in their sin, without the voice of warning raised to hinder them, or voice of entreaty being exerted to bring the lost lambs back to the fold! How many sisters, in the flesh if not in kin, are there, who will tolerate their presence, in however mean a capacity, in their households, though repentance most sincere may be manifested? Who thrust them out at the first frail sin, when, perhaps, woman's weakness was but a victim to man's guile; homeless, a wanderer, yet the mother's pangs e'en then taking their awful hold upon the helpless one? Who, tempt to infanticide, are, in their acts, nought but murderers, if not in deed, yet in conspiracy? Who, in taking away all hope of reformation, in thrusting to the streets for entire destruction, when the beginning might have been averted into repentance: in leaving to poverty, solitude, absence of care and compassion, and the necessities of a mother, are superior, nay even equal, in compassion to the beasts that perish? and yet these are — Christians! Often mothers themselves! Where departed the compassion that one poor sufferer feels for another in a like position, only bereft of the comforts and even necessities which they enjoy.

Mothers! most forlorn and wretched, live but to repent, and thy God will make thine hardships a penance most acceptable unto Him; thy desertion, a crying plea for His

care, the absence of earthly compassion the greater need for His receiving thee in the Kingdom. Is it habitual to you to preach against such false-named Christian charity, to speak gently to the erring one, to condemn him who has caused the shame, or if his craven heart conceal his personality, to denounce the act? Whether Yes, or No, may be your answer, look to it that ye omit it not in the future, at the peril of thine own salvation. Follow me.

Far away! Over the housetops swiftly and silently, a river shines like a silver thread in the moonlight, deep beneath our feet. Descending, I note a

bridge, familiar by sight unto me; its traffic gone; the pavement, which re-echoed through the day with the ceaseless train of vehicles and the tramp of many feet, now hushed and solemn with its silence; for it was night! Distinctly can now be heard the ripple of the mighty river as it hurries upon its way, concealing its mighty strength under the playful semblance of a child; yet deep, dark, strong, and faithless as the friendships of the world. See how it licks the stony feet of the bridge, as if in its affection; yet it is striving with all its might to loosen the mighty mass and hurl it down in its pride of strength; there, again, a chain, ponderous and strong, fastens a barge to a huge ring embedded immoveably in the stone. Mark how it gently floats the barge, until its chain slackens idly, as if in perfect security,' without any restraint, and yet a rush, a tug of terrific strength (straining the chain to its utmost) marks its semblance of play — merely a mask to try its brute strength more vigorously. O, River! mighty semblance of eternity! Bear lightly, treat tenderly, the frail images of mortality, who, from to time, end their despair of life in thy dim, sullen waters! That which the world has tossed in its tempests, broken upon its rocks, and murdered with its neglect, guide thou gently into thy playful ripples, that, with their music smoothening the pallid brow of death, those who sleep upon thy waters may float to their last bourne, lulled with the music of a tenderness and pity they knew not in life. A woman's form appears upon the parapet; a wild cry breaks upon the night; a spring — a plunge, and a soul less exists in the world — one more gone to its last home! No boat puts off, for none are there to impel them; no passenger upon the bridge; not one has heard the cry, but deems it no business of theirs to inquire into. Nobly does the old river bear up its burden; gently, as a mother with her child, does it cradle it along. See how it is guiding it for the bank with its current, into a little jetty, where the bank gradually sloping, receives its burden, the head gently resting on a sandbank, the limbs yet floating in the water, the frail chance, even for life, thus extended to it, may, at any moment, be broken and the body float again into the stream. But no;



the river has its mission. A higher power directs it, and unmolested on its watery couch, the time passes slowly on. The gentle breeze, freshened by the river, plays its refreshing stream over the pallid face. The breeze revives her, and awaking faintly she sees her peril. A short time ago, reckless of her life, she now clutches the jetty, and with the frenzy of despair, she raises her poor weakened frame up by its aid, until reaching dry earth she sinks down in her exhaustion. Her lips move in prayers, although for a long time strangers to them. "Most merciful and pitying God, I know by this that Thou wishest me to live, and that for me, life, even wretched as it has been, hopeless and shameful, is yet better fitted for me than death. O, God, I thank Thee with all my heart that Thou hast saved me; make me what Thou wouldest; whatever I undergo I will never attempt to take my life again, until Thou thinkest fit to take it to Thyself. I have not known happiness on earth, and I was throwing away my chance of happiness in Heaven. Take it not away from me, my God; leave it still to me, to be obtained at last. All I undergo will only make me thank Thee more and more; toil will be sweetened by the thought that I may come to Thee."

The world believes that all those who take away; the spirit of life which is within them are lost for ever, not only in this world, but the next also, said the Angel mournfully; it is best so. Thus thousands receive their only check from destroying the image which God had made, to escape from their own most wretched state; it was God's wise precaution against his silence being mistaken as a sanction for despair, from which, the sole refuge opening out its gaunt invitation would be death — death unnatural, and by self-annihilation. But even to the suicide, from causes which time deepens into a deeper iniquity, from which a soul flees, hoping for pardon! yet not of itself, having strength to repel the insidious flood; I say not there is hope, because I know not; the Father knows alone; but who would doubt that to the wretched in life, ground down by temptation, poverty, and the denied wants of mere existence? He will yet afford pardon whose attribute is mercy. Unto thee it is not given to proclaim this message, for it thou hast no warrant; but thou canst plead the hope; this is not denied to thee, and forget not "the effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Follow me.

"I can look back upon my career and thank myself for everything I possess," said a portly man standing before the fireplace in his own home, whilst his family — two little boys, who looked spiritless and unhealthy, as if the natural course of their being had been somehow averted into the wrong channel — sat at a table, at which, also, was a pale-faced, thin, and ladylike looking woman, who did not make any answer to the remark, having heard it time after time before.

"Jane, I tell you, I have to thank no one for anything," came again from the portly form of her lord and master.

Yes, Jeremiah; but I think most people prefer having been helped, to depending for everything upon one's self, said the wife meekly.

But I don't feel like other people! Look at me! I rose from the workhouse! I'm not ashamed to own it! Not I — I pride myself upon it! No thanks to anyone; compare me to those sons of mine! When I was their age I was at "work" (the last word almost shouted out) earning my own living, 2s. 6d. a-week and one meal a-day, and live out of doors. Ask me how I did it? (no one had asked him) Why, sleep in the open air, or a barn, wash in the brook, no soap (again hurled at them as if they had done him some injury). What did I want with soap? Waste, I tell you, waste, extravagance; penny loaf and water from the brook — breakfast; to work till dinner-time, then

the broken victuals, the same as the dog had; then another loaf with a cup of tea, three times a week — tea; then a potato dipped in salt — supper; then to bed. What did I do to raise myself? What is raising oneself, John Saul?

Making a noise, father! (The voice shades weaker than the mother's, in fact, so weak as to be scarcely a voice at all. He said what he believed was "raising oneself," his father's noisy description of it.)

Go to bed without any tea, sir, growled the father. But stay, wait till I've done speaking. Raising oneself is owing no thanks to anybody, and getting money. Before I went to work in the morning, I gathered chickweed for birds, and sold chickweed for birds! and made money by chickweed for birds! Don't forget it (considering they had it repeated about twice every week, they were not likely to forget it). A farthing a-day from four places made a penny a-day; a penny a day, six days a week, made 6d. a week; 6d. a week for six months (twenty-six weeks) made 13s.; added to this, 3d. a week saved for twelve months from the 2s. 6d. a week (fifty-two weeks), 13s., in all 26s. This I gave to a man much in want of money, to teach me his trade — a tallow chandler. Then I became a workman at good wages, 25s. a week; then foreman, at £2 10s. then partner, because I threatened to take the trade elsewhere; then master; then I married his widow, your mother, my wife; (no degree of satisfaction was expressed by anyone at the facts related, no smile marked the allusion to his wife upon her pale face). I never prayed; prayers are humbug. Those only pray who don't work and work's — life — money. I never stole — its bad policy. I never drank — its bad policy. In the one you get found out — transported; in the other, you let others render you some assistance, and get the better of you. I never lied, except most safely; because, I found I was not trusted again so readily — its bad policy. I go to church — its good policy! I get custom through it. Church in the morning — chapel in the afternoon (Wesleyan chapel); in the evening, Independent; each brings a connection for candles. I think of developing into two prayer meetings of a week-day evening, two more connections. I don't listen to what they say — they never say anything that applies to me. I don't believe in any religion, or in anything else, except raising oneself and getting money. I sing loudly because that's good policy. I can't read, but I catch the tune, and make everyone look at me. after that I sleep till the sermon, all through the prayers ; but keep awake in the sermon — that's good policy, for others are looking about to see who's asleep, then to talk about it. No clergyman ever called on me, I behaved too well before

them, my good policy blinded them. Now I write myself Mr. Jeremiah Noggs, L.O.L.W., I hate Esq., or I should take that too, it means a stuck-up, well-dressed person, who is a long time paying his bills, and I hate that especially. I like the L.O.L.W. best, its such a surprise to everyone who never heard it before. The deacon of the chapel asked me to what learned society it referred, meaning to put it into the paper as attending their chapel; I answered, "Late of Lancaster Workhouse." I really thought he would have gone off in a fit, he looked so astonished. Now, John Saul, to bed — Mrs. Noggs, I'm going.

I wondered what I was intended to learn from the scene, which had just faded from our sight to my great relief, the repulsive nature of the man, conveying to me nothing but feelings of disgust and abhorrence. Silent at first, the Angel then said, You think such a scene as we have just witnessed, unreal — such a character, an impossibility? your face bears evidence of it. Truly, such open, undisguised developments, are rare, most uncommon ; the self-righteousness, the worship, adoration, and belief in one person only, that person — self — is not uncommon, the apparent death in life, the use made, by this man, even of the very forms of religion, for his base grovellings in pelf, are also no rarity; a like love of money, I need not tell you, is shared by thousands. The lesson to be learnt by you, from his life, is to accept, no seeming sanctity, as religion, to speak to all alike; thine adversary, the Devil, in his pursuit of souls, follows out no fixed rules, except the one of subtlety; beaten in one field, his tactics are changed, and he tries another; under every guise, under every species of deceit, from the lowest to the highest, from the poorest to the richest, his choice spoil, the great of the earth; it needs man's keenest intellect, God's every grace, the Priest's most earnest endeavours, or the citadel will yield to him sooner or later. Men going to war are watchful and vigilant, have their arms always ready, and the sentinels around — Priests fighting a more deadly warfare, a battle with a more dreaded opponent, neglect their weapons, allow the citadel to go to sleep, pride themselves upon the little warfare they do, and scent the battle waged faintly — afar off.

Had I to show you the vision of my next message, I should have to take you into a thousand homes, a thousand of earth's gathering-places; it is to show you the false, the untrue, which are lies, not said verbally, but lies, all

equally culpable. Of these are lies of dress, the painted face, the pencilled eyebrow, the false bloom upon the cheek, the false lustre in the eye, the hundred forms which Fashion's blind votaries so eagerly follow. Unreality is the rule; of manner, of speech, of emotion, of friendship, of love, even of worship before the Throne; Reality the exception. Seeming they are not; the naturalness of Nature, is now a manufactured nature, a thing of barter. Affection is a thing of merchandize, at least, the semblance of it; fair daughters are sold to the highest bidder; rank, position, wealth, interest, convenience, each in turn, whichever most valuable, the motive ; a lower scale, for those whose barter is not so ready a one, less discrimination, where less demand — such is the world.

To the world "Unreality;" yet unto God — in death, wouldst thou deck the corpse in the falseness in which it has lived, paint, powder, and tinge its pallid features into a semblance of health to appear before its God? Nay, it would be felt desecration, and yet the image of purity which He has made in His own likeness, suits not, the dissipated sight of mortals, unless its colours are — heightened, its shades more telling, the sickly, wretched arts of poor erring women who try to conceal the ravages their sinse and age are making upon their once pure countenances now followed by those, for whom is no excuse, to whom no sense of shame should be too great. Time was when the good, the pure, the noble, the virtuous, were fit objects of imitation; now the Devil rides triumphant, falseness and deception bring him in a glorious harvest, his guile succeeds.

In this a lesson truly; most generally neglected. If the bare outline of doctrine is set forth, the kernel of practice is oft ignored. Whose is the office to condemn, to hold up to deserved contempt such departures from the moral law of innocence and reality? Again, the world deems the subject a most delicate one, such are the Devil's choice 'vantage grounds. Can purity exist with a painted face? innocence, when the vow given at the Altar of God, was before given to another, but departed from, because a richer prize was found? Purity and innocence are two things required of God, in those who desire Him. He cannot enter polluted hearts. Who are sent to make ready His way before Him ?" Ministers and stewards." Clearly, then, to them is the mission given; theirs is the work; their place is taken by the press, for the teachings of morality in its minor form, minor at first, afterwards the greater God's unordained ministers, stand almost alone. Who

is to direct the crusade against the unreality of the world? Some amongst the ranks of God will surely think the little things of their adversary of due importance when they see the success which follows his stratagem. Let thyself be one, and tarry not in thy message. Follow me.

Amongst the wretched of the earth, through filthy streets and dense life, we wend our way; haggard faces, pale, emaciated children, who bear trace of the disease which they endure within them, the gin palaces reeking with the air of desperation which filled its crowded bars, yet the only cheering light in the street, the only house which bears the least semblance of aught inviting, for there warmth and light were to be obtained, and there, care could be drowned for those who had money, and for those who had none, the chance of someone more affluent inviting them to partake of the reckless inspiring draught. Oh, it was a truly glorious picture of civilization to anyone who, filled with the pride of his century, might have visited it. ("A certain king of glorious memory (?) having himself a superfluity of wives, bethought himself the poor were too rich, so he sent through the country, and destroyed hundreds of monasteries, from which the needy were fed, by which they were clothed, and which, in spite of some abuses, from which most things earthly are not exempt, were doing God's work of mission to His poor in God's own way. A glorious revenge, thought he ; first, on the Priest, who thought adultery in me was a sin; secondly, on the poor, who will now be more dependent upon me, and have less opportunity of worshipping that God whose laws I break. I have pulled down their Churches and cloisters, disturbed their nests of Mercy's sisters, the Church will to me offer now less resistance, and think twice before it again deems me a royal adulterer.") We enter a dilapidated building, which had the appearance of being held together by its neighbours on either side — themselves in a similar condition; but unity is strength. We pass into a little garret at the top of the house. From one small window, the light struggles through dimly; most of the panes having been broken, and repaired merely by rags being stuffed in to keep out the cold. Vain endeavour! The wind whistles through a hundred crevices, some large enough to put a hand through: a roof, low and leaky, a man could scarcely stand upright; damp on the walls, the corners seem to reek with it. A little straw lays in one corner, no other furniture — (it had been recently seized for rent, for even this hovel has its price); upon it lays a woman, a perfect skeleton; beside her, a

child, or what was once a baby, now its face looked old With suffering, and silently to itself it sobbed its little griefs; besides, a man with his head between his hands, his elbows resting upon his knees, his back to the straw, for he dare not look down upon that sight.

Husband! calls a faint voice from the straw, followed by an attack of that awful sepulchral cough, which the parish doctor knows only too well.

Don't speak to me, Ann, my lass. I can't bear thy voice, it drives me almost mad to feel I can't bring thee honest food. For three months to day have I tramped for work; none Six months has seen the back of everything at the pawnshop! Nothing to eat since yesterday morning, and then a piece of bread between us.

Only for me you mean, Joe, you wouldn't take any; but here's some of it; eat it for my sake — I shan't need it; I don't feel hungry.

But you do, and you must eat it, and I'll go off and try once more. The doctor says

What does he say, Joe?

Oh, that you're getting on nicely; and with plenty to eat and all that

No, Joe, tell me the truth. I don't fear it, its for the best; only to leave you

Now, lass, I won't hear it. All you want is a little nourishment, and that I am going to get.

He proceeded down the stairs, after taking a fond farewell from her: but his face soon lost' its look of hope when he had left her presence, and a sullen fierceness came upon it. Bread! he muttered, I will have bread! Come what will, I'll have bread! He hurried along, away into a great suburb, after soliciting vainly for assistance from the passers by, he entered a deserted baker's shop at a corner, and stole a large loaf; the baker rushed forward to seize him, but was felled dead with one of the weights from his own counter, and the man fled with a wild look, and the fierceness of hunger making his face a very demon's — diving away through tortuous streets, his pursuers left miles behind, the wondering passers by clearing out of his path as from a dangerous maniac. He rushed upstairs and into the room, holding the bread, with eager clutch, forward before him. The face turned to him as of yore: but no voice! The eyes, gazing wide open in their intensity, ready to greet him upon his coming — gave no sign of recognition. He seized the hand with gentle haste. Cold! She was dead! O God! the cry broke from the man as he fell at the bedside! Hours passed; the bread was heeded not: at last he rose with determined purpose. No word passed his lips. Once he

stooped gently over the infant. The breath came laboured and but faintly — its hours were also numbered. The man brushed away the falling tear from his eyes. He said nothing more. Every crevice was stopped with the straw: the chimney stopped — a work of time



for so many holes were there, so many outlets. At last, all finished, he prepares a fire with charcoal, which had been used for purposes before, and had been left in a cupboard. He lights it, and he lays himself down, twining the arms of the dead around his neck. With one arm he envelops his wife's waist, the other draws his child to his breast. Strange and awful scene! The room is dense with the fumes, so stifling, so overpowering: yet no movement. The man's eyes, wakeful and determined, look upon the features of the dead. Yet and yet more dense, and now the fire has caught the boards, and spreads with frightful rapidity: the room is soon enveloped with the flames. The face is yet apparently wakeful: the eyes are open, but the man is dead!

The rush of the fire engine is heard, and soon the drench of falling water is heard upon that burning hovel: it subsides and is conquered, having made but little way!

A paragraph the following day in one of the papers stated the fact of the fire, and of three corpses being found quite uninjured — the man and the woman with their eyes open; all three locked in each others arms! It had been supposed the death had resulted from starvation, but an untouched loaf laying by the side told a different tale.

The murderer was not found, no one having seen the act; and of those who chased the man who stole the loaf, none saw his face, so the clue was lost, and the coroner's inquest passed the verdict, — " Found murdered, the person or persons who committed the murder, or its cause, being unknown!"

The Angel said, this is not intended as a lesson for thyself alone, for thy class, for thy profession, or even this vast city; it is intended for all! Oh, Charity! what a golden vehicle art thou to obtain a Godly grace! Thou alone makest wealth noble, when the heart goes with the gift! If but mortals would know the inestimable privilege with which they are endowed (denied even to the very Angels) how eagerly would they embrace its opportunities! The Charity, not only of a gift, but the Charity of life, the kindly word, the loving guidance, the cup of cold water to the thirsty one, the leading back the erring, the leading to the love of Christ — who would not be proud dispensers of this priceless gift of God? . Yet, year by year, the cry of dire destitution and misery grows louder and louder: the Charity, although great, is not sufficient; such misery exists as disgrace the very name of Christian as applied to a land! What a field is here for all — some to learn humility, and tend the humble in their necessities; some to realise the value of the gifts God has given them, and to use them aright; some to have their cold hearts touched with a pity more penetrating than steel, to teach them the lesson that we are not made only for ourselves but for others.

Two attributes of earth alone are desired by the Angels of Heaven, the one to proclaim the salvation of souls by the Man and God, Christ Jesus; the other to minister in sweet Charity to those who need succour, and the cherishing balm of pity! If ye had the eyes of Heaven you would see Christ in His poor, read His life in their lives of suffering, beneath the wretched coverlet, in the emaciated frame would be distinguished true martyrdom — the martyrdom of Christ; earthly rags and ignominy, neglect, wretchedness,

want, all failing to conceal the Cross of Christ upon them, that under its shadow they fall asleep. The World calls Charity, pity; Heaven calls it the warfare of the soldiers of heaven — a grand privilege. Who would be of Christ? Let Him feed His sheep. Who would be saved? Let him purify himself with the purification which is of Christ, which, befitting him for the courts of Heaven, unto him shall be given a Crown of life which fadeth not away. In the ministry of the earth forget not that Christ goes with the footsteps of the merciful. Never let thy footsteps flag, thine heart falter, thy spirits fail thee; for He grieves to see His soldiers fearful — faltering when the purse strings are called upon to unclasp the tight hold of earth for deeds of mercy, remember it is He that holdeth the plate, and noteth thine alms. Grace be unto you, that in this message ye fail not. Follow me.

Holy Angel, let thy pity descend upon me. Plead for me that repentance for the past, I feel but for which I scarce dare plead myself, yet will draw nigh to ask for pardon. I thought my life a holy one, my mission fulfilled so far as my earthly powers did permit me. I see my error. I repent the past; henceforth my life, if spared unto me, shall be one of intense devotion to my holy calling. The little frailties of age and bodily infirmity shall with me be no excuse for the neglect which they have been. Until the Lord calls me, I will work most faithfully in His vineyard, and pray not to be found wanting. My life is yet spared unto me, it shall be as time redeemed. I cannot recall the past; the future shall be changed.

Others have said the same. Mortal their words have been, as words written upon the shifting sands, which the restless tide washes away. Others emotion, others penitence have been as great as thine — for a time; but the memory has passed away from them; custom been too strong, and they have been lost for ever! Good intentions are the seeds implanted by God in the conscience; for them alone the mortal has no blessing, they are not of himself; but if they are tended and nourished into acts, they and those acts are accepted of God for ever.

The lessons thou hast taught me I pray to be abiding. Of myself, I do not hope; but of God to obtain the needful strength of purpose. Under His banner I vowed to fight, and fought not. A new vow I register. Unto Thee, O God, I call; accept my prayer. The world, my field; the Devil, mine enemy. To the death, the sins and follies of the world my theme; my victories, souls; my prize, Heaven! In the strength of Heaven I put my trust.

My weapons, Thy Word — Thy Life. I vow my life His who made it, to be an instrument for His holy purpose. His to receive, to remain His for ever.

Would'st thou learn more, mortal, neglect not the gifts God has given thee. The world thy study. I have not shown thee all of earthly stain; much of the world's passion remains unrevealed unto thee; but if thou art earnest in His warfare, unto thee shall be given much power, and at last — reward unending.

Holy One, to me alone hast it been permitted thus to read Thy lessons.

Mortal! No. The manner of the message most varied; conscience the means most general; it is yet permitted to us for special purposes and high ends, thus to make known the secrets of the minds and ends of men unto some favoured mortal, who, by special privilege thus realizes his state, and learns from the fates of others. Should he repent and frame his course afresh, of him it is expected that he shall be a great and mighty influence for good — leavening those around him; should he return to his course, from which the message sent unto him recalled him back, his end more deadly, his punishment far greater than those to whom no such message had been given; his influence for good perverted, he bears the penalty of his own and others' sins — the sins of those whose hopes would have been influenced by his own.

Dost thou need to see the end of such who have thus gone astray, to complete thy lesson? added the Angel, sternly.

No, most Holy One; the lesson is complete. Spare me more. Show me not the end to which I might have come.

I will. I leave thy life before thee.

Would'st thou see one whose message turned to God and Charity one of earth's most grovelling one's, to terminate my message unto thee with the vision of a result which thy life must also show?

I would.

Follow me.

CHAPTER VI.

AWAY, far away, in our swift flight; away from the city, from the haunts of men, from the sullen river, and the stifling streets! Our speed at last relaxes, our journey is ended, and we enter a pretty house, about which the roses climb and mingle with the windows, twining around like beautiful picture frames. The sun shines brightly, the birds are singing! The world comes not here — Nature alone in her beauty gladdens all hearts. We ascend above. A pretty bedroom, with snowy hangings, that told of care and of affection ungrudgingly bestowed. All so pleasant, so white, so fair, so full of loving happiness that it would not have been thought that it was the chamber of death. Yet it was. Upon the bed, lay in a gentle slumber, an old man, whose few grey hairs were moved gently by the breeze as it came gently through the pretty latticed window. A face, which bore old traces of sorrow, but so changed, not a wrinkle but told of peace and present happiness; and as it lay in slumber, the lips seemed parted with the prayer the face spoke. A hand had strayed over the coverlet, and had remained there gently unclasped; not the hand of a hard man; thin and veined with age, it yet seemed as if its offices had been gentle ones, that its use had been made holy. Known well to most of us, but yet unknown as now; known before the lesson of a life had entered in that stony heart and dissolved it into the milk of human kindness. Scrooge! Not of the office or of 'Change; but Scrooge, having had the lesson of the neglected tombstone, the softening repentant influence of Tiny Tim upon him, rounding the rugged corners of his life.

He preferred to lie there with open window and the sweet scent of flowers coming to him as he lay fronting its breezy opening. He liked to see the bright blue sky the first thing as he awoke; he said it always reminded him of the angels, although where grandfather, (as Tiny Tim had been taught to call him), had seen them no one knew, or could even guess.

The door opens, and gently gliding to the bedside comes Tiny Tim — tiny no longer ; for years had rolled away, and he has grown stronger and bigger, although Scrooge insists upon his being called Tiny Tim, still saying he is not big enough yet to change his name, and that he is yet in his sight the same Tiny Tim as of old. The little thin hand glides gently o'er the face!

the voice gently says, "Granny dear!" The eyes open with no start, for Scrooge is always waked thus; the smile deepens upon his pleasant face as he says, Tiny ! my boy, bless you.

Now, granny, don't rise, there's a dear; you know you're not strong enough, said Tiny Tim, reprovingly.

Come here, my boy, and lay by my side. I want to tell you something.

Tiny Tim, nothing loth, laid his head upon the pillow, and with his hand played with the few grey locks of Scrooge.

"They were often thus; the childhood of age and the childhood of youth mingling their innocent happiness — thus do the beginning and the end meet."

Tiny, last night I dreamt of years ago, when I lived alone, when I did not even know you, Tiny, and when I was a bad, wicked man.

No, no! Tiny said, he didn't believe that. He could not have that included in the story.

Yes, Tiny, I was a bad man; but I will not say it again, only think of it, as you don't like to hear it.

Tiny would not have it thought, if he must think it, although he should not believe it, he might say it — as a story.

When I was a bad wicked man, who lived only for money and himself, and even himself gained no good by living, I wondered why I had money, and good people, at the same time, were wanting it for good purposes and yet could not get any, and I thought that it proved everybody but business men, who did not give any time to anything but their business, were idlers and good for nothing, who preyed upon others' hard earned gold. But, Tiny, you'll not think I'm thinking anything like this now; for I've been a changed man since then.

No, granny, I know you're all love now.

One Christmas Eve came, when I left the office as usual; the office, you know, where I took you one day, where your father is head clerk, and my nephew is master.

Yes, granny, uncle Fred.

Yes, Tiny. Well, I went to my house, not my home you know — this is my home; and I saw a dreadful Spirit, who told me that three other Spirits would come to me afterwards.

How very cruel to you, granny.

No, my boy; I always thank that dreadful Spirit, and tell my thanks to God for sending him. Tiny, my dear, those Spirits showed me what a bad man I was. The first of the three showed me a little boy, not any bigger than you, Tiny; and it was me, such a poor little deserted boy, with only his little sister Fan, to love him: then he showed me where I went, when a young man, grown up, you know, Tiny. With me there was some one I loved very much, but who, seeing in me the love of money and business without anything to soften its hold upon me, offered me herself, or money-making, to love ; and being mad, you know, Tiny, for a man couldn't be right who did what I did. I chose the money-making. The second Spirit then came to me, and took me away, through such pleasant places. The first sight of Christmas I had had for many a year, such pleasant greetings, such nice ways, that I wondered no one had said them to me, but I remembered that I had never given them the opportunity. Then we went to see you, Tiny, and your father, and your mother, and your brothers and sisters. You had such a goose for dinner! and you sang the prettiest song I had ever heard, and said the nicest wish I'd ever heard too, and yet, I was an old man, and you were a little child, Tiny. "God bless us every one." I don't know whether it did you all as much good as it did me; but if it did, I should think if it was said oftener in the world it would be much nicer for everyone, for there's such a family feeling about it; and, Tiny, we went to your uncle Fred's — the first Christmas visit I had ever paid him; and although I was invited he did not know I was there; but I had such fun; I never knew such games before. I played at forfeits, and should have stayed all night, being invited; but the Spirit took me away in the middle of it. boys and girls you call, your children, and put in a great house of your own to be clothed and fed?

How very cruel of him, granny.

Yes, Tiny; but he had his work to do, and he almost broke my heart just before he left me — showing me two such poor little creatures, that I have never forgotten their faces since.

Granny, were they two of the little ragged

Yes, Tiny, the same family. Their names were Ignorance and Want. Then came the last and most dreadful Spirit, who was to show me what I should have been if the Spirits had not come to me. Oh, such an awful sight, Tiny. No one to love me, no one to care forme. I died. Those who had done business with me in life wanted the attraction of a dinner, to tempt them to follow me to the grave. Dreadful creatures took the little I had from my

dead body, even the hangings from my bed, and sold them. I lay on the bare bed a corpse; the very vermin anticipating their prey, from which no one was there to drive them away? Who cared for the deathbed of the miser?

Tiny, draw closer to me, dear, dear boy. Kiss my face (Scrooge continued, hoarsely), Tiny, he took me to your home again, and I believed you dead — dead through my neglect, dead for want of a little of that of which I had much — money. He showed me, too, my nephew, your uncle Fred, ruined too, for the want of a little of the same — money! Then I saw how money alone cannot bring happiness; that hard coin has no comfort of itself; that the want of it oft brings wretchedness; the good use of it adds to happiness; but that of itself, unmixed with human sympathy and love, it is only a bait to lure to destruction. Last of all, Tiny, he showed me my grave — no, not my grave, but what it might have been; such a dreadful spot — such a dreadful sight; thrust in a hole like a pauper, and yet I had lots of money. The tombstone a cheap one; whilst others were fattening on my spoils! All that I had worked for — gone! No one pitied me — no one grieved for me; no one was the better for anything I had ever done! Oh, Tiny! if it had been thus!

Granny, granny, don't cry; you know it wasn't so after all. Don't cry!

Tiny, when — when — I am gone, you will miss your poor old granny Scrooge, shan't you? — and Scrooge wept like a child.

Granny, dear, don't cry, and don't make me cry too, by telling me you are going to leave me. The child cried too. It was difficult to distinguish which of these children had the greater sympathy — the greater love.

Yes, Tiny, I shan't be with you long. I can't bear to leave you, but I've been very very happy since that time when I was a hard-hearted, wicked man; and I have tried to do my best to all of you since. I sometimes think I am hard-hearted, still, when I think upon the past, and feel it is all forgiven to me — there was so much, you know, Tiny, so very much — I wasn't like other men, with some little good inside me, but I had none at all; and, you know, it takes a long time to accustom oneself to the change.

Tiny, you'll come to my grave sometimes, when I'm gone, won't you? faltered Scrooge. Tiny only sobbed — he could not answer.

And bring a few roses from the home where I have been so happy; and, Tiny, sometimes think of me as — ” Poor old Granny — poor old Granny Scrooge, who loved me with all his heart,” tremblingly said Scrooge. I feel now more and more, after all these years, of how wicked I was, and am yet,

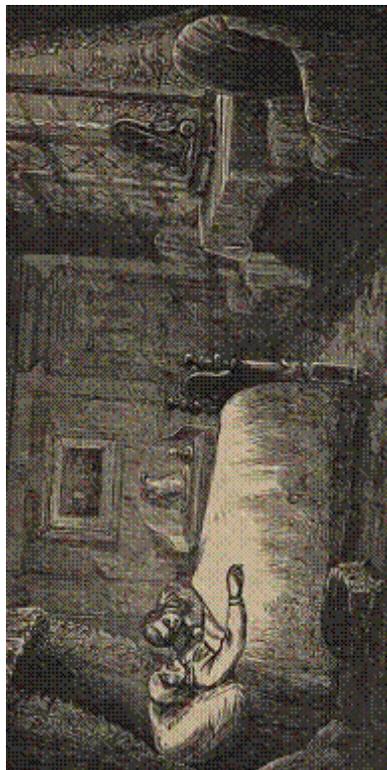
and how merciful it was to me to let me even live for this happiness, even if I died then, as I saw in the past; and even yet, I may die with you near me, Tiny, and be buried where you'll often see my grave. Scrooge buried his face in his hands and sobbed as if his heart would break.

Granny, granny, tell me something happy, which will not make you cry, said Tiny Tim, piteously stroking Scrooge's clasped hands.

Sometimes, Tiny, I think all is forgiven me, because I am so happy, and do not fear to die now, except to leave you, and Bob, and Fred, and all so dear to me. Tiny, my dear, good, loving Tiny, I am a little tired, and will go to sleep; stay with me, Tiny, and say those words I love to hear before I fall asleep.

The trembling voice of Tiny broke the silence for the last time in Scrooge's ears with the prayer that he loved best, "God bless us every one," — and Scrooge — slept the sleep that knows no waking.

The bell of the village church tolls for a departed soul!
What grief was in that pretty cottage!
They had come in hours after — Bob Cratchet



and his wife — and found the loving child, poor Tiny Tim, still clasping with affectionate grief the neck of the dead child, poor old Scrooge; and yet — not poor — for thy life has blossomed in its old age, and was ready for the gathering!

Bob Cratchet, simple as a child, wept with his wife; and disturbed not the love of a life in poor little Tiny Tim, by too rude a shock, leaving him to wake, — and then to feel his loss.

A funeral; plain, and yet a funeral such as any of us, my readers, may wish for; all friends following, even the bearers, those whom we have loved in life, for Bob Cratchet and Scrooge's nephew, Fred, would let none other touch his coffin. Tiny Tim and all were there. Villagers who had heard not of Scrooge's earlier life, and had known him only to love him, wondered at the goodness which must have been his, to call out such affection. No dry eye was there. Tiny Tim laid a wreath of roses upon the coffin, and would have flung himself upon it in his passionate grief, had not they withheld him. — Most truly could it be said of him, "In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life," for nobly had he redeemed his time.

Scrooge's virtues live after him — charities and generousities innumerable. He retired from his business after that memorable Christmas Eve, and in his place he placed his

nephew, making only one restriction — that every Christmas Eve was to be spent in as jolly a manner, as he had himself joined in, when in the Spirit's company. Bob Cratchet he made foreman, with a salary that Bob never knows how to spend, without the aid of as many kindnesses shown to others as he has experienced himself. Men upon 'Change thought Scrooge had gone mad! What a glorious madness! His will, strange to say, particularised his bed-furniture, as one of the legacies to Bob Cratchet's wife, and also stated how the plain, but pretty cross, which stood over his grave, should be inscribed —

IN
MEMORY of SCROOGE,
(RELICT OF THE FIRM SCROOGE AND MARLEY)
A HARD, GRASPING MAN IN EARLIER LIFE,
HE LIVED TO SEE HIS FOLLY, AND

LIVE FOR OTHERS.
HIS LIFE A LESSON TO ALL WHO READ,
BECAME MOST CHANGED ON
CHRISTMAS EVE.

I had been so absorbed in the death and burial of Scrooge, that I observed not that from my side the Angel had gone, and I was left alone. I have always thought that his mission to me accomplished, he bore the soul of Scrooge to its last home.

I felt to miss some final word of cheering comfort for the future, and wearied with my journey, and the emotion through which I had undergone, and the traces of which were still deeply impressed in my heart, resolves for the future; how I know not — where I know not; but I fell asleep.

The Canon was a subject of astonishment to every one: how, or what had influenced him, people knew not — transformed his very being, as every one said, in one night.

On Christmas Day he preached such a sermon as was never heard before in those time honoured walls. People said that they could not believe it was the Canon! Such probings into hard hearts, and unfoldings of dark consciences were there, as to leave none alone. Every one said “They didn’t think it was in him,” and pondered upon his words to their spiritual and temporal comfort. The poor loved him; they said he understood them as none other did. His life was a changed one. His Master’s work was his one theme. Morning, noon and night he worked, unwearied, and with untiring energy. Most charitable, he never would allow his gift to be known to others, and had a great repugnance to the donation board in the Cathedral. He termed it the hypocrisy of charity. He also had a great dislike to epitaphs, except the most simple, terming them an adulation which might or might not be deserved, but which should not appear over the dead when this world’s passage was o’er. He lived respected, loved, admired, and as an example to all around him; and, although his subjects

for sermons were most winning, most spiritual, although he probed to repentance the very hearts of men, no one knew the cause of the sudden change which came over him; and, as no allusion was ever made to it by himself, they could only call it — as they did call it —

“An Eve With The Spirits.”

THE END.

THE PROBLEM OF EDWIN DROOD by W.

Robertson Nicoll



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**THE PROBLEM OF
'EDWIN DROOD'**

**A STUDY IN THE METHODS OF DICKENS
BY
W. ROBERTSON NICOLL**

**HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO**

PRINTED IN 1912

**TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF ROSEBERY
K.G.**

PREFACE

The first serious discussion of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* came from the pen of the astronomer, Mr. R. A. Proctor. Mr. Proctor wrote various essays on the subject. One appears in his *Leisure Readings*, included in Messrs. Longmans' 'Silver Library.' A second was published in 1887, and entitled *Watched by the Dead*. There were, I believe, in addition some periodical articles by Mr. Proctor; these I have not seen. Mr. Proctor modified certain positions in his earlier essay included in *Leisure Readings*, so that the paper must not be taken as representative of his final views. Whatever may be thought of Mr. Proctor's theory, all will admit that he devoted much care and ingenuity to the study, and that he had an exceptional knowledge of Dickens's books.

In 1905 Mr. Cuming Walters published his *Clues to Dickens's Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The *Athenæum* expressed its conviction 'that in these hundred pages or so he has found the clue, the main secret which had baffled all previous investigators, and so has secured permanent association with one of the immortals.' Mr. Cuming Walters's book was immediately followed by Mr. Andrew Lang's *The Puzzle of Dickens's Last Plot*. In this Mr. Lang adopted with modifications the theory of Mr. Proctor. The subject continued to interest this lamented author to the end of his life. He wrote many letters and articles on the theme, coming ultimately to the conclusion that Dickens did not know himself how his story was to be ended.

In 1910 Professor Henry Jackson of Cambridge published a volume, *About Edwin Drood*. It is a work of sterling merit, and particularly valuable for its study of the chronology of the story. Dr. Jackson was the first to examine the manuscript in a scholarly way, and to give some of the chief results. His conclusions are in the main those of Mr. Cuming Walters, but they are supported by fresh arguments and criticisms.

There have been many articles on the subject, particularly in that excellent periodical, the *Dickensian*, edited by Mr. B. W. Matz. Of this magazine it may be said that every number adds something to our knowledge of the great author.

By far the most successful attempt to finish the book is that of Gillan Vase, which was published in 1878. It is the only continuation worth

looking at.

Among the best of the periodical contributions are those by Dr. M. R. James of Cambridge, published in the *Academy*, and in the *Cambridge Review*. The papers of Mr. G. F. Gadd in the *Dickensian* deserve special praise. In the *Bookman* Mr. B. W. Matz, whose knowledge of Dickens is unsurpassed, has declared for the view that Edwin Drood was murdered, but has not committed himself to any theory of Datchery.

I should not have been justified in publishing this volume if I had been able to add no new material. But I venture to think it will be found that while I have freely used the arguments and the discoveries of previous investigators, I have made a considerable addition to the stores. In particular, I have brought out the fact that Forster declined to accept Dickens's erasures in the later proofs, and I have printed the passages which Dickens meant to have omitted. The effect of the omissions is also traced to a certain extent, though not fully. The more one studies them, the more significant they appear.

I have printed completely for the first time the Notes and Plans for the novel. I have also published some notes on the manuscript based on a careful examination. These notes are not by any means complete, but they include perhaps the more important facts. Through the kindness of Miss Bessie Hatton and Mr. B. W. Matz I have been able to give an account of the unacted play by Charles Dickens the younger and Joseph Hatton on *Edwin Drood*.

I have also put together for the first time the external evidence on the subject. It is particularly important that this evidence should be read in full, and much of it is now inaccessible to the general reader. In the discussion of the main problems it will, I believe, be found that certain new arguments have been brought forward. In particular I ask attention to the quotations from the Bancroft *Memoirs* and from *No Name*. I have also given certain studies of the methods of Dickens which may be useful.

I have to acknowledge with warm thanks the kindness of Mr. Hugh Thomson in sending me his reading of the Wrapper.

It will thus, I hope, be found that the study is a contribution to the subject, and not a mere repetition or paraphrase of what has been advanced.

I have made no attempt at summarising the novel. No one can possibly attack the problem with any hope of success who has not read the book over

and over again. A hasty perusal will serve no purpose. The fragment deserves and repays the very closest study.

There are questions that have been raised and arguments that have been stated which are not mentioned here. This is not because of ignorance. I have read, I believe, practically all that has been published on the theme. What I have omitted is matter that seems to me trivial or irrelevant.

While fully believing in the accuracy of the conclusions I have reached, I desire to avoid dogmatism. There is always the possibility that a writer may be diverted from his purpose. He may come to difficulties he cannot surmount. The fact that scholarly students of Dickens have come to different conclusions is a fact to be taken into account.

My thanks are due to Lord Rosebery for kindly accepting the dedication of the volume. Lord Rosebery is, however, in no way responsible for my arguments or my conclusions.

In preparing this study I have had the constant assistance and counsel of my accomplished colleague, Miss Jane T. Stoddart. Miss Stoddart's accuracy and learning and acuteness have been of the greatest use to me, and there is scarcely a chapter in the volume which does not owe much to her.

Mr. J. H. Ingram has most kindly furnished me with information about Poe.

Mr. Clement Shorter has allowed me to use his very valuable collection of newspaper articles.

Mr. B. W. Matz has very courteously answered some inquiries, and he has permitted me to use his valuable bibliography.

Messrs. Chapman & Hall have kindly given me permission to use the Wrapper, etc.

Mr. Cuming Walters has been so kind as to read the proofs.

If there are those who think that the problem does not deserve consideration, I am not careful to answer them. It is a problem which will be discussed as long as Dickens is read. Those who believe that Dickens is the greatest humorist and one of the greatest novelists in English literature, are proud to make any contribution, however insignificant, to the understanding of his works. Mr. Gladstone, in his 'Essay on the Place of Homer in Education,' mentions the tradition of Dorotheus, who spent the whole of his life in endeavouring to elucidate the meaning of a single word in Homer. Without fully justifying this use of time, we may agree in Mr.

Gladstone's general conclusion 'that no exertion spent upon any of the classics of the world, and attended with any amount of real result, is thrown away.'

Bay Tree Lodge, Hampstead,
Sept. 1912.

INTRODUCTION

The three mysteries of *Edwin Drood* are thus stated by Mr. Cuming Walters:

‘The first mystery, partly solved by Dickens himself, is the fate of Edwin Drood. Was he murdered? — if so, how and by whom, and where was his body hidden? If not, how did he escape, and what became of him, and did he reappear?’

‘The second mystery is — Who was Mr. Datchery, the “stranger who appeared in Cloisterham” after Drood’s disappearance?’

‘The third mystery is — Who was the old opium woman, called the Princess Puffer, and why did she pursue John Jasper?’

It is with the first two of these mysteries that this book is concerned. In the concluding chapter some hints are offered as to the third, but in my opinion there are no sufficient materials for any definite answer.

The problem before us is to decide with one half of Dickens’s book in our possession what the course of the other half was likely to be.

It is important to lay stress upon this. An able reviewer in the *Athenæum*, 1st April 1911, says: ‘The book is still in its infancy. Its predecessor, *Our Mutual Friend*, attained to some sixty-seven chapters, *Great Expectations* to fifty-nine, *Bleak House* to sixty-six. There is no strain on probability in supposing that *Edwin Drood* might, in happier circumstances, have reached something like these proportions.’ The fact is that the book was to be completed in twelve numbers, and we have six.

In the first part of this volume I have dealt with the materials for a solution.

In the second part, I have used the materials and the internal evidence of the book, and attempted an answer to the questions.

PART I. — THE MATERIALS FOR A SOLUTION

CHAPTER I — THE TEXT OF EDWIN DROOD

The materials for the solution of the ‘Edwin Drood’ problems must first of all be found in the text of the unfinished volume. Hitherto it has not been observed that the book we have is not precisely what it was when Dickens left it. Three parts had been issued by Dickens himself. After his death the remaining three parts were issued by John Forster. Dickens had corrected his proofs up to and including chapter xxi. The succeeding chapters xxii. and xxiii. are untouched. I discovered to my great surprise on examining the proofs in the Forster Collection that Forster had in every case ignored Dickens’s erasures, and had replaced all the omitted passages in the text. Thus it happens that we do not read the book as Dickens intended us to read it. We have passages which on consideration he decided not to print. It is unnecessary to criticise the action of Forster, but it seems clear that he should at least have given warning to the reader. I now print the passages erased by Dickens and restored by Forster.

SENTENCES AND PARTS OF SENTENCES ERASED BY DICKENS

In Chapter xvii.: —

an eminent public character, once known to fame as Frosty faced Fogo,

by, always, as it seemed, on errands of antagonistically snatching something from somebody, and never giving anything to anybody.

‘Sir,’ said Mr. Honeythunder, in his tremendous voice, like a schoolmaster issuing orders to a boy of whom he had a bad opinion, ‘sit down.’

Mr. Crisparkle seated himself.

Mr. Honeythunder having signed the remaining few score of a few thousand circulars, calling upon a corresponding number of families without means to come forward, stump up instantly, and be Philanthropists, or go to the Devil, another shabby stipendiary Philanthropist (highly

disinterested, if in earnest) gathered these into a basket and walked off with them.

when they were alone,

Mr. Crisparkle rose; a little heated in the face, but with perfect command of himself.

'Mr. Honeythunder,' he said, taking up the papers referred to: 'my being better or worse employed than I am at present is a matter of taste and opinion. You might think me better employed in enrolling myself a member of your Society.'

'Ay, indeed, sir!' retorted Mr. Honeythunder, shaking his head in a threatening manner. 'It would have been better for you if you had done that long ago!'

'I think otherwise.'

'Or,' said Mr. Honeythunder, shaking his head again, 'I might think one of your profession better employed in devoting himself to the discovery and punishment of guilt than in leaving that duty to be undertaken by a layman.'

'Perhaps I expect to retain it still?' Mr. Crisparkle returned, enlightened; 'do you mean that too?'

'Well, sir,' returned the professional Philanthropist, getting up and thrusting his hands down into his trousers pockets, 'I don't go about measuring people for caps. If people find I have any about me that fit 'em, they can put 'em on and wear 'em, if they like. That's their look out: not mine.'

It seems a little hard to be so tied to a stake, and innocent; but I don't complain.'

'And you must expect no miracle to help you, Neville,' said Mr. Crisparkle, compassionately.

'No, sir, I know that.'

and that of course I am guiding myself by the advice of such a friend and helper. Such a good friend and helper!'

He took the fortifying hand from his shoulder, and kissed it. Mr. Crisparkle beamed at the books, but not so brightly as when he had entered.

But they were as serviceable as they were precious to Neville Landless.

'I don't think so,' said the Minor Canon. 'There is duty to be done here; and there are womanly feeling, sense, and courage wanted here.'

'I meant,' explained Neville, 'that the surroundings are so dull and unwomanly, and that Helena can have no suitable friend or society here.'

'You have only to remember,' said Mr. Crisparkle, 'that you are here yourself, and that she has to draw you into the sunlight.'

They were silent for a little while, and then Mr. Crisparkle began anew.

'When we first spoke together, Neville, you told me that your sister had risen out of the disadvantages of your past lives as superior to you as the tower of Cloisterham Cathedral is higher than the chimneys of Minor Canon Corner. Do you remember that?'

'Right well!'

'I was inclined to think it at the time an enthusiastic flight. No matter what I think it now. What I would emphasise is, that under the head of Pride your sister is a great and opportune example to you.'

'Under all heads that are included in the composition of a fine character, she is.'

'Say so; but take this one.'

She can dominate it even when it is wounded through her sympathy with you.

Every day and hour of her life since Edwin Drood's disappearance, she has faced malignity and folly — for you — as only a brave nature well directed can. So it will be with her to the end.

which knows no shrinking, and can get no mastery over her.'

as she is a truly brave woman,'

As Mr. Grewgious had to turn his eye up considerably before he could see the chambers, the phrase was to be taken figuratively and not literally.

'A watch?' repeated Mr. Grewgious musingly.

‘I entertain a sort of fancy for having him under my eye to-night, do you know?’

In Chapter xviii.

‘indeed, I have no doubt that we could suit you that far, however particular you might be.

with a general impression on his mind that Mrs. Tope’s was somewhere very near it, and that, like the children in the game of hot boiled beans and very good butter, he was warm in his search when he saw the Tower, and cold when he didn’t see it.

He was getting very cold indeed when. ‘Until’ is put in here.

‘Indeed?’ said Mr. Datchery, with a second look of some interest.

Mr. Datchery, taking off his hat to give that shock of white hair of his another shake, seemed quite resigned, and betook himself whither he had been directed.

Perhaps Mr. Datchery had heard something of what had occurred there last winter?

Mr. Datchery had as confused a knowledge of the event in question, on trying to recall it, as he well could have. He begged Mrs. Tope’s pardon when she found it incumbent on her to correct him in every detail of his summary of the facts, but pleaded that he was merely a single buffer getting through life upon his means as idly as he could, and that so many people were so constantly making away with so many other people, as to render it difficult for a buffer of an easy temper to preserve the circumstances of the several cases unmixed in his mind.

‘Might I ask His Honour,’ said Mr. Datchery, ‘whether that gentleman we have just left is the gentleman of whom I have heard in the neighbourhood as being much afflicted by the loss of a nephew, and concentrating his life on avenging the loss?’

‘That is the gentleman. John Jasper, sir.’

‘Would His Honour allow me to inquire whether there are strong suspicions of any one?’

‘More than suspicions, sir,’ returned Mr. Sapsea; ‘all but certainties.’

‘Only think now!’ cried Mr. Datchery.

‘But proof, sir, proof must be built up stone by stone,’ said the Mayor. ‘As I say, the end crowns the work. It is not enough that Justice should be morally certain; she must be immorally certain — legally, that is.’

‘His Honour,’ said Mr. Datchery, ‘reminds me of the nature of the law. Immoral. How true!’

‘As I say, sir,’ pompously went on the Mayor, ‘the arm of the law is a strong arm, and a long arm. That is the way I put it. A strong arm and a long arm.’

‘How forcible! — And yet, again, how true!’ murmured Mr. Datchery.

‘And without betraying what I call the secrets of the prison-house,’ said Mr. Sapsea; ‘the secrets of the prison-house is the term I used on the bench.’

‘And what other term than His Honour’s would express it?’ said Mr. Datchery.

‘Without, I say, betraying them, I predict to you, knowing the iron will of the gentleman we have just left (I take the bold step of calling it iron, on account of its strength), that in this case the long arm will reach, and the strong arm will strike. This is our Cathedral, sir. The best judges are pleased to admire it, and the best among our townsmen own to being a little vain of it.’

All this time Mr. Datchery had walked with his hat under his arm, and his white hair streaming.

In the next sentence the word *now* is struck out.

‘He had an odd momentary appearance upon him of having forgotten his hat, when Mr. Sapsea now touched it.’

‘I shall come. Master Deputy, what do you owe me?’

‘A job.’

‘Mind you pay me honestly with the job of showing me Mr. Durdles’s house when I want to go there.’

In Chapter xx.: —

‘Yes, you may be sure that the stairs are fireproof,’ said Mr. Grewgious, ‘and that any outbreak of the devouring element would be perceived and suppressed by the watchmen.’

In Chapter xxi.: —

I wished at the time that you had come to me; but now I think it best that you did as you did, and came to your guardian.’

‘I did think of you,’ Rosa told him; ‘but Minor Canon Corner was so near him — ’

‘I understand. It was quite natural.’

‘Have you settled,’ asked Rosa, appealing to them both, ‘what is to be done for Helena and her brother?’

‘Why really,’ said Mr. Crisparkle, ‘I am in great perplexity. If even Mr. Grewgious, whose head is much longer than mine, and who is a whole night’s cogitation in advance of me, is undecided, what must I be!’

Am I agreed with generally in the views I take?’

‘I entirely coincide with them,’ said Mr. Crisparkle, who had been very attentive.

‘As I have no doubt I should,’ added Mr. Tartar, smiling, ‘if I understood them.’

‘Fair and softly, sir,’ said Mr. Grewgious; ‘we shall fully confide in you directly, if you will favour us with your permission.’

I begin to understand to what you tend,’ said Mr. Crisparkle, ‘and highly approve of your caution.’

‘I needn’t repeat that I know nothing yet of the why and wherefore,’ said Mr. Tartar; ‘but I also understand to what you tend, so let me say at once that my chambers are freely at your disposal.’

THE MANUSCRIPT

I make also a few notes based on a careful examination of the manuscript. Certain passages are rewritten, and the result pasted over the original page. These passages have been noted. Also certain sentences

have been altered in form, sometimes by the substitution of one word for another, and sometimes by the addition of words. It is not necessary to give every example, but a few may be noted.

Towards the end of the second chapter the passage beginning 'I have been taking opium for a pain,' including the long paragraph which follows, has been entirely rewritten and pasted on.

In the description of the Landlesses in chapter vi. Dickens made certain changes. As the sentence stands now it reads as follows: 'An unusually handsome lithe young fellow, and an unusually handsome lithe girl; much alike; both very dark, and very rich in colour; she of almost the gipsy type; something untamed about them both; a certain air upon them of hunter and huntress; yet withal a certain air of being the objects of the chase, rather than the followers.'

As originally written it read thus: 'A handsome young fellow, and a handsome girl; both dark and rich in colour; she quite gipsy like; something untamed about them both; a certain air upon them of hunter and huntress; yet a certain air of being the objects of the chase, rather than the followers.'

In chapter vii., where Neville is speaking of his sister, as we have the passage it reads: 'In a last word of reference to my sister, sir (we are twin children), you ought to know, to her honour, that nothing in our misery ever subdued her, though it often cowed me. When we ran away from it (we ran away four times in six years, to be soon brought back and cruelly punished), the flight was always of her planning and leading. Each time she dressed as a boy, and showed the daring of a man. I take it we were seven years old when we first decamped; but I remember, when I lost the pocket-knife with which she was to have cut her hair short, how desperately she tried to tear it out, or bite it off.'

The original version ran thus: 'In reference to my sister, sir (we are twin children), you ought to know, to her honour, that nothing in our misery ever cowed her, though it often cowed me. When we ran away from it (we ran away four times in five years, to be very soon brought back and punished), the flight was always of her planning. Each time she dressed as a boy, and showed the daring of a man. I take it we were eight years old when we first decamped; but I remember, when I lost the pocket-knife with which she was to have cut her hair short, that she tried to tear it out, or bite it off.'

At the beginning of chapter xviii. we read of the stranger in Cloisterham: 'Being buttoned up in a tightish blue surtout.' This was originally: 'Being

dressed in a tightish blue surtout.’ A little further on in the same paragraph we have: ‘He stood with his back to the empty fireplace.’ Dickens originally wrote: ‘He stood with his back to the fireplace.’ In the next paragraph ‘His shock of white hair’ was originally ‘His shock of long white hair.’

In the same chapter, when Datchery and the boy are standing looking at Jasper’s rooms we have the following sentence: “‘Indeed?’” said Mr. Datchery, with a second look of some interest.’ This was originally written: “‘Indeed?’” said Mr. Datchery, with an appearance of interest.’ In the final proofs this passage was entirely struck out. On the next page we have this sentence: ‘Mr. Datchery, taking off his hat to give that shock of white hair of his another shake, seemed quite resigned, and betook himself whither he had been directed.’ The original version ran thus: ‘Mr. Datchery, taking off his hat and giving his shock of white hair another shake, was quite resigned, and betook himself whither he had been directed.’

A little further on in the same chapter, when Datchery first goes into Jasper’s room we have: “‘I beg pardon,” said Mr. Datchery, making a leg with his hat under his arm.’ This was originally written, “‘I beg pardon,” said Mr. Datchery, hat in hand.’

In the last paragraph of this chapter we have: ‘Said Mr. Datchery to himself that night, as he looked at his white hair in the gas-lighted looking-glass over the coffee-room chimney-piece at the Crozier, and shook it out: “‘For a single buffer, of an easy temper, living idly on his means, I have had a rather busy afternoon!”’” This was originally written: ‘Said Mr. Datchery to himself that night as he looked at his white hair in the gas-lighted looking-glass over the coffee-room chimney-piece at the Crozier: “‘Well, for a single buffer of an easy temper, living idly on his means, I have had rather a busy afternoon!”’”

In chapter xx., when Grewgious is talking about Bazzard we have the following: “‘No, he goes his way, after office hours. In fact, he is off duty here, altogether, just at present; and a firm downstairs, with which I have business relations, lend me a substitute. But it would be extremely difficult to replace Mr. Bazzard.”’” Originally Dickens wrote: “‘No, he goes his ways after office hours. In fact, he is off duty at present; and a firm downstairs with which I have business relations, lend me a substitute. But it would be difficult to replace Mr. Bazzard.”’”

Chapter xxii. is much corrected, and the whole of the second paragraph is rewritten and pasted on. Chapter xxiii. is also a good deal corrected. Near the beginning we have the following: 'The Cathedral doors have closed for the night; and the Choir-master, on a short leave of absence for two or three services, sets his face towards London.' This was originally written: 'The Cathedral doors have closed for the night; and the Choir-master, on leave of absence for a few days, sets his face towards London.'

The passage beginning: 'But she goes no further away from it than the chair upon the hearth,' and the next two paragraphs are entirely rewritten and pasted on, and the following sentences are cancelled: "'So far I might a'most as well have never found out how to set you talking," is her commentary. "You are too sleepy to talk too plain. You hold your secrets right you do!"' A little further on we have: "'Halloa!" he cries in a low voice, seeing her brought to a standstill: "who are you looking for?"' This was originally "'Halloa!" cries this gentleman, "who are you looking for?"'

On the next page we have: 'With his uncovered gray hair blowing about.' Dickens originally wrote: 'With his gray hair blowing about.'

On the same page, when Datchery and the opium woman are talking together Dickens puts in the following sentence about opium as an afterthought: "'And it's like a human creetur so far, that you always hear what can be said against it, but seldom what can be said in its praise.'"

A little further on we have: 'Mr. Datchery stops in his counting, finds he has counted wrong, shakes his money together, and begins again.' Originally we had: 'Mr. Datchery stops in his counting, finds he has counted wrong, and begins again.' Very near the end of this chapter we have: 'At length he rises, throws open the door of a corner cupboard, and refers to a few uncouth chalked strokes on its inner side.' Dickens first wrote: 'At length he rises, throws open the door of a corner cupboard, and refers to a few chalked strokes on its inner side.'

CHAPTER II — EXTERNAL TESTIMONIES

We now proceed to give such external testimony as exists of the plans and intentions of Dickens. The chief authority is, of course, the *Life* by Forster. We have in addition the testimony of Madame Perugini, whose first husband, Charles Allston Collins, designed the wrapper. To this we add the testimony of Charles Dickens the younger as conveyed to his sister. Through the kindness of Miss Bessie Hatton I have been able to read the text of the unacted play written by Joseph Hatton and Charles Dickens the younger on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. We have also the important letter of Sir Luke Fildes, who was chosen by Dickens to illustrate the story. It seems essential to any complete consideration of the subject that these testimonies should be given in full, and this is the more necessary because some of them are now not readily at hand.

JOHN FORSTER'S TESTIMONY

Dickens in 1868 had been alarming his friends and exhausting himself by his public Readings. When he was in America on his last Reading tour he had made a profit of about £20,000. He entered into an agreement with Messrs. Chappell to give a final course of Readings in this country, from which he expected to receive an additional £13,000. The strain of his work in America had manifestly told upon him. 'There was manifest abatement of his natural force, the elasticity of bearing was impaired, and the wonderful brightness of eye was dimmed at times.' Unfavourable and alarming symptoms of nerve mischief were also noted, but he drew lavishly on his reserve strength, and thinking that a new excitement was needed he chose the *Oliver Twist* murder, one of the most trying of his public recitals. He suffered 'thirty thousand shocks to the nerves' going to Edinburgh. His Readings and his journeyings exacted from him the most terrible physical exertion, but no warnings could arrest his course till his physicians peremptorily ordered him to desist. Even then, however, he resumed his Readings at a later date.

In this condition of mental and bodily fatigue Dickens began his last book. I print almost in full the relative passages from Forster.

The last book undertaken by Dickens was to be published in illustrated monthly numbers, of the old form, but to close with the twelfth. It closed, unfinished, with the sixth number, which was itself underwritten by two pages.

His first fancy for the tale was expressed in a letter in the middle of July. 'What should you think of the idea of a story beginning in this way? — Two people, boy and girl, or very young, going apart from one another, pledged to be married after many years — at the end of the book. The interest to arise out of the tracing of their separate ways, and the impossibility of telling what will be done with that impending fate.' This was laid aside; but it left a marked trace on the story as afterwards designed, in the position of Edwin Drood and his betrothed.

I first heard of the later design in a letter dated 'Friday, the 6th of August 1869,' in which, after speaking, with the usual unstinted praise he bestowed always on what moved him in others, of a little tale he had received for his journal, he spoke of the change that had occurred to him for the new tale by himself. 'I laid aside the fancy I told you of, and have a very curious and new idea for my new story. Not a communicable idea (or the interest of the book would be gone), but a very strong one, though difficult to work.' The story, I learnt immediately afterward, was to be that of the murder of a nephew by his uncle; the originality of which was to consist in the review of the murderer's career by himself at the close, when its temptations were to be dwelt upon as if, not he, the culprit, but some other man, were the tempted. The last chapters were to be written in the condemned cell, to which his wickedness, all elaborately elicited from him as if told of another, had brought him. Discovery by the murderer of the utter needlessness of the murder for its object, was to follow hard upon commission of the deed; but all discovery of the murderer was to be baffled till towards the close, when, by means of a gold ring which had resisted the corrosive effects of the lime into which he had thrown the body, not only the person murdered was to be identified, but the locality of the crime and the man who committed it. So much was told to me before any of the book was written; and it will be recollected that the ring, taken by Drood to be given to his betrothed only if their engagement went on, was brought away with him from their last interview. Rosa was to marry Tartar, and Crisparkle the sister of Landless, who was himself, I think, to have perished in assisting Tartar finally to unmask and seize the murderer.

Nothing had been written, however, of the main parts of the design excepting what is found in the published numbers; there was no hint or preparation for the sequel in any notes of chapters in advance; and there remained not even what he had himself so sadly written of the book by Thackeray also interrupted by death. The evidence of matured designs never to be accomplished, intentions planned never to be executed, roads of thought marked out never to be traversed, goals shining in the distance never to be reached, was wanting here. It was all a blank. Enough had been completed nevertheless to give promise of a much greater book than its immediate predecessor. 'I hope his book is finished,' wrote Longfellow, when the news of his death was flashed to America. 'It is certainly one of his most beautiful works, if not the most beautiful of all. It would be too sad to think the pen had fallen from his hand, and left it incomplete.' Some of its characters are touched with subtlety, and in its descriptions his imaginative power was at its best. Not a line was wanting to the reality, in the most minute local detail, of places the most widely contrasted; and we saw with equal vividness the lazy cathedral town and the lurid opium-eater's den. Something like the old lightness and buoyancy of animal spirits gave a new freshness to the humour; the scenes of the child-heroine and her luckless betrothed had both novelty and nicety of character in them; and Mr. Grewgious in chambers with his clerk and the two waiters, the conceited fool Sapsea, and the blustering philanthropist Honeythunder, were first-rate comedy. Miss Twinkleton was of the family of Miss La Creevy; and the lodging-house keeper, Miss Billickin, though she gave Miss Twinkleton but a sorry account of her blood, had that of Mrs. Todgers in her veins. 'I was put in early life to a very genteel boarding-school, the mistress being no less a lady than yourself, of about your own age, or it may be some years younger, and a poorness of blood flowed from the table which has run through my life.' Was ever anything better said of a school-fare of starved gentility?

The last page of *Edwin Drood* was written in the ch[^]let in the afternoon of his last day of consciousness; and I have thought there might be some interest in a facsimile of the greater part of this final page of manuscript that ever came from his hand, at which he had worked unusually late in order to finish the chapter. It has very much the character, in its excessive care of correction and interlineation, of all his later manuscripts; and in order that comparison may be made with his earlier and easier method, I place beside

it a portion of a page of the original of *Oliver Twist*. His greater pains and elaboration of writing, it may be mentioned, become first very obvious in the later parts of *Martin Chuzzlewit*; but not the least remarkable feature in all his manuscripts is the accuracy with which the portions of each representing the several numbers are exactly adjusted to the space the printer has to fill. Whether without erasure or so interlined as to be illegible, nothing is wanting, and there is nothing in excess. So assured had the habit become, that we have seen him remarking upon an instance the other way, in *Our Mutual Friend*, as not having happened to him for thirty years. Certainly the exceptions had been few and unimportant; but *Edwin Drood* more startlingly showed him how unsettled the habit he most prized had become, in the clashing of old and new pursuits. 'When I had written' (22nd of December 1869), 'and, as I thought, disposed of the first two numbers of my story, Clowes informed me to my horror that they were, together, *twelve printed pages too short!* Consequently I had to transpose a chapter from number two to number one, and remodel number two altogether. This was the more unlucky, that it came upon me at the time when I was obliged to leave the book, in order to get up the Readings' (the additional twelve for which Sir Thomas Watson's consent had been obtained); 'quite gone out of my mind since I left them off. However, I turned to it and got it done, and both numbers are now in type. Charles Collins has designed an excellent cover.' It was his wish that his son-in-law should have illustrated the story; but this not being practicable, upon an opinion expressed by Mr. Millais which the result thoroughly justified, choice was made of Mr. S. L. Fildes.

Forster goes on to explain as follows the discovery of the manuscript containing the passage 'How Mr. Sapsea Ceased to be a Member of the Eight Club.' This is to be found in every edition of *Edwin Drood*, but Forster's remarks are important and must be reproduced:

This reference to the last effort of Dickens's genius had been written as it thus stands, when a discovery of some interest was made by the writer. Within the leaves of one of Dickens's other manuscripts were found some detached slips of his writing, on paper only half the size of that used for the tale, so cramped, interlined, and blotted as to be nearly illegible, which on close inspection proved to be a scene in which Sapsea the auctioneer is introduced as the principal figure, among a group of characters new to the story. The explanation of it perhaps is, that, having become a little nervous

about the course of the tale, from a fear that he might have plunged too soon into the incidents leading on to the catastrophe, such as the Datchery assumption in the fifth number (a misgiving he had certainly expressed to his sister-in-law), it had occurred to him to open some fresh veins of character incidental to the interest, though not directly part of it, and so to handle them in connection with Sapsea as a little to suspend the final development even while assisting to strengthen it. Before beginning any number of a serial, he used, as we have seen in former instances, to plan briefly what he intended to put into it chapter by chapter; and his first number-plan of *Drood* had the following: ‘Mr. Sapsea. Old Tory jackass. Connect Jasper with him. (He will want a solemn donkey by and by)’; which was effected by bringing together both Durdles and Jasper, for connection with Sapsea, in the matter of the epitaph for Mrs. Sapsea’s tomb. The scene now discovered might in this view have been designed to strengthen and carry forward that element in the tale; and otherwise it very sufficiently expresses itself. It would supply an answer, if such were needed, to those who have asserted that the hopeless decadence of Dickens as a writer had set in before his death. Among the lines last written by him, these are the very last we can ever hope to receive; and they seem to me a delightful specimen of the power possessed by him in his prime, and the rarest which any novelist can have, of revealing a character by a touch. Here are a couple of people, Kimber and Peartree, not known to us before, whom we read off thoroughly in a dozen words; and as to Sapsea himself, auctioneer and mayor of Cloisterham, we are face to face with what before we only dimly realised, and we see the solemn jackass, in his business pulpit, playing off the airs of Mr. Dean in his Cathedral pulpit, with Cloisterham laughing at the impostor.’

MADAME PERUGINI’S TESTIMONY

Madame Perugini’s article appeared in the *Pall Mall Magazine* for June 1906. The title is ‘Edwin Drood and the Last Days of Charles Dickens, by his younger daughter Kate Perugini.’ Madame Perugini begins by summarising the evidence of Forster as already given. She proceeds to make the following instructive comments. It will be observed also that she makes no additions to the external evidence, particularly on the vexed question of the wrapper:

The Mystery of Edwin Drood is a story, or, to speak more correctly, the half of a story, that has excited so much general interest and so many speculations as to its ultimate disclosures, that it has given rise to various imaginary theories on the part of several clever writers; and to much discussion among those who are not writers, but merely fervent admirers and thoughtful readers of my father's writings. All these attach different meanings to the extraordinary number of clues my father has offered them to follow, and they are even more keen at the present day than they were when the book made its first appearance to find their way through the tangled maze and arrive at the very heart of the mystery. Among the numerous books, pamphlets, and articles that have been written upon *Edwin Drood*, there are some that are extremely interesting and well worth attention, for they contain many clever and possible suggestions, and although they do not entirely convince us, yet they add still more to the almost painful anxiety we all feel in wandering through the lonely precincts of Cloisterham Cathedral, or along the banks of the river that runs through Cloisterham town and leads to the Weir of which we are told in the story.

In following these writers to the end of their subtle imaginings as to how the mystery might be solved, we may sometimes be inclined to pause for an instant and ask ourselves whether my father did not perhaps intend his story to have an ending less complicated, although quite as interesting, as any that are suggested. We find ourselves turning to John Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens* to help us in our perplexity, and this is what we read in his chapter headed 'Last Book.' Mr. Forster begins by telling us that *Edwin Drood* was to be published in twelve illustrated monthly parts, and that it closed prematurely with the sixth number, which was itself underwritten by two pages; therefore my father had exactly six numbers and two pages to write when he left his little ch[^]let in the shrubbery of Gad's Hill Place on 8th June 1870, to which he never returned. Mr. Forster goes on to say: 'His first fancy for the tale was expressed in July (meaning the July of 1869), in a letter which runs thus:

“What should you think of the idea of a story beginning in this way? — Two people, boy and girl, or very young, going apart from one another, pledged to be married after many years — at the end of the book. The interest to arise out of the tracing of their separate ways and the impossibility of telling what will be done with that impending fate.”“

This idea my father relinquished, although he left distinct traces of it in his tale; and in a letter to Mr. Forster, dated 6th August 1869, tells him:

‘I laid aside the fancy I told you of, and have a very curious and new idea for my new story. Not a communicable idea (or the interest of the book would be gone), but a very strong one, though difficult to work.’

Mr. Forster then says that he immediately afterwards learnt that the story was to be ‘the murder of a nephew by his uncle’; the originality of which was to consist in the review of the murderer’s career by himself at the close, when its temptations were to be dwelt upon as if not he, the culprit, but some other man, were the tempted. The last chapters were to be written in the condemned cell, to which his wickedness, all elaborately elicited from him as if told of another, had brought him. Discovery by the murderer of the utter needlessness of the murder for its object, was to follow hard upon commission of the deed; but all discovery of the murderer was to be baffled till towards the close, when, by means of a gold ring which had resisted the corrosive effects of the lime into which he had thrown the body, not only the person murdered was to be identified, but the locality of the crime and the man who committed it.’

Mr. Forster adds a little information as to the marriages at the close of the book, and makes use of the expression ‘I think’ in speaking of Neville Landless, as though he were not quite certain of what he remembered concerning him. This ‘I think’ has been seized upon by some of Mr. Forster’s critics, who appear to argue that because he did not clearly recollect one detail of the story he may therefore have been mistaken in the whole. But we see for ourselves that Mr. Forster is perfectly well informed as to the nature of the plot, and the fate of the two principal characters concerned, the murdered and the murderer; and the only thing upon which he is not positive is the ending of Neville Landless, to which he confesses in the words ‘I think,’ thus making his testimony to the more important facts the more impressive. If we have any doubts as to whether Mr. Forster correctly stated what he was told, we have only to turn to the story of *Edwin Drood*, and we find, as far as it goes, that his statement is entirely corroborated by what we read in the book.

If those who are interested in the subject will carefully read what I have quoted, they will not be able to detect any word or hint from my father that it was upon the Mystery alone that he relied for the interest and originality of his idea. The originality was to be shown, as he tells us, in what we may

call the psychological description the murderer gives us of his temptations, temperament, and character, as if told by another; and my father speaks openly of the ring to Mr. Forster. Moreover, he refers to it often in his story, and we all recognise it, whatever our other convictions may be, as the instrument by which Jasper's wickedness and guilt are to be established in the end. I do not mean to imply that the mystery itself had no strong hold on my father's imagination; but, greatly as he was interested in the intricacies of that tangled skein, the information he voluntarily gave to Mr. Forster, from whom he had withheld nothing for thirty-three years, certainly points to the fact that he was quite as deeply fascinated and absorbed in the study of the criminal Jasper, as in the dark and sinister crime that has given the book its title. And he also speaks to Mr. Forster of the murder of a nephew by an uncle. He does not say that he is uncertain whether he shall save the nephew, but has evidently made up his mind that the crime is to be committed. And so he told his plot to Mr. Forster, as he had been accustomed to tell his plots for years past; and those who knew him must feel it impossible to believe that in this, the last year of his life, he should suddenly become underhand, and we might say treacherous, to his old friend, by inventing for his private edification a plot that he had no intention of carrying into execution. This is incredible, and the nature of the friendship that existed between Mr. Forster and himself makes the idea unworthy of consideration.

Mr. Forster was devotedly attached to my father, but as years passed by this engrossing friendship made him a little jealous of his confidence, and more than a little exacting in his demands upon it. My father was perfectly aware of this weakness in his friend, and although the knowledge of it made him smile at times, and even joke about it when we were at home and alone, he was always singularly tenderhearted where Mr. Forster was concerned, and was particularly careful never to wound the very sensitive nature of one who, from the first moment of their acquaintance, had devoted his time and energy to making my father's path in life as smooth as so intricate a path could be made. In all business transactions Mr. Forster acted for him, and generally brought him through these troubles triumphantly, whereas, if left to himself, his impetuosity and impatience might have spoilt all chances of success; while in all his private troubles my father instinctively turned to his friend, and even when not invariably following his advice, had yet so much confidence in his judgment as to be rendered not only uneasy but unhappy

if Mr. Forster did not approve of the decision at which he ultimately arrived. From the beginning of their friendship to the end of my father's life the relations between the two friends remained unchanged; and the notion that has been spread abroad that my father wilfully misled Mr. Forster in what he told him of the plot of *Edwin Drood* should be abandoned, as it does not correspond with the knowledge of those who understood the dignity of my father's character, and were also aware of the perfectly frank terms upon which he lived with Mr. Forster.

If my father again changed his plan for the story of *Edwin Drood* the first thing he would naturally do would be to write to Mr. Forster and inform him of the alteration. We might imagine for an instant that he would perhaps desire to keep the change as a surprise for his friend, but what I have just stated with regard to Mr. Forster's character renders this supposition out of the question, as my father knew for a certainty that his jealousy would debar him from appreciating such a surprise, and that he would in all probability strongly resent what he might with justice be allowed to consider as a piece of unnecessary caution on my father's part. That he did not write to Mr. Forster to tell him of any divergence from his second plan for the book we all know, and we know also that my eldest brother, Charles, positively declared that he had heard from his father's lips that Edwin Drood was dead. Here, therefore, are two very important witnesses to a fact that is still doubted by those who never met my father, and were never impressed by the grave sincerity with which he would have given this assurance.

It is very often those who most doubt Mr. Forster's accuracy on this point who are in the habit of turning to his book when they are in the search of facts to establish some theory of their own; and they do not hesitate to do this, because they know that whatever views they may hold upon the work itself, or the manner in which it is written, absolute truth is to be found in its pages. Why should they refuse, therefore, to believe a statement made upon one page of his three volumes, when they willingly and gratefully accept the rest if it is to their interest to do so? This is a difficult question to answer, but it is not without importance when we are discussing the subject of *Edwin Drood*. On pages 425 and 426 of the third volume of Mr. Forster's *Life* is to be found the simple explanation of my father's plot for his story, as given to him by my father himself. It is true that Mr. Forster speaks from remembrance, but how often does he not speak from

remembrance, and yet how seldom are we inclined to doubt his word? Only here, because what he tells us does not exactly fit in with our preconceived views as to how the tale shall be finished, are we disposed to quarrel with him, for the simple reason that we flatter ourselves we have discovered a better ending to the book than the one originally intended for it by the author. And so we put his statement aside and ignore it, while we grope in the dark for a thing we shall never find; and we obstinately refuse to allow even the little glimmer of light my father has himself thrown upon the obscurity to help us in our search. It was not, I imagine, for the intricate working out of his plot alone that my father cared to write this story; but it was through his wonderful observation of character, and his strange insight into the tragic secrets of the human heart, that he desired his greatest triumph to be achieved.

I do not write upon these things because I have any fresh or startling theories to offer upon the subject of *Edwin Drood*. I cannot say that I am without my own opinions, but I am fully conscious that after what has been already so ably said, they would have but little interest for the general public; so I shrink from venturing upon any suggestions respecting the solution of my father's last book. My chief object in writing is to remind the readers of this paper that there are certain facts connected with this story that cannot lightly be put aside, and these facts are to be found in John Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens*, and in the declaration made by my brother Charles. Having known both Mr. Forster and my brother intimately, I cannot for a moment believe that either of them would speak or write that which he did not know to be strictly true; and it is on these grounds alone that I think I have a right to be heard when I insist upon the assertion that Edwin Drood was undoubtedly murdered by his uncle Jasper. As to the unravelling of the mystery, and the way in which the murder was perpetrated, we are all at liberty to have our own views, seeing that no explanations were as yet arrived at in the story; but we should remember that only vague speculations can be indulged in when we try to imagine them for ourselves.

It has been pointed out, and very justly, that although Jasper removed the watch, chain, and scarf-pin from Edwin's body, there would possibly remain on it money of some kind, keys, and the metal buttons on his clothes, which the action of the quicklime could not destroy, and by which his identity would be made known. This has been looked upon as an

oversight, a mere piece of forgetfulness on my father's part. But remembering, as I do very well, what he often said, that the most clever criminals were constantly detected through some small defect in their calculations, I cannot but think it most probable that this was not an oversight, but was intended to lead up to the pet theory that he so frequently mentioned whenever a murder case was brought to trial. After reading *Edwin Drood* many times, as most of us have read it, we must, I think, come to the conclusion that not a word of this tale was written without full consideration; that in this story at least my father left nothing to chance, and that therefore the money, and the buttons, were destined to take their proper place in the book, and might turn out to be a weak spot in Jasper's well-arranged and complicated plot, *the* weak spot my father insisted upon, as being inseparable from the commission of a great crime, however skilfully planned. The keys spoken of need not be taken seriously into account, for Edwin was a careless young fellow, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that he did not always carry them upon his person; he was staying with his uncle, and he may have left them in the portmanteau, which was most likely at the time of the murder lying unfastened in his room, with the key belonging to it in the lock. It would be unfair to suggest that my father wrote unadvisedly of this or that, for he had still the half of his story to finish, and plenty of time, as he thought, in which to gather up the broken threads and weave them into a symmetrical and harmonious whole, which he was so eminently capable of completing.

That my father's brain was more than usually clear and bright during the writing of *Edwin Drood*, no one who lived with him could possibly doubt; and the extraordinary interest he took in the development of this story was apparent in all that he said or did, and was often the subject of conversation between those who anxiously watched him as he wrote, and feared that he was trying his strength too far. For although my father's death was sudden and unexpected, the knowledge that his bodily health was failing had been for some time too forcibly brought to the notice of those who loved him, for them to be blind to the fact that the book he was now engaged in, and the concentration of his devotion and energy upon it, were a tax too great for his fast-ebbing strength. Any attempt to stay him, however, in work that he had undertaken was as idle as stretching one's hands to a river and bidding it cease to flow; and beyond a few remonstrances now and again urged, no such attempt was made, knowing as we did that it would be entirely

useless. And so the work sped on, carrying with it my father's few remaining days of life, and the end came all too soon, as it was bound to come, to one who never ceased to labour for those who were dear to him, in the hope of gaining for them that which he was destined never to enjoy. And in my father's grave lies buried the secret of his story.

The scene of the Eight Club, which Mr. Forster discovered after his death, in which there figure two new characters, Mr. Peartree and Mr. Kimber, bears no relation as we read it to the unfolding of the plot; and although the young man Poker, who is also introduced in this fragment for the first time, seems to be of more significance, we see too little of him to be certain that we may not already have made his acquaintance. In Mr. Sapsea my father evidently took much pleasure, and we are here reminded of the note made for him in the first number-plan of *Edwin Drood*: 'Mr. Sapsea. Old Tory jackass. Connect Jasper with him. (He will want a solemn donkey by and by.)' My father also wanted the solemn donkey, and not only brought him in for the purposes of his story, but because, as in the case of 'the Billickin,' he took delight in dwelling upon the absurdities of the character.

As to the cover of *Edwin Drood*, that has been the subject of so much discussion there is very little to tell. It was designed and drawn by Mr. Charles A. Collins, my first husband. The same reasons that prevented me from teasing my father with questions respecting his story made me refrain from asking any of Mr. Collins; but from what he said I certainly gathered that he was not in possession of my father's secret, although he had made his designs from my father's directions. There are a few things in this cover that I fancy have been a little misunderstood. In the book only Jasper and Neville Landless are described as dark young men. Edwin Drood is fair, and so is Crisparkle. Tartar is burnt by the sun; but when Rosa asks 'the Unlimited head chambermaid' at the hotel in Furnival's Inn if the gentleman who has just called is dark, she replies:

'No, Miss, more of a brown gentleman.'

'You are sure not with black hair?' asked Rosa, taking courage.

'Quite sure of that, Miss. Brown hair and blue eyes.'

Now in a drawing it would be difficult to make a distinction between the fair hair of Edwin and the slightly darker hair of Tartar; and in the picture, where we see a girl — Rosa we imagine her to be — seated in a garden, the young man at her feet is, I feel pretty sure, intended for Tartar. Edwin it

cannot be, nor Neville, as has been supposed, for he was decidedly dark. Besides this, Neville would not have told his affection to Rosa, for Helena was far too quick-witted not to understand from Rosa's first mention of Tartar that she is already in love with him, and she would have warned and saved the brother to whom she was so ardently attached from making any such confession. The figure is not intended for Jasper, because we know that Jasper did not move from the sun-dial in the scene where he declares his mad passion for Rosa, and Jasper had black hair and whiskers. And, again, the drawing cannot be meant to represent Helena and Crisparkle, for the young man is not in clerical dress. The figures going up the stairs are still more difficult to make out; but there can be little doubt that the active higher one is the same young man we see at Rosa's feet, and must therefore be Tartar. Of the remaining two, one may be Crisparkle, although there is still no clerical attire, and the other either Grewgious or Neville, though the drawing certainly bears but little resemblance to either of those characters.

The lower and middle picture is, of course, the great scene of the book; but whether the young man standing calm, and inexorable as Fate, is intended to be the ghost of Edwin as seen by Jasper in his half-dazed and drugged condition, or whether it is Helena dressed as Datchery, as one writer has ingeniously suggested (although there are reasons in the story against the supposition that Helena is Datchery, and many to support the theory that the 'old buffer' is Bazzard), — these are puzzles that will never be cleared up, except to the minds of those who have positively determined that they hold the clue to the mystery, and can only see its interpretation from one point of view. The girl's figure with streaming hair, in the picture where the word 'Lost' is written, has been supposed to represent Rosa after her parting from Edwin; but it may more likely, I think, indicate some scene in the book which has yet to be described in the story. This is another enigma; but my father, it may be presumed, intended to puzzle his readers by the cover, and he had every legitimate right to do so, for had his meaning been made perfectly clear 'the interest of the book would be gone.' Some surprise has been expressed because Mr. Forster did not ask Mr. Collins for the meaning of his designs; but if he already knew the plot, why should he seek information from Mr. Collins? particularly as my father may have told him that he had not disclosed the secret of his story to his illustrators, for I believe I am right in affirming that Mr. Luke Fildes was no better informed as to the plan of the book than was Mr. Collins.

I am unfortunately not acquainted with much that has been written about *Edwin Drood*, for the story was so painfully associated with my father's death and the sorrow of that time that after first reading it I could never bear to look into the book again till about two months ago, when I found myself obliged to do so; and then my thoughts flew back to the last occasion when my father mentioned it in my hearing.

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There is one other fact connected with my father and *Edwin Drood* that I think my readers would like to know, and I must be forgiven if I again speak from my own experience in order to relate it. Upon reading the book once more, as I have already told, after an interval of a great number of years, the story took such entire possession of me that for a long time I could think of nothing else; and one day, my aunt, Miss Hogarth, being with me, I asked her if she knew anything more definite than I did as to how the ending was to be brought about. For I should explain that when my father was unusually reticent we seldom, if ever, attempted to break his silence by remarks or hints that might lead him to suppose that we were anxious to learn what he had no doubt good reasons for desiring to keep from us. And we made it a point of honour among ourselves never, in talking to him on the subject of *Edwin Drood*, to show the impatience we naturally felt to arrive at the end of so engrossing a tale.

My aunt said that she knew absolutely nothing, but she told me that shortly before my father's death, and after he had been speaking of some difficulty he was in with his work, without explaining what it was, she found it impossible to refrain from asking him, 'I hope you haven't really killed poor Edwin Drood?' To which he gravely replied, 'I call my book the Mystery, not the History, of Edwin Drood.' And that was all he would answer. My aunt could not make out from the reply, or from his manner of giving it, whether he wished to convey that the Mystery was to remain a mystery for ever, or if he desired gently to remind her that he would not disclose his secret until the proper time arrived for telling it. But I think his words are so suggestive, and may carry with them so much meaning, that I offer them now, with my aunt's permission, to those who take a delight in trying to unravel the impenetrable secrets of a story that has within its sadly shortened pages a most curious fascination, and is 'gifted with invincible force to hold and drag.'

THE TESTIMONY OF CHARLES DICKENS THE YOUNGER

I have quoted from Madame Perugini's statement the words: 'We know also that my elder brother Charles positively declared that he had heard from his father's lips that Edwin Drood was dead.' I proceed to corroborate the statement by giving here a brief account of the play by Joseph Hatton and Charles Dickens.

The importance of this play as a witness to Dickens's intentions is shown in an article by Joseph Hatton which appeared in the *People* on 19th November 1905. Mr. Hatton explains that about the year 1880, in a conversation, he sketched out his idea of the play up to the crucial point. Dickens had a play in his mind when he wrote the story, and it was said that he had thought of Dion Boucicault as his collaborator in his work for the stage. After the death of Dickens, Boucicault had a mind to write the play and invent his own conclusion to the story, but afterwards gave it up. Mr. Hatton, in a conversation with Mr. Luke Fildes, saw Dickens's possible conclusion, but did not attempt to gather up the broken threads. 'Consulting his son, Charles, to whom I offered my sketch, I found that his father had revealed to him sufficient of the plot to clearly indicate how the story was to end. We agreed to write the play. Much of the son's version of the finale was proved by the instructions which the author had given to the illustrator in regard to certain of the unpublished and unwritten chapters. And so Dickens the younger and I fell to work and wrote the play of *Edwin Drood* for the Princess's Theatre.' He goes on to explain that the piece was cast, and a great point made of the authoritative conclusion of the story, thus clearing up something of the mystery which was part of its title. But Mr. Harry Jackson, the stage manager, did not like the play, and it was left unacted. Years after, Dickens had a hope that Mr. Willard would undertake the play, but this expectation was not fulfilled. Dickens consoled himself by saying that next to the pleasure of having a good play acted was the pleasure of writing it, and for the rest he took the incident as one of the 'little ironies' of his life.

The play as it lies before me is in four Acts. The first is made up of conversations between the Landladies, Mrs. Crisparkle, Septimus Crisparkle, Rosa and Edwin. These are practically repeated from the book. Grewgious and Jasper then come on the scene, the novel being closely followed in their conversation. The second Act is made up of conversations also mainly reproduced from the book between Helena and Rosa, Jasper

and Crisparkle. Grewgious comes on in the second Scene where Edwin and Rosa decide to be brother and sister. There follow in the third Scene the talks between Jasper and Durdles. Edwin talks to the opium woman, and Jasper appears with the scarf on his arm. So far there is practically nothing that is not taken directly from Dickens. The third Act opens with a conversation between Septimus and Mrs. Crisparkle as to the guilt of Landless. Helena and Neville appear protesting innocence. Grewgious tells Jasper about the breaking of the engagement between Edwin and Rosa. Jasper makes love to Rosa. In the concluding Act the scene is laid in the opium den in London: 'Dark, poverty-stricken. Fourpost bedstead, chair, table, candlestick, set well down so as to allow good space for vision later on, light up a little, when Opium Sal lights candle shortly after Jasper's entrance. For details see Fildes's picture in book. Opium Sal discovered moving about in a witch-like kind of way.' Jasper enters and tells Sal that a man followed him to the door. She lights the opium pipe for him, and then questions him.

He says at last: 'Hush! the journey's made! It's over!'

Sal. Is it over so soon?

Jasper. I must sleep that vision off. It is the poorest of all. No struggle, no consciousness of peril, no entreaty, and yet I never saw *that* before!

Sal. See what, deary?

Jasper. Look at it! Look what a poor miserable thing it is! *That* must be real. It's over.

(He has accompanied this incoherence with some wild unmeaning gestures; but they trail off into the progressive inaction of stupor, and he lies like a log upon the bed. The Woman attempts to rouse him as before, but finding him past rousing for the time, she slowly gets upon her feet with an air of disappointment, flicks his face with her hand savagely, and then flings a rug over Jasper.)

(Both Sal and Jasper now being perfectly quiet, the back of scene is illuminated, showing the scene exactly as at end of Act II. The candle is out in the Opium Den, leaving front part of stage dark. The brightest light in vision is from Jasper's window, leaving other parts of scene slightly in shadow but sufficiently light for action to be seen. It is to be carefully noted that all the persons on in the Vision Scene should wear list shoes, so that they make no noise in moving about, and that the Stage Manager should insist upon perfect quiet behind the stage and at the wings. The actors, too,

speak in rather a measured, monotonous tone. Crowd later on in Vision to be grouped and drilled from this point of view.)

(The Scene being well open, there is a flash of lightning, and a peal of thunder, followed after a short pause by a burst of merry laughter from Jasper's room, the voices of Drood and Neville being audible. They come down to door, Jasper with them, without his hat.)

Edwin, Jasper, and Neville are talking. Edwin says he will walk with Neville as far as the river and have a look at the storm. Neville and Jasper exchange good-nights, and Edwin says: 'Don't go to bed, Jack, I won't be long.'

(Jasper in response waves hand. Pause. Then re-enters house, closes door. Goes upstairs. Puts light out, and is seen for a moment at window. Flash of lightning, peal of thunder. Pause. Jasper comes out with hat on head, the black silk scarf on arm. Comes out cautiously, closing door after him and looks round, and warily goes to crypt; finds door locked and takes key from his pocket with which he opens it, and pushes door wide open. Creeps off in the direction Neville and Edwin have gone. Pause. Weak flash of lightning and peal of thunder. Jasper returns crouching, and hides within shadow of wall. Re-enter Edwin Drood from where exit was made. He looks up at Jasper's window.)

Ah, too bad; he has gone to bed and has put his light out.

(Jasper rushes upon Edwin from behind, seizes him, whips scarf, which he has previously been twisting into rope-like shape, round his head and neck, and proceeds to strangle him. There is a fierce struggle for a few seconds. Nearly on the point of death, Edwin gets free of Jasper, sees his assailant, and thinks Jasper is there to help him.)

Edwin. Jack! Jack! Save me! They are killing me! (Flings himself into Jasper's arms.)

Jasper. Save you, yes!

(Deliberately tightens scarf, strikes Edwin, and kills him. Flash of lightning and peal of thunder, as Edwin falls lifeless at Jasper's feet. Pause.)

Jasper *(a little overcome physically, and jerking out his sentences gasping, but with intense ferocity)*. You poor fool. You'll boast no more. *(Spurning body with his foot.)* Ah! ah! ah! *(Laughs wildly.)* He's gone. The fellow-traveller has gone for ever, gone down, into the everlasting abyss! Hush! *(Listens.)* Durdles? No, opium mixed with his liquor keeps

that other fool quiet. (*Listens again, and looks cautiously round — distant low-moaning peal of thunder.*) Only the storm wearing itself out! Ah! ah! ah! (*Looking at body.*) You've seen the last of the storm, weak, self-satisfied fool! Come (wildly seizing the body, and dragging it towards crypt), come — to your marriage bed (*drags body*). Come — to sleep with Death!

(*Exit with body into crypt.*)

(*Slow music. Short pause. Re-enter Jasper from crypt, and as he does so gauze clouds begin to darken scene. Jasper locks crypt, puts key in his pocket, crosses, crouching and creeping, looking behind him fearfully, and enters his own house, with flash of lightning, peal of thunder, the very last of the storm. By this time gauze clouds nearly darken the scene. Double on bed moves. Opium Sal rises restlessly, once more leans over bed, and begins to talk while the actor representing Jasper returns to his place on bed.*)

Sal. Troubled dreams, deary! Troubled dreams. Have you been taking the journey again? Was it pleasant, and what did you do to fellow-traveller, eh?

Jasper (*speaking in a dreamy way*). That's how the journey was made — that's how I like to make it. But there's something more. I never saw that before; what is it? (*Fearfully, falls asleep again.*)

(*Sal wearily resumes her attitude of rest with her arms on bed, and the Vision Scene goes on. Durdles appears beckoning off, unlocks crypt and enters. As he does so Grewgious and Rosa come on from direction indicated by Durdles's beckoning, all the others in scene coming from the same place. Rosa clings to her guardian's arm. They stop in centre of stage opposite crypt, looking towards door. Neville and Helena follow. They join Grewgious and Rosa. Crisparkle and Opium Sal's Double come on. Opium Sal's Double is pointing towards Rosa and others, and Crisparkle joins the group. The Double now stands near wing and beckons off. Townspeople come on and make group, Double at their head, she pointing towards crypt; they all look in that direction. Durdles comes to door, beckons Grewgious, who goes in after Durdles to crypt. Groups now move a step or two nearer to entrance of crypt. Slight pause. Rosa clings to Helena; Neville in dumb show whispers anxiously to Helena and Rosa, as if to reassure and comfort them. Helena stands proudly but anxious; Rosa droopingly.*)

Grew. (*standing just outside crypt door, and addressing himself to Crisparkle*). Keep the women back; this is no place for them. Edwin Drood has been foully murdered!

(*Sensation in crowd, not indicated by noise, but dumb show. Rosa staggers. Neville catches her in his arms. Jasper moves and groans in his sleep. Durdles comes out of crypt, plucks Grewgious by the sleeve, and holds up Jasper's long black scarf.*)

Cris. Jasper's scarf!

(*Jasper again groans on bed.*)

Where is Jasper?

(*Goes to door of Jasper's house and knocks. This knocking must be made right at back of stage.*)

Grew. It is no good knocking there. The murderer of Edwin Drood will be found in London!

(*Sensation as before in crowd. Crisparkle still knocks, and between knocks faint rapping is heard at door of opium den, and Jasper tosses about on bed, then starts up with a cry, the Vision disappearing the moment he stands on the floor.*)

Jasper (*starting as if at what he has seen*). No, no. It's a lie!

(*Knocking at opium den door becomes louder.*)

(*Turning to Sal, who is now at other end of room.*) What's that?

Sal. They wants to come in.

Jasper. Who wants to come in?

(*Knocking is louder and louder.*)

Sal. Why, the perlice.

Jasper. The police! Damnation! The man who followed me here to-night! Then it's all true. Durdles has found the body in spite of all my precautions, and I am lost. (*Rushes wildly about room.*) Is there no escape? Where's the window?

Sal. There ain't no winder, deary.

Jasper. Then I'm trapped like a wolf in a cage. You filthy hag, this is your doing.

(*Seizes candlestick on stool to strike her; she crouches down. Knocking at door now so fierce as to arrest his attention, and he turns towards it, weapon in his hand.*)

(*Voice at door. Open in the Queen's name!*)

(Jasper drops stool or whatever he has seized upon to attack Sal with, staggers back, tears open his shirt-sleeve, where a small phial is seen fastened to left wrist, drags it from his wrist and holds it convulsively in right hand, as door is violently burst open.)

(Enter Inspector of Police, handcuffs in hand, Durdles, Neville, Crisparkle, and Grewgious.)

Grew. (to Officer, pointing to Jasper). There is your prisoner.

Jasper. Never! Do you think I was not prepared for this always! (Takes poison, and flings phial down.) Now I defy you! Hush! I did kill him! Ha! ha! The fellow-traveller! Yes. For love. For a mad wild passion. Killed him as I would have killed you and you — as I would have swept you all from the path that led to her. Ha! ha! what fools you were not to see it, not to see my love, how it burned, how it consumed me. She knew it! Rosa knew it. (Then speaking as though none but he and Rosa were present.) Rosa! Rosa! My Rosa! Come! You must! You shall! (Wildly.) Back! Back! She's mine I tell you! (Passes hand over eyes, and staggers, then once more half realises the situation.) What's that? (Looks round, and sees Neville.) You here! You who think to reap the harvest for which I have sold my soul to hell! Vile wretch! I'll kill you!

(Rushes to Neville, who stands forward. In act of raising arm to strike him, Jasper is seized with death spasm, trembles, shudders, and, flinging up arms, falls dead. Picture: Opium Sal crouching still in fear, Officer, Grewgious, Durdles, Neville, and Crisparkle near the body.)

END OF DRAMA

THE TESTIMONY OF SIR LUKE FILDES

A reviewer in the *Times* Literary Supplement, 27th October 1905, wrote: 'Nor do we attach much importance to any of the hints Dickens dropped, whether to John Forster, to any member of his family, or to either of his illustrators. He was very anxious that his secret should not be guessed, and the hints which he dropped may very well have been intentionally misleading.' This called forth the following letter from Sir Luke Fildes:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir, — In an article entitled 'The Mysteries of Edwin Drood' in your issue of to-day, the writer, speculating on the various theories advanced as solutions of the mystery, ventures to say: —

‘Nor do we attach much importance to any of the hints Dickens dropped, whether to John Forster, to any member of his family, or to either of his illustrators. He was very anxious that his secret should not be guessed, and the hints which he dropped may very well have been intentionally misleading.’

I know that Charles Dickens was very anxious that his secret should not be guessed, but it surprises me to read that he could be thought capable of the deceit so lightly attributed to him.

The ‘hints he dropped’ to me, his sole illustrator — for Charles Collins, his son-in-law, only designed the green cover for the monthly parts, and Collins told me he did not in the least know the significance of the various groups in the design; that they were drawn from instructions personally given by Charles Dickens, and not from any text — these ‘hints’ to me were the outcome of a request of mine that he would explain some matters, the meaning of which I could not comprehend, and which were for me, his illustrator, embarrassingly hidden.

I instanced in the printers’ rough proof of the monthly part sent to me to illustrate where he particularly described John Jasper as wearing a neckerchief of such dimensions as to go twice round his neck; I called his attention to the circumstance that I had previously dressed Jasper as wearing a little black tie once round the neck, and I asked him if he had any special reasons for the alteration of Jasper’s attire, and, if so, I submitted I ought to know. He, Dickens, appeared for the moment to be disconcerted by my remark, and said something meaning he was afraid he was ‘getting on too fast’ and revealing more than he meant at that early stage, and after a short silence, cogitating, he suddenly said, ‘Can you keep a secret?’ I assured him he could rely on me. He then said, ‘I must have the double necktie! It is necessary, for Jasper strangles Edwin Drood with it.’

I was impressed by his earnestness, as indeed, I was at all my interviews with him — also by the confidence which he said he reposed in me, trusting that I would not in any way refer to it, as he feared even a chance remark might find its way into the papers ‘and thus anticipate his “mystery”’; and it is a little startling, after more than thirty-five years of profound belief in the nobility of character and sincerity of Charles Dickens, to be told now that he probably was more or less of a humbug on such occasions. — I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Luke Fildes.

Harrogate, *October 27.*

NOTES FOR THE NOVEL

I give here the notes which Dickens made for his novel. These are partly quoted by Professor Jackson in his book, *About Edwin Drood*, but are now for the first time printed complete.

Friday, Twentieth August 1869

	Gilbert Alfred.
	Edwin.
	Jasper Edwyn.
	Michael Oswald.
The Loss of James Wakefield.	Arthur.
Edwyn.	Selwyn.
	Edgar.
	Mr. Honeythunder.
	Mr. Honeyblast.
James's Disappearance.	The Dean.
	Mrs. Dean.
Flight and Pursuit.	Miss Dean.
Sworn to Avenge it.	
One Object in life.	
A Kinsman's Devotion.	
	The Two Kinsmen.
The Loss of Edwyn Brood.	
The Loss of Edwin Brude.	
The Mystery in the Drood Family.	
The Loss of Edwyn Drood.	
The Flight of Edwyn Drood. Edwin Drood in hiding.	
The Loss of Edwin Drude.	
The Disappearance of Edwin Drood.	
The Mystery of Edwin Drood.	
	Dead? or Alive?
Opium-Smoking.	
Touch the key-note.	
'When the wicked man — '	
The Uncle & Nephew.	

'Pussy's' Portrait.

You won't take warning then?

Dean.

Mr. Jasper.

Minor Canon, Mr. Crisparkle.

Uncle & Nephew.

Verger.

Gloves for the Nuns' House.

Peptune.

Churchyard.

Change to Tope.

Cathedral town running throughout.

Inside the Nuns' House.

Miss Twinkleton and her double existence.

Mrs. Tisher.

Rosebud.

The affianced young people. *Every love scene after is a quarrel more or less.*

Mr. Sapsea. Old Tory Jackass.

His Wife's Epitaph.

Jasper and the Keys.

Durdles down in the crypt and among the graves. His dinner bundle.

(MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD. — NO. I.)

CHAPTER I

the dawn

change title to the dawn.

opium smoking and Jasper.

Lead up to Cathedral.

CHAPTER II

a dean and a chapter also

Cathedral & Cathedral Town

Mr. Crisparkle.

and the Dean.

Uncle & Nephew.

Murder very far off.

Edwin's Story & Pussy.

CHAPTER III

the nuns' house

Still picturesque suggestions of Cathedral Town.

The Nuns' House and the young couple's first love scene.

CHAPTER IV

mr. sapsea

Connect Jasper with him. (He will want a solemn donkey by & by.)

Epitaph brings them together, and brings Durdles with them.

The Keys. Story Durdles.

Bring in the other young couple. Yes

Neville and Olympia Heyridge or Heyfort?

Neville & Helena Landless.

Mixture of Oriental blood — or imperfectly acquired mixture in them.

Yes.

No

(*MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD. — NO. II.*)

CHAPTER V

philanthropy in minor canon corner

The Blustrous Philanthropist.

Old Mrs. Crisparkle.

Mr. Honeythunder.

China Shepherdess.

Minor Canon Corner.

CHAPTER VI

more confidences than one

Neville's to Mr. Crisparkle.

Rosa's to
Helena.

Piano scene with Jasper. She singing; he
following her lips.

CHAPTER VII

daggers drawn

Quarrel.

(Fomented by Jasper). Goblet. And then confession to Mr. Crisparkle.

Jasper lays his ground.

CHAPTER VIII

mr. durdles and friend

Deputy engaged to stone Durdles nightly.

Carry through the woman of the 1st chapter.

Carry through Durdles calling — and the bundle & the keys.

John Jasper looks at Edwin asleep.

Pursue Edwin Drood and Rosa?

Lead on to final scene then in No. V? IV?

Yes.

How many more scenes between them?

Way to be paved for their marriage and parting instead. Yes.

Miss Twinkleton's? No. Next No.
Rosa's Guardian? Done in No. II.
Mr. Sapsea? In last chapter.
Neville Landless at Mr. Crisparkle's
and Helena? Yes.
Neville admires Rosa. That comes out from himself.

(*MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD. NO. III.*)

CHAPTER X

smoothing the way

That is, for Jasper's plan, through Mr. Crisparkle who takes new ground
on Nevill's new confidence.

Minor Canon Corner. The closet?
remember there is a child.
Edwin's appointment for Xmas Eve.

CHAPTER XI

a picture and a ring

P.

J.T.

1747

Drood in chambers. [The two waiters]

Bazzard the clerk.

Mr. Grewgious's past story:

'A ring of diamonds and rubies delicately set in gold.'

Edwin takes it.

CHAPTER XII

a night with durdles

Lay the ground for the manner of the murder to come out at last.

Keep the boy suspended.

Night picture of the Cathedral.

Once more carry through Edwin and Rosa?

or Last time? Last Time.

Then

Last meeting of Rosa & Edwin outside the Cathedral? Yes.

Kiss at parting.

'Jack.'

Edwin goes to the dinner.

The Windy night.

The Surprise and Alarm.
Jasper's failure in the one great
object made known by Mr. Grewgious.
Jasper's Diary? Yes.

(*MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD. — NO. IV.*)

CHAPTER XIII
both at their best

The Last Interview
And Parting.

CHAPTER XIV
when shall these three meet again?

How each passes the day.

[Watch & shirt pin]
[all Edwin's
Jewellery.]

Neville.
Edwin.
Jasper.

[Watch to the
Jewellers.]

'And so *he* goes up the Postern Stair.'

Storms of wind.

CHAPTER XV
impeached

Neville away cart. Pursued & brought back.
Mr. Grewgious's communication:

And his scene with Jasper.

CHAPTER XVI
devoted

Jasper's artful use of the communication on his recovery.
Cloisterham Weir, Mr. Crisparkle, and the watch and pin.

Jasper's artful turn.

The Dean. Neville cast out.

Jasper's Diary 'I devote myself to his destruction.'

Edwin and Rosa for the last time? Done Already.

Kinfederel.

Edwin Disappears.

The Mystery. Done Already.

(*MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD. — NO. V.*)

CHAPTER XVII

philanthropy professional and unprofessional

CHAPTER XVIII

shadow on the sun dial
a settler in cloisterham

CHAPTER XIX

a settler in cloisterham
shadow on the sun dial

CHAPTER XX

let's talk

various flights divers flights

(MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD. — NO. VI.)

CHAPTER XXI

a gritty state of things comes on

CHAPTER XXII

the dawn again

CHAPTER XXIII

CHAPTER III — THE ILLUSTRATIONS ON THE WRAPPER

Much attention has been given to the illustrations on the wrapper and their significance. So far as I can find, the question was first raised in the *Spectator*. On 1st October 1870, in a review of the first edition of *Edwin Drood*, the *Spectator* complained that the publishers had not given a facsimile of the vignetted cover. The critic proceeds: 'By whom was the lamplight discovery of a standing figure, apparently meant for Edwin Drood, in the vignette at the bottom of the page, intended to be made?' He inquired also whether the man entering with the lanthorn was John Jasper, and what were the directions given by Mr. Dickens as to the ascent of the winding staircase represented on the right hand of the cover. The *Spectator* asked for any authentic indications which might exist of the turn which Dickens intended to give to the story. 'Nor can we see how it can be possible that no such indications exist, with this prefiguring cover to prove that he had not only anticipated, but disclosed to some one or other, many of the situations he intended to paint.' Since then others, and in particular Mr. Andrew Lang, have with much insistency declared that the bottom picture represents a meeting of the risen Edwin Drood with his horror-stricken uncle, John Jasper.

In reply to these questions certain considerations may be adduced:

1. We have already shown from the testimony of Charles Allston Collins, as reported by his widow, and by Sir Luke Fildes, that he, at least, was not aware of any such intention in the mind of Dickens. On the contrary, Madame Perugini and Sir Luke Fildes are convinced that Edwin Drood was murdered. More than this, Charles Dickens the younger, who was more or less in his father's confidence, agreed with them. As we have noted, he affirmed that his father had told him that Edwin Drood was murdered, and he constructed his play on that basis.

2. I attach much weight to Madame Perugini's suggestion that whatever her father meant or did not mean, he was certainly not the man to give away on the cover the answer to the mystery. He may have meant — he very probably did — before he began the story to mystify his readers a little. This is shown, I think, by the various suggested titles printed on page 57.

But as he rejected those titles, it is plain that he thought them unsatisfactory, and that he refrained from raising in the title at least the question whether the murder of Edwin Drood was accomplished.

3. I had prepared materials for a chapter on the wrappers of Dickens's novels as used in the monthly parts, but it is not necessary to go into particulars. I am glad to find myself in full agreement with the eminent Dickens scholar, Mr. B W. Matz, who attaches no importance to the covers. I put no trust in the wrapper of *Edwin Drood* any more than I should in that of *Pickwick*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Little Dorrit*, *Dombey and Son*, and many others, for a suggestion of any intricate points in any of their plots. The only covers which may be reliable in this respect are *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Sketches by Boz*. Each of these works was issued in parts after their respective stories had appeared complete in other forms. All the others must have been designed before the first parts were published, and knowing the freedom which Dickens allowed himself we can attach little importance to the evidence of a particular cover as an index to the story.

When Mr. Marcus Stone, R.A., completed his seventy-second year, on 4th July 1912, he was interviewed by a representative of the *Morning Post*, and said:

The cover of *Our Mutual Friend*, with the representation of different incidents in the story, I drew after seeing an amount of matter equivalent to no more than the first two one-shilling monthly parts. Here it is: you will see that I depicted among other characters, Mr. Silas Wegg. Well, I was aware that Wegg had a wooden leg, but I wanted to know whether this was his right or his left leg, as there was nothing in the material before me that threw light on this point. To my surprise, Dickens said: 'I do not know. I do not think I had identified the leg.' That was the only time I ever knew him to be at fault on a point of this kind, for as a rule he was ready to describe down to the minutest details the personal characteristics, and, I might almost add, the life-history of the creations of his fancy.

4. But the final proof of the impossibility of making trustworthy deductions from the cover is to be found in the fact that no readers read it in the same way. In proof of this I give the readings of Professor Henry Jackson, Mr. Andrew Lang, Dr. M. R. James, and Mr. Cuming Walters. Through the great kindness of Mr. Hugh Thomson the artist, who has made a study of this subject and has given me his results, I am able to add another

interpretation certainly of no lower authority than those which accompany it.

PROFESSOR JACKSON'S READING

We may fairly presume that the figures in the four corners represent comedy, tragedy, the opium-woman, and the Chinaman. In the nave of the Cathedral, Edwin and Rosa pair off against Jasper and Crisparkle. Despite the discrepancy which Mr. Lang points out, I think that the lower of the two pictures on our left shows Jasper and Rosa in the garden of the Nuns' House. In the upper side-piece, the girl is, I am sure, Rosa flying from Jasper's pursuit, in full view of a placard announcing Edwin's disappearance. It is true that the hatless girl with her hair streaming down her back does not answer very well to Dickens's description of Rosa, and has no resemblance to Sir L. Fildes's pictures of her: but if Dickens, when he had not yet thought out his conception of her personality, told Collins to draw a frightened girl of seventeen running away from school, no more than this could be expected. For the scheme of the sketch, compare the picture in *Bleak House*, which shows Lady Dedlock, as she mounts the staircase, turning to look at a bill announcing a reward for the discovery of the murderer of Tulkinghorn. That placards and advertisements, imploring Edwin to communicate with his uncle, had been widely circulated, we have been told at p. 182. On the right, the two men in the lower picture are, I suppose, Jasper and Durdles ascending the tower on the night of 'the unaccountable expedition'; while the man above is Jasper on Christmas Eve looking down at *that*, p. 276: 'Look down, look down! You see what lies at the bottom there?' p. 274. I demur to Mr. Lang's statements that the young man whom I venture to identify with Jasper is represented as 'whiskerless,' and that the figure which I take to be Durdles is well-dressed.

Professor Jackson then mentions the views of Mr. Proctor and Mr. Lang on the important vignette at the bottom of the page:

For my own part, I suspect that the upright figure represents Drood, but that the Drood which it represents is a phantom of Jasper's imagination. Let us suppose that an advertisement for a ring known to have been in the possession of the late Edwin Drood appears in the local newspaper, and that Jasper, now for the first time aware of the ring's existence, goes to the crypt to look for it. Dickens might well suppose him at such a moment to see a vision of the murdered man, and might instruct Collins to represent what

Jasper imagined himself to see. Indeed, I fancy that I recognise an intentional contrast between the two figures: the one in the foreground, full of movement, solidly drawn; the other, in the background, statuesque, and a little shadowy. Doubtless Dickens was anxious that the reader should not know too much; and if he made Collins give visible form to a hallucination of Jasper's brain, I for one do not think the procedure illegitimate. It is sad that Dickens did not live to explain the innocent deception which, as I imagine, he meant for a few months to practise upon his readers.

MR. ANDREW LANG'S INTERPRETATION IN 'THE PUZZLE OF
DICKENS'S LAST PLOT'

The cover lies before the reader. In the left-hand top corner appears an allegorical female figure of joy, with flowers. The central top space contains the front of Cloisterham Cathedral, or rather, the nave. To the left walks Edwin, with hyacinthine locks, and a thoroughly classical type of face, and Grecian nose. *Like Datchery, he does not wear, but carries his hat*; this means nothing, if they are in the nave. He seems bored. On his arm is Rosa; *she* seems bored; she trails her parasol, and looks away from Edwin, looks down, to her right. On the spectator's right march the surpliced men and boys of the choir. Behind them is Jasper, black whiskers and all; he stares after Edwin and Rosa; his right hand hides his mouth. In the corner above him is an allegorical female, clasping a stiletto.

Beneath Edwin and Rosa is, first, an allegorical female figure, looking at a placard, headed 'LOST,' on a door. Under that again, is a girl in a garden-chair; a young man, whiskerless, with wavy hair, kneels and kisses her hand. She looks rather unimpassioned. I conceive the man to be Landless, taking leave of Rosa after urging his hopeless suit for which Helena, we learn, 'seems to compassionate him.' He has avowed his passion, early in the story, to Crisparkle. Below, the opium hag is smoking. On the other side, under the figures of Jasper and the choir, the young man who kneels to the girl is seen bounding up a spiral staircase. His left hand is on the iron railing; he stoops over it, looking down at others who follow him. His right hand, the index finger protruded, points upward, and, by chance or design, points straight at Jasper in the vignette above. Beneath this man (clearly Landless) follows a tall man in a 'bowler' hat, a 'cut-away' coat, and trousers which show an inch of white stocking above the low shoes. His profile is hid by the wall of the spiral staircase: he might be Grewgious of

the shoes, white stockings, and short trousers, but he may be Tartar: he takes two steps at a stride. Beneath him a youngish man, in a low, soft, clerical hat and a black pea-coat, ascends, looking downwards and backwards. This is clearly Crisparkle. A Chinaman is smoking opium beneath.

In the central lowest space, a dark and whiskered man enters a dark chamber; his left hand is on the lock of the door; in his right he holds up a lantern. The light of the lantern reveals a young man in a soft hat of Tyrolese shape. His features are purely classical, his nose is Grecian, his locks are long (at least, according to the taste of to-day); he wears a light paletot, buttoned to the throat; his right arm hangs by his side; his left hand is thrust into the breast of his coat. He calmly regards the dark man with the lantern. That man, of course, is Jasper. The young man is Edwin Drood, of the Grecian nose, hyacinthine locks, and classic features, as in Sir L. Fildes's third illustration.

Mr. Proctor correctly understood the unmistakable meaning of this last design, Jasper entering the vault:

'To-day the dead are living,
The lost is found to-day.'

DR. JAMES'S VIEW

In the *Cambridge Review* for 9th March 1911 Dr. James says:

Now, as to the figures at the angles and the scene at the top there is general agreement. As to those on the left, H. J. is, I think, right in calling the upper one Rosa's flight; but the lower one *cannot* be Jasper and Rosa. The young man has a moustache. Jasper had none, and has none in the two pictures of him on this same cover. Also, the artist has carefully emphasised the fact that the girl is indifferent to her suitor. The figures, I believe, represent Rosa and Neville Landless.

On the right, H. J. assumes that there are two scenes. I am clear that there is but one: for, whereas, on the left side the two scenes are separated by a sprig of the rose-wreath which surrounds the centre, and a similar sprig parts them from the top scene, there is on the right only the division from the top scene, managed in the same way as on the left. And yet, had the scene been two, there was great necessity to separate them, inasmuch as they are taking place in the same surroundings, namely, the winding staircase. As to the identity of the three men, the lowest one is a cleric,

Crisparkle, the next above him I will not identify; the uppermost is either Jasper or just possibly (since he is pointing pretty directly at the figure of Jasper in the top scene, and seems to be acting as a guide to those below him) Datchery.

Dr. James dissents from Dr. Jackson as to the central vignette at the bottom. No phantom of the imagination is there. We have a real person, as is shown by the fact that he casts a shadow on the wall behind him.

MR. HUGH THOMSON'S READING

Mr. Hugh Thomson wrote the following notes on 3rd April 1912, and they are now printed for the first time:

But to get to the cover to which you particularly directed my attention. It was designed, I take it, primarily as a decoration, and not as a series of representations of the characters to appear in the book. Consequently, there is but little definite character-drawing in any of the groups with the exception of the one at the bottom of the page, where Jasper is depicted exactly as I should wish him depicted, dark and saturnine 'with thick, lustrous black hair and whiskers.' If the other figure is merely a wraith conjured up by Jasper's evil opium-soaked conscience, it is as substantial as one of the ghosts of Hamlet's father given to us on the stage time after time without protest. But in a black and white design for a popular serial it is scarcely possible to be subtle, and at the same time plainly intelligible. So it may be a ghost, or it may be Edwin in the flesh, or Neville Landless got up to represent Edwin. It is a very effective little cut. In the other groups, Jasper is not so unmistakable, but, of course, in the upper drawings the sleek, clerical-looking personage with his hand at his mouth is meant to represent Jasper. The staircase groups, I can't identify. The young men in both may be meant to represent Jasper. They are not in the least like that sombre personage, but just colourless young men. In the garden scene one cannot think that the kneeling figure pressing the girl's fingers to his lips is meant for Jasper at all. It has a mop of fair hair and boasts a moustache, and in the scene in the garden of the Nuns' House Rosa did not permit Jasper to approach her so nearly. In the picture there is no suggestion of the repugnance and fear with which she regarded Jasper. Don't you think it reasonable to suggest that this little picture illustrates a scene to take place much later in the book, a scene Dickens did not live to write? It might be Edwin Drood returned from abroad or from disguise. Edwin Drood making

love to Helena Landless. In chapter viii. he was ‘already enough impressed by Helena to feel indignant that Helena’s brother should dispose of him (Edwin) so coolly’ to Rosebud.

Or could it be Tartar proposing to Rosebud? But Tartar had no moustache either as himself or as Datchery, and the girl’s figure has a suggestion of lithe dignity which I don’t associate with the ‘little beauty’ Rosebud.

I agree with the author of *About Edwin Drood* that Edwin was not worth while bringing back, but it is possible that he was to return, and that this is he in the garden scene. In the space above this the female figure scanning a placard ‘LOST’ is, I think, merely allegorical, and not meant to represent Rosebud fleeing from Jasper. In the book she leaves Cloisterham so neat and pretty that Joe, the omnibus man, would have liked to keep for himself the love she sent to Miss Twinkleton.

MR. CUMING WALTERS’S READING

There is another view to which I strongly incline, first stated by Mr. Cuming Walters. I take the erect figure in the bottom vignette to be Datchery. It is not Edwin. The large hat and the tightish surtout are the articles of clothing on which Dickens lays stress in his description of Datchery. Mr. Lang says that the figure is that of a young man in a longish loose greatcoat, not a tightish surtout such as Datchery wore, but I agree with Mr. Cuming Walters that the figure corresponds with the description of Datchery. Edwin as seen above with Rosa in the cathedral is not wearing a coat of this sort. His hat also is different. On examining the figure Mr. H. B. Irving said to me: ‘That looks uncommonly like a woman in disguise.’

None of us has a right to dogmatise, but the variety of opinions among those who have studied the cover shows that no certain conclusion can be drawn from the illustrations. The arguments advanced previously tend to make this practically certain. In the discussion of the problem a wholly disproportionate weight has been laid on the illustrated cover. It would hardly bear that weight even if every one were agreed as to the reading of the pictures, and there is no such agreement.

CHAPTER IV — THE METHODS OF DICKENS

HALF-WAY IN DICKENS

Dickens has left us one-half of his last story. It was to be completed in twelve parts, and six parts were published. We can only infer and guess at the way in which the author would have completed it. Would he have brought many new characters on the stage, or are we to believe that the main characters are already there, and that it is through the revealing of their secrets that the end is to be reached? To give a positive reply is impossible, and yet we may learn something of Dickens's methods by studying his complete books. Supposing we had only one-half of each book in our possession, might we expect that the complete story would introduce us to many fresh characters? I give the results of some investigations from the later novels.

THE LENGTH OF DICKENS'S NOVELS

Edwin Drood, as we have it, runs in round numbers to about 100,000 words. When completed it would have been 200,000 words. This would have made it slightly longer than *Great Expectations*, which may be estimated at 160,000 words. *A Tale of Two Cities* runs to 143,000 words. *Edwin Drood*, while slightly longer than this, would have been very much shorter than the larger works of Dickens. *David Copperfield* has about 306,000 words; *Bleak House*, 308,000, and *Our Mutual Friend*, 297,000. All these are practically the same length. *Barnaby Rudge* has about 264,000 words.

'BLEAK HOUSE'

I begin with *Bleak House*, which is one of the latest and most elaborate of Dickens's stories. In the first half the characters arrive in crowds. I make out in the first chapter ten or eleven. The second chapter brings My Lady Dedlock, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Mr. Tulkinghorn, and others. The third brings Esther Summerson and John Jarndyce, besides half a dozen more. The fourth brings us the Jellybys, with Mr. Guppy, and others. Krook and Nemo are the fresh arrivals in chapter v.; Mr. Harold Skim-pole arrives in chapter vi., with the Coavinses. In chapter vii. I make out six arrivals at least. Chapter viii. gives us the Pardiggles, Mr. Gusher, the brickmaker, and

family, and Jenny, his wife. In chapter ix. Mr. Lawrence Boythorn arrives alone; chapter x. gives us the Snagsbys, their predecessor, Peffer, the two prentices, and Guster, the servant. Miss Flite comes with chapter xi., and along with her appear the young surgeon, the beadle, Mrs. Perkins, Mrs. Anastasia Piper, and a few more. Chapter xii. brings Mlle. Hortense, maid to Lady Dedlock, Lord Boodle and his retinue, the Right Hon. William Buffy, M.P., and his retinue. In Chapter xiii. we have Mr. Bayham Badger, Mrs. Badger, and the former husbands of Mrs. Badger are recalled. Chapter xiv. brings Mr. Turveydrop and his son, also Allan Woodcourt, the young surgeon, and we have mentioned the 'old lady with a censorious countenance,' and the late Mrs. Turveydrop. In chapter xv. we have Mrs. Blinder and the Neckett family; chapter xvii., Mrs. Woodcourt, mother of Allan; chapter xix., Mr. and Mrs. Chadband; chapter xx., Young Smallweed and Jobling, *alias* Weevle; in chapter xxi., the Grandfather and Grandmother Smallweed, Judith Smallweed, Mr. George, trooper (Uncle George, chapter vii.), and Phil Squod of the Shooting Gallery. The great Mr. Bucket appears in chapter xxii. Captain Hawdon is in chapter xxvi. In chapter xxvii. we have the Bagnet family of five. In chapter xxviii. there comes Volumnia Dedlock; Miss Wisk in chapter xxx., and Liz in chapter xxxi.

We have now reached the end of the first half, and the arrivals after that are few and unimportant. In chapter xxxii. no new character is brought on the stage, though there is talk about the noted siren, who assists at the Harmonic Meetings, and is announced as Miss M. Melville, though she has been married a year and a half. In chapter xxxiii. it is mentioned that the 'Sols Arms,' a well-conducted tavern, is licensed to a highly respectable landlord, Mr. J. G. Bogsby. After that we have no new character till chapter xxxvii., where we are introduced to Mr. W. Grubble, the landlord of that very clean little tavern, 'The Dedlock Arms.' Vholes is introduced by Skimpole as the man who gives him something and called it commission. Mr. Vholes has the privilege of supporting an aged father in the Vale of Taunton, and has a red eruption here and there upon his face. He has three daughters — Emma, Jane, and Caroline — and cannot afford to be selfish. In chapter xxxviii. we meet Mrs. Guppy, 'an old lady in a large cap, with rather a red nose, and rather an unsteady eye, but smiling all over.' Then in chapter xl. there are the cousins of Sir Leicester Dedlock. In chapter xliii. Mrs. Skimpole and the Skimpole family are introduced, and in chapter liii.

Mrs. Bucket. It will be observed that some of these can scarcely be called new characters, and that not one is of any real importance, that is, so far as *Bleak House* is concerned. Dickens in the middle of his story had practically put every actor upon the stage. The story was to be developed by the characters to whom the reader had been introduced. I have calculated that in the first half there are about one hundred and six characters of greater or less importance. In the second half there are, on the most generous computation, only sixteen, and not one of them plays a vital part in the development of the tale.

‘OUR MUTUAL FRIEND’

I take next *Our Mutual Friend*, and with this I must deal more briefly. *Our Mutual Friend* is remarkable for the profusion of characters in the first half. In the second chapter there are sixteen at least, including Mr. and Mrs. Veneering, Mr. and Mrs. Podsnap, Mortimer Lightfoot, Eugene Wrayburn, and John Harmon. The Wilfers come in chapter iv.; in chapter v. Silas Wegg and the Boffins, and almost every chapter adds to the company till we get to the middle. After that there is an abrupt cessation. There are not more than half a dozen new characters named in the second part, and all of them are wholly insignificant, the Deputy Lock, Gruff and Glum, the Greenwich pensioner, the Archbishop of Greenwich, a waiter, Mrs. Sprodgkin, the exacting member of the fold, and the contractor of 500,000 power. In *Our Mutual Friend* every character of any significance has been introduced when the first half ends. The few stragglers who come later have practically no effect on the story.

‘LITTLE DORRIT’

In *Little Dorrit* we have the old profuseness of characters; in the first half nearly one hundred, and in the second half there are practically no new characters at all. Mr. Tinkler, the valet to Mr. Dorrit, and Mr. Eustace, the classical tourist, can hardly be counted. In chapter xxi., ‘The History of a Self-Tormentor,’ we have Charlotte Dawes, the false friend, who vanishes instantly, and counts for nothing. Thus, I think, we may say, taking the three long books of Dickens’s later period, that in each it was his manner to introduce no new characters of the least import in the second half of his books. But it may be worth while to glance at his practice in the shorter tales, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*.

‘A TALE OF TWO CITIES’

In the second half of this fine book there are practically no new characters that I can trace. The epithet can hardly be applied to the President of the trial at the Conciergerie.

‘GREAT EXPECTATIONS’

It is now agreed that one of Dickens’s most perfect books is *Great Expectations*. It is known also that Dickens complied with a suggestion of Lord Lytton’s, which modified the plot — not seriously nor disagreeably. Here again in the second part we have very few fresh characters. We have the Colonel in Newgate introduced to Mr. Wemmick, but he is ‘sure to be assassinated on Monday.’ Let us not forget Miss Skiffins, a good sort of fellow, with a high regard both for Wemmick and the Aged. There is the retrospective Provis, but the characters introduced belong to the past. Finally, in chapter xlvi., we have a pleasant glimpse of the Barley family and of Mrs. Whyple, the best of housewives, and the motherly friend of Clara and Herbert. It is she who fosters and regulates with equal kindness and discretion their mutual love. ‘It was understood that nothing of a tender nature could possibly be confided to Old Barley, by reason of his being totally unequal to the consideration of any subject more psychological than Gout, Rum, and Purser’s Stores.’

These are all the books of which I have made a close personal examination. I believe that the general result will be the same in all save two or three exceptional works, such as *Barnaby Rudge*. Whether he consciously acted on the principle that no new characters should be introduced after half the story was told, it is impossible to say. It seems certain, however, that he acted upon it.

WILKIE COLLINS ‘AHEAD OF ALL THE FIELD’

Dickens was no great reader, and it is plain by what he did not say, as well as by what he did say, that he did not on the whole admire ardently the work of his contemporaries. But he made a special exception in the case of Wilkie Collins, with whom he collaborated on more than one occasion, as in the story *No Thoroughfare*. He published in his own magazine some of Collins’s best detective stories, including *The Woman in White*, *No Name*, and *The Moonstone*. Of these stories Dickens put first *No Name*. *The Moonstone* he criticised in one of his letters to Wills. At first he thought it

in many respects ‘much better than anything he has done,’ but afterwards he wrote, 26th July 1868: ‘I quite agree with you about *The Moonstone*. The construction is wearisome beyond endurance, and there is a vein of obstinate conceit in it that makes enemies of readers.’

In September 1862 he wrote in enthusiastic terms of admiration about *No Name*. This I take to be a very weighty and significant letter, as will appear in the sequel:

I have gone through the second volume [*No Name*] at a sitting, and I find it *wonderfully fine*. It goes on with an ever-rising power and force in it that fills me with admiration. It is as far before and beyond *The Woman in White* as that was beyond the wretched common level of fiction-writing. There are some touches in the Captain which no one but a born (and cultivated) writer could get near — could draw within hail of. And the originality of Mrs. Wragge, without compromise of her probability, involves a really great achievement. But they are all admirable; Mr. Noel Vanstone and the housekeeper, both in their way as meritorious as the rest; Magdalen wrought out with truth, energy, sentiment, and passion, of the very first water.

I cannot tell you with what a strange dash of pride as well as pleasure I read the great results of your hard work. Because, as you know, I was certain from the Basil days that you were the Writer who would come ahead of all the Field — being the only one who combined invention and power, both humorous and pathetic, with that invincible determination to work, and that profound conviction that nothing of worth is to be done without work, of which triflers and feigners have no conception.

Mr. Swinburne in his study of Wilkie Collins writes:

It is apparently the general opinion — an opinion which seems to me incontestable — that no third book of their author’s can be ranked as equal with *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*: two works of not more indisputable than incomparable ability. *No Name* is an only less excellent example of as curious and original a talent.

This was not the opinion of Dickens.

‘A BACKWARD LIGHT’

On 6th October 1859 Dickens replied to a suggestion by Collins on the working out of *A Tale of Two Cities*. The italics are mine:

I do not positively say that the point you put might not have been done in your manner; but I have a very strong conviction that it would have been overdone in that manner — too elaborately trapped, baited, and prepared — in the main anticipated, and its interest wasted. This is quite apart from the peculiarity of the Doctor's [Dr. Manette — *A Tale of Two Cities*] character, as affected by his imprisonment; which of itself would, to my thinking, render it quite out of the question to put the reader inside of him before the proper time, in respect of matters that were dim to himself through being, in a diseased way, morbidly shunned by him. *I think the business of art is to lay all that ground carefully, not with the care that conceals itself — to show, by a backward light, what everything has been working to, — but only to suggest, until the fulfilment comes. These are the ways of Providence, of which ways all art is but a little imitation.*

EDGAR ALLAN POE AND DICKENS: A MYSTIFICATION

Could Dickens keep his secrets well? In other words, could he prevent his readers from fathoming a mystery till the proper moment of the *dénouement*? An important help to the answering of this question will be found in the essay on Charles Dickens by Edgar Allan Poe, who was a critic of extraordinary penetration. If any one could detect a secret it was he. But he was also much given to mystification, and it is not wise to accept anything he says without verifying it. The essay on Dickens turns largely on *Barnaby Rudge*, and, to the best of my belief, it has not been strictly examined.

POE'S CLAIM

Poe says:

We are not prepared to say, so positively as we could wish, whether by the public at large, the whole *mystery* of the murder committed by Rudge, with the identity of the Maypole ruffian with Rudge himself, was fathomed at any period previous to the period intended, or, if so, whether at a period so early as materially to interfere with the interest designed; but we are forced, through sheer modesty, to suppose this the case; since, by ourselves individually, the secret was distinctly understood immediately upon the perusal of the story of Solomon Daisy, which occurs at the seventh page of this volume of three hundred and twenty-three. In the number of the *Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post* for 1st May 1841 (the tale having then

only begun), will be found a prospective notice of some length, in which we make use of the following words:

‘That Barnaby is the son of the murderer may not appear evident to our readers — but we will explain. The person murdered is Mr. Reuben Haredale. He was found assassinated in his bed-chamber. His steward (Mr. Rudge, senior) and his gardener (name not mentioned) are missing. At first both are suspected. “Some months afterward” — here we use the words of the story — ”the steward’s body, scarcely to be recognised but by his clothes and the watch and ring he wore, was found at the bottom of a piece of water in the grounds, with a deep gash in the breast, where he had been stabbed by a knife. He was only partly dressed; and all the people agreed that he had been sitting up reading in his own room, where there were many traces of blood, and was suddenly fallen upon and killed, before his master.”

‘Now, be it observed, it is not the author himself who asserts that the steward’s body was found; he has put the words in the mouth of one of his characters. His design is to make it appear, in the *dénouement*, that the steward, Rudge, first murdered the gardener, then went to his master’s chamber, murdered *him*, was interrupted by his (Rudge’s) wife, whom he seized and held *by the wrist*, to prevent her giving the alarm — that he then, after possessing himself of the booty desired, returned to the gardener’s room, exchanged clothes with him, put upon the corpse his own watch and ring, and secreted it where it was afterwards discovered at so late a period that the features could not be identified.’

This is the prediction we have to examine. In the first place, was such an article published in the Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post* for 1st May 1841? Mr. J. H. Ingram, the chief authority on Poe in this country, very kindly informs me that this review has never been reprinted in any edition of Poe’s works. Should it not be searched out and reprinted in full? I should like to see the context of Poe’s extract, and I should like still more to be sure that the article appeared as he says it did. Mr. Ingram has no doubt that the article appeared as stated by Poe. Mr. J. H. Whitty of Richmond, Va., kindly informs me that all the early files of the *Post* are inaccessible.

In the second place, Poe affirms that the article appeared in the Philadelphia paper for 1st May 1841, and that the tale was only then begun. As for that, *Barnaby Rudge* was first published as a volume in 1841, after having run as a serial in the pages of *Master Humphrey’s Clock* from 13th

February 1841 to 27th November 1841. I have failed to find the precise date of its first appearance in America. No doubt it appeared in serial form, and the first instalments on which Poe bases his assertions should have been printed in America considerably earlier than 1st May. But the assertion which chiefly demands scrutiny is very definitely made by Poe. He says: The secret was *distinctly* understood *immediately* upon the perusal of the story of Solomon Daisy.’ The italics are mine.

THE STORY OF SOLOMON DAISY

We turn to the story of Solomon Daisy ‘as told in the *Maypole* at any time for four and twenty years.’ It is very simple and matter-of-fact. It tells how Mr. Reuben Haredale, of The Warren, a widower with one child, left the place when his lady died. He went up to London, where he stopped some months, but, finding that place as lonely as The Warren, he suddenly came back with his little girl, bringing with him besides, that day, only two women servants, and his steward and a gardener. The rest stayed behind in London, and were to follow next day. That night, an old gentleman who lived at Chigwell Row, and had long been poorly, died, and an order came to Solomon at half after twelve o’clock at night to go and toll the passing bell. Solomon relates to a thrilled audience how he went out in a windy, rainy, very dark night; how he entered the church, trimmed the candle, thought of old tales about dead people rising and sitting at the head of their own graves, fancying that he saw the old gentleman who was just dead, wrapping his shroud round him, and shivering as if he felt it cold. At length he started up and took the bell rope in his hands. At that minute there rang — not that bell, for he had scarcely touched the rope — but another! It was only for an instant, and even then the wind carried the sound away, but he heard it. He listened for a long time, but it rang no more. He then tolled his own bell and ran home to bed as fast as he could touch the ground. Next morning came the news that Mr. Reuben Haredale was found murdered in his bed-chamber, and in his hand was a piece of the cord attached to an alarm bell outside, which hung in his room, and had been cut asunder, no doubt by the murderer when he seized it. ‘That was the bell I heard.’ He further relates how the steward and the gardener were both missing, both suspected, but never found. The body of Mr. Rudge, the steward — scarcely to be recognised by his clothes and the watch and the ring he wore — was found months afterwards at the bottom of a piece of water in the

grounds with a deep gash in the breast where he had been stabbed by a knife. Every one knew now that the gardener must be the murderer, and Solomon Daisy predicted that he would be heard of. That is the whole story as told by Solomon Daisy, and Poe affirms that he perceived from this story: (1) That the steward Rudge first murdered the gardener; (2) that he then went to his master's chamber and murdered him; (3) that he was interrupted by Rudge's wife, whom he seized and held by the wrist to prevent her giving the alarm; (4) that he possessed himself of the booty, returned to the gardener's room, exchanged clothes with him, put upon the corpse his own watch and ring, and secreted it where it was afterwards discovered at so late a period that the features could not be identified.

WHERE POE FAILED

Poe admits that his preconceived ideas were not entirely correct:

The gardener was murdered, not before, but after his master; and that Rudge's wife seized *him* by the wrist, instead of his seizing *her*, has so much the air of a mistake on the part of Mr. Dickens that we can scarcely speak of our own version as erroneous. The grasp of a murderer's bloody hand on the wrist of a woman *enceinte* would have been more likely to produce the effect described (and this every one will allow) than the grasp of the hand of the woman upon the wrist of the assassin. We may, therefore, say of our supposition, as Talleyrand said of some cockney's bad French — *que s'il ne soit pas Français assurément donc il le doit être* — that if we did not rightly prophesy, yet, at least, our prophecy should have been right.

I have no hesitation in saying that this is largely a piece of pure mystification, another *Tale of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. It is conceivable that Poe guesses from Solomon Daisy's story that the steward Rudge murdered the gardener and his master. It follows that the steward changed clothes with the murdered gardener, put upon the corpse his own watch and ring, and secreted it where it was afterwards discovered at so late a period that the features could not be identified. But that Poe should have guessed immediately after reading Solomon Daisy's story that he seized and held by the wrist his wife to prevent her giving the alarm is beyond belief. 'By the wrist' are the three significant words, and they prove that Poe must have had before him when writing the parts of the novel up to and including

chapter V. For it is in the fifth chapter that the first mention is made of the smear of blood on Barnaby's wrist. We read there:

They who knew the Maypole story, and could remember what the widow was, before her husband's and his master's murder, understood it well. They recollected how the change had come, and could call to mind that when her son was born, upon the very day the deed was known, he bore upon his wrist what seemed a smear of blood but half washed out.

Near the beginning of chapter lxii., where Rudge is making his confession in prison, he says of his wife:

Did I see her fall upon the ground; and, when I stooped to raise her, did she thrust me back with a force that cast me off as if I had been a child, staining the hand with which she clasped my wrist? Is *that* fancy?

To claim that the seizing of the wrist could have been deduced from Solomon Daisy's story by itself is to affirm an impossibility.

And so vanishes the main value of the prediction. If Poe wrote that article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, he wrote it after having read the fifth chapter of Dickens's novel.

WHERE POE SUCCEEDED

It may be asked whether Poe discovered anything from his reading of the first pages. The only thing which he may have guessed is the thing which it was comparatively easy to guess. He may have conjectured that the mysterious stranger at the Maypole was Rudge Redux. When this surmise had been lodged in his mind the other deductions follow as a matter of course from later chapters, as the tale unfolds itself. Even if Poe identified the stranger at the Maypole with the murderer it was no great feat, for the murderer is closely disguised, from which any intelligent reader would infer that he has a motive for fearing detection in an old haunt. He is shabbily dressed; he is very curious about the people and events at The Warren; he is suspected as a criminal of some kind by the cronies; he strikes Joe as he leaves. On the road he threatens Varden with murder. This shows us that we have before us a fugitive criminal. He is presented to us with all the marks of a villain in hiding. It may be noted that from Solomon Daisy's story the inference is that only one of two men committed the murder of Reuben Haredale, the gardener or Rudge. There has also been a difficulty in identifying the remains. This leaves Poe no special credit. There is

considerable keenness in his conjecture that the treatment of the Gordon Riots was an afterthought of Dickens. Poe says:

The title of the book, the elaborate and pointed manner of the commencement, the impressive description of The Warren, and especially of Mrs. Rudge, go far to show that Mr. Dickens has really deceived himself — that the soul of the plot, as originally conceived, was the murder of Haredale, with the subsequent discovery of the murderer in Rudge — but that this idea was afterwards abandoned, or, rather, suffered to be merged in that of the Popish riots. The result has been most unfavourable. That which, of itself, would have proved highly effective, has been rendered nearly null by its situation. In the multitudinous outrage and horror of the Rebellion, the *one* atrocity is utterly whelmed and extinguished.

But facts, as Poe admits, are against this supposition. Dickens says in his Preface:

If the object an author has had, in writing a book, cannot be discovered from its perusal, the probability is that it is either very deep or very shallow. Hoping that mine may lie somewhere between these two extremes, I shall say very little about it, and that only in reference to one point. No account of the Gordon Riots having been to my knowledge introduced into any work of fiction, and the subject presenting very extraordinary and remarkable features, I was led to project this tale.

This is final. It appears from Forster's biography that Dickens desired to expose the brutalising character of laws which led to the incessant execution of men and women comparatively innocent. It is clear also that Dickens made a special study of the contemporary newspapers and annual registers. But Forster admits that the form ultimately taken by *Barnaby Rudge* had been comprised only partially within its first design, and he admits also that the interest with which the tale begins has ceased to be its interest before the close. 'What has chiefly taken the reader's fancy at the outset almost wholly disappears in the power and passion with which, in the later chapters, great riots are described. So admirable is this description, however, that it would be hard to have to surrender it even for a more perfect structure of fable.' To this I may add that the letters to the artist Cattermole on the illustrations to *Barnaby Rudge* are very valuable for the fullness and precision of their detail.

DICKENS'S WAY

That it is legitimate to draw inferences from the hints given by Dickens I should be the last to deny. His purpose was to provide hints which, when contemplated with what he called a backward glance, should appear luminous at the end of the story. Their meaning at the time might be more or less obscure, but when from the end of the book one could look back upon its course even to the beginning, he would see that the artist had a purpose all through, and that he was steadily preparing his reader for the *dénouement*. Of this I give a striking proof, on which, so far as I am aware, little stress has been laid. The *Edinburgh Review* of July 1857 contains an article, 'The License of Modern Novelists,' in which the critic deals with *Little Dorrit*, and denounces his charges against the administrative system of England. Among other things, the reviewer says: 'Even the catastrophe in *Little Dorrit* is evidently borrowed from the recent fall of houses in Tottenham Court Road, which happens to have appeared in the newspapers at a convenient period.' Dickens, for the first and only time in his life, so far as I know, publicly replied to a reviewer. He wrote an article in *Household Words* of 1st August 1857, entitled 'Curious Misprint in the *Edinburgh Review*,' in which he turned upon his critic fiercely and sharply. He quotes the sentence about the catastrophe in *Little Dorrit*, and goes on to say:

Thus, the Reviewer. The Novelist begs to ask him whether there is no License in his writing those words, and stating that assumption as a truth, when any man accustomed to the critical examination of a book cannot fail, attentively turning over the pages of *Little Dorrit*, to observe that that catastrophe is carefully prepared for from the very first presentation of the old house in the story; that when Rigaud, the man who is crushed by the fall of the house, first enters it (hundreds of pages before the end) he is beset by a mysterious fear and shuddering; that the rotten and crazy state of the house is laboriously kept before the reader, whenever the house is shown; that the way to the demolition of the man and the house together is paved all through the book with a painful minuteness and reiterated care of preparation, the necessity of which (in order that the thread may be kept in the reader's mind through nearly two years) is one of the adverse incidents of the serial form of publication? It may be nothing to the question that Mr. Dickens now publicly declares, on his word of honour, that that catastrophe was written, was engraved on steel, was printed, had passed through the hands of compositors, readers for the press, and pressmen, and was in type

and in proof in the Printing House of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans before the accident in Tottenham Court Road occurred. But, it is much to the question that an honourable reviewer might have easily traced this out in the internal evidence of the book itself, before he stated, for a fact, what is utterly and entirely, in every particular and respect, untrue.

The blows are dealt with a will, and it should be noted that Dickens is more irritated at the stupidity of the reviewer in failing to see the way in which he contrived the catastrophe than at his mistake in the fact. It is to be noted also that Dickens considered that his serial form of publication compelled him to be almost too minute, copious, and constant in keeping the thread in the mind of a reader whose attention had to be maintained for nearly two years.

PART II — ATTEMPT AT A SOLUTION

CHAPTER V — WAS EDWIN DROOD MURDERED?

I reply in the affirmative, and for the following reasons:

I.

1. The external testimonies as given in a previous chapter are all explicit as far as they go in their testimony that in the intention of Dickens Edwin Drood was murdered. There is first the testimony of John Forster. To him Dickens plainly declared that a nephew was to be murdered by his uncle. The murderer was to discover that his crime was useless for its purpose, but he was not to be convicted in the ordinary way. It was by means of a gold ring, which had resisted the corrosive effects of the lime into which the body had been cast, that the murderer and the person murdered were to be identified.

2. Madame Perugini corroborates Forster's testimony, and points out that the only thing on which he is not positive is the ending of Neville Landless. He guards himself by saying, 'I think,' and this makes his testimony to the more important facts the more impressive. Madame Perugini, who thoroughly understood the relations between Forster and Dickens, finds it impossible to believe that Dickens should have altered his plan without communicating with Forster. Forster's strong character, and the peculiar friendship that existed between him and Dickens, make it impossible to believe that Dickens should suddenly become 'underhand,' and we might say treacherous, by inventing a plot which he did not intend to carry into execution. Forster became a little jealous of Dickens's confidence, and more than a little exacting in his demands on it. This Dickens knew, and smiled at occasionally. But he was very careful not to wound his friend's very sensitive nature, and he so trusted Forster's judgment as to be uneasy and unhappy if he did not obtain its sanction for his decisions and his actions. If there had been any change of plan Forster would certainly have been told. He never was told.

3. Again, we know that Charles Dickens the younger positively declared that he heard from his father's lips that Edwin Drood was dead. I have been able to print part of a play written by Charles Dickens the younger and Joseph Hatton. This shows beyond contradiction that the authors believed Drood to be dead. Mr. Hatton says: 'Consulting his son, Charles, to whom I offered my sketch, I found that his father had revealed to him sufficient of the plot to clearly indicate how the story was to end.' How far this may apply to details we cannot be sure, but most certainly it certifies the death.

4. To this I may add that Madame Perugini's own firm belief that Drood was dead is of no small importance, considering that she was the wife of Charles Allston Collins, who drew the much discussed wrapper. It did not occur either to Madame Perugini or her husband that there was any doubt as to the fate of Edwin Drood.

5. The weighty letter of Sir Luke Fildes printed on pages 54–5 confirms unmistakably and strongly the witness already adduced. Fildes was the sole illustrator of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and he testifies that Collins did not in the least know the significance of the various groups on the wrapper. Further, when Sir Luke was puzzled by the statement that John Jasper was described as wearing a neckerchief that would go twice round his neck he drew Dickens's attention to the circumstance that he had previously dressed Jasper as wearing a little black tie once round the neck, and asked why the alteration was made. Dickens, a little disconcerted, suddenly asked, 'Can you keep a secret?' He then said: 'I must have the double necktie! It is necessary, for Jasper strangles Edwin Drood with it.' Fildes was impressed by Dickens's earnestness, and resented the suggestion often made that Dickens's hints dropped to members of his family or friends may have been intentionally misleading. 'It is a little startling,' says Sir Luke, 'after more than thirty-five years of profound belief in the nobility of character and sincerity of Charles Dickens, to be told now that he probably was more or less of a humbug on such occasions.'

I cannot but feel that the external testimony is too strong to be explained away, and it ought to be read and pondered in its entirety.

II. DICKENS'S OWN NOTE

In the Memoranda made by Dickens for chapter xii., and printed on page 63, we read that Jasper 'lays the ground for the manner of the murder, to come out at last. Night picture of the Cathedral.' Mr. Lang himself admits,

‘It seems almost undeniable that, when Dickens wrote this note, he meant Jasper to succeed in murdering Edwin.’

III. THE ADMITTED TESTIMONY OF THE BOOK

The proof that Edwin Drood was murdered is to my mind mainly to be found in the pages of the story. One would have to print a large part of it in order to convey the impressive and unmistakable force of the whole, but perhaps it is better to read it as Dickens wrote it. For he himself advances nothing to modify or mitigate the conclusion that, as the result of a carefully designed plot, Edwin Drood was foully murdered by his uncle. Happily it is not necessary to spend much space on this. I believe that Dr. Jackson is fully justified in his statement that all who have written on the subject acknowledge that Jasper tried to murder his nephew, and believed himself to have succeeded. We all see that Jasper had either strangled Edwin with a black scarf and committed his body to a heap of quicklime that lay about convenient, or thought that he had done so. ‘We all see that the crime is to be proved by a gold ring of rubies and diamonds which Edwin has concealed about his person, though Jasper does not know it.’ Mr. Proctor writes:

It is clear that Dickens has intended to convey the impression that Edwin Drood is murdered, his body and clothes consumed, Jasper having first taken his watch and chain and shirt-pin, which cannot have been thrown into the river till the night of Christmas Day, since the watch, wound up at twenty minutes past two on Christmas Eve, had run down when found in the river.

Having arrived at this point we may proceed.

Is it conceivable that Jasper, believing himself to have succeeded in murdering his nephew, could have failed? Jasper is meant by Dickens to be a man wholly without conscience and heart. Such characters are not numerous in Dickens’s books, but we have evidence that he knew them and had pondered over them. I may quote his words in *Hunted Down*:

There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a man who is a calculating criminal, is, in any phase of his guilt otherwise than true to himself, and perfectly consistent with his whole character. Such a man commits murder, and murder is the natural culmination of his course; such a man has to outface murder, and will do it with hardihood and effrontery. It is a sort of fashion to express surprise that any notorious criminal, having

such crime upon his conscience, can so brave it out. Do you think that if he had it on his conscience at all, or had a conscience to have it upon, he would ever have committed the crime? Perfectly consistent with himself, as I believe all such monsters to be, this Slinkton recovered himself, and showed a defiance that was sufficiently cold and quiet. He was white, he was haggard, he was changed; but only as a sharper who had played for a great stake and had been outwitted and had lost the game.

In *Household Words* for 14th June 1856, Dickens has an article on ‘The Demeanour of Murderers.’ He is referring to William Bousfield, ‘the greatest villain that ever stood in the Old Bailey dock.’ Bousfield’s demeanour was considered exceedingly remarkable because of his composure under trial. On this Dickens says:

Can any one, reflecting on the matter for five minutes, suppose it possible — we do not say probable, but possible — that in the breast of this poisoner there were surviving, in the days of his trial, any lingering traces of sensibility, or any wrecked fragment of the quality which we call sentiment. Can the profoundest or the simplest man alive believe that in such a heart there could have been left, by that time, any touch of pity?

The murder of Edwin Drood had been so long premeditated that Jasper had done it hundreds and thousands of times in the opium den. The motive was his fierce and wolfish passion for Rosa. He loathed his poor nephew as the chief obstacle to his wishes, and planned out in every detail a murder which would utterly remove him from the sight of men.

Jasper, then, was an unredeemed villain, but he was anything than a fool. He drugged Drood; he strangled him; he put his body in quicklime; he had time to rob the victim of his jewellery; he maintained a threatening and defiant attitude. He was not afraid that Drood would return to convict him of an attempt to murder. He had done his business. I think it worth while to point out that in Dickens’s view Jasper’s malevolence must have been raised to the highest point of fury on the night of the murder. For the murder was committed on a night of the wildest tempest. Trees were almost torn out of the earth, chimneys toppled into the streets, the hands of the cathedral clock were torn off, the lead from the roof was stripped away and blown into the close, and stones were displaced on the summit of the great tower. In *Barnaby Rudge* (chapter ii.) Dickens says:

There are times when the elements being in unusual commotion, those who are bent on daring enterprises, or agitated by great thoughts, whether

of good or evil, feel a mysterious sympathy with the tumult of nature, and are roused into corresponding violence. In the midst of thunder, lightning, and storm, many tremendous deeds have been committed; men, self-possessed before, have given a sudden loose to passions they could no longer control. The demons of wrath and despair have striven to emulate those who ride the whirlwind and direct the storm; and man, lashed into madness with the roaring winds and boiling waters, has become for the time as wild and merciless as the elements themselves.

IV. THE RING

As we have seen, Dickens's method is to make every hint significant, and, as a rule, not too significant. The reader at the time may fail to perceive why a particular point is mentioned, but it is not mentioned carelessly or without design. The backward glance from the end is to interpret all. Besides this there are hints in the novels to which he calls special attention, and which he thereby binds himself to redeem. Conspicuous among these in *Edwin Drood* is the sentence about the jewelled ring and betrothal over which Edwin Drood's right hand closed as it rested in its little case. He would not let Rosa's heart be grieved by those sorrowful jewels. He would restore them to the cabinet from which he had unwillingly taken them, and keep silence. He would let them be. He would let them lie unspoken of in his breast. But Dickens says: 'Among the mighty store of wonderful chains that are for ever forging, day and night, in the vast ironworks of time and circumstance, there was one chain forged in the moment of that small conclusion, riveted to the foundations of heaven and earth, and gifted with invincible force to hold and drag.' No answer to our question, no solution of the problem can be satisfactory which fails to assign its due weight to this sentence. In Proctor's first attempt at the solution of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* contained in *Leisure Readings*, we find the following amazingly inept words: 'From the stress laid on this point, and the clear words in which its association with the mystery is spoken of, we may safely infer, I think, that it is intended partly to mislead the reader.'

Later on, Proctor, seeing the insufficiency of this, propounded another theory. This was that the attempt on Drood and his rescue were known almost immediately to Mr. Grewgious, who took possession of the ring; that when the fact that such a ring had been in Drood's pocket came to Jasper's

knowledge he at once in a state of panic rushed to the vault to recover it from among the quicklime; that Drood, divining this intention, concealed himself in the vault and confronted Jasper the moment he opened the door. This theory is partly approved of by Mr. William Archer. But Dickens's point is plainly that the ring was the only jewellery possessed by Drood about which Jasper knew nothing. It is the finding of the ring in the tomb that is to bring the guilt of the murder home.

As for the numerous assumptions made by Proctor, it can only be said that they have no foundation in the facts. There is no reason to believe that the attempt on Drood and his rescue were known almost immediately to Mr. Grewgious. There is no evidence that Grewgious took possession of the ring. There is no evidence that Jasper came to know that such had been in Drood's pocket. All these theories are not only without foundation, but, I think, also in plain contradiction to the whole tenor of the story.

If Drood was half dead how did he get away? According to Mr. Proctor's ingenious theory he was rescued from the bed of quicklime by Durdles. He was rescued with the skin burnt off his face, and his eyebrows gone, so that he could afterwards disguise himself as Datchery. If this is so, the quicklime must have behaved itself in a singularly obliging and accommodating manner. But, as a matter of fact, there is no evidence whatever for the theory, and the whole drift of the story makes against it. The difficulties are admitted even by those who incline to support Proctor's view and to maintain that Edwin is not dead.

Mr. Lang admits that Proctor's theory of the murder is thin, and that 'all this set of conjectures is crude to the last degree.' I am content to leave it at that. Mr. Lang has conjectures of his own. He conjectures that Mr. Grewgious visited the tomb of his lost love, Rosa's mother, and consecrated to her 'a night of memories and sighs.' He says: 'Mrs. Bud, his lost love, we have been told, was buried hard by the Sapsea monument.' This is not told by Dickens. It is better to stick by the narrative.

Supposing that Edwin was not dead, what was the meaning of the long silence? Why did he allow Neville to rest under a cloud of suspicion, and exposed to great peril? Why did he allow Jasper's persecution of Rosa? Why did he allow Helena Landless, whom he had begun more or less to love, to suffer with the rest? Are we to suppose that he came back disguised to fix the guilt on his uncle? Can we believe that he did not know that his uncle had tried to murder him? If not, are we to believe that he

suspected his uncle and was not sure, and came down to try to surprise his uncle's secret and to punish him? He could only have punished him at most for an attempt at murder. Even that might have been hard to bring home, supposing he himself was not clear as to the facts. 'Fancy can suggest no reason,' writes Mr. Lang, 'why Edwin Drood, if he escaped from his wicked uncle, should go spying about instead of coming openly forward. No plausible, unfantastic reason could be invented.'

Dr. M. R. James, one of the few who still think that Edwin might not have been murdered, says in his last writing on the subject: 'I freely confess that the view that Edwin is dead solves many difficulties. A wholly satisfactory theory of the manner of his escape has never been devised; his failure to clear Neville from suspicion is hard to explain.' Mr. Lang, in what has unhappily proved his last article on the subject, in *Blackwood* for May 1911, explains that while he believed in 1905 that Jasper failed in his attempt to murder, 'now I have no theory as to how the novel would have been built up.'

V.

Those who more or less strongly still believe that Dickens meant to spare Edwin rest their case mainly on a subjective impression. Says Dr. James: 'On the other hand, whether the result would be a piece of "bad art" or not, I do think it is more in Dickens's manner to spare Edwin than to kill him. The subjective impression that he is not doomed is too strong for me to dismiss.' It is difficult to argue against a subjective impression. The fact remains that Edwin Drood becomes superfluous. He has effected no lodgment in any human heart. Mr. Walters says that Drood is little more than a name-label attached to a body, a man who never excites sympathy, and whose fate causes no emotion. Proctor, who believes that Edwin Drood survived, admits that he lived unpaired. 'Rosa was to give her hand to Tartar, Helena Landless to Crisparkle, while Edwin and Mr. Grewgious were to look on approvingly, though Edwin a little sadly.'

Mr. Lang in the Gadshill edition of Dickens wrote: 'Edwin and Neville are quarrelsome cubs, not come to discretion, and the fatuity of Edwin, though not exaggerated much, makes him extremely unsympathetic.' But in his book on the subject Mr. Lang changes his view and writes: 'On re-reading the novel I find that Dickens makes Drood as sympathetic as he can.' Thus impressions alter. Gillan Vase, in her continuation of the story

would make us believe that on Edwin's reappearance Rosa transferred her heart from Tartar to her old lover! But taking the story as it stands, we see that the sorrow for his death is not deep, and that no heart is broken by his disappearance. Rosa is consoled, and more than consoled. Helena grieves for her brother, and flings a shield over Rosa. Neville and Edwin have never been good friends. Grewgious has cheerfully acquiesced in, if he has not instigated, the breaking of the engagement between Rosa and Edwin. The appropriate explanation is: 'Poor youth! Poor youth!' That is all.

It has been suggested that there is a parallel between *No Thoroughfare* and *Edwin Drood*. According to Proctor it is suggested clearly in *No Thoroughfare* that Vendale has been murdered beyond all seeming hope. Proctor's real argument seems to be that Vendale is not marked for death, and does not die, and that Edwin Drood belongs to the same class. He says that Nell and Paul, Richard Carson and the other characters who die in Dickens's stories are marked for death from the beginning, but that there is not one note of death in all that Edwin does or says. I believe that this is entirely contrary to the facts. There are some who like Edwin, but none who love him. He is hated by his uncle, and hated perhaps by Neville.

In *No Thoroughfare*, a story written by Wilkie Collins and Dickens in 1867 as a Christmas Number, we have the story of a man supposed dead coming to life again. It may be noted that the only portions of this story furnished exclusively by Dickens were the overture and the third act. Collins contributed to the first and fourth act, and wrote the whole of the second. Vendale, a wine-merchant, is in love with a Swiss girl, Marguerite. She returns his affection, but her guardian Obenreizer is bitterly opposed. He consents, however, to the marriage if Vendale can double his income and make it £3000 a year. Vendale discovers that a forgery has been committed, through which £500 are missing. He is asked by the Swiss firm with which he deals to send a trustworthy messenger to investigate the fraud and discover its perpetrator. Vendale resolves to go himself, and tells Obenreizer. Obenreizer is the culprit, though Vendale does not suspect it, and the two go to Switzerland together. Obenreizer keeps planning a murder, and contrives to give Vendale an opium draught. He drugs him again, and in the course of a perilous mountain journey Vendale is roused to the knowledge that Obenreizer had set upon him, and that they were struggling desperately in the snow. Vendale rolls himself over into a gulf. But help is near. Marguerite's fears have been excited, and she has

followed her lover on the journey. She engages a rescue expedition, and they find the lost man insensible. He is delirious and quite unconscious where he is. Then he seems to sink in the deadly cold, and his heart no longer beats. 'She broke from them all, and sank over him on his litter with both her living hands upon the heart that stood still.' But by and by, when the crisis of the exposure comes, 'supported on Marguerite's arm — his sunburnt colour gone, his right arm bandaged and slung over his breast — Vendale stood before the murderer a man risen from the dead.' I cannot see that this is a great surprise. Vendale was not marked for death. I think the unsophisticated reader, knowing how he is loved and how he is waited for, and how unconsciousness may pass into consciousness, would fully expect him to live. When he comes to life, he is supported on Marguerite's arm. There was no arm on which Edwin Drood could lean. Dickens can provide for his old bachelors like Newman Noggs, but he had no provision for Edwin.

THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE DISAPPEARANCE THEORY

From the Wrapper. — I am convinced after a careful perusal of nearly all that has been written on the subject that the real strength of the disappearance theory is to be found in the bottom picture of the wrapper. When Madame Perugini published the article from which I have quoted, Mr. Lang in a letter to the *Times* rested his whole case on the cover design. He said:

The chief difficulty in accepting the fact has always been that, in designs on the covers, by Mr. C. A. Collins, first husband of Mrs. Perugini, we see a young man, who is undeniably Edwin Drood, confronting Jasper in a dark vault, in the full light of a lantern held up by Jasper. Mrs. Perugini says that this figure may be regarded as 'the ghost of Edwin as seen by Jasper in his half-dazed and drugged condition,' or Helena Landless 'dressed as Datchery.' The figure is not dressed as Datchery, nor was Miss Landless fair like Drood, but very dark. As for the ghost, he is as substantial as Jasper, and it is most improbable that Dickens would have a mere hallucination designed in such a substantial fashion, 'massive and concrete,' as Pip said of Mr. Wopsle's rendering of the part of Hamlet.

Mr. Lang in his final *Blackwood* paper repeats the assertion with unhesitating confidence. He goes so far as to say:

Last, Dickens had instructed his son-in-law, Charles Collins (brother of Wilkie Collins), to design a pictorial cover of the numbers, in which Jasper, entering a dark vault with a lantern, finds a substantial shadow-casting Drood ‘in his habit as he lived,’ — soft conical hat and all, — confronting him.

As to this we note:

1. That Collins received no such instructions.
2. That neither Collins nor Luke Fildes nor any of the Dickens family read the illustration in that sense. They all supposed Edwin to be dead.
3. We also note that, in spite of Mr. Lang’s confident assertions, there is no unanimity as to the meaning of the design. It may be Drood; it may be, as I think it is, Datchery; it may be Neville Landless, as Mr. Hugh Thomson has suggested. But no one is entitled to dogmatise on the subject.
4. As I have already pointed out, in the great majority of the wrappers the designs are vague and general, and cannot be verified in the narrative.
5. But to my mind the most conclusive proof that the wrapper is not to be rigidly and pedantically interpreted is that Dickens himself was the very last man in the world to give away his secrets on the cover. On this Madame Perugini has said all that needs to be said. I am glad to find that in his last review of the controversy Dr. M. R. James makes no mention of the wrapper evidence.

‘WHEN SHALL THESE THREE MEET AGAIN?’

It appears that certain readers have taken the heading of chapter xiv., ‘When shall these three meet again?’ as an argument for the theory that Drood reappears. If the use of the quotation has any special interest a very good interpretation has been supplied by Mr. Edwin Charles. Mr. Charles points out that the words are used in *Macbeth* before the three witches meet again to plant in Macbeth’s mind the tragical lust of ambition. He slays Duncan, who is at once his guest, his kinsman, and his king. And Duncan’s sons, also guests of Macbeth, fly respectively to England and Ireland, and Macbeth uses the flight to spread suspicion against them. ‘We hear our bloody cousins are bestow’d in England and in Ireland: not confessing their cruel parricide.’ Jasper is Edwin Drood’s kinsman and guardian and host. Jasper slays his nephew, and contrives that the suspicion of his murder shall fall on his other guest, Neville Landless, who has to leave Cloisterham. Is this a chance parallel? Does the use of the words in the heading of the

chapter prove that Dickens had the tragedy of *Macbeth* in his mind? Mr. Charles not only thinks so, but he holds that the quotation positively destroys any shadow of doubt as to what was intended to be the fate of Edwin. Mr. Charles also notes that Dickens makes another reference to Macbeth in the story when he records the dinner which Grewgious gave to Edwin and Bazzard at Staple Inn. Speaking of the leg of the flying waiter Dickens says that 'it always preceded him and the tray by some seconds, and always lingered after he disappeared,' adding, 'like Macbeth's leg when accompanying him off the stage with reluctance to the assassination of Duncan.'

There is not much to reply to in the argument, but the reply is, to say the least, sufficient.

'EDWIN DROOD IN HIDING'

Another argument has been drawn from the tentative titles written by Dickens here first printed in full. Two of them are 'The Flight of Edwin Drood,' and 'Edwin Drood in Hiding.' On this Mr. Lang writes in the *Morning Post* that, though the titles do not go with the idea that Edwin was to be slain early, Dickens may have intended the titles to mislead his readers, and may have rejected them because he felt them to be too misleading. This I believe to be the exact truth. Dickens was willing to have as much mystery as possible, but he soon perceived that it would not suit his purpose to raise the question whether Edwin was dead or alive.

THE MANNER OF THE MURDER

In Dr. Jackson's book on the subject there is a very able discussion on the manner in which the murder was accomplished. Dr. Jackson inquires: (1) Where and how did Jasper murder Drood, or attempt to murder him? (2) Where and how did Jasper dispose of Drood's body, or attempt to dispose of it? For myself, I believe that the manner of the murder is part of the mystery to be solved as the book proceeds. In this I am in general agreement with Proctor. It would be vain to guess what happened on that stormy night. To give the details definitely would have been to give them prematurely, for much of the interest of the novel is to depend on their unfolding. But certain suggestions may be offered. Dr. Jackson holds that significance is to be attached to Jasper's babblings in the presence of the opium woman. He tells her that he has in his mind the tower of the cathedral, a perilous journey over abysses with an indispensable fellow-

traveller. Also that when the journey was really made there was 'no struggle, no consciousness of peril, no entreaty,' but that 'a poor, mean, miserable thing,' which was nevertheless real, lay 'down below at the bottom.' Dr. Jackson thinks that we have here Jasper's confession of the place and the manner of the crime. 'He had ascended the tower with Edwin, and he had seen Edwin's body lying down below, presumably at the foot of the staircase by which they had ascended.'

Mr. Walters thinks that Drood was to be encountered near the cathedral, drugged and then strangled with the black silk scarf that Jasper wore round his own neck. Mr. Proctor and Mr. Lang suppose that Jasper partially strangled Drood near the cathedral, and then deposited his body in the Sapsea monument. They do not explain 'the perilous journey over abysses.' The babblings of the opium den become intelligible if Jasper flung or pushed Drood down the staircase of the tower. But if Drood was attacked outside the cathedral on level ground they are 'unjustifiable mystifications.'

Dr. Jackson further argues that in chapter xii., 'A Night with Durdles,' is a rehearsal of the coming tragedy. He thinks that when Durdles sleeps Jasper makes a wax impression of a key with which Durdles had opened the outside door of the crypt and the door between the crypt and the cathedral. He finds quicklime in the crypt. Then he flings or pushes Drood, who is drugged, down the staircase, and deposits his body in the quicklime in the crypt. Else why did Jasper make a careful study of the tower with Durdles?

My friend and colleague, Miss Jane T. Stoddart, kindly sends me the following:

Some critics have failed to realise the extreme importance of the Sapsea monument in connection with the murder. It has been suggested by Professor Jackson that Jasper buried the body in a heap of lime in the crypt of the cathedral. But crypts are semi-public places, and if heaps of lime were about workmen would be coming and going. In no case could a corpse lie unnoticed on the open floor of a crypt for more than a few hours. All the evidence points rather to the Sapsea monument in the graveyard as the murderer's chosen hiding-place. Observe how Dickens distinguishes between tombs and monuments, clearly meaning by the latter those massive vault-like erections of stone which are often seen in old churchyards, and which have the dimensions of small chambers with a corridor. Durdles says in chapter V.: "Say that hammer of mine's a wall — my work. Two; four; and two is six," measuring on the pavement. "Six foot inside that wall is Mrs. Sapsea."

"Not really Mrs. Sapsea?" asks Jasper.

“Say Mrs. Sapsea. Her wall’s thicker, but say Mrs. Sapsea. Durdles taps that wall represented by that hammer, and says, after good sounding: ‘Something betwixt us!’ Sure enough, some rubbish has been left in that same six-foot space by Durdles’s men!”

There is therefore a ‘six-foot’ vacant space at least in the Sapsea monument, left, no doubt, for the reception at some far distant date of the Mayor’s body. Within this place Jasper decides to deposit the remains of his victim. I do not agree with the critics who fancy there was a Sapsea vault in the crypt. The monument is in the full light of day, for in chapter xii. the Mayor is walking near the churchyard ‘on the look-out for a blushing and retiring stranger.’ And in chapter xviii. he calls Datchery’s attention to this ‘small lion’ in the churchyard. Mrs. Sapsea, we are distinctly told, is buried within the monument, not in any subterranean vault in the crypt.

THE ‘NIGHT WITH DURDLES’

We come now to the night of the mysterious expedition of Jasper and Durdles, when they climb the Cathedral Tower in the moonlight, and when Durdles lies in a drugged sleep on the floor of the crypt. Jasper has been very active during this interval. How has his time been spent? His first business, after possessing himself of the key of the crypt, must have been to search in the bundle carried by Durdles for the key of the Sapsea monument. We have repeatedly been told of his interest in the bundle, into which (see chapter iv.) he had seen Durdles drop this particular key. The inscription had been placed on the monument, but we are to understand that the key had not yet been returned to the Mayor. Having secured this key, Jasper leaves the building, and by some means which can only be conjectured conveys quicklime to the monument, and places it in readiness in the empty space. He may have gone back to the yard-gate where Durdles had showed him the mound of lime, but this would have been a very risky proceeding, as the ‘hole in the city wall’ occupied by Durdles was beyond Minor Canon Corner, the Monks’ Vineyard, and the Travellers’ Twopenny. Even in the dead of night, sharp eyes in the lodging-house (Deputy’s, for instance) might have seen a man go by wheeling lime in a barrow or carrying it in a sack. It is far more probable that the lime was found nearer to the cathedral.

It has been suggested, further, that Jasper, while away from Durdles, took a wax model of the key of the crypt, which also opens the door at the top of

the steps leading from the crypt to the cathedral. The Dean (it is presumed by Professor Jackson) has already entrusted him with another key, that of the iron gate which gives access to the Tower. We are told that Durdles 'bears the close scrutiny of his companion in an insensible way, although it is prolonged while the latter fumbles among his pockets for a key confided to him that will open an iron gate, so to enable him to pass to the staircase of the great Tower.'

Visitors to cathedrals to-day usually find that the key of the tower staircase is in charge of the chief verger, and Jasper would have no difficulty in obtaining a loan of it from this functionary for one night, though hardly for a longer period, as visitors would be coming and going.

Dr. Jackson supposes that the Dean lent his key to the choirmaster, and assumes that, before the expedition with Durdles, Jasper has already taken a wax model of it. If he did so, it must have been in the interval between locking-up time, when we find him (see chapter xii.) conversing with the Dean and the verger, and the time of his changing his coat to go out on the expedition. But Dickens tells us that Mr. Jasper withdrew to his piano, and sat chanting choir music in a low and beautiful voice for two or three hours; 'in short, until it has been for some time dark, and the moon is about to rise.' I take it, then (1) that the iron key was lent to Jasper by the verger for use in this nocturnal expedition; (2) that no wax model of it has been made up to the time of starting; (3) that the verger will look for the return of the key next day.

It seems to me most unlikely that Jasper took a wax model of the crypt key or the key to the iron gate, either on the night of his wandering with Durdles, or at any other time. If he took any wax model, it was that of the key to the Sapsea monument. He used the crypt key merely to let himself out of the building and in again. May not the simplest explanation be that he unlocked the door of the monument, leaving it merely closed, so that a turn of the iron handle would admit him on the night of the murder? According to the picture at the foot of the cover the door seems to have a handle.

I find it difficult to believe that Jasper would order duplicates of two large and unusual-looking keys to be made from wax models by a locksmith in Cloisterham. Such an order would have excited curiosity and perhaps unfavourable surmises in a town where Jasper was so well known. I should expect a curious stare if I carried wax models of church keys even to a

locksmith in a London suburb; and Jasper had no time during the week before Christmas to make a journey to London. He was not himself a worker in iron like Roland Graeme in *The Abbot*, who at the cost of much time and labour forged a bunch of keys almost exactly resembling those carried by the lady of Lochleven.

On the night of the murder — that wild and stormy Christmas Eve — Jasper brought Edwin into the churchyard on some pretext, after partially stupefying him with the ‘good stuff’ which affects the brain so speedily. He may have persuaded him to drink to the dawn of Christmas, as Faust proposed to quaff the cup of poison to the rising Easter dawn:

Der letzte Trunk sei nun, mit ganzer Seele,
Als festlich hoher Gruss, dem Morgen zugebracht.

It is after midnight when the murderer and his victim are abroad together. At that hour the ‘streets are empty,’ and only the storm goes thundering along them. The precincts ‘are unusually dark to-night.’ No need, then, for Jasper to fear detection as he slips the great silk scarf over Edwin’s head and pulls it tightly round his throat. ‘No struggle, no consciousness of peril, no entreaty — and yet I never saw that before.’

The maundering talk of Jasper in the opium woman’s den need not be taken literally. The difficult and dangerous journey ‘over abysses where a slip would be destruction’ may have no reference to the actual tower, but to the perils of the scheme and the risk of detection. Among other modes of killing, however, the idea of flinging Edwin from the tower may have occurred to Jasper, and been abandoned. Hence his outcry, ‘Look down! look down! You see what lies at the bottom there!’

Dr. Jackson thinks Jasper departed so far from his original plan that he chose the crypt instead of the Sapsea monument as a hiding-place. I think it far more likely that, if ever he intended to hurl Edwin from the tower, he set aside this plan when he found that it meant the making of two duplicate keys. Suppose that in the days following the crime, when the names of Edwin Drood and Jasper were in every mouth in Cloisterham, a small tradesman in some obscure lane were to ask his neighbours why the choirmaster needed these two large keys. The conjecture might be sufficient to destroy him.

I venture to think that Miss Stoddart is right in assigning the place of the body to the Sapsea monument, but I incline to agree with Dr. Jackson that, in order to do justice to the ‘Night with Durdles,’ and the confessions to the

opium woman, we must give some place to the tower as connected with the murder. But I do not understand how Jasper should have seen Drood lying beneath him dead if he had merely pushed him down the tower stairs. Would it not have been more likely that Jasper should have pushed Drood from the galleries, and seen him fall into the space beneath? We cannot lay great stress on the topography of Cloisterham. The Sapsea monument is a pure invention, having no counterpart in Rochester, and Dickens manifestly used the utmost freedom in dealing with his materials. Mr. Lang, by the way, makes a strange mistake in saying, 'As he walks with Durdles that worthy explains (in reply to a question by Jasper) that, by tapping a wall, even if over six feet thick, with his hammer, he can detect the nature of the contents of the vault.' The wall is not six feet thick. The words are: 'six foot inside that wall is Mrs. Sapsea.'

It was for Dickens to explain in the remaining part of the novel how the murder was achieved, and no one has a right to say that he would have failed in doing so. His object is to leave upon us the impression of a murder which was in a singular degree premeditated, ferocious, and complete. If Dr. Jackson is right in supposing that Drood was thrown from the tower, in addition to his being drugged, strangled, and laid in quicklime, Dickens gives us a fresh thrill of horror.

CHAPTER VI — WHO WAS DATCHERY?

In discussing this problem we have no aid from external evidence. It seems that the question was not raised by the critics of the time. We are thrown upon internal evidence, and not only the internal evidence of the book, but the evidence given by a study of Dickens's methods. We have also, as I hope to show, some help given indirectly from Dickens's own biography, and in particular from a book by Wilkie Collins.

It will be convenient at this stage that we should discuss the exact position of affairs after Edwin vanished from the scene.

To us who read the book, Jasper's guilt is so plain and his character so atrocious that we wonder why those who knew him did not at once suspect his guilt. To us Jasper is a self-confessed criminal with his doom already written, but to his neighbours at Cloisterham he presented himself in a wholly different aspect. The Dean himself is not more obviously a pattern of virtuous living. Jasper occupies a conspicuous set of rooms. His fire burns, his red light glimmers, his curtains are drawn, in sight of all the town. He is young, good-looking, socially attractive, and occupied in an almost sacred profession. His duties as choirmaster raise him far above the position of a provincial teacher of music. On Sundays and weekdays the people hear his voice in Psalms and Canticles and Anthems. Edwin expresses the truth about his uncle's standing when he says: 'I should have put in the foreground your being so much respected as Lay Precentor, or Lay Clerk, or whatever you call it, of this Cathedral; your enjoying the reputation of having done such wonders with the choir; your choosing your society, and holding such an independent position in this queer old place.' Mrs. Crisparkle remarks on his 'well-bred consideration,' and his pallor as of 'gentlemanly ashes.' When the story opens there is not a soul in Cloisterham who breathes a word of scandal against him, and his real nature is suspected by only two living persons known to us. One is Rosa Bud, whom he has terrified by his secret love-making; the other the opium woman in London, who has heard strange mutterings in his drugged sleep which to her were not wholly 'unintelligible.' The Dean's fear is that 'Mr. Jasper's heart may be too much set on his nephew.' Nocturnal ramblings with the disreputable Durdles suggest nothing more surprising to the Dean

than that Jasper means to write a book about the place. His visits to London are so carefully timed that he is rarely absent from the daily services. He is a favourite with his landlady, Mrs. Tope, and to mothers with marriageable daughters he must appear a very eligible young bachelor. Who could dream that a man of twenty-six, refined, highly educated, and agreeable, should seek his private recreation in an opium den?

Eight or nine months pass away, and at the point where the story closes Jasper is to all appearance still safe and prosperous. But already the avengers are upon his track, and we shall find it possible from the indications given in the book to show that there were at least six persons designed to have a share in the final capture.

The first mind in which suspicion lodges is clearly that of Mr. Grewgious, and he has taken his impressions of Jasper from Rosa and from Helena Landless. From his interview with Rosa in chapter ix. he learned that the young bride-elect wished to have nothing to do with Jasper. 'I don't like Mr. Jasper to come between us,' she said, 'in any way.' After the murder, when Grewgious comes to Jasper's rooms he has already seen Rosa and Helena Landless, and the latter must have told him of the persecution to which Rosa has been subjected. When Jasper utters a terrible shriek and falls to the ground in a swoon, his companion stands by the fire, warming his hands, and looking curiously at the prostrate figure. He refuses to eat with Jasper, and treats him from that time onwards as 'a brigand and wild beast in combination.' He keeps a personal watch on his movements in Staple Inn, and it is doubtless with his connivance and support that Datchery goes to Cloisterham. Are not these significant words of Grewgious in chapter xxi. to Rosa and Crisparkle: 'When one is in a difficulty, or at a loss, one never knows in what direction a way out may chance to open. It is a business principle of mine, in such a case, not to close up any direction, but to keep an eye on every direction that may present itself. I could relate an anecdote in point, but that it would be premature.' In that last sentence may not Grewgious refer to the plan for sending Datchery to Cloisterham?

When the novel breaks off, Grewgious is working against Jasper, but only on strong suspicion. If Rosa had reported to him Jasper's exact words in her final interview with him, that suspicion may have been heightened to certainty. The part allotted to him in the ultimate crisis is that of identifying the remains of Edwin, now hardly distinguishable otherwise, owing to the

action of quicklime in the Sapsea tomb, by means of the ring which was on the young man's person at the time of his murder, and which possessed invincible powers to hold and drag. After giving the ring to Edwin Mr. Grewgious had said 'Her ring. Will it come back to me? My mind hangs about her ring very uneasily to-night. But this is explainable. I have had it so long, and I have prized it so much. I wonder — '

The ring will come back to him from the dust of death.

THE PRINCIPLES OF DISGUISE

It is universally admitted that Datchery was disguised.

Before seeking to identify him with a character already known to us I shall give a short note on the principles and limitations of disguise. Suppose one wishes to disguise himself, how far is it possible for him to succeed? What are the limits within which success is possible?

The question was very carefully discussed in the *Berliner Tageblatt* for 15th May 1912, under the title 'On the Psychology of Dissimulation.' The author, Dr. Hugo Eick, uses the word *Verstellung* entirely in the sense of mental disguise or purposeful deception. In the closing paragraph he limits the possibilities. His remarks on this question are not without value for the students of certain literary problems.

According to Dr. Eick, the really fundamental things which can never be imitated are all manifestations of positive life. For example, we cannot simulate courage, enthusiasm, humility. It is true that we can reproduce certain distinctive marks of courage and enthusiasm which may deceive the inexperienced; but the essence of these qualities can be expressed only by a person who has experienced them, and who possesses them. A brave man may simulate timidity and cowardice, the man who is capable of enthusiasm may wear the mask of apathetic indolence; all depressive and negative conditions may be imitated. But fulness of life and the sap which quickens it cannot be replaced by any dissimulation. The stupid person may persuade another stupid person to believe in his cleverness. But it is impossible to counterfeit cleverness before a clever person unless we possess a minimum of cleverness, because a certain amount of cleverness is needed for the deception itself. The real tone of truth's voice can no more be copied than the fiery gleam of enthusiasm. At this point all the arts of deception fail; the voice contradicts the words. The man who possesses something of these qualities of soul can indeed simulate higher degrees of

the same qualities, and can exploit them in unlimited measure. But the elemental things of life are inimitable, and lie beyond the reach of falsehood. He who imitates an elemental thing is immediately discovered — supposing, of course, that the discoverer has himself some share in the element.

THE NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS

The idea that Datchery is a new character may safely be dismissed. It is in one of the characters already on the stage that we must find Datchery. I might proceed by taking the characters one by one, and by a process of exhaustion arrive at Datchery. But a simpler way may be to enumerate the qualifications required in Datchery, and to show that one character of the story possesses them all. The claims of the other characters may be then discussed.

Datchery is assigned the task of collecting and co-ordinating all the evidence of diverting suspicion from the innocent Neville Landless, and fixing it on the true criminal. In order to do this satisfactorily he required a combination of qualities.

1. We need mental alertness and ability. Stupidity would be fatal.
2. We need high courage and firm resolution.
3. We need an individual who is at once fearless and skilful, one who knows the art of disguise, one who can assume a new character and carry through the assumption to a triumphant end.
4. We need supremely a character whose whole heart goes with the effort at detection. There must be behind all his actions a passionate, personal, intimate concern. These requirements, I believe, are satisfied in Helena Landless, and in Helena Landless alone. The identification is naturally received at first with a certain measure of incredulity and surprise, but a careful and patient study of the story will confirm it.

The theory was put forth by Mr. Cuming Walters in 1905 in his book *Clues to Dickens's 'Mystery of Edwin Drood.'* It is one of the most brilliant conjectures or identifications in literary history. In arguing for its truth I must follow largely on the lines of Mr. Cuming Walters, but I hope to supply some fresh and fortifying considerations.

HELENA LANDLESS

No one will ever understand this problem unless he studies the method of Dickens as explained by Dickens himself in his letter to Wilkie Collins

(page 92), and in his reply to the *Edinburgh*, (page 105). Dickens is supremely an artist, and he tries to insert nothing without a purpose. Sometimes his hints are intended to help at the time, sometimes to mislead temporarily. Sometimes they are intended to be plain when the end is reached, and the reader peruses the story in the light of the conclusion.

1. Helena has the mental alertness and ability which qualified her for the task. It is interesting to see from the original manuscript and the proofs how Dickens kept raising and lowering the lights which fell upon the Landlesses. We have seen from the original manuscript in chapter vi. how Dickens heightened his description of the pair. He changed 'A handsome young fellow, and a handsome girl; both dark and rich in colour,' into 'An unusually handsome, lithe young fellow, and an unusually handsome, lithe girl; much alike; both very dark, and very rich in colour.' He emphasises Helena's personal characteristics: 'Slender, supple, quick of eye and limb; half shy, half defiant; fierce of look; an indefinable kind of pause coming and going on their whole expression, both of face and form, which might be equally likened to the pause before a crouch or a bound.' She fought her way through her tragical childhood, was beaten by a cruel stepfather, and would have allowed him to 'tear her to pieces before she would have let him believe that he could make her shed a tear.' 'She had a masterful look.' Rosa said to her: 'You seem to have resolution and power enough to crush me. I shrink into nothing by the side of your presence.' But it is soon manifest that Helena has a tender heart. She and her brother came to the Crisparkles 'to quarrel with you, and affront you, and break away again.' But they are touched by Mr. Crisparkle's kindness, and Helena is more than touched. Neville tells Crisparkle that in describing his own imperfections he is not describing his sister's. 'She has come out of the disadvantages of our miserable life, as much better than I am as that cathedral tower is higher than these chimneys.' Describing the misery of their childhood to Crisparkle, Neville says: 'You ought to know, to her honour, that nothing in our misery ever subdued her, though it often cowed me. When we ran away from it (we ran away four times in six years, to be soon brought back and cruelly punished), the flight was always of her planning and leading. Each time she dressed as a boy, and showed the daring of a man. I take it we were seven years old when we first decamped.' He says again to Crisparkle: 'You don't know, sir, what a complete understanding can exist

between my sister and me, though no spoken word — perhaps hardly as much as a look — may have passed between us.’

2. She has been from the beginning a born planner and leader. She has shown the daring of a man. When her brother lost the pocket-knife with which she was to have cut her hair short, she tried desperately to tear it out or to bite it off. Yet this strong and fiercely passionate girl had herself under the strictest control.

She had no fear of Jasper. Rosa, Helena, Neville, Jasper, and Edwin meet in Crisparkle’s drawing-room. Rosa is singing under the control of Jasper. She bursts into tears and shrieks out: ‘I can’t bear this! I am frightened! Take me away!’ Helena immediately comes to the rescue, and with one swift turn of her lithe figure lays the little beauty on a sofa. Edwin says to Jasper:

‘You are such a conscientious master, and require so much, that I believe you make her afraid of you. No wonder.’

‘No wonder,’ repeated Helena.

‘There, Jack, you hear! You would be afraid of him, under similar circumstances, wouldn’t you, Miss Landless?’

‘Not under any circumstances,’ returned Helena.

This to my mind is the first unmistakable suggestion of what was to be developed. Here we have Jasper and Helena falling into enmity almost at the first moment of their meeting, challenging one another to battle. Helena accepts the challenge. Not under any circumstances would she be afraid of Jasper. She lives to redeem that word.

3. Dickens expressly tells us that Helena from her childhood was accustomed to disguise herself as a boy. ‘When we ran away from it (we ran away four times in six years, to be soon brought back and cruelly punished), the flight was always of her planning and leading. Each time she dressed as a boy, and showed the daring of a man.’ This is the strongest reason for the identification of Helena with Datchery. I find it difficult to suppose that any careful student of Dickens will believe that these facts about Helena’s disguise were put in without intent. It was one of those facts which Dickens intended his readers to interpret by the backward look. Those who were amazed when Datchery appeared as Helena would be referred back to the significant words which they had missed.

Helena protects her unhappy brother in London, and plans against his enemies. She surmises that ‘Neville’s movements are watched, and that the

purpose of his foes is to isolate him from all friends and acquaintances, and wear out his daily life grain by grain.' She secures the help of Mr. Tartar.

In her conference with Grewgious, Helena plans for checkmating Jasper, and inquires whether 'it would be best to wait until any more maligning and pursuing of Neville on the part of this wretch shall disclose itself, or to try to anticipate it.'

4. Helena's whole heart went with the effort at detection. We have seen her hatred of Jasper. In the conversation between Helena and Rosa about Drood and Jasper, Rosa betrays her horror of Jasper and his mesmeric power over her, which makes her ashamed and passionately hurt. They resume on the same strain.

Says Rosa:

'But you said to-night that you would not be afraid of him, under any circumstances, and that gives me — who am so much afraid of him — courage to tell only you. Hold me! Stay with me! I am too frightened to be left by myself.'

The lustrous gipsy-face drooped over the clinging arms and bosom, and the wild black hair fell down protectingly over the childish form. There was a slumbering gleam of fire in the intense dark eyes, though they were then softened with compassion and admiration. Let whomsoever it most concerned look well to it!

This last sentence is another of the unmistakably prophetic sentences in Dickens. Helena was the sworn champion thenceforth of Rosa against Jasper. Helena submits herself to the fairy bride and learns from her what she knows. When Jasper is mentioned and Rosa says, 'I could not hold any terms with him, could I?' Helena answers with indignation, 'You know how I love you, darling. But I would sooner see you dead at his wicked feet.'

As to the close and tender affection between Helena and Neville, and her vehement sympathy with his trial, there is no question. I quote one passage because it seems to me a most striking fact that in the proofs of Dickens the whole of it is struck out:

'I don't think so,' said the Minor Canon. 'There is duty to be done here; and there are womanly feeling, sense, and courage wanted here.'

'I meant,' explained Neville, 'that the surroundings are so dull and unwomanly, and that Helena can have no suitable friend or society here.'

'You have only to remember,' said Mr. Crisparkle, 'that you are here yourself, and that she has to draw you into the sunlight.'

They were silent for a little while, and then Mr. Crisparkle began anew.

‘When we first spoke together, Neville, you told me that your sister had risen out of the disadvantages of your past lives as superior to you as the tower of Cloisterham Cathedral is higher than the chimneys of Minor Canon Corner. Do you remember that?’

‘Right well!’

‘I was inclined to think it at the time an enthusiastic flight. No matter what I think it now. What I would emphasise is, that under the head of Pride your sister is a great and opportune example to you.’

‘Under *all* heads that are included in the composition of a fine character, she is.’

‘Say so; but take this one. . . . She can dominate it even when it is wounded through her sympathy with you. . . . Every day and hour of her life since Edwin Drood’s disappearance she has faced malignity and folly for you as only a brave nature well directed can. So it will be with her to the end . . . [pride] which knows no shrinking, and can get no mastery over her.’

Immediately after, Neville says: ‘I will do all I can to imitate her.’

‘Do so, and be a truly brave man, as she is a truly brave woman,’ answered Mr. Crisparkle stoutly. In his proof Dickens struck out the words, ‘as she is a truly brave woman.’

It is impossible, I think, to read this and not to see that Dickens is afraid that we may too soon suspect Helena Landless of being Datchery.

Neville’s sufferings under the suspicion are unmistakable and cruel. When Crisparkle saw him he wished that his eyes were not quite so large and quite so bright. ‘I want more sun to shine upon you.’ Neville tells him that he feels marked and tainted even when he goes out at night, and he never goes out in the day. He says, though Dickens did not mean us to read the sentence: ‘It seems a little hard to be so tied to a stake, and innocent; but I don’t complain.’

Such are the main reasons that induce me to believe that Helena is Datchery. It is admitted on all hands that she was meant to play an important part in the story. What part does she play if she is not Datchery?

DATCHERY’S WISTFUL GAZE

But the proof that impresses me as much as any other is to be found in the passage: ‘John Jasper’s lamp is kindled and his lighthouse is shining

when Mr. Datchery returns alone towards it. As mariners on a dangerous voyage, approaching an iron-bound coast, may look along the beams of the warning light to the haven lying beyond it that may never be reached, so Mr. Datchery's wistful gaze is directed to this beacon and beyond.' The detective of whom this is written cannot possibly be a mere detective. His heart is engaged in the search. This fits Helena, and Helena only, of all the characters that have been brought forward. A professional detective paid by Grewgious could never have behaved in that way. Helena's whole heart was in the business. She had to relieve her fondly-loved brother from a cruel weight of anxiety and suspicion. She had to bring a villain whose baseness she thoroughly knew to justice. She had to liberate the girl friend she loved from persecution, and she looked to a beyond, to the haven — the haven of Crisparkle's love.

DATCHERY'S WIG

Datchery wears a wig, and it is unusually large, as though a woman's hair were concealed under it. As Mr. Cuming Walters also points out, Helena undoubtedly had a strong motive for not sacrificing her hair to the disguise, for she was unmistakably in love with Crisparkle.

DATCHERY'S HANDS

There is no doubt that if Datchery was Helena, one of her chief difficulties must have been with her hands.

Miss Stirling Graeme, the author of *Mystifications*, had a marvellous power of disguising herself. 'There was nothing extraordinary about her,' says Dr. John Brown, 'but let her put on the old lady; it was as if a warlock spell had passed over her; not merely her look, but her nature was changed: her spirit had passed into the character she represented; and jest, quick retort, whimsical fancy, the wildest nonsense flowed from her lips, with a freedom and truth to nature which appeared to be impossible in her own personality.'

Sir Walter Scott in his *Journal* for 7th March 1828 tells us that when she returned to her party in the character of an old Scottish lady she deceived every one. 'The prosing account she gave of her son, the antiquary, who found an auld wig in a slate quarry, was extremely ludicrous, and she puzzled the Professor of Agriculture with a merciless account of the succession of crops in the parks around her old mansion-house. No person to whom the secret was not entrusted had the least guess of an impostor,

except one shrewd young lady present, who observed the hand narrowly, and saw it was plumper than the age of the lady seemed to warrant.'

In the *Daily Mail* of 4th April 1912 there is an account of two girls who lived together, passing as husband and wife. The man with whom they lodged said: 'The husband's hands were so small and soft that both my wife and myself were suspicious.'

I ask the attention of readers to the manner in which Dickens refers to Datchery's hands. I do not lay too much stress on these indications, but they deserve consideration.

1. We read in chapter xviii. about Datchery in the coffee-room of the Crozier, 'as he stood with his back to the empty fireplace waiting for his fried sole, veal cutlet, and pint of sherry.' ('Empty' was an afterthought on Dickens's part.) Here we have Datchery keeping his hands out of view.

2. A little after, Datchery asks the waiter to take his hat down for a moment from the peg. If he had stretched out his own hand it might have been noticed.

3. Later in the same chapter, when Datchery meets Jasper and the Mayor, he does not shake hands with them. "I beg pardon," said Mr. Datchery, making a leg with his hat under his arm.' Originally this was written 'hat in hand.' If he carried his hat under his arm, one hand would be buried in the hat.

4. Afterwards we read of Datchery following Jasper and the Mayor, 'with his hat under his arm, and his shock of white hair streaming in the evening breeze.'

5. When Datchery is talking to the opium woman, 'he lounges along, like the chartered bore of the city, with his uncovered grey hair blowing about, and his purposeless hands rattling the loose money in the pockets of his trousers.' His hands are thus out of sight. Immediately after we find him 'still rattling his loose money,' and again, 'still rattling.'

6. At last he begins to count out the sum demanded of him by the opium woman. 'Greedily watching his hands, she continues to hold forth on the great example set him.' Of course, she may merely be watching for the money in his hands, but there may be something more in it than this. Let it be noted that Dickens originally wrote, 'Greedily watching him,' and inserted 'his hands' later.

7. Immediately after 'Mr. Datchery drops some money, stoops to pick it up.' In all the scene with the opium woman he keeps his hands out of sight

as much as possible, and when he does show them they strike the old woman.

I may add, though much has been said about the possibility of detecting by means of the voice, this does not appear by any means to be impossible, or even very difficult. Only one meeting between Jasper and Helena is recorded. Her voice is described as low and rich. Even if he had talked with Datchery, it is more than doubtful whether he would have known the voice again, music-master though he was. Datchery, if our supposition is right, was an expert in disguise, and could have carried it off. I find in the pleasant *Recollections and Impressions* of Mrs. Sellar that she had no difficulty in deceiving her nearest friends. She tells us how one day, when Sir David and Lady Brewster were dining with the Sellars at St. Andrews, after dinner Lady Brewster begged her to dress up and take in Sir David:

““But what will account for my absence?””

““Oh, you have been obliged to go to bed with one of your headaches; and I’ll introduce the stranger.””

‘So I went upstairs, put on a false front, and was announced as Miss Craig. On the gentlemen coming in I was specially introduced to Sir David, but not being at all attractive-looking, he soon left me for younger and fairer friends! Determined he should take some notice of me, I said I would not play the piano unless Sir David asked me; and on this being told him he muttered: “God bless the woman! what does she mean! I don’t know her.”’

Mr. Lang says: ‘A young lady of my acquaintance successfully passed herself off on her betrothed as her own cousin — also a young lady — and Dickens had not to imagine anything so unlikely as that.’

To this I may add that Scott tells a story of Garrick and his wife. Mrs. Garrick was an accomplished actress, but once she witnessed an entertainment in which was introduced a farmer giving his neighbours an account of the wonders seen on a visit to London. The character was received with such peals of applause that Mrs. Garrick began to think it rivalled those which had been so lately lavished on Richard the Third. At last she observed her little spaniel dog was making efforts to get towards the balcony which separated him from the facetious farmer. Then she became aware of the truth. ‘How strange,’ she said, ‘that a dog should know his master, and a woman, in the same circumstances, should not recognise her husband!’

THE ORIGIN OF DICKENS’S IDEA

So strong is the evidence for Helena Landless being Datchery that even the chief advocates of the Proctor theory have fully admitted its force. Dr. M. R. James says: 'I will go as far as this: if Edwin is dead, then Datchery is Helena.' Mr. Andrew Lang over and over again admitted that Datchery might be Helena. But he contended that, if so, the idea of Dickens is improbable with the worst sort of improbability, is terribly far-fetched, and fails to interest. 'It is the idea of a bad sixpenny novel. We are asked to credit Dickens with the highest scientific skill, and this egregious invention is the result of his science. The idea would have been rejected by Mr. Guy Boothby. But it does not follow that Mr. Walters has not hit on Dickens's idea. If he has, *Edwin Drood* is far below *Count Robert of Paris* in its first uncorrected state, as the public will never know it.'

There is something in this argument, and it has never yet been fairly met, but I believe that I can show that the idea was probably suggested to Dickens by one figure in real life, and another figure in fiction. So far as I am aware these suggestions are made for the first time.

In the *Bancroft Recollections*, Lady Bancroft writes on page 31:

My first part at the Strand Theatre was Pippo, in his burlesque *The Maid and the Magpie*, which proved an immense success, and I established myself as a leading favourite. It was not until the *Life of Charles Dickens* was published that I knew his opinion of this performance. Dickens had written years before, in a letter to John Forster, these words:

'I went to the Strand Theatre, having taken a stall beforehand, for it is always crammed. I really wish you would go to see *The Maid and the Magpie* burlesque there. There is the strangest thing in it that ever I have seen on the stage — the boy Pippo, by Miss Wilton. While it is astonishingly impudent (must be, or it couldn't be done at all), it is so stupendously like a boy, and unlike a woman, that it is perfectly free from offence. I never have seen such a thing. She does an imitation of the dancing of the Christy Minstrels — wonderfully clever — which, in the audacity of its thorough-going, is surprising. A thing that you *cannot* imagine a woman's doing at all; and yet the manner, the appearance, the levity, impulse, and spirits of it are so exactly like a boy, that you cannot think of anything like her sex in association with it. I never have seen such a curious thing, and the girl's talent is unchallengeable. I call her the cleverest girl I have ever seen on the stage in my time, and the most singularly original.'

Lady Bancroft adds: ‘Charles Dickens’s being impressed with my likeness to a boy reminds me that on the first night I acted in *The Middy Ashore*, one of the staff came up to me at the wings and said: “Beg pardon, young sir, you must go back to your seat; no strangers are allowed behind the scenes.”’ From this it must be inferred that Dickens had there that evening a new idea as to the possibilities of disguise. Dickens’s letter was written in 1859.

I believe that Dickens in this Datchery assumption was mainly influenced by Wilkie Collins. Most writers on Dickens have observed his admiration for Collins, the way in which he co-operated with him, and the high value he placed on his work. *The Moonstone* has been referred to in this connection, but I venture to think that the novel which led Dickens to his idea was *No Name*. I have already printed (page 91) Dickens’s wildly enthusiastic testimony to its merits. He placed it far above *The Woman in White*, and far above *The Moonstone*. In particular, he admired the character of Magdalen Vanstone.

In *No Name* we are introduced to a charming family — husband, wife, and two daughters — the Vanstones. Then it turns out that the parents are unmarried. The husband made a great mistake in marrying a bad woman in his early youth, and is nearly ruined in consequence. He induces a good woman to live with him as his wife, and he has a fortune of £80,000. By a singular mischance both he and the mother die suddenly about the same time. Vanstone had made a will leaving his property to the daughters, but just before the death of his wife he discovers that his real wife is dead, and so they go out and get married. The law is that marriage abolishes all past wills. The consequence is that the will is not effective, and the two daughters are left without a penny, and without a name. What are the girls to do? The younger, Magdalen, has great force of character, and shows a talent for the stage. She resolves to revenge herself on her father’s brother who has taken all the money. Instead of going to work as an ordinary actress, she gives performances of her own. She is very clever at acting different parts. She disguises herself as an old woman, and in all sorts of disguises. She is nineteen, almost the age of Helena Landless. Here is a description of the way in which she disguises herself:

I found all the dresses in the box complete — with one remarkable exception. That exception was the dress of the old north-country lady; the character which I have already mentioned as the best of all my pupil’s

disguises, and as modelled in voice and manner on her old governess, Miss Garth. The wig; the eyebrows; the bonnet and veil; the cloak, padded inside to disfigure her back and shoulders; the paints and cosmetics used to age her face and alter her complexion — were all gone. Nothing but the gown remained; a gaudily flowered silk, useful enough for dramatic purposes, but too extravagant in colour and pattern to bear inspection by daylight. The other parts of the dress are sufficiently quiet to pass muster; the bonnet and veil are only old-fashioned, and the cloak is of a sober grey colour. But one plain inference can be drawn from such a discovery as this. As certainly as I sit here, she is going to open the campaign against Noel Vanstone and Mrs. Lecount, in a character which neither of those two persons can have any possible reason for suspecting at the outset — the character of Miss Garth.

What course am I to take under these circumstances? Having got her secret, what am I to do with it? These are awkward considerations; I am rather puzzled how to deal with them.

It is something more than the mere fact of her choosing to disguise herself to forward her own private ends that causes my present perplexity. Hundreds of girls take fancies for disguising themselves; and hundreds of instances of it are related year after year, in the public journals. But my expupil is not to be confounded, for one moment, with the average adventuress of the newspapers. She is capable of going a long way beyond the limit of *dressing herself like a man, and imitating a man's voice and manner*. She has a natural gift for assuming characters, which I have never seen equalled by a woman; and she has performed in public until she has felt her own power, and trained her talent for disguising herself to the highest pitch. A girl who takes the sharpest people unawares by using such a capacity as this to help her own objects in private life; and who sharpens that capacity by a determination to fight her way to her own purpose which has beaten down everything before it, up to this time — is a girl who tries an experiment in deception, new enough and dangerous enough to lead one way or the other, to very serious results. This is my conviction founded on a large experience in the art of imposing on my fellow-creatures. I say of my fair relative's enterprise what I never said or thought of it till I introduced myself to the inside of her box. The chances for and against her winning the fight for her lost fortune are now so evenly balanced that I cannot for the life of me see on which side the scale inclines. All I can

discern is, that it will, to a dead certainty, turn one way or the other on the day when she passes Noel Vanstone's doors in disguise.

I am not prepared to criticise Dickens's plot as Mr. Lang has done. If Wilkie Collins made an admirable heroine of Magdalen Vanstone disguising herself variously, why should not Dickens succeed in making a character as wonderful and more attractive of Helena Landless? There is nothing to be condemned in the idea itself. It has been used by masters, and used successfully. There would have been nothing to condemn, I believe, in Dickens's way of working it out if he had lived to complete his book. The comparison with Guy Boothby is singularly inept.

OBJECTIONS

The objections that have been made to the Datchery-Helena theory turn mainly on the supposed disgracefulness of Dickens deceiving his readers as he did, and working out a melodramatic idea. These objections might have been, and, I believe, would have been, scattered to the winds by the complete story.

The most serious objection to the identification of Datchery as Helena is the confusion in the chronology. This is admirably stated by Dr. Jackson, who examines in a masterly way the arrangement of the chapters. He comes to the conclusion that chapter xviii. has been introduced prematurely. It ought to have followed chapter xxii. If Dickens had lived to issue the fifth and sixth monthly instalments, he would have placed our chapter xviii. without the alteration of a single word after chapter xxii., next before chapter xxiii. We know that Dickens told his sister-in-law that he was afraid the Datchery assumption in the fifth number was premature. Dr. Jackson gives us a full and valuable examination of the manuscript so far as its arrangement is concerned. I have tested his statements in every point, and can only confirm them. To Dr. Jackson's chapter ix., 'The Manuscript,' I refer the reader.

There are other objections. In particular, some are troubled by Datchery's masculine ways. They ask how Helena, fresh from Ceylon, should have known the old tavern way of keeping scores. There is not much in this. In fact, these scores, which could have served no purpose, seem to me the natural expression of a buoyant girl rejoicing in her achievements. A cool-headed, middle-aged detective would never have expressed himself in such a way. Why should not Helena have known

about tavern scoring? She was accustomed to walk with her brother Neville, and in the course of their walks they may very likely have visited a tavern now and then. We read of Neville finding his way to a tavern when he walked away that dark night. In *Phineas Finn*, at the end of chapter lxxi., Trollope, reporting the conversation of two high-born ladies, Lady Laura Kennedy and Miss Violet Effingham, has this:

‘Was I not to forgive him — I who had turned myself away from him with a fixed purpose the moment that I found that he had made a mark upon my heart? I could not wipe off that mark, and yet I married. Was he not to try to wipe off his mark?’

‘It seems that he wiped it off very quickly; and since that he has wiped off another mark. One doesn’t know how many marks he has wiped off. They are like the innkeeper’s score which he makes in chalk. A damp cloth brings them all away, and leaves nothing behind.’

This shows, at least, that chalk-marking is not a matter of esoteric knowledge in England, but is known to high and low. I may note that Dickens inserted the adjective ‘uncouth’ — ‘a few uncouth, chalked strokes’ — over his original manuscript, to make it clear no doubt that the scorer was an amateur at the business.

Then there are objections to Datchery’s masculine fare — fried sole, veal cutlet, and pint of sherry; bread and cheese, and salad and ale. It must be remembered that Helena was in disguise. This was not a mere disguise of dress, but it was a disguise of everything. She was assuming a character and carrying it out. She had all the ability and all the will for accomplishing this. In doing masculine things she was simply carrying out her disguise. A woman passing for a man must do what a man would do or she will fail, and be found out.

It has been suggested that if Datchery is Helena, and therefore knows the Gatehouse, why does she give it ‘a second look of some interest’? Dr. Jackson replies very well that the house for her has now a new importance, and is the object upon which her thoughts are to be concentrated for weeks, and perhaps for months. But Dickens did not mean this passage to be printed, for good reasons of his own.

WHAT DICKENS DID NOT MEAN US TO READ

This leads us to note that certain passages which have been much discussed were not meant for publication by Dickens. That is, he struck

them out in proof. Dr. Jackson points out that in chapter xviii., when Datchery consults the waiter at the Crozier about 'a fair lodging for a single buffer,' he is obviously asking to be recommended to Tope's. The waiter is puzzled at first. When Mr. Datchery asks for 'something venerable, architectural, and inconvenient,' the waiter shakes his head. 'Anything cathedrally, now?' Mr. Datchery suggested. Then comes the mention of Tope. Datchery boggles about the cathedral tower seeking for lodgings, but Dickens did not mean us to read the words: 'With a general impression on his mind that Mrs. Tope's was somewhere very near it, and that, like the children in the game of hot boiled beans and very good butter, he was warm in his search when he saw the tower, and cold when he didn't see it.'

When the Deputy pointed out Jasper's, first Dickens wrote "'Indeed?'" said Mr. Datchery, with an appearance of interest.' Then he wrote: "'Indeed?'" said Mr. Datchery, with a second look of some interest.' Then he struck out the sentence entirely.

Dickens also struck out the sentence which describes Datchery after the Deputy left him: 'Mr. Datchery, taking off his hat to give that shock of white hair of his another shake, seemed quite resigned, and betook himself whither he had been directed.' He also struck out the passage in which Mrs. Tope and Datchery talk of what occurred last winter:

Perhaps Mr. Datchery had heard something of what had occurred there last winter?

Mr. Datchery had as confused a knowledge of the event in question, on trying to recall it, as he well could have. He begged Mrs. Tope's pardon when she found it incumbent on her to correct him in every detail of his summary of the facts, but pleaded that he was merely a single buffer getting through life upon his means as idly as he could, and that so many people were so constantly making away with so many other people as to render it difficult for a buffer of an easy temper to preserve the circumstances of the several cases unmixed in his mind.

Nearly all the conversation between the Mayor and Datchery is deleted. See page 9.

Also Dickens erases the little talk between the Deputy and Datchery beginning: 'Master Deputy, what do you owe me?' See page 11.

It may not be possible to deduce any assured inference from these omissions, but they are worth pondering, and may be referred to again.

CHAPTER VII — OTHER THEORIES

THE DROOD-DATCHERY THEORY

One opposing theory is that Datchery was Drood. With all respect for the scholars who have propounded it, this appears to me a purely comic notion. It is the most fantastical of all fancies as to who was Datchery. As Dr. Blake Odgers points out, every one at Cloisterham knew the murdered man: a mere white wig would be no disguise at all. I may add that if Jasper had discovered him he would almost be justified in finishing the murder this time. For what would be Drood's object? The theory is that, in spite of his being drugged, throttled, perhaps thrown from a tower, at all events buried in quicklime, and in all probability locked up in the tomb, Drood got away when his uncle was triumphantly flinging his watch and scarf-pin into the river. Supposing it were so, what was Drood doing while he watched his uncle? Is it said that he was so bemused by the opium that he did not know who had handled him in such a murderous fashion? This is very hard to believe. Mr. Andrew Lang himself says: 'Fancy can suggest no reason why Edwin Drood, if he escaped from his wicked uncle, should go spying about instead of coming openly forward.' Mr. Archer says the flaw is that the theory provides no motive whatever for Drood's disguising himself as Datchery. Why should Drood devote himself to an elaborate scheme of revenge upon his near kinsman and friend? He would want to hush the matter up, and save Jasper from himself. Why did Drood let Neville lie under the suspicion of murder, and why was not Rosa let into the secret? It is hardly worth while to point out that there is nothing in Drood's character as given us which could have enabled him to show the ability, the composure, and the self-control of Datchery. Who could have supplied him with money to live idly at Cloisterham? His money was all locked up till he came of age, and Jasper was his guardian and trustee. If Grewgious supplied the money, why did not Grewgious make an end of Neville's misery?

THE BAZZARD-DATCHERY THEORY

A far more plausible theory is that Datchery was Bazzard. Dickens almost invites readers to connect Bazzard with Datchery when he makes

Grewgious say to Rosa when she came up to London that Bazzard ‘was off duty here altogether just at present, and a firm downstairs with whom I have business relations lend me a substitute.’ (The words ‘here altogether’ were added by Dickens.)

I have no doubt that Dickens in some way meant to explain Bazzard’s business. But that Bazzard should have been Datchery will appear a sheer impossibility to careful students of Dickens. Proctor, whose side remarks are often excellent, puts the point briefly as follows: ‘No one at all familiar with Dickens’s method would for a moment imagine that Datchery is Bazzard, Mr. Grewgious’s clerk. Bazzard was as certainly intended to come to grief, and be exposed in the sequel as was Silas Wegg in *Our Mutual Friend*.’

Mr. Cuming Walters says: ‘Literary art rebels against the idea. Bazzard was one of Dickens’s favourite low comedy characters.’

Dr. James dismisses the Bazzard theory ‘because Bazzard in his first and principal appearance has too much both of the fool and of the knave about him to develop into the Datchery whom we are intended to admire.’

Dr. Jackson says: ‘Capacity can ape incapacity, but incapacity cannot ape capacity. This being so, I am sure that Bazzard, who is not only “particularly angular, but also somnolent, dull, incompetent, egotistical, is wholly incapable of playing the part of the supple, quick-witted, resolute, dignified Datchery.”’ In these judgments I agree. Bazzard has no ethical quality. He has not the smallest personal interest in the discovery. How could it be said of Bazzard that his ‘wistful gaze is directed to this beacon, and beyond?’

As the theory is obvious and popular, it may be worth while to say something more, and Dr. Hugo Eick’s words, as previously quoted, may help us. Helena Landless had the elemental qualities needed for the Datchery role. Note that among Shakespeare’s heroines who masquerade as men, Rosalind, in *As you Like It*, and Julia, in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, have not these elemental qualities and are suspected. Portia has them, and even her own husband does not know her in her doctor’s robes. She is recognised by all as a young doctor, but not one person in court thinks ‘There is a woman!’ Bazzard might have imitated depressive and negative conditions, but he could not have imitated the qualities of positive life. ‘Fulness of life and the sap which quickens it cannot be replaced by any dissimulation.’

It should also be noted that if Bazzard was Datchery, he had no occasion to disguise himself in a huge white wig, for he was not known in Cloisterham.

THE GREWGIOUS-DATCHERY THEORY

The theory that Datchery was Grewgious may be dismissed in a sentence. Grewgious with his 'awkward and hesitating manner,' his 'shambling walk,' his 'scanty flat crop of hair,' his 'smooth head,' his 'short sight,' his general angularity fits in no way the watchful, courtly, adroit, fluent, and versatile Datchery.

THE DATCHERY-NEVILLE THEORY

Mr. Lang has a wild conjecture somewhere that Neville was Datchery, and that Helena was disguised as Neville. It is difficult to treat this seriously. Neville would inevitably have been found out. His cause was undertaken by his friends, and his business was to study and wait. Why on earth should Helena disguise herself as Neville?

THE TARTAR-DATCHERY THEORY

There is something more attractive about this theory, and it has been very well argued by Mr. G. F. Gadd in the *Dickensian*, vol. ii. p. 13. Mr. Gadd uses the argument 'with a second look of some interest,' as showing Datchery's ignorance of Cloisterham. He quotes Tartar's phrase 'being an idle man,' as corresponding with the 'idle buffer living on his means.' He suggests that Dickens at this point of his story avails himself of the licence not unfrequent in fiction of temporarily abandoning the strictly chronological order. He suggests that Tartar as a seafaring man might know something of opium smoking, and compares the wistful gaze directed to this beacon and beyond, to what is said about Tartar as he and Rosa entered his chambers at Staple Inn. 'Rosa thought . . . that his far-seeing eyes looked as if they had been used to watch danger afar off, and to watch it without flinching, drawing nearer and nearer.'

But, as Dr. Jackson points out, Tartar has his duties assigned to him. He has to watch over Neville and see him almost daily. Again, Tartar does not know about Cloisterham and the Drood mystery what Datchery knows and needs to know. 'Thirdly, I doubt whether the cheery, straightforward, simple-minded Tartar is capable of Datchery's versatility, subtlety, and address.' To this I add that Tartar's heart is not engaged in the business as

Helena's is. Also what need is there for his disguise? He has never been in Cloisterham, and nobody there knows him.

For these reasons we conclude that Helena and no other is Datchery. I have taken no account of the theory that Datchery is an unknown person. An unknown person could not possess the necessary qualities of heart.

CHAPTER VIII — HOW WAS 'EDWIN DROOD' TO END?

How *Edwin Drood* was to end is a problem which can only be solved to a certain extent. We find we are left in the middle, and as much mystery remains as fully justifies the title. We do not know the precise manner in which the murder was accomplished. In particular, we are left ignorant as to the way in which the crime is to be brought home to the victim. We cannot define the relations of the opium woman to Drood and Jasper and the Landlesses. We do not know the history of Jasper's early years. We can do no more than speculate, and the speculations must be confined within strict limits. The first question is, whether Dickens himself knew how he was going to extricate and complete his narrative.

Scott has left us the astonishing statement that 'I have generally written to the middle of one of these novels without having the least idea how it was to end.' Mr. Skene, a true friend of Sir Walter Scott, tells us that when Scott described to him the scheme which he had formed for *Anne of Geierstein*, he suggested to him that he might with advantage connect the history of René, king of Provence, in which subject Skene had special means of helping him. Scott accepted the suggestion, 'and the whole *dénouement* of the story of *Anne of Geierstein* was changed, and the Provence part woven into it, in the form in which it ultimately came forth.'

Was Dickens in the same case when death interrupted him in his work?

Was this an 'apoplectic' novel?

Scott speaks frankly of *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous* being his 'apoplectic books.' Does *Edwin Drood* bear the same relation to the body of Dickens's work as *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous* bear to the *Waverley Novels*? Mr. Lang, whose views on this subject varied much, in one of his later writings takes the view that Dickens was deeply embarrassed. He says: 'It is melancholy to think of this great and terribly overtasked genius tormented by fears that were only too real.' He finds the story wandering on, living from hand to mouth, full of absurdities. He thinks that Dickens was very capable of changing his original purpose, and saving the life of Edwin.

There is no doubt that Dickens was puzzled about the order of his chapters. Forster tells us that Dickens ‘became a little nervous about the course of the tale from a fear that he might have plunged too soon into the incidents leading on to the catastrophe such as the Datchery assumption (a misgiving he had certainly expressed to his sister-in-law).’ I have already expressed agreement with Dr. Jackson in his plan for renumbering the chapters. Unless this plan is adopted there is chronological confusion. Also there is no doubt that Dickens had been working under terrific strain. But the testimony of those who knew him best is that his faculties were never brighter and stronger than they were in his last months.

The same impression is left upon me by his unfinished novel. Those who dislike Dickens’s later manner may easily find faults. They may say that Honeythunder is grotesque rather than amusing. They may say that Jasper’s courtship of Rosa is melodramatic and wolfish. I confess to being perpetually puzzled by the account of Neville’s capture on the morning after the murder. Why was he pursued in that manner? All that was known against him was that he had been with Edwin on the previous night. He is only eight miles away from Cloisterham, and stopping at a roadside tavern to refresh. He starts again on his journey, and becomes aware of other pedestrians behind him coming up at a faster pace than his. He stands aside to let them pass, but only four pass. Other four slackened speed, and loitered as if intending to follow him when he should go on. The remainder of the party (half a dozen, perhaps) turn and go back at a great rate. Among those who go back is Mr. Crisparkle. Nobody speaks, but they all look at him. Four walk in advance and four in the rear. Thus he is beset, and stops as a last test, and they all stop. He asks:

‘Why do you attend upon me in this way? . . . Are you a pack of thieves?’

‘Don’t answer him,’ said one of the number. . . . ‘Better be quiet. . . .’

‘I will not submit to be penned in,’ says Neville; ‘I mean to pass those four in front.’

They all stand still, and he shoulders his heavy stick and quickens his pace. The largest and strongest man of the number dexterously closes with him and goes down with him, but not before the heavy stick has descended smartly. Naturally Neville is utterly bewildered. Two of them hold his arms and lead him back into a group whose central figures are Jasper and

Crisparkle. Why on earth did not Crisparkle speak to him at the beginning, and tell him what had happened? All this is somnambulistic.

There seems to be a slight slip in chapter ii.

Jasper's room at the Gatehouse is described. It has an unfinished picture of a blooming schoolgirl hanging over the chimneypiece. At the upper end of the room Mr. Jasper opens a door and discloses a small inner room pleasantly lighted and prepared for supper.

'Fixed as the look the young fellow meets is, there is yet in it some strange power of suddenly including the sketch over the chimneypiece.' They dine in the inner room. The cloth is drawn, and a dish of walnuts and a decanter of rich coloured sherry are placed upon the table.

'How's she looking, Jack?'

Mr. Jasper's concentrated face again includes the portrait as he returns: 'Very like your sketch indeed.'

'I am a little proud of it,' says the young fellow, glancing up at the sketch with complacency, and then shutting one eye, and taking a corrected prospect of it over a level bridge of nut-crackers in the air.

Dickens seems to have forgotten that the sketch is in the other room.

It seems to me that these are slips, but I do not find any other readers have taken the same view. With these exceptions, the story seems to be one of Dickens's best books. Its grasp of local colour and detail is as strong as ever it was. There is much of his old humour in the Mayor, in Miss Twinkleton's Girls' School, in Billickin, in Durdles and his attendant imp. Also the story is constructed with the greatest care and ingenuity. Any one who carefully goes over the manuscript and the proofs will see that Dickens had a plan in his mind that he half revealed and half concealed, that his phrases and details are chosen with the nicest care, and that he meant to reward those who at the end could take a 'backward look' by the delight they would experience in seeing how everything had been scrupulously planned and artistically conducted to a climax. We cannot do justice to the book in its present state. But Dickens's royal genius was at its full, and would have vindicated itself. He had set himself deliberately to carrying out a plot far more exact than he had ever attempted, and the end was in view from the beginning.

This is not to say that the reason of every incident and every description was disclosed from the first. I have previously discussed Edgar Allan Poe's reading of *Barnaby Rudge*, and shown that his perception, keen as it was,

yielded him less than he thought. I have shown how Dickens prepared the plan for *Little Dorrit* from the start of his book. It may be traced now, but without the 'backward glance' it would not have been easy to trace it.

We may also say with some confidence that no new characters of importance would have been introduced to us in the second half. In the chapter 'Half Way with Dickens' I have shown that this is the case with five of his principal books. The conclusion is not stringent, for Dickens was free to change his method. But it may be said to be highly probable; if it is true we are left to conjecture the part that the various characters would have played in the winding up of the tale.

The book was to end with the capture and conviction of Jasper. I have already written of the part played and to be played by Grewgious. Another hunter of Jasper was Durdles. The task assigned to Durdles among the hunters is fairly clear. Sooner or later, by tapping round the Sapsea monument he is to discover the presence of 'a when banes,' or at least of some unsuspected 'rubbish.' He had put the inscription on the monument before Christmas, and had no doubt satisfied himself then that all was safe. 'When Durdles puts a touch or a finish upon his work, no matter where, inside or outside, Durdles likes to look at his work all round, and see that his work is a-doing him credit.'

Having made his inspection when the epitaph was put on, Durdles would have no further curiosity about the tomb until, in the following summer, he took Mr. Datchery on a rambling expedition as he had taken Jasper. His peculiar gift, like that of the bloodhound, is to aid in tracking down the quarry.

Deputy has also his part to play. From the first Jasper hates and fears Deputy, and there are signs near the close of *Edwin Drood* that this strange boy, who has some characteristics in common with Dickie Sludge, of *Kenilworth*, is to form a close alliance with Datchery. The ugliest side of Jasper's character displays itself in his treatment of the 'young imp employed by Durdles.' The chanting of the line, 'Widdy Widdy Wake-cock warning,' has for him a note of menace. With the fury of a devil he leaps upon the boy when he emerges from the crypt with Durdles, and hears a sharp whistle rending the silence. 'I will shed the blood of that impish wretch!' he cries; 'I know I shall do it.' Durdles has to appeal to him not to hurt the boy. 'He followed us to-night, when we first came here,' says Jasper. 'He has been prowling near us ever since.'

Deputy denies both accusations. 'I'd only just come out for my 'elth when I see you two a-coming out of the Kinfreederal.'

What has Deputy actually seen? He may have testimony to give of the most vital consequence, but even if he has seen nothing of Jasper's movements while Durdles lies asleep, or of his approach to the Sapsea monument, he will tell Mr. Datchery of that furious onslaught when Jasper clutched his throat and threatened to kill him. He will prove a very useful ally of the hunters.

It seems quite inconceivable that either Durdles or Deputy could have known the whole secret and kept it. Neither of them was capable of keeping a secret long. But they might have suspicions, and they might and would know circumstances which when rightly interpreted led to the inevitable conclusion.

I cannot but think that the chief part in the coming narrative was to be played by the opium woman. The novel from the very first page has a touch of the East. In Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* the Indians did their part, and then vanished from the scene. But in *Edwin Drood* we have the Landlesses from Ceylon with a touch of dark blood, or at least of the Eastern spirit. Mr. Lang is in excess of the facts when he calls them Eurasians, and Dickens hesitates in ascribing black blood to them. They are more probably gypsies. We have also the connection of Edwin Drood with the East. There is more than a suggestion of dark blood in John Jasper. Above all, we have the opium woman. What was the connection between John Jasper and the opium woman? What was John Jasper's history before he came to Cloisterham?

We do not know, but conjectures have been hazarded. Mr. Cuming Walters thinks that the opium woman's hatred of Jasper may be due to the fact that Jasper has wronged a child of the woman's. He also conjectures that Jasper may be the son of the opium woman. Dr. Jackson conjectures that Jasper seduces a young girl who had treated the old woman kindly, that he neglected this girl for Rosa, that the girl committed suicide, and that the old woman devoted herself to the pursuit of the betrayer. All this is mere speculation. We have really no means of judging whether the speculation is true or not. It does seem that the woman's peculiar hatred of Jasper must have an origin and a grave cause. Miss Stoddart suggests that the opium woman was not wholly degraded, and that she is horrified by Jasper's continually repeated threatenings while under the influence of opium; that

her sympathies have been awakened for that hapless Ned who bears a threatened name, and she resolves to do her best to serve him. With an honest purpose she makes her way before Christmas to Cloisterham. She loses sight of Jasper, but actually meets Edwin Drood. The kind act of that young stranger causes her to unload her conscience, and she bids him be thankful that his name is not Ned. At her second visit in the summer she knows from Jasper's confessions under her own roof that the long premeditated crime has actually taken place, and her object in visiting Cloisterham is to gather evidence that may serve the ends of justice. This sunken creature has a task assigned to her, and she fulfils it.

I am not sure that Dickens means to throw any redeeming light on the character of the opium woman. She has been wronged; she is seeking vengeance, and at last, she finds it. How this comes to pass Dickens meant to tell us, but he meant, no doubt, to surprise us in the telling.

My own belief is that Dickens intended to surprise his readers by telling them of some unsuspected blood relationship between his characters. Surprises of this kind are given in his novels. No reader of *Oliver Twist* could have guessed from the first part Oliver's relationship to Monks and the Maylies. Who would have supposed from the first half of *Nicholas Nickleby* that Smike was the son of Ralph?

'That, boy,' repeated Ralph, looking vacantly at him.

'Whom I saw stretched dead and cold upon his bed, and who is now in his grave —'

'Who is now in his grave,' echoed Ralph, like one who talks in his sleep.

The man raised his eyes, and clasped his hands solemnly together:

'— Was your only son, so help me God in heaven!'

In the midst of a dead silence Ralph sat down, pressing his two hands upon his temples. He removed them after a minute, and never was there seen, part of a living man undisfigured by any wound, such a ghastly face as he then disclosed.

Again, who would have supposed from the early part of *Great Expectations* that Estella was the daughter of Abel Magwitch?

In *Barnaby Rudge*, Maypole Hugh turns out to be an illegitimate son of Sir John Chester. In *The Old Curiosity Shop*, 'The Stranger' is found to be the brother of the Grandfather. In *Bleak House*, Esther Summerson is revealed as a daughter of Lady Dedlock. In *Our Mutual Friend*, John Rokesmith turns out to be John Harmon.

That the action of opium had a part to play in the revelation can hardly be doubted. The whole book is drenched in opium. In *The Moonstone* the problem is who stole the jewels. It is solved by opium. The jewels are stolen by a man under the influence of opium surreptitiously administered. He is quite unconscious of what he has done, and remains unconscious. Afterwards he is discovered by a fresh administration of opium. When the opium has completely done its work the man repeats his deed, and the experiment is conclusive.

I do not think that any one reading right on would name the perpetrator of the theft, and yet when we take a backward glance we find an account of a dinner-party about the seventieth page which gives the clue. I doubt whether any one on first reading it would see in it anything that mattered, and yet it contains everything that matters. The height of art in work like this is to conceal art. You may be able at an early stage to introduce facts which contain the ultimate solution of your problem, and yet appear important enough to be stated for their own sake. The solution of the problem, or rather the materials of the solution, should be given, and yet the reader should be unable to detect the full significance of the preliminary statement till the complete clearing arrives. At the same time the book will not be satisfactory if details are superfluous, if they do nothing to carry one on to the dissipation of the mystery.

It is not to be denied that this fitting of everything into its place is at times a little wearisome. 'The construction is most minute and most wonderful,' wrote Anthony Trollope of Wilkie Collins. 'I can never lose the taste of the construction. The author seems always warning me to remember that something happened at exactly half-past two on Tuesday morning, or that a woman disappeared from the road just fifteen yards beyond the fourth milestone.' There is truth in this, but if Anthony Trollope had written a novel of mystery, which perhaps he could never have done, he would have had to take the same path.

Another doctor in *The Moonstone* tells us that the ignorant distrust of opium in England spreads through all classes, so much so, that every doctor in large practice finds himself every now and then obliged to deceive his patients by giving them opium under a disguise. He himself claims that opium saved his life. He suffered from an incurable internal complaint, but he was determined to live in order to provide for a person very dear to him.

‘To that all-potent and all-merciful drug I am indebted for a respite of many years from my sentence of death.’

Like Collins, Dickens was keenly interested in the possibilities of opium. Collins himself was a lavish consumer of the drug, but I do not think it has been suggested that Dickens himself ever touched it. Nor is it likely, for Dickens with all his tenseness of nerve was an eminently self-controlled and temperate man. But in *Edwin Drood* he has inserted a sentence in praise of opium. The opium woman says to Datchery: ‘It’s opium, deary. Neither more nor less. And it’s like a human creetur so far, that you always hear what can be said against it, but seldom what can be said in its praise.’ The last sentence was an afterthought on the part of Dickens. It has been written in.

As to whether Jasper was made ultimately to repeat his crime in any fashion under the influence of opium, it is impossible to say. He was unquestionably more or less under the influence of the drug when he committed it.

The literary men of Dickens’s period were much interested in the action of drugs, in mesmerism, and the like. Elliotson, to whom *Pendennis* is dedicated, was on intimate terms with Dickens. Dickens plainly implies that Crisparkle went to the weir because Jasper willed him to do so. Collins and Dickens were both addicted to calling witnesses to their accuracy. At the close of *Armadale*, Collins says: ‘Wherever the story touches on questions connected with law, medicine, or chemistry, it has been submitted before publication to the experience of professional men. The kindness of a friend supplied me with a plan of the doctor’s apparatus — I saw the chemical ingredients at work before I ventured on describing the action of them in the closing scenes of this book.’ Every one remembers the ‘spontaneous combustion’ preface to *Bleak House*. I do not know whether any medical man can be found to confirm the science of *Armadale*, or of *Bleak House*, or of *The Moonstone*. But that is not the question before us. We have only to do with what the novelist himself believed to be a scientific possibility. In *Kenilworth* Wayland compounds ‘the true Orvietan, that noble medicine which is so seldom found genuine and effective within these realms of Europe.’ Scott adds a note: ‘Orvietan, or Venice treacle, as it is sometimes called, was understood to be a sovereign remedy against poison; and the reader must be contented, for the time he peruses these pages, to hold the same opinion, which was once universally

received by the learned as well as the vulgar.’ Dickens’s science must be received in the same manner.

Mr. Crisparkle has one piece of evidence in his memory. ‘Long afterwards he had cause to remember’ how, when he entered Jasper’s rooms and found him asleep by the fire, the choirmaster ‘sprang from the couch in a delirious state between sleeping and waking, and crying out, “What is the matter? Who did it?”’

As we have already seen, the gathering of the threads is in the strong hands of Datchery.

As we know, Forster adds that Neville Landless was to have perished in assisting Tartar finally to unmask and seize the murderer. It will be seen that this part of his testimony is more doubtful than the rest, and cannot, therefore, be so implicitly accepted, but it may well be true. Melancholy seems to mark Neville Landless for its own, and his passion for Rosa is hopeless. If he dies, it is a heavy blow for his devoted sister, who finds her triumph marred by the death of her brother. Singularly enough, some writers who have hesitated to accept Forster’s more expressed testimony make much of the death of Neville Landless and its circumstances. It need only be pointed out that all this is pure conjecture, however ingenious it may be.

I find no difficulty in believing that Dickens carried out his plan of making Jasper give in prison a review of his own career. This has been called a poor and conventional idea, but as worked out by Dickens it would neither have been poor nor conventional. What remains to be told is, I repeat, largely the story of John Jasper’s earlier life.

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MICAWBER REDIVIVUS by Jonathan Coalfield



OR

HOW HE MADE A FORTUNE AS A MIDDLEMAN, LOST THE
CONFIDENCE OF AN ENLIGHTENED PUBLIC, AND SUCCUMBED
TO DIRECT SUPPLY

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Mr. Micawber.

CHAPTER I.

NOTHING WILL TURN UP. DESPONDENCY AND DESPERATION.

From a feeling of conviction that the troubles and vicissitudes, which have chequered the extraordinary career of the immortal Mr. Micawber, still claim the sympathies, and command the attention of the sojourners of that remarkable man in this Vale of Woe; and persuaded that a renewed contemplation of the almost superhuman exertions, with which this plaything of Fortune has endeavoured to combat and overcome, to extricate himself from and successfully evade, those pecuniary difficulties, in which he usually finds himself so unhappily and firmly entangled by the machinations of his sordid and unfeeling creditors, will ever afford an appreciative Public

“A perpetual feast of nectar’d sweets •

Where no crude surfeit reigns.”

The narrator of these, the further adventures of Mr. Micawber, believes he needs make but little apology to justify his obtruding so celebrated a person again upon the notice of the large and indulgent circle of his admirers.

He has rescued him from the oblivion which threatened his fate, and snatched him from the forgetful waters of Lethe, in which he was for ever about to become engulfed, to set him aloft, the cynosure to which the admiring eyes of his fellow countrymen may be directed, on that pinnacle, which he before so gracefully occupied in their affections and estimation.

The author will not seek to extenuate the presumption he must plead guilty to in inditing this memoir. He trusts the partiality its readers bear to its subject will be extended to its author; and if Mr. Micawber should himself ever cast a curious eye over these pages, he will recognise in me, whose name is inscribed on the title-page, the friend of his youth, the admirer of his prosperity, and the consoler of his reverses and misfortunes, and forgive me if I have failed to do justice to his memory.

In the enjoyment of matrimonial felicity, and in the beloved society of his adored Agnes, David Copperfield, the former chronicler of Micawber's History, has allowed the winged hours to flit past the rosy bower, planted on Hampstead's verdant heath, which he has secured for the object of his affections, nor will they allow him opportunity to inscribe on their outspread pinions the records which shall make the name of Wilkins Micawber famous and renowned, long after the material portion of that celebrated individual has mingled with the elements.

Concerned that Mr. Micawber's fame should be diminished, David Copperfield has entrusted to me, Jonathan Coalfield, his cousin and bosom friend, the task of preserving the imperishable deeds, and of depicting the remarkable idiosyncracies of a man, my intimacy with whom has warranted my undertaking so delicate a commission, and has enabled me to perform so arduous a duty, in a manner, I am sufficiently confident to imagine, "indifferent well."

I had just snugly settled myself in my celibate arm-chair, beside a blazing fire of best Pinxton, one cold raw evening in November, and was employed in cheering my mind with the grateful infusion of my own particular Bohea, and in refreshing and replenishing my more material man with hot buttered toast and muffins, when a startling rap sounded on the door panel, and the maid-of-all-work — who was wont chiefly to occupy herself in disarranging my papers, hiding my boots, cleaning my windows with my sponge, cutting firewood with my razors, brushing my coats with my hairbrushes, and otherwise attending to my simple wants in the manner peculiar to her profession — bounced into the room and having jerked a flimsy and out at elbows looking letter on to my tea table, bounced out again like a galvanized lay figure.

The hand writing, in which the direction on the letter was penned, seemed somewhat familiar, and on opening it, I found a dirty note signed Wilkins Micawber, couched in the lofty strain he usually adopted in his correspondence.

I remembered having met Copperfield in the City in the morning, and his telling me that Micawber and his family had returned to England, having left behind him the wealth which he had accumulated in Australia in the hands of some artful Yankee speculators, who had managed to gull the foolish Micawber into signing an application for shares, while his heart was warmed by philanthropy and punch, in some wild Company, which "did

o'er leap itself," — and like a cart load of very black mud, fell, splotch! on the shining head, undefended even by its natural covering of hair, of the devoted Micawber.

On his emerging from the slimy torrent, and after having divested himself of the defiling scum which clung to his person, he found that its corrosive influence had entirely eaten away all the gilded splendour with which he had been surrounded; Micawber stood alone, with nothing to recommend him but his native majesty, and genteelness, and the colossal mind which breathed in every feature of his expressive countenance.

Micawber was no longer the honoured citizen and magistrate of the town of Middlebay, but once more the impecunious party that I used to know, waiting for something to turn up, and whose affairs were always in a chronic crisis.

The letter mentioned that Micawber had returned to England, bringing with him, his devoted and inseparable spouse, and his multitudinous and hungry family. Wilkins Micawber, Junr., had married the blooming Miss Helena Mell, whose birth having been preceded by the advent of three other Mells, had entitled her to but a very small share in the slender patrimony of her father. The twin finding it necessary to shift for himself had taken to the profession of his father-in-law, and soon by distressing experience, found out the difference between keeping a school from an abstract and theoretical point of view, and getting concrete specimens of the rising generation to be taught. At present, Mr. Micawber himself was in danger of passing through the Court of Bankruptcy and no doubt would long since have done so, had his worldly goods and possessions been of sufficient value to make his progression through Bankruptcy at all a remunerative one to his creditors. As the gentle hare escaped from the fangs of the beagles, palpitating with fear, and shivering with apprehension, crouches low in her form, so Mr. Micawber had taken refuge from his creditors, and had gone to repose his wearied head in his usual form at No. 1, Hallucination Buildings, the shady retreat to which he besought me to come at once.

Such was the substance of the epistle to which he had subscribed himself as

Your afflicted Friend,
At last
Brought
to

Bay,
WILKINS MICAWBER.

Moved by his earnest entreaties, and not without hope that I might be able to soothe the feelings, and minister to the sorrows, of my esteemed friend, I determined to postpone my evening pipe, and go at once to see him, and accordingly wrapping myself in my ulster I sallied out through the fog and drizzle to that part of Chelsea where Hallucination Buildings were situated; after several inquiries I at length arrived at a narrow and dirty street in which I was assured I should find Micawber's habitation.

I soon discovered the house I sought, with a large brass plate gleam



I call on Mr. Micawber.

ing like the eye of a Cyclops displayed on its shabby engrained front door, proclaiming, piteously enough — for the fog had dimmed its lustre with unctuous moisture, which collected and coursed down its surface in grimy lachrymose drops — that education for little boys was provided within.

I knocked at the door, and after some shufflings in the passage, and furtive liftings of blinds, the suspicions, which my advent seemed to have aroused, were sufficiently allayed, and the door was cautiously opened by a slatternly and weak-eyed dependent on Micawber's bounty, whose attenuated frame, and wolfish expression, betokened the pervading

influences of the house, and the propriety of the name which had been bestowed upon it.

She led me slowly along a dim and dirty passage papered with an imitation marble, whose fantastic veins quite shamed in their “variegated splendour the colours of the rainbow, though their tints, under the influence of the rain, which appeared to meet with little obstruction from the roof, instead of adding to their brilliance had shown a deplorable tendency to run. After stumbling over sundry boots, plates, and tin cans, left as a sort of barricade to arrest the progress of any adventurous dun, who might have the boldness to venture thus far, and give sufficient notice to the inmates of his approach, I gained the door of the chamber in which Mr. Micawber had sought that calm, which the turmoil of the world can never afford, in the bosom of his sympathising and admiring family. Indeed, they appeared to take out in admiration of their noble parent, what they lacked in food, and by moral feasts, supplied any deficiencies they might experience in physical nutriment.

I was surprised at the slight alteration which Time had effected in the person of Mr. Micawber; as he had never any claims to be considered an Esau, Time had had no chance of shearing his locks, and had perforce contented himself in imprinting a few furrows and lines on his plump cheeks and expansive brow. He seemed never to have made any alteration in his clothing since I last saw him, except that the ends of his trousers, instead of being tucked into his socks, were allowed to flap about the upper part of his ankle, while his shrunk shank gave them the appearance of being more in accordance with a fashion that had long since discarded that species of clothes called small. Mrs. Micawber’s dishabille was as careless in its artless grace as ever, and the twins, now grown into promising young men, made manifest in their persons what their father once had been.

My appearance was the signal for a display of feeling, on the part of Mr. Micawber and his family, which, though touching, was not unembarrassing to myself. Mr. Micawber with a theatrical start, and with frantic gestures, threw himself, sobbing, upon my shirt front, and bedewed the green and crimson roses, blooming on the carpet, with the salt sorrows which distilled from his somewhat fishy eyes. Mrs. Micawber selected the most comfortable and commodious corner and straightway went off into hysterics of an alarming character, and it



Mr. Micawber is overcome.



A trying moment.

required all the efforts of the twins, and the soothing solicitude of Mrs. Micawber, junior, to restrain her from going into convulsions at once.

The weak-eyed maid, inured, no doubt, to scenes of so distressing a character, as the one she was now witnessing, remained unmoved, and peered anxiously into the cupboard, hoping no doubt, to discover some stray comestibles within reach of her eager acquisitive claws. The balmy aroma of burnt feathers having titillated the delicate nose of Mrs. Micawber, and restored her to reason; the servant having retired disappointed from her barren quest; and Mr. Micawber having pent up his overflowing feelings within the dam of his own stalwart breast, Mr. Micawber proceeded to detail his adventures and fortunes since the memorable hegira of himself and his family, after the collapse and discomfiture of his rascally master Heep. I will not fatigue my readers with the relation of the thrilling adventures - with bushmen, serpents and wild beasts, which Micawber met with in the bush of Australia: of the hair-breadth escapes and perilous encounters of which he was the hero; of the endurance and fidelity of Mrs. Micawber, who stuck to her motto and never did desert Mr. Micawber on the most trying emergencies, but was always equal to the exigencies of the occasion; or of the prowess and fortitude of the twins. Suffice it to say that he was favoured with a tolerably fair share of the smiles of the arch coquet Fortune, and had attained magisterial dignity and a position of affluence and consideration in the rising and important town of Middlebay.

Alas for the pride of Micawber, him not the Curule chair, not the flattery of Middlebay journalism, not the esteem of his fellow citizens, could save from impending ruin! dull care forsaking his usual habits of equitation, since Micawber's rotundity of figure was unsuited to adhere to the precarious back of a horse, condescended to take up his abode within the walls "of Micawber Lodge, and in a very short time, Micawber's fortune was the spoil of adventurers more wily than himself, who complacently pocketed their gains, and left not a wrack behind.

Micawber's fortune had, "like an unsubstantial pageant, faded," his cloud of magisterial dignity, deprived of the auriferous breeze which had hitherto wafted it along so pleasantly, fell, and he himself was floored. The fair land of promise had turned out a cheating mirage, so he determined, to try his luck in his native land once more, or, in his own expressive phrase, to immerse his wretched clay in the Lethean tide which meanders through this extensive Metropolis. All this, and much more, Micawber jerked out spasmodically, between the sobs which convulsed his portly frame, and indeed, he became so affected, and his feelings communicated themselves

to the rest of his family with such intensity, that I became quite alarmed, and determined to make an effort to restore harmony to the family, and equanimity to my betrayed and ruined friend.

I accordingly hurriedly despatched the domestic to the nearest tavern, and she soon returned with the materials for mixing that mysterious and seductive compound called by the gods nectar, and known to the sons of men by the familiar name of punch.

Micawber's eye, which before glared with a speculation denoting chiefly razors, and ratsbane, and threatening an immediate termination to his existence, now admitted a glitter, which spoke an interest in things less awesome and forbidding, and he soon turned his attention from the subject of his own dissolution, to that more absorbing one, of dissolving a due proportion of sugar in the steaming beverage which filled his glass.

Under the generous influence of the brimming cup, the soul of Micawber cast off its dark and sombre cloak and emerged from the mephitic vapours which had surrounded it, brilliant and sanguine as of yore.

His affection to me knew no bounds. I was his staff and support in his old age, the saviour of his family, and the preserver of that domestic hearth, which the minions of the law sought ruthlessly to despoil. After gratitude of the profusest for benefits the most imaginary, and protestations of undying friendship, the most fervent and grandiloquent, "his hopes like towering falcons" began to rise — only unhappily there was no quarry below on which they could make a profitable swoop : — And in an ecstatic condition of prophecy, like the Delphic Oracle, intoxicated with the fumes of the God he so sedulously worshipped, Mr. Micawber at length mounting on the table — his head turban'd with his red bandana handkerchief — his glass of incense smoking in one hand and a punch ladle by way of divining rod in the other — threw himself into a commanding attitude and gazing on a ceiling, which would have better represented the blank leaf of the book of fate, had it possessed more whitewash and less soot, he declared that he could hear airy tongues, suggested perhaps by the cry "Milk 0!" in the area, borne on the wings of the midnight breeze, syllabing the name of Wilkins Micawber, and telling of his renewed prosperity and success.

As Mr. Micawber seemed to have by this time worked himself into a pretty equable state of mind, and as the hour was late, I thought I would leave him to betake himself to bed, before prolonged conviviality might deprive him of the power of doing so.

As I had at this time a good deal of leisure, I thought I could not dispose of it more profitably than by attempting to dissipate Micawber's melancholy, so after much persuasion, concluded by the irresistible argument that by the riverside, with all its busy trade, and bustling activity, there must be some opening for a man of Micawber's abilities, I obtained a promise that he would allow me to take his family and himself to the Tower of London on the following day.

I promised to call for them in due time on the morrow, and was finally ushered out of the street door by the Micawber tribe en masse amid a spluttering fire of whose "Good Nights" I walked up the street and disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER II.

A GLEAM OF HOPE.

Next morning, the jovial face of my gorgeously liveried valet, the sun, staring in at my bedroom window, chased away my dreams, and reminded me of the engagement, I had made overnight with Micawber. So I summoned up all my resolution, to desert the warm comforts of my downy couch, for the chill terrors of my bath, and after restoring the normal current to my blood by a substantial breakfast before a cheery fire, I lighted my morning pipe, and walked briskly to Hallucination Buildings.

Mr. Micawber and his family had been up betimes, and all of them had taken the utmost pains in furbishing up their several scanty wardrobes to show themselves to the greatest advantage. Mr. Micawber had selected his smartest shoes, and his gayest pocket-handkerchief, with which to do honour to the occasion, while Mrs. Micawber had added to the attractions of a bewitching straw bonnet, and a watered silk dress, a Paisley shawl, fastened at her throat with a brooch made of a crown-piece of the time of George III. This same brooch was indeed the only specimen of jewelry Mrs. Micawber boasted, and a whisper has been maliciously circulated by that jealous jade Kumour, that it was devoted to the purpose of adorning the lovely throat, on which it now coyly reposed, because it could not obtain currency elsewhere, it having, in fact, been given to one of the twins, in the days of their guileless youth by a shopman, who had no ill-founded suspicion as to its genuineness.

Mr. Micawber was in a state of exuberant spirits, and attracted by the fineness of the day, and anxious to place himself and Mrs. Micawber in a position, where so many fine feathers would not blush unseen, he proposed that we should all proceed to London Bridge on the top of an omnibus. I, of course, acquiesced, and after some slight demur on the part of the ladies, the plan was unanimously acceded to.

Mr. Micawber was quite in his element in the City, and continually pointed out many places in which his dormant genius had struggled to develop itself, but struggled, alas, in vain! until at length we arrived at

London Bridge, and descending from the omnibus, walked down the steps into Lower Thames Street, and proceeded to wend our way among the horses and vans in the direction of the Tower.



Offended dignity.

Mr. Micawber all the while kept a watchful eye on what was going on around him, and carefully noted the names of the firms, upon the warehouses contiguous to the road, in order that, if any place should present itself, from which he could take a spring he might at once slide into it. On arriving at Billingsgate, he insisted upon entering the market, and surveying the mercantile horizon, as he said. So we were obliged to follow him through the unsavoury press of porters and salesmen, between the sacks and barrels of periwinkles, mussels, and oysters, and the numberless cases of fish everywhere piled up, until he had obtained, what he considered, a commanding position in the midst of the market, from which he could take a birds-eye view of affairs in general.

The market was almost at its busiest, and it was with difficulty that we could keep our little party together, White-clothed, tarpaulin becaped porters were hurrying to and fro: some, bending under the weight of their loads of fish; others, returning empty-handed to the steamer which lay alongside the quay, bellowing hoarsely at intervals like a gigantic Afrite, anxious for the return of the masters, who were to ease him of his burden.

Around the different stalls swarms of buyers were assembled, while on the outskirts of the various groups, a little boy or girl might be seen armed with a long stick, with which they raked out stray shell fish lurking, unnoticed, among the forest of legs. Then woe for the luckless whelk, or the defenceless cockle, for an eye, keener and more pitiless than that of a seagull, will detect you in your hiding-place, the bitter sharpness of a pin will transfix you, and pluck you quivering forth, and an appetite, more voracious than a shark's, will seek to satisfy itself, on your tender and succulent flesh. Mrs. Micawber had begun to manifest some impatience at the hubbub and confusion, and fearing, that she might be further annoyed, by hearing too much of that vernacular tongue, which has made the name of Billingsgate so celebrated, I tried to persuade Micawber to come over and see the Coal Exchange, which is situated opposite the Billingsgate Fish Market. Micawber had all this time continued lost in thought, and when



"A Fair Encounter."

I addressed him, he informed me that he had been revolving in his mind, whether to become a Middleman in the fish trade, as he considered he saw a rift in the clouds opening out in that direction. However, he did not seem very much inclined to ascend through it, and as he had his hat knocked over his eyes, and his toes trodden on, two or three times by passing porters, in effecting his retreat, by the time he had got outside he had determined to travel some other road to fortune than that which lay with fish-salesmen and Billingsgate porters, however great the gains. — In fact, so incensed was he, that the blood of the hundred kings, who have always been understood to be the founders of the Micawber race — boiled in his veins, and it needed all my endeavours, and the blandishments of Mrs. Micawber, to pacify him, and persuade him to curb that haughty spirit, which would have urged him, like a Paladin of old, into a singlehanded contest with all those who had endangered his dignity.

Leaving the Coal Exchange for our return journey, we now made the best of our way to the Tower, and after having armed ourselves with the necessary tickets, we promenaded religiously through it — and shed a tear — vicariously by Mrs. Micawber, over the spot, where the noblest sacrifice, on the long roll of victims to the blood-thirsty bigotry of Mary, had been offered to the executioner's axe, and where the beauty of Anne Boleyn had been blasted by the savage jealousy of her ruffian lord. Around this place, imbrued so deeply with innocent blood, hovered two glossy ravens, who seemed to justify the



A Chip of the Old Block.

belief, that the souls of men, sometimes, after death, take up their abode in the bodies of brutes, and continue to haunt the scene of their former existence, long after their human bodies are dust. So fitting abodes would the forms of these ill-omened fowls have been for the unquiet spirits of the executioners, who here practised their fell trade, and who are now doomed, to wander and croak for ever, around the precincts of that scaffold, from which they have given their victims an eternal release.

Mrs. Micawber was highly delighted with the Tower, though her happiness was dashed somewhat by apprehension, lest her crinoline, that fashionable monstrosity her vanity had led her to adopt, by brushing against the walls, might subject her to the penalty, of immediately being taken into

custody denounced at every turn against those who defaced them. However, her fear³ proved groundless, and we emerged safely from the various dungeons, without leaving Micawber's faithful spouse immured within any of them. A luncheon of oysters and porter entirely settled her nerves, and fortified us for our promised visit to the Coal Exchange, whither we forthwith directed our steps.

On gaining the interior of the building, Mrs. Micawber's admiration was elicited by the lofty dome and the intricate pattern of its parquetry floor, while the pictures and ornamentation which profusely embellished the walls, led her to express an opinion that the coal trade must be an exceedingly elegant and genteel pursuit, though she could not quite satisfactorily account to herself for the entire absence of the commodity, for the exchange of which, so spacious a building had been appropriated.

Mr. Micawber, from a brief conversation he held with a nondescript person who was hanging about the doorway, had been induced to form golden views of the profits to be made in the sale of coal on commission, and already prospectively saw himself the possessor of one of the vast fortunes which are amassed by that unnecessary interloper the middleman. Standing in the centre of the hall, his foot on the dagger, made of wood said to have been worked by the hands of Peter the Great, which is embedded in the floor, his bare and shining head refulgent with the yellow beams admitted through the saffron skylight, which seemed to shadow forth future golden triumphs, the soul of Peter seemed to have diffused itself from the dagger on the floor, and to have filled, with its influence, the swelling bosom of Micawber, determining him, henceforth to use the heraldic dagger of the Coal Exchange, as his metaphorical oyster-knife, with which to open the oyster of the world withal.

After lingering fondly round the knot of great coal merchants, who were determining the prices for the day, Micawber stalked out into Thames Street, "pride in his port defiance in his eye," with Mrs. Micawber clinging anxiously to his arm, at once the admiration of his family, and the object of derisive amazement to the unsympathising denizens of Billingsgate.

Mr. Micawber was intoxicated with the splendid vision his fancy had painted, nor could I induce him to regard the fact, that at present, he had provided no means of ascent whatever to the El Dorado, he had built for himself, in the clouds. However all my matter of fact arguments were of no avail, and in the extremity of his joy he insisted upon my going home with

him to Hallucination Buildings, to taste, what he designated as, the frugal entertainment of his domesticated banquet.

As we returned early, that prudent house-wife, Mrs. Micawber, had ample time to marshall her resources, and arrange the feast, so that, at the hour appointed, a plump goose, crisping and frizzling on the dish, with apple sauce the most appetizing, a plum pudding of the richest, and Stilton cheese, to which port wine and age had contributed their mellowing influence, all washed down by brown stout and amber ale, combined by the master hand of Micawber, and crowned by a steaming bowl of punch, gave no ineloquent testimony to the skilfulness of mine hostess's catering, and furnished grounds for a suspicion, that the timbers which Mr. Micawber had saved from the wreck of his fortunes, were more substantial than rumour had reported.

Micawber's spirits became more and more buoyant as the dinner proceeded, and all the charms and incantations of an Armida, could not have had half the effect upon our modern Einaldo, as had the culinary allurements of Mrs. Micawber. Mr. Micawber failed to remember that he was not yet in the midst of that land of promise, which he imagined smiled on the horizon, but that he was dallying on an oasis of plenty in the midst of a barren desert of embarrassment and penury.

When, in former days, Mr. Micawber had entertained projects for entering the coal trade, he decided that the preliminary, and most befitting step he could make towards the consummation of his hopes, was to take a journey up to the North, and stay awhile in the colliery districts; to this end was made his memorable journey to the Medway, begun in the most sanguine expectations, ending in the blackest despair. He now blamed himself for the superficial manner in which he had commenced his abortive career, and he resolved, this time, to be content with nothing less, than a visit to the very source from which the article he intended to trade in was drawn, and to examine with his own eyes the troglodyte mysteries of a coal mine.

As I happened to be well acquainted with the coal mining districts in Derbyshire, I promised to accompany Mr. Micawber, and suggested that we should visit Pinxton, a village situated near the post town of Alfreton, which has long been justly celebrated for the excellent quality of its coal, and in which I knew of a retired hostelry, just suited to the modest requirements of Mr. Micawber and myself. I had before paid a visit to the

Pinxton Collieries, and from my experience of the genial courtesy of the officials connected with them, I had no doubt that every facility would be accorded to Mr. Micawber to enable him to prosecute his researches to the greatest advantage, and with all possible convenience.

As my holidays were soon drawing to a close, I thought it would be better, to go to Derbyshire as soon as possible. Accordingly, a family conference was held, and Mrs. Micawber at length authoritatively announced, that, having taken into consideration the facts, that Mr. Micawber had at present no pressing business engagements to detain him in London, and that the washing was expected home that evening, she would be able to pack up Mr. Micawber's scanty wardrobe overnight and send him off duly equipped on the following morning.

Although we used every means to persuade Mrs. Micawber to accompany us on our journey, she remained deaf to our entreaties : she refused to leave so inexperienced a housekeeper as Mrs. Micawber, junior, in charge of their London establishment, and, while lamenting that the call of duty should part her and her devoted Wilkins, for however short a period, consoled herself by the thought, that the separation would not be for long, and that her Wilkins was in the society of a companion, as prudent and circumspect as myself. Next morning, after a few tears from Mrs. Micawber, and a great deal of motherly advice, Micawber and I got fairly under way, and after an enjoyable journey, alighted at Alfreton, to find a pony-cart sent, in answer to my telegram, by mine host of the Black Shale Arms, to carry us and our luggage to his comfortable house of entertainment, where we intended to take up our quarters during the ensuing week. On our arrival, we sent to ascertain whether we could descend one of the Pinxton Coal Pits on the following day. A favourable answer was returned, and after having appointed 10 o'clock as the hour, and the pit bank of No. 6 pit as the place



A Dream of Wealth.

at which to meet the underground manager next morning, we discussed a bowl of punch with the aid of our host, and in due time sought our pillows, and were soon hobnobbing in our dreams, with the gnomes and salamanders, sprites and elves, with whom our drowsy fancies peopled phantom coal mines.

CHAPTER III

MICAWBER LOOKS BEFORE HE LEAPS.

The “cock’s shrill clarion” piercing the still morning air, as a gay Chanticleer strutted and crowed, among his feathered dames, in a neighbouring farmyard, aroused us from our slumbers, and warned us that it was time to don the motley garments, our host had provided us with, the night before, in which to array ourselves, before descending the pit.

Mr. Micawber had covered his sober tights with a baggy yellow pair of oilskin overalls, which the most ingenious coaxing could not, by a long way, induce



Micawber ready to descend.

to meet the skirts of an ancient peajacket, garnished with huge metal discs by way of buttons, while a red felt lawn tennis cap completed his attire, and gave him the aspect of a jaunty brigand, or stage pirate of the Vanderdecken school. My costume was not so striking, but was eminently fitted for the purpose for which I had adopted it.

Mr. Micawber's anxiety to begin operations, induced him to set out for the pit bank long before there was any necessity to do so. And consequently after carefully threading the maze of lines crossing and recrossing our path, on which several compact little locomotives were employed in shunting trucks backwards and forwards between the sidings of the various pits, we arrived some twenty minutes before the time appointed. However our time was not wasted, and we had leisure to' watch the way in which the men, with whom the place was alive, performed their several duties.

The Pit hank is a raised platform about thirty yards square, in the centre of which are the two shafts communicating with the workings, 350 feet below; a cage is hoisted up and down each shaft by the winding Engine, erected in an adjoining Engine House, and is the vehicle in which all the coal is brought to the surface.

The winding process is conducted almost noiselessly, and it was not till my attention was directed to it by an exclamation from Micawber who was startled by the cage settling down upon the keeps — Iron props which retain it in its position, and relieve the strain its weight would occasion to the winding Engine and ropes — that I perceived it was going on.

Immediately the cage reaches the top, employment is given to the crowd of men and boys who are waiting the arrival of the boxes of coal. The landers pull the loaded boxes off the cage on to a platform covered with cast iron sheeting, whose smooth surface allows the boxes to be easily turned in any direction, while empty boxes are pushed on to the cage from the opposite side, and down they go to the realms below, to be replenished from the mine's inexhaustible stores.

Meanwhile the boxes on the surface have their wheels and axles anointed by a collier boy, with a repulsive compound of grease, and are immediately passed on to a self indicating weighing machine. The coals are then sorted and put into the railway trucks, which are drawn up alongside the pit bank. The full truck is again weighed by one of the colliery clerks, 21 cwt. being allowed to the ton, for tret or waste, which unavoidably occurs in unloading and sacking, and nothing remains but to send the coals to the consumer.

Before we had become tired of watching the busy scene, which surrounded us, Mr. Alsop appeared and announced that everything was ready for our descent. The usual signals were exchanged with the manager of the winding engine, and entering the cage, we caught hold of the cross bar, hardened our hearts, and waited to be lowered into the gulf which

yawned beneath our feet. Though the first experience, when the floor of the cage falls under ones feet, is somewhat alarming, the sensation of sinking rapidly past the gleaming walls is rather pleasant than otherwise: and when the cage is about half-way down the shaft, it is almost impossible to tell whether it is rising or falling. Indeed, at this point, Mr. Micawber imagined that something had gone wrong with the machinery, and that our promised expedition would have to be postponed. However he was soon undeceived, by our emerging from the darkness, into the ruddy glare of several candles, and lamps, which were held by a group of colliers, who awaited our arrival.

We were each provided with a safety lamp and a stout staff with which to support ourselves, when the lowness of the roof should compel our proceeding in a crouching attitude, and under the leadership of Mr. Alsop, and John Brown, a strapping under-viewer, to whose commanding stature of six foot 3 in. Dame nature had” added thews and sinews of proportionate mould, we advanced through the gloomy brick arches, in the direction of the underground stables.

I must say, I had not formed very exalted ideas, of the stables, which one would expect to find buried 150 yards in the bowels of the earth, and I was very agreeably surprised, when we entered the extensive and airy ones of No. 6 pit. They contain stalls for more than 50 horses, that being the usual number which is constantly employed in working this pit. The ponies, and horses, are well groomed and cared for, and do great credit to the horsekeepers, under whose charge, and management, they are placed, while the former are as sleek, and probably a good deal sleeker, than when they first arrived in England, from their Icelandic or Norwegian pastures. The latter are mostly Irish bred, serviceable animals, of from 15 to 16 hands, they thrive down the pit remarkably well, and good corn, and plenty of work, keep them in such excellent condition, that they attain even a greater age than they would do above ground. Indeed one patriarch has lived at Pinxton 23 years and has passed most of his time below.

After having walked through the stables, and rejoiced the heart of the horsekeeper, by a passing encomium on his cat, which attracted our attention, by rubbing its soft sides against our legs, we retraced our steps to an open space, from which several tunnels radiate to the different workings. One of these, leads to an incline 2000 yards long, terminating at a lower seam honeycombed with workings, from which hundreds of tons of coal, are dragged daily up a railroad laid along the incline, at the rate of 20 miles

an hour by a steel wire rope worked by a stationary underground steam engine.

As we were anxious to experience the novelty, of railway travelling, so far underground, we persuaded Mr. Alsop to come down in a train, as far as the Lamp Cabin which is situate about half-way down the incline. He was easily prevailed upon, and having caused two or three boxes to be converted into comfortable couches, by being strewn with some armfuls of hay, he, and John Brown, seated themselves in a front box, and elevated their lamps, to show as much of the road as possible, while we squatted



Down the Incline.

behind them. With a warning to us to mind our heads, Mr. Alsop gave the word, and away we went, with a dash, and a clatter, tearing along through the darkness; the echoes thundering behind us, and the stillness of the grave before. Micawber was clutching the front of the box with excitement, and kept ducking his head, as a sage gander would have done, had he been placed in similar circumstances, for he was never in danger of knocking it.

It was a grand sensation, flying on through the gloom, the boles of the trees, which line the tunnel, flashing past, and the man holes responding, in ghostly whiteness, to the fitful gleams of our lamps, while the rattling of the wheels, and the grinding and grinding of the irons in the sides of the boxes against the guides, fixed to the timbers of the tunnel, as we were whirled

round the curves, joined with the whistling of the wind, were collected in the arched roof, and poured into our ears, in a harsh discordant roar. It was a sound, that might have proceeded, from the brazen throat of the monster Geryon, when he conveyed Virgil and Dante, from the shores of Phlegethon, into the abyss, which barred their progress, and was calculated to strike awe into the boldest breast.

The Lamp Cabin was soon reached, and the savoury odour of eggs and bacon, acquainted us with the pleasing fact, that lunch awaited us within; so we hastily left our impromptu carriages, and found an ample basket, full of the good things, Tim Ball, the landlord of the New Inn, had provided for us. We enjoyed our gipsy repast exceedingly, enlivened as it was by the learned disquisitions, and shrewd observation, of Mr. Alsop, who showed us the thermometers, barometers, and meteorological books, which are always kept in the Lamp Cabin. Indeed, this cosy retreat is the Head underground office, and here it is, that John Brown, like a latter-day Rhadamanthus, issues his mandates, and summons every man before his tribunal, to undergo an inquisitorial examination, before he is taken on to work in the pit.

We now strolled a little way up the incline, and were shown the precautionary measures, which had been adopted to prevent accidents, by the trucks becoming detached from the wire rope, and running away down the steep gradient, to dash themselves, scattering death and destruction, on the men working below. When the boxes are being drawn up the incline, full, there is firmly affixed to the tail of each train, a stout pointed stake of iron, called a dagger, which is firmly fixed to the box at one end, while the other is allowed to trail on the ground behind, so that, in the event of a coupling breaking, the truck runs back, its weight forces the dagger into the floor, and it is hurled off the line.

This safeguard is not, however, infallible, and in order entirely to remove all possibility of any serious casualty, the Pinxton engineer has devised an ingenious and simple contrivance, by which all risk is obviated.

The trunk of a tree, roughly hewn and squared, is fastened at one end, by a massive hinge, to the roof, the end which is free, rests on the railway pointing up hill, towards the top of the incline, this end is then hoisted to the roof by a chain and firmly secured there.

The apparatus is repeated, at stated intervals, all along the line, and if a truck becomes a run-away, notice is given to the men on duty at the several

signal stations, the fastenings of the tree trunks are loosened, they swing down on their hinges, the truck runs up the first it meets, and crashing into the solid roof, is arrested in its headlong descent.

Mr. Alsop now suggested that we should descend to the lower workings, so we again mounted our cars, and were whirled along, till we had to change carriages, and again proceeded, this time, drawn by a horse, driven by an Elfish Charioteer, crouching on the front of the box, who urged him on with all the eloquence, his cracking whip, and shrill boyish voice, were capable of.

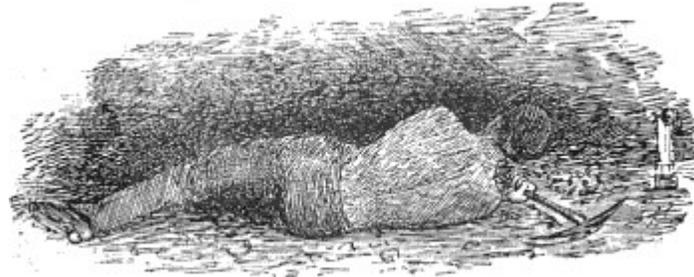
We soon found ourselves among the workings, and proceeding on foot, had to stoop very low to avoid knocking our heads against the roof, which was unpleasantly near the floor. Mr. Micawber occasionally lagged behind, to try conclusions with it, with apparent unsuccess, though on examination, we found his bump of combativeness had been considerably increased in size, and beautified in colouring, by the contest. Picking our way through “the creeping murmur and the poring dark,” with the aid of our safety lamps and staves, in a little while we perceived a glimmer of light ahead, and keeping it in view, we soon came upon one of the actual sources, from which the streams of Derby Brights flow to London, and spread themselves all over the civilized world.

Mr. Alsop informed us, that this was, what is called, a stall, it is taken by a contractor, who engages to work the coal at a certain price per ton, and in order, to take advantage of the principle of the division of labour, he employs loaders, and holers, to help him, at tonnage wages. The whole of his operations are subject, of course, to the supervision of the colliery authorities, and the men he employs are obliged to be interviewed by our critical friend, John Brown.

Now and then, in busy times, a dayman is taken on to help the others, but the contractor generally contents himself with holers and loaders, as he is naturally loth to share his profits with extra hands.

The method of working a stall is much more laborious, than might at first be imagined; first, the holer attacks the perpendicular face of the coal seam, at about a foot from the bottom, and holes, or cuts away, the coal from beneath, wasting as little as possible. As he excavates, the coal sprags, short logs of wood, are placed under the pensile mass, to prevent it falling, until the holing is sufficient; borings are then made in the upper part of the seam, these are filled with blasting powder, and, on being exploded, the mass

sinks down, and is ready to be broken up, sorted, and put into the boxes by the loaders. Much waste is necessarily occasioned in working the coal, and we were told, that in carefully managed pits, waste of 10 to 15 per cent, is unavoidable, while, in many, the proportion is considerably higher. The average output of coal by a single collier in the course



Holing.

of the day is from one to one-and-a half tons; but this quantity may be very much diminished, if a great deal of roofing is required, or if the seams are thin, or disturbed.

Mr. Alsop had been kind enough, to look up some interesting statistics, relating to the consumption of coal, and the fatalities, which occur among miners. It appears from these that mineral, and metallurgic industries, claim 44 per cent, of the coal annually consumed in the united kingdom; for domestic purposes, 20 per cent, is -required; while general manufactures, and locomotion, by sea, and land, are responsible for 25 and 5 per cent, respectively.

Though coal mining is undoubtedly attended with great risks, and dangers, it is much safer in England, than it is in foreign countries, and one death a year, for every 750 miners employed, and for every 237,921 tons of coal raised, although to be deplored, does not seem a very excessive rate of mortality.

Mr. Micawber listened eagerly, to all the information he could obtain; and his enthusiasm at last reached such a pitch, that, seizing a pick, he stretched himself on the ground, and proceeded to hole, with great vigour, but with so little address, that his exertions produced more effect upon his knuckles, than on the coal, and he at last was ruefully compelled to desist; not however before he had triumphantly chipped off a large piece of the original Pinxton coal, which he pocketed as a relic of his visit.

Having formed a pretty good idea of working the coal, Mr. Alsop now explained to us the method which is adopted to ventilate the pit, and

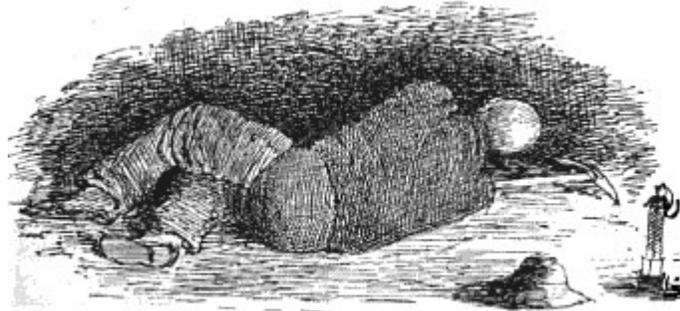


The Result.

ensure a constant current of fresh air, to the workings, and roads, which ramify in all directions. At Pinxton, the old plan of ventilating by furnaces, has long been discarded, for the safer, and more effective contrivance of the fan. This is a huge iron wheel 30 feet in diameter, armed with broad blades, like the paddles of a steamer, it is spun round by an engine of 40 horse power, at an average rate of 52 revolutions per minute, and working as it does, at the mouth of an air tight tunnel, situated at the top of the upcast shaft, it carries on the ventilation by the direct exhaustion of 60,000 cubic feet of air a minute. The vitiated air is thus sucked out of the upcast shaft, sunk purely for the purposes of ventilation, after it has been made to flow through the whole of the workings, since its entrance to the pit down the working shafts, sunk at the other extremity of the coal mine. By this means, the air in the deepest workings is almost as pure as it is above ground, and its flow is so free, that the draught established by the fan, will continue for more than twenty hours after the fan has ceased to revolve.

We marched along, through- the darkness, to the drift leading to the upcast shaft, and John Brown, scrambling up it, by means of the wire rope attached to the roof, without which it would be impossible to ascend as the drift is almost perpendicular, exhibited his light at the top, 100 yards ahead of us.

Mr. Micawber was anxious to essay the ascent also, and, deaf to our dissuasions, he manfully grasped the rope, and struggled upwards, leaving us to follow, or not, as we pleased. His spirit



Mr. Micawber tries his hand.

of adventure, however, proved to be contagious, and hardly had his form disappeared, when we too took *Excelsior* as our motto, and followed in his wake.

After a dire struggle, in which the loose stones became detached by our feet, and went rumbling, and leaping, down behind us; we gained the summit of the steep incline, and gazed up the perpendicular continuation of the shaft, and as it was impossible to ascend further, we slid down with the aid of the rope and soon found ourselves safely at the bottom, sans a good deal of breath, and leaving behind us, on the strands of the rope, a considerable portion of the skin from the palms of our hands. We had now exhausted the wonders of the mine, so we made the best of our way to the cage, were hoisted to the upper world again, and taking leave of Mr. Alsop, trudged homeward, congratulating ourselves on our days sightseeing, and on our good fortune, in lighting on cicerones, so genial and able, as our friend the underground manager, and his herculean satellite.

Mr. Micawber was particularly proud of himself, in as much as everyone, whom we met, turned round to stare at him. He imagined their curiosity must be aroused by his imposing carriage and appearance, though, no doubt, he was cruelly undeceived, when, on examining his features in his looking glass at the inn, he discovered the metamorphosis eight or nine hours sojourn down the pit had made in his former rubicund complexion.

An unstinted application of soap and hot water, gradually removed all traces of our exploit, and discover



"Why, here's a change, indeed."—SHAKS.

our former selves under the crust of coal dust, in which we were enveloped.

We stayed a few more days at Pinxton, during which we visited the surrounding country; and among other objects of interest nearer home, saw the miners' cricket-ground and their magnificent swimming bath 80 yards long, by 15 wide, and were entertained, during our evenings, by stirring accounts of the annual athletic sports, and swimming matches, which are wont to be held on the former, and in the latter, respectively.

Our time passed so pleasantly, that it was with difficulty, we could tear ourselves away from our comfortable Inn. And it was only the hope of realizing those bright dreams of future success in the coal trade, which Micawber had been indulging, and the reflection that his visit was decreasing to an alarming extent, his already desperate finances, that finally induced him to consent, to leave the scenes, in which we had passed our time in so agreeable and profitable a manner.

CHAPTER IV.

MICAWBER MAKES A SPRING AND THE GOD OF DAY BEGINS TO RISE.

Mr. Micawber, on his return to his domestic hearth, and to the bosom of his family, was welcomed with as much rejoicing as if he had found the philosopher's stone, whose magic influence was to dissipate the base material of his domestic hardware, and discover the quintessence of gold, which lurked therein; and was bringing the same home in triumph, safely secured in his portmanteau; instead of; as was the lamentable fact, coming home, minus the sum he had expended, in maintaining himself, and paying his expenses at the inn, a negative quantity, that it would tax all his resources, and ingenuity, to convert into a positive one.

No doubt, the confidence, that Mr. Micawber's family reposed in him, nerved him to pursue the forlorn chase after the phantoms of his imagination : and, as the trustful spirit of Kadajah, poured balm upon the half broken heart of Mahomet, giving him strength and resolution, to struggle with fate, and finally, to accomplish the greatest moral revolution the world has ever seen; so Micawber, deriving determination from the confiding bosom of Mrs. Micawber, was enabled, ultimately, to effect a signal pecuniary victory in the microcosm of his own fortunes.

As Micawber and I, had become quite intimate during our trip, and he had made me a participator, in all his dreams and aspirations, he continued to consult me as to the means he should adopt to edge himself into the Coal trade; and many an evening did I spend at Hallucination Buildings, confabulating with the Micawber family on this momentous topic. The capital, that Mr. Micawber could command, was unfortunately of the slenderest, and so he had to adopt a waiting policy, and live, for the time being on the hope of better things, and on the small commissions, he occasionally received for the sale of coal from Messrs Grip & Grasper the rich firm of middlemen. Now and then, however, he got a chance of selling coal in his own name, and in the course of time, he established quite a little connection.

Micawber had a very hard time of it, but his buoyant spirits, and sanguine hopes, supported him in his trials, and at last, by clutching at every passing straw in his endeavours to keep his head above water, he gradually built himself a fragile raft, on which he was just able to support himself. Now was the time, to put off into the crowded tideway, which leads to the enchanted isle of success. So Micawber hoisted his sail to the breeze, and, pushing his unsteady craft out of the stagnant pool, where it was in danger of becoming becalmed, into the bubbling current, flowing before him, he set his teeth and devoted all his energies to trim his sail, and steer his cock-boat clear of the rocks and quicksands, which surrounded him. In other words, to abandon metaphor, Micawber was able to save a little capital, and determined to set up as a coal dealer on his own account.

It was a bold stroke, but he had developed no small amount of aptitude for business, during his adversities, and I hoped to see him soon, a sharer in the enormous profits, I knew the middlemen in the London Coal Trade obtained. His first anxiety was to procure a suitable office, in which to establish himself in his new blown dignity. In this he was at last successful; he became a tenant, at a weekly rent, of a back room, in a small house in the Fulham Road, and was allowed by the tenants of the front rooms, whose minds were practical, rather than artistic, to suspend, for a consideration, certain gaily coloured boards on the front of the house, which announced to the world that Wilkins Micawber received orders for coal; and that any such would meet with prompt attention at his hands. Micawber was entranced with the business-like appearance, and elegance, which characterised his head quarters; and he was not to be satisfied until I had promised to go and see him there.

Accordingly, one Saturday afternoon, I strolled down the Fulham Road; and it did not need the beaming face of Micawber himself, who welcomed me on the threshold, to inform me, which was the house his choice had fallen upon. One would have thought it was devoted to coal, to its very bricks and mortar, from its basement to its topmost chimney, to judge by the legends, with which it was covered, instead of a very small den at the back, being sacred to dealings in it.

Micawber would not permit me to enter, but conducted me to the other side of the way, and turning round in front of the house, pointed proudly, in speechless admiration to the profusion of gorgeous scrolls, blazing with gilt and crimson, which ornamented its Gothic face.

I did my best to satisfy Micawber's vanity, though I could see that my commonplace praises, fell far short of the rapture he expected me to express; however, he had to content himself, and we crossed over to inspect the interior of his establishment. He led the way through the front door, into a narrow passage, on the walls of which was painted a black and bony hand, pointing with outstretched forefinger, to a ladder-like staircase, up which Micawber's unsuspecting customers were directed to climb. I imagined them, impelled by curiosity, or perhaps by that love of adventure, which fires the breasts of the natives of these isles, painfully clambering up the first pair of stairs, to find on the landing, where they had hoped to regain their fugitive breath, another hand, which clutched them by the collar, and hurried them, panting, up another flight, to be precipitated, by the gaunt fingers of a third, breathless and nerveless, into the presence of Micawber himself, to whom in their helpless condition, they could not fail to fall an easy prey.

I was glad that I had not come as a customer, and that Micawber's friendship, overcame his desire of doing business with me. Plans of Collieries, with which Micawber had no more to do than the man-in-the-moon, hung on the walls of his Sanctum, and the lump of coal he had carried from the Pinxton Coal Mines embellished his mantel shelf; while imperilling his neck on a very high stool was perched Wilkins Micawber Junior, who had given up teaching ingenuous boyhood, to become his father's right-hand man and factotum.

Micawber showed me some of his books, and explained to me his method of carrying on business. At present, he had to content himself with what he called moderate profits — though certainly they were by no means inconsiderable. He was obliged to buy his coal from the merchants, and could not afford to deal directly with the Collieries yet, as his limited capital only afforded him the means of trading in small quantities of coal at a time. However, he assured me he was prospering, and was confident, that in time, he would accumulate sufficient capital, to become some day one of the merchants, and an arbiter of those prices, which enable them to make such a substantial profit on their transactions. Indeed, he confided to me, that, in a very short period, he hoped to be able to set up as a factor, and leave his old business of dealer to be carried on by his son.

Micawber managed to impress me, to such an extent, with his prudence and sagacity, that I was quite proud of my old friend, who used to be so

disreputable an acquaintance, and was now become so respectable a man of business. But, when I praised his virtues abroad, and held him up, as a pattern of a man who had raised himself from indigence by his industry, to a position of comparative affluence, strange and sinister rumours reached my ears.

It was said that he had become corrupted by the eagerness, with which he pursued fortune, and had adopted, with his unwonted prudence and business habits, the questionable tactics that are only made use of among the lowest class of coal dealers.

Contaminated by their example, he did not scruple, so rumour boldly asserted, to resort to the sharp practices, and to avail himself of the disingenuous subterfuges, which all upright and honest traders so heartily reprobate; and I had too much reason to fear that many of the reports, which reached me, were not far from the truth.

However, whether Micawber's conduct was reprehensible or not, of his continuing success there could be no doubt, and, like the statue of Minerva on the Acropolis at Athens, he was fast being rehabilitated in the golden plates, of which he had been divested. "Plate sin with gold and the strong lance of justice harmless breaks," saith the poet, and never was apophthegm more completely vindicated than in Micawber's case. As his fortunes prospered, the little circle of society, in which he moved, was ready to ignore every moral delinquency he had been guilty of, and steadfastly declined to lift up his gilded scales and discover the corrosion which was scarcely concealed beneath them. Meanwhile, coals rose in the London Market, and the iron trades in the North, which had for a long time been depressed, became worse and worse. The Collieries, which generally supply the large iron masters with coal, direct from the pits, lost extensive custom and were obliged to fall back upon the domestic trade of London; they were thus at the mercy of the Merchants, who held the trump cards and played their game as they chose. The coal owners were forced to accept any terms, however capricious and unreasonable, from the men who pulled the strings of the London Market, and monopolised the domestic trade of the metropolis.

The prices realized by the middlemen, during this period, will be within the memory of most of their customers; and it will hardly be necessary to remind such very particularly of their extravagance.

Suffice it to say, that a varying rate of from 1 to 5 Shillings per ton has been added to most of the Coal sold in London by the middlemen during the last ten years. And it must be a reflection far from agreeable to the coal consumers, when they consider that the vast sum, which would equal the accumulation of the profits of the middlemen during so many years, would have remained secure in their own pockets, if they had had the opportunity, which has only lately been afforded them, of dealing directly with Collieries independent, and unconnected with any system or association, which tends to maintain an artificial scale of prices. It would be absurd to suppose that no profit whatever is made by the Colliery owners. A profit is of course made; but by buying the coal direct from the coal producers, the consumer pays a price which includes only the single profit of the producer, in addition to the intrinsic value of the coal itself, the cost of raising it to the surface, and its carriage to the market, where it is to be disposed of. Whereas, when coal is purchased from the middlemen, the price not only equals that, which would have to be paid to the producer; but exceeds it by the amount of the second, and additional profit taken by the middlemen. A sum, which is paid by the consumer solely to support a class of men, the utility of whose existence in the coal trade is more than doubtful.

The system which recognizes their footing in society, is indeed a travesty on nature. The drones have artfully simulated the character of the working bees; and taking advantage of the impression their pretentious buzzing has made upon the easy-going credulity of their companions in the industrial hive, they have laid claim to a substantial portion of the honey they have but little title to share. Let them beware, lest some day the workers become acquainted with their true character, and consign them to the fate which generally overtakes their humbler prototypes.

All this time Micawber had not been idle, at every turn of fortune's wheel, he, and the whole fraternity of middlemen, not only retained their position on its summit, but found themselves urged higher up the hill by every crisis, From the humble position of dealer, Micawber had risen step by step, till he became a coal factor: prospering in this position, as he had done in the lower sphere in which he had before moved, he accumulated sufficient funds, to, at last, rent a number of offices in different parts of London, and to establish Coal Depots at various convenient Railway Termini. He was now a man of some importance in the Coal trade, and had long since given up the petty swindling, which marked the opening of his

career. His position now reflected credit upon himself and his friends; and the fact that he was become a minor link in the Coal King, and an arbiter of the price, which is assigned to coal by the operation of that remarkable piece of mechanism, gave him considerable influence among the members of his new profession.

CHAPTER V.

THE GOD OP DAY HIGH IN THE HEAVENS, AND WHAT HE SAW ON THE EARTH.

As a coal merchant, and a member of the Coal Ring, Micawber had achieved the fulfilment of every ambitious hope, he ever entertained in days gone by, and he was not slow to make use of his success, by feathering



his nest to the best advantage. He opened accounts with the leading collieries, amongst others with his old acquaintance Pinxton, and chuckled gleefully, as he pocketed the profits that accrued to him, from the sale of coal to the public, who, no doubt, found Micawber a somewhat expensive Medium between their fire places and the pits mouth. Occasionally Micawber hit upon a *bonne bouche*, in the shape of a consignment of Seaborne Wallsend, which he could buy at Sixteen Shillings a ton and was able to sell, after paying expenses amounting to, at the most 5s. per ton, at the remunerative figure of twenty-five.

No wonder a gorgeous chariot, with its pair of horses, glittering in silver-mounted harness, emblazoned with the Micawber arms, soon relieved Mrs. Micawber of the tiresome necessity of doing her shopping on foot, when her husband swept in his money so easily; and their humble dwelling in Hallucination Buildings, had long since been transformed into a brand new villa at Brixton, with conservatory and billiard room complete. Though Micawber had met with such unprecedented worldly success, he was not a man “to quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,” which he experienced, from the recollection of the shady expedients he had made use of in originally starting his business, without many a pang. And bitter was his regret, when he found himself estranged [from all those faithful friends, who had rallied round him in his adversities — So different in their worth and sincerity, to the hollow crew, that now furnished him with companions, who simulated an affection for the man, they were incapable of feeling, but for the riches he possessed and they enjoyed.

Meanwhile, the stagnation in the iron trade continued, the London prices still remained high and shewed no immediate tendency to diminish.

The daily papers were full of heartrending accounts of the misery, their correspondents constantly witnessed, among the poor artizans and colliers in the north, and it was becoming evident that some drastic measures would soon have to be adopted to alleviate the distress, which was so deplorably prevalent.

Though the causes of the depression in trade were too universal for the Collieries to affect favourably to the interests of their men, by their individual or even collective efforts, it seemed apparent to many of them, that if the London Trade were freer, relief would at any rate be afforded in many individual instances.

The fact, that by the intervention of the middlemen, Coal is dearer than it otherwise would be, is too patent to need any ingenuity of argument to establish. It is obvious too, that a diminution in the price of any commodity, which is almost essential to men’s existence, will be attended by an increase in the demand of such commodity; since large classes of Society will be enabled to buy it, which before were wholly unable to do so, or could buy of it, but sparingly. On considerations such as these, several Colliery Owners thought, very justly, that if they could manage to oust the middlemen from the London Market; by themselves selling Coals at a lower

price, than that at which they were being offered, the trade would become brisk, and things assume a more reassuring aspect.

Yet the Middlemen were so secure, and had so absolute a command of the London Market, that the Colliery Owners found the practical carrying out of their conclusions, was a task of more difficult a nature than they had believed it to be. Moreover the public had become so accustomed to the system, which admitted Middlemen to a participation in the consequently augmented profits of almost every trade, that the Collieries could expect no very cordial Co-operation in their adventure.

And so the strange anomaly for a long time continued. Colliery Owners, forced to cease working supplies, that were practically inexhaustible, and Colliers deprived of employment, wandering desperate and discontented about the country seeking it, while their wives and little ones starved on their cold hearthstones. And all the while one source, at least, from which employment for labour might be obtained, and relief, however partial or inadequate, afforded was closed against them.

The Reports of the distress and misery, which were bruited abroad were not a whit exaggerated; in fact, so far from the accounts being highly coloured, or in excess of the truth, they entirely failed to convey anything but a feeble impression of the grim and terrible reality. For, to take a single melancholy example from the multitude of instances, what could be more utterly wretched, than the plight of the unhappy colliers in the district of Dedlow, where the



Out of Work.

system of placing men in cottages owned by the collieries had yet not been generally adopted? Their cottages, once so well cared for, and pranked with honeysuckles and convolvulus, now dismantled and decaying, afforded scant shelter to the wretched inmates, exposed, as they were to the cruel wintry winds, which drove the icy rain and sleet through the broken window-panes and the tileless rafters of the roofs. The little garden plots in front, which were the source of so much enjoyment in happier days, and which furnished the means of augmenting the colliers' modest wages by the cultivation of vegetables and garden stuff, were desolate and neglected, their withered flowers typical of the blighted hopes of their ill-fated owners! — The men themselves helpless in their useless strength, and stunned by the crushing weight of their misfortunes, gazed in nerveless apathy on the spectacle of their ruined homes and famine-stricken families reduced by want and disease to the extremity of human wretchedness, or, maddened into brutish callousness, sought forgetfulness of their troubles in the insensate delirium of intoxication. The country round caught the contagion, and a dreadful cloud of woe and desolation brooded over the land, hitherto smiling in plenty and contentment, and tainted all things with its cankerous blight.

At last things became so critical, and the condition of the Colliers was generally so desperate, that several of the Colliery proprietors, who had before taken the matter into consideration, brought their half digested plans to maturity, and determined to, at once, endeavour to depose the Middle



men, break the Ring, and deal directly with the public themselves.

Their decision was a bold one, and pregnant as it was with great results to themselves, the public, and the Coal Ring, it was not to be acted upon, without engaging in an internecine struggle with the powerful body of the Middlemen.

However, the coal owners were not to be intimidated by idle threats or forebodings of, disaster, and immediately commenced their campaign. Depots and offices sprang up all over London, and every proprietor who had ventured his capital in the undertaking, began to congratulate himself on having achieved his object, and was already rejoicing at the victory, which appeared almost within his grasp.

Meanwhile, Micawber and his comrades, were thrown into an indescribable state of consternation, the sickle was laid to their profitable harvest, and the husbandmen, who had come to reap it, were seemingly stalwart and determined enough to slay the dragon which guarded it, and despoil him of the golden fruit.

At first everything went well. No serious resistance was made until the surprise, which attended the sudden step taken by the Coal Owners had somewhat abated, and the Middlemen had had time to take council together, and determine on means to counteract the endeavours of their new Competitors. The public moreover were delighted at the change in the price of Coal, and they strenuously seconded by their custom the vigorous efforts of the Collieries. Orders poured in; work was found for the starved colliers, and



Overthrow of the Dragon.

contentment once more began to reign in the coal districts, while nothing was wanting to add to the satisfaction, which was mutually experienced between the public and its new coal retailers.

This happy state of things was not destined ' to last long. — Though the colliery owners were by no means men of straw, their capital had been seriously diminished by the long continued depression, and it was, therefore, with materially weakened forces that they perhaps somewhat prematurely took the held against their powerful opponents.

The Middlemen, on the other hand, engaged in the contest after a period of almost uninterruptedly profitable trading; and entrenched and fortified, as they were, by large accumulations of capital, the balance of advantage

was necessarily on their side, when they found themselves called upon to cope with their antagonists.

By the action of the coal owners they were scotched but not killed, the Ring was strained, but by no means broken, and its Members put forth all their energies to firmly rivet afresh its loosened links. Each of the colliery owners, in starting business in London, had been content with a small beginning, and had only ventured to set afloat one or two depots and offices in different parts of London. Nearly every Middleman of substance, on the contrary, possessed several depots and offices in and around London, and consequently if the trade done by one should be bad for a season, the successful trading of the others could be set off against the losses, and the balance of gain would probably be in favour of the proprietor of the entire number. Never before did the wide spread influence of the Middlemen stand them in such good stead, as it did at this time.

They found that, by but a slight sacrifice, they were able far to under sell the colliery owners, in those particular districts, in which the latter had opened offices, while the undiminished profits they derived from the - sale of coal in other parts of London, where no competitors had hitherto appeared, compensated them for the insignificant losses they sustained in the immediate neighbourhood of the colliery owners.

The public, ever on the alert to avail itself of the cheapest market, were deceived, though the most cursory examination of the state of the coal market would have satisfied anyone of the impossibility of selling the coal at anything like the prices at which it was offered.

They patronized the middlemen, who offered coal at such remarkable prices, with as much eagerness as they had previously shown in giving their custom to the colliery owners; and the latter soon felt the influence of their desertion.

The colliery owners were unable to maintain their footing in the face of • the opposition of the Middlemen and the neglect of the public, and they had the mortification of perceiving that their undertaking must have been successful if their arena had not been so limited by the scarcity of capital they were able to command.

Their already inadequate capital would not allow them to carry on a ruinous contest against such formidable odds, and the enormous expenses to which they were put in maintaining their London offices, rendered it imperatively necessary for them to retire from the field before disastrous

consequences should ensue. Moreover, the total want of organization or uniformity of action among the colliery owners rendered them more easy victims and forced them to yield, almost without a struggle, to a body of men, whom they could, perhaps, have overcome, had they acted with half the concerted unanimity which' characterised "the councils of their opponents.

Most of the colliery owners retired in disgust to their collieries, while some few of more substance than their fellows remained in London, but were only tolerated by the Coal Ring, when they resorted to the expedient of charging the same prices for their coal as those, which were authoritatively announced by the London Oracle. The prices soon went up to their old figure, and it was now too late for the public to retrieve their mistake, and avoid the consequence of the fatal error into which they had fallen.

Once more the Ring exerted as much influence on the market as it did before any opposition had been offered to its mandates, while both the public and the colliery owners were in a worse plight than before, since the recent defeat of the latter appeared to have taken away all hopes of any possibility of removing the obstruction of the Ring which was again apparently as secure as ever.

CHAPTER VI.

CLOUDS GATHER ON THE HORIZON, AND THE SUN OF MICAWBER IS OBSCURED.

During the events described in the last chapter, Mr. Micawber had shared the anxieties and doubts, which were experienced by his brother Middlemen; had participated with them in their triumph over the Collieries; and was now reaping the benefit, accruing from the higher prices consequent on their victory.

As those little glass imps, which are kept in equilibrium in the midst of a fluid, contained in a bottle closed at the mouth with an elastic membrane, rise or fall according to the pressure applied to the membrane; so was it with the spirits of Micawber, who was despondent, when oppressed by the weight of competition, or cheerful, when his mind was relieved by its removal.

For him and his clique, fortune smiled once more, though from the colliery owners and the public, she still averted her fickle face, which, for so short a season, seemed auspicious to their fortunes, and had led them to indulge in hopes, which the event proved to be so hollow and deceiving.

Though the coal trade showed signs of improvement, it was by no means prosperous, and the colliery owners, who had lately failed in their venture, were too much occupied in husbanding their resources, and in seeking to recoup themselves for the capital they had wasted, to think of re-entering the lists with their formidable competitors.

Accordingly the Middlemen banished every apprehension from their minds, and confidently believing that their position was impregnable, were able to make whatever terms they chose with both the public and the colliery owners, with all the assurance they derived from their fancied security.

That their security was but fancied was soon to be proved, and their confidence was destined within a short time to be roughly shaken.

Among those Collieries, which did not deem it expedient or prudent to strike the blow at the Coal Ring so prematurely as had been done, was the

Colliery of Pinxton.

The subject of the assertion of independence, had, at the time, been one, which had called for the most anxious consideration at the hands of its proprietors, but they had come to the conclusion that the time had not yet arrived, and that any attempt, then, to free themselves from the power of the Coal Ring, would be premature, and could not but prove abortive. Events but too fully verified such gloomy forebodings, the collieries had engaged in their undertaking before the times were ripe for action, and before they themselves were fully prepared for the contest, which was sure to follow the line of action they were about to adopt, in opposition to the interests of the Ring.

Moreover, many causes of their ultimate failure were apparent in the faults of the system they adopted, and in the recklessness with which they neglected all precautions to control the cost of their initial outlay, and of their subsequent working expenses. Entirely oblivious of the homely proverb, that "Rome was not built in a day," they had imagined that immediately they showed themselves in London, all the world would flock to their offices, and at once pour upon them the custom, which is only acquired by years of experience and assiduity.

To meet their sanguine and exaggerated expectations, they had accordingly sunk a vast amount of capital, in providing horses and vans, and other miscellaneous plant, besides engaging a multitude of men, for whom there was at starting very little employment.

Though the public at first responded so largely with their custom, that it seemed as if the fruits of their mistake would not be felt, when they were exposed to the irresistible competition, the Middlemen, from their favourable position, were able to bring to bear, the falling off in their trade disclosed the weakness, which so materially helped to hasten their downfall. Add to this, the fact that the deplorable state of the iron trade deprived them of almost the only source from which they could obtain succour to counterbalance their losses in London, and it will be easily seen that nothing could save them from the fate that awaited them.

When, therefore, the Pinxton Colliery Owners determined to face the Ring single handed, they were about to place themselves in an extremely critical position. However, they were not to be daunted by the dangers that beset them. They had had opportunities of observing the fate of the other collieries and were prepared by experience, to avoid the errors into which

their inexperience had led them. While their reviving trade in other parts of the country furnished them with some sources of revenue, in which, at least, they could place a confident reliance.

Such being the aspect of affairs, means were immediately adopted to secure a footing in London. Communications were made to the various Railway Companies, for the purpose of securing space at their various stations for Coal Depots, and more than a dozen offices were engaged in different parts of London, in order that, by extending their area of operations, they might compete with the Middlemen on equal terms.

At first it seemed as though it would be impossible to obtain the requisite room for depots, for all the available space at the Railway Stations had already been engaged. However by a consideration of the profitable trade, that would accrue to them, if Pinxton occupied their wharves, instead of tenants of less capital, and who might not perhaps show too great a desire to pay their dues, some of the Railway Companies managed to make room for the former by refusing to allow some of the latter to remain longer on their premises.

Everything was now ready to commence trading with the public: the depots were well supplied with coal, 100,000 circulars had apprised the public that Pinxton was prepared to supply them with coal direct from the Pinxton Collieries, and nothing remained but to wait for orders, and take means to transport the coal to the places at which its delivery was required. In their provision for this the promoters of the movement were singularly sagacious. Profiting by the errors of their predecessors, they sunk no capital in the acquisition of carrying stock, but contractors were found, who made it their business to supply horses, vans, and men, to every-one who might be willing to agree to their terms.

Agreements were made with some of them, by which they undertook always to be prepared to find sacks, horses, vans, men, and weighing machines, and to deliver any amount of coal within a specified radius, at a fixed rate per ton, while other contracts were made with men who were to act as loaders — their duty being to fill the sacks and carry them into the vans — these were also paid by the ton, and by this arrangement, the colliery got rid of the risk of the heavy loss of capital, which would be occasioned by the falling off of trade, when a large proportion of their plant would necessarily be thrown out of employment.

The Pinxton Coal Company was now fairly launched in its London trading enterprise, and the uniform success, they had hitherto met with at the outset joined with the intrinsic soundness of the system they had decided to act upon, justified every expectation of its continued success.

“The lowest price at which coals can be sold for any considerable time, is like that of all other commodities, the price which is barely sufficient to replace, together with its ordinary profits, the stock which is employed in bringing them to market.”

Such was the conclusion of Adam Smith, the founder of the School of England’s Political Economists, at a time when Middlemen received little sympathy, and the laws against engrossing, and forestalling the market, were yet unrepealed. And this price the Pinxton Colliery Company, untempted by the much greater profits they might have obtained, and which actually were being made on all sides of them, determined never to exceed.

Their conduct completely puzzled the Ring; and the Middlemen were so taken by surprise, by the strange spectacle of a Company preferring to secure the confidence of the public, by providing them with the produce of its mines, at the lowest possible price, instead of seeking to amass a fortune by high prices, and the largest possible profits, that at first they hardly offered any opposition to the success of the enterprise the owners of the Pinxton Collieries had engaged in.

Meanwhile, the public were not slow to recognize the name of Pinxton, which had formerly borne so high a character, and the old customers of the Pinxton Collieries, were delighted to find the quality of the coal undeteriorated, while its price was not increased since the time when they ordered it twenty years ago. That its good qualities were then appreciated is proved by the following extract from an article headed “A few notes on coal” which appeared in a publication called “Our Own Fireside,” of the date of 1865. “It may be of the last importance “ says the author “ either for the sick room or as a saving of time &c, to avoid touching the fire after it is made, except by supplying fuel, and this is admirably answered in the case of one of the cheapest and best coals sold, viz. the Pinxton (from the mine in Derbyshire) which are usually sold in London at from 17s. to a guinea per ton, according to the season. They are not difficult to light, and then all that is necessary is to supply. I have known a fire, somewhat carefully made up at night keep for eight or nine hours without touching, or being supplied. In our kitchens considerable difficulties often occur from the prevalent, but

most erroneous notions, that the dearest coals are the best. Hence and perhaps for no other reason, a cheap article is frequently flouted and accordingly wasted." &c,

The inertness of the Middlemen did not long continue, and they prepared themselves for a struggle, which they knew must seriously affect either the security of their own class; or the London Trade, and the general wellbeing of the Pinxton Coal Company.

Indeed it was of the greatest moment to the Middlemen, that they should look to themselves.

The action of the Pinxton Collieries, was so well timed and sudden, and the results were so keenly felt, that in the course of a single week — and that week, the one in which the Pinxton prices were first published, and their offices first open for orders — the merchants prices fell no less than three shillings per ton. When a result like this followed the very first move of Pinxton, it was no wonder that sentiments of friendliness



to the cause of Pinxton should find no place in the breasts of the Middlemen.

Those among them, who were customers at the Pinxton Pits threatened to withdraw their trade and take their trucks elsewhere, and every means was

resorted to, to prevent Pinxton obtaining a firm position in the London Market.

The Pinxton Coal Company was so convinced of the pernicious effects occasioned in London, by the arbitrary method of fixing the prices of coal, which prevails among the Middlemen, that some six months after the time of their opening offices in London, they published a small pamphlet entitled "Facts about Coal." This embodied the views of the Company, and contained a few facts illustrative of the abuses, it has always been the endeavour of the Pinxton Coal Company to eradicate.

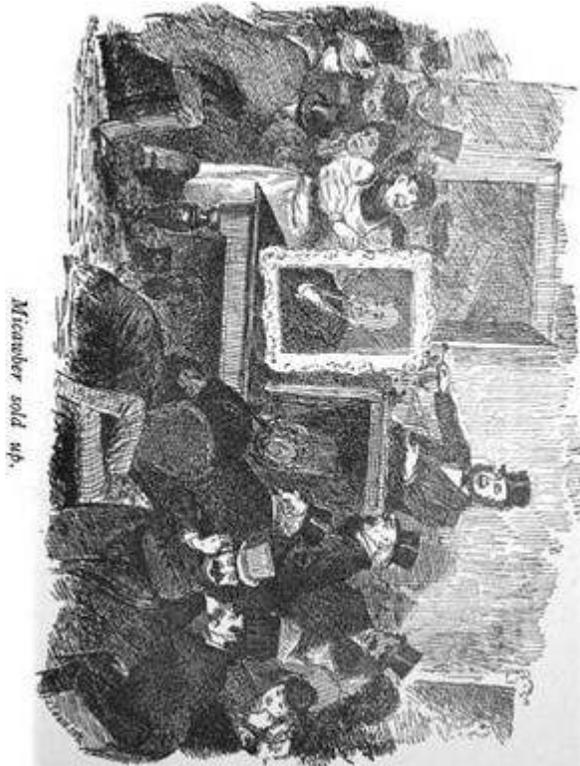
The imputation, that the Middlemen of London are wont to act in concert, which was to be gathered from the contents of this pamphlet, seemed to be shown not unfounded by their conduct with respect to it. Hundreds of copies were bought up by an influential coal merchant and distributed among his fellow traders, and a copy of the illustration which formed one of the covers of the pamphlet, was hung up framed and glazed on the walls of the Coal Exchange. It is hardly necessary to aver that such conduct was intended to excite odium against the Pinxton Coal Company, odium that could not be incurred by them, save at the hands of those, against whose system of trading the pamphlet was conceived.

However, whether the Pinxton Coal Company were right in their conjectures or no, let the facts determine. They fell into grievous disrepute with the Middlemen of London, and were finally banished from the merchant's subscription rooms at the Coal Exchange, though the merchants did not forego the advantage of buying some of the cheapest coal to be had on the market, and still continued to deal with Pinxton.

The system on which the Pinxton Coal Company wishes to act is a perfectly fair and impartial one, and must commend itself to all sensible and right minded men. No objection can be raised against Middlemen as Middlemen, since in many trades they are absolutely necessary to communicate between the producer and the consumer.

But in some trades they are not necessary, and in all, where they combine together and settle prices, which are not those, at which the commodity they deal in would be sold if perfectly independent competition were only permitted; then their existence, instead of being useful becomes absolutely prejudicial to the best interests of the trade in which such a Ring is for a moment tolerated.

That the Public paid no heed to the idle forebodings of the Ring, was apparent to the owners of the Pinxton Collieries, when an examination of their books at the end of the first six months of their appearance in London, shewed that no less than 5000 names of regular London customers had been inscribed upon them. Poor Micawber had never quite been able to introduce himself into the first circle of the Coal Ring, and though he had derived a large income from



the profits he made, his connection had never been sufficiently extended, to enable him to put by much of his gains, consequently when the Pinxton Coal Company entered into competition with the Ring, the Middlemen of less substance felt the pressure very severely, and a great many found it impossible to maintain their footing in the face of the new conditions, under which the coal trade was now carried on.

Among such, was Micawber — obliged to continue his business, though it was being conducted at a considerable loss, and without sufficient capital to meet his expenses; while the depression continued, his affairs became, every-day more and more gloomy.

The diminution of his profits compelled him to discard his carriage, and remove from his luxurious villa at Brixton to a house of more humble pretensions — and ruin seemed again to be about to claim him. He applied

to me for advice in this crisis, and I strongly urged that the best course for him to adopt, was to shut up his offices, dispose of the goodwill of his business, if any such remained, and retire again to Middlebay, where, before, he had been so successful, and where it was not too late to hope he might be able to retrieve his former position among its citizens.

After a long period of doubt and hesitation, Micawber determined to act on my advice, he broke off his connection with the coal trade, settled his affairs in London, and proceeded to take leave of his friends, and prepare himself, and Mrs Micawber, for their intended emigration. At last the day for their departure arrived, and the two young Micawbers, who had decided to stay in England, and I, accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Micawber to the Docks, and saw them safely on board the ship, in which they had taken their passage for Australia.

While we dropped down the river, we did our best to encourage and cheer them to face their altered circumstances with fortitude and equanimity, till at length the order was given to us to leave the ship, and, after a reluctant parting with Micawber and his wife, we were rowed away from her side to the Gravesend Pier. From thence we watched them waving their handkerchiefs from the stern of the vessel, until they faded in the distance, and the good ship slowly glided below the horizon, leaving no trace behind her but a thin haze of smoke from her funnel, a fitting emblem of the ephemeral existence of the man she was bearing away from the shores of England in her wave-lapped bosom.

PICKWICKIAN STUDIES by Percy Fitzgerald



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PICKWICKIAN STUDIES
By PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A., F.S.A.
Author of "The History of Pickwick," "Pickwickian Manners and
Customs,"
"Bozland," &c.
1899

CHAPTER I. IPSWICH

I. — The Great White Horse

This ancient Inn is associated with some pleasant and diverting Pickwickian memories. We think of the adventure with “the lady in the yellow curl papers” and the double-bedded room, just as we would recall some “side splitting” farce in which Buckstone or Toole once made our jaws ache. As all the world knows, the “Great White Horse” is found in the good old town of Ipswich, still flourishes, and is scarcely altered from the days when Mr. Pickwick put up there. Had it not been thus associated, Ipswich would have remained a place obscure and scarcely known, for it has little to attract save one curious old house and some old churches; and for the theatrical antiquary, the remnant of the old theatre in Tacket Street, where Garrick first appeared as an amateur under the name of Lyddal, about a hundred and sixty years ago, and where now the Salvation Army “performs” in his stead.

The touch of “Boz” kindled the old bones into life, it peopled the narrow, winding streets with the Grummers, Nupkins, Jingles, Pickwick and his followers; with the immortal lady aforesaid in her yellow curl papers, to say nothing of Mr. Peter Magnus. From afar off even, we look at Ipswich with a singular interest; some of us go down there to enjoy the peculiar feeling — and it *is* a peculiar and piquant one — of staying at Mr. Pickwick’s Inn — of sleeping even in his room. This relish, however, is only given to your true “follower,” not to his German-metal counterfeit — though, strange to say, at this moment, Pickwick is chiefly “made in Germany,” and comes to us from that country in highly-coloured almanacks — and pictures of all kinds. About Ipswich there is a very appropriate old-fashioned tone, and much of the proper country town air. The streets seem dingy enough — the hay waggon is encountered often. The “Great White Horse,” which is at the corner of several streets, is a low, longish building — with a rather seedy air. But to read “Boz’s” description of it, we see at once that he was somewhat overpowered by its grandeur and immense size — which, to us in these days of huge hotels, seems odd. It was no doubt a large posting house of many small chambers — and when crowded, as “Boz” saw it at Election time in 1835, swarming with committeemen, agents, and voters, must have impressed more than it would now. The Ball-room at “The Bull,” in

Rochester, affected him in much the same way; and there is a curious sensation in looking round us there, on its modest proportions — its little hutch of a gallery which would hold about half-a-dozen musicians, and the small contracted space at the top where the “swells” of the dockyard stood together. “Boz,” as he himself once told me, took away from Rochester the idea that its old, red brick Guildhall was one of the most imposing edifices in Europe, and described his astonishment on his return at seeing how small it was.

Apropos of Rochester and the Pickwick feeling, it may be said that to pass that place by on the London, Chatham, and Dover line rouses the most curious sensation. Above is the Castle, seen a long time before, with the glistening river at its feet; then one skirts the town passing by the backs of the very old-fashioned houses, and you can recognise those of the Guildhall and of the Watts’ Charity, and the gilt vanes of other quaint, old buildings; you see a glimpse of the road rising and falling, with its pathways raised on each side, with all sorts of faded tints — mellow, subdued reds, sombre greys, a patch of green here and there, and all more or less dingy, and “quite out of fashion.” There is a rather forlorn tone over it all, especially when we have a glimpse of Ordnance Terrace, at Chatham, that abandoned, dilapidated row where the boy Dickens was brought up dismally enough. At that moment the images of the Pickwickians recur as of persons who had lived and had come down there on this pleasant adventure. And how well we know every stone and corner of the place, and the tone of the place! We might have lived there ourselves. Positively, as we walk through it, we seem to recognise localities like old friends.

“Boz,” when he came to Ipswich, was no more than a humble reporter, on special duty, living in a homely way enough. The “White Horse” was not likely to put itself out for him, and he criticises it in his story, after a fashion that seems rather bold. His description is certainly unflattering:

“In the main street, on the left-hand side of the way” — observe how minute Boz is in his topography — “a short distance after you have passed through the open space fronting the Town Hall, stands an Inn known far and wide by the appellation of ‘The Great White Horse,’ rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal, with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart horse, which is elevated above the principal door. The ‘Great White Horse’ is famous in the neighbourhood in the same degree as a prize ox or county paper-chronicled

turnip, or unwieldy pig — for its *enormous size*. Never were there such labyrinths of *uncarpeted passages*, such clusters of *mouldy, badly-lighted rooms*, such huge numbers of small dens for eating or sleeping in, beneath any other roof, as are collected between the four walls of this overgrown Tavern.”

Boz cannot give the accommodation a good word, for he calls the Pickwickian room “a large, badly furnished apartment, with *a dirty grate* in which a small fire was making a wretched attempt to be cheerful, but was fast sinking beneath the dispiriting influence of the place.” The dinner, too, seems to have been as bad, for a *bit of fish* and a steak took one hour to get ready, with “*a bottle of the worst possible port, at the highest possible price.*” Depreciation of a hostelry could not be more damaging. Again, Mr. Pickwick’s bedroom is described as a sort of surprise, being “a more comfortable-looking apartment that his short experience of the accommodation of the Great White House had led him to expect.”

Now this was bad enough, but his sketch of the waiter who received the arriving party is worse:

“A corpulent man, with a fortnight’s napkin under his arm and coeval stockings.”

There is something so hostile in all this that it certainly must have come from a sense of bad reception. As we said, the young reporter was likely enough to have been treated with haughty contempt by the corpulent waiter so admirably described, with his “coeval stockings.”

Even the poor horse is not spared, “Rampacious” he is styled; the stone animal that still stands over the porch. It must be said that the steed in question is a very mild animal indeed, and far from ramping, is trotting placidly along. “Rampacious,” however, scarcely seems correct — “Rampagious” is the proper form — particularly as “Boz” uses the words “On the rampage.” We find ourselves ever looking at the animal with interest — as he effects his trot, one leg bent. The porch, and horse above it, have a sort of sacred character. I confess when I saw it for the first time I looked at it with an almost absurd reverence and curiosity. The thing is so much in keeping, one would expect to see the coach laden with Pickwickians drive up.

Mr. Pickwick’s adventure, his losing his way in the passages, &c., might occur to anyone. It is an odd feeling, the staying at this old hostelry, and, as it draws on towards midnight, seeking your room, through endless

windings, turns, and short flights. There is even now to be seen the niche where Mr. Pickwick sat down for the night; so minute are the directions we can trace the various rooms. Mr. Pickwick asked for a private room and was taken down a "long dark passage." It turned out later that Miss Witherfield's sitting-room was actually next door, so Mr. Magnus had not far to go. These rooms were on the ground floor, so Mr. Pickwick had to "descend" from his bedroom.

There is a tradition indeed that Mr. Pickwick's adventure with a lady really occurred to "Boz" himself, who had lost his way in the mazes of the passages. I have a theory that his uncomfortable night in the passages, and the possible displeasure of the authorities, may have jaundiced his views.

II. — Eatanswill and Ipswich

It is not "generally known" that Ipswich is introduced twice in the book: as Eatanswill, as well as under its own proper name. As "Boz" was dealing with the corrupt practices at Elections, and severely ridiculing them, he was naturally afraid of being made responsible. Further, he had been despatched by the proprietors of the *Chronicle* to report the speeches at the election, and he did not care to take advantage of his mission for literary purposes. The father of the late Mr. Alfred Morrison, the well-known, amiable virtuoso, was one of the candidates for Ipswich at the election in 1835, and he used to tell how young "Boz" was introduced into one of the rooms at the "Great White Horse," where the head-quarters of the candidate was. Sir Fitzroy Kelly was the other candidate, a name that seems pointed at in Fizkin.

This high and mighty point of the locality of Eatanswill has given rise to much discussion, and there are those who urge the claims of other towns, such as Yarmouth and Norwich. It has been ingeniously urged that, in his examination before Nupkins, Mr. Pickwick stated that he was a perfect stranger in the town, and had no knowledge of any householders there who could be bail for him. Now if Eatanswill were Ipswich, he must have known many — the Pott family for instance — and he had resided there for some time. But the author did not intend that the reader should believe that the two places were the same, and wished them to be considered different towns, though *he* considered them as one. It has been urged, too, that Ipswich is not on the direct road to Norwich as stated by the author; but on consulting an old road book (Mogg's) I find that it is one of the important stages on the coach line.

But what is conclusive is the question of distance. On hurrying away so abruptly from Mrs. Leo Hunter's, Mr. Pickwick was told by that lady that the adventurer was at Bury St. Edmunds, "*not many miles from here,*" that is a short way off. Now Bury is no more than about four-and-twenty miles from Ipswich, a matter of about four hours' coach travelling. Great Yarmouth is fully seventy by roundabout roads, which could not be described as being "a short way from here." It would have taken eight or nine hours — a day's journey. Mr. Pickwick left Eatanswill about one or two, for the lunch was going on, and got to Bury in time for dinner, which, had he left Yarmouth, would have taken him to the small hours of the morning.

No one was such a thorough "Pressman" as was "Boz," or threw himself with such ardour into his profession. To his zeal and knowledge in this respect we have the warmest testimonies. When he was at Ipswich for the election, he, beyond doubt, entered with zest and enjoyment into all the humours. No one could have written so minute and hearty an account without having been "behind the scenes" and in the confidence of one or other of the parties. And no wonder, for he represented one of the most important of the London "dailies."

The fact is, Ipswich was a sort of a tempestuous borough, the scene of many a desperate conflict in which one individual, Mr. Fitzroy Kelly — later Chief Baron — made the most persevering efforts, again and again renewed, to secure his footing. Thus, in December, 1832, there was a fierce struggle with other candidates, Messrs. Morrison, Dundas, and Rigby Wason, in which he was worsted — for the moment. But, in January, 1835, when he stood again, he was successful. This must have been the one in Pickwick, when the excesses there described may have taken place. There were four candidates: one of whom, Mr. Dundas — no doubt depicted as the Honourable Mr. Slumkey — being of the noble family of Zetland. We find that the successful candidate was unseated on petition, and his place taken by another candidate. In 1837, he stood once more, and was defeated by a very narrow majority. On a scrutiny, he was restored to Parliament. Finally, in 1847, he lost the seat and gave up this very uncertain borough. Now all this shows what forces were at work, and that, with such determined candidates, electoral purity was not likely to stand in the way. All which makes for Ipswich.

It must be said, however, that a fair case can be made for Norwich. In introducing Eatanswill, Boz says that “an anxious desire to abstain from giving offence” prompted Mr. Pickwick, *i.e.*, Boz, to conceal the real name of the place. He adds that he travelled by the Norwich coach, “but this entry (in Mr. Pickwick’s notes) was afterwards lined through as if for the purpose of concealing even the direction.” Some might think that this was a veiled indication, but it seems too broad and obvious a method, that is, by crossing out a name to reveal the name. It is much more likely he meant that the town was somewhere between Norwich and London, and on that line. There are arguments, too, from the distances. There are two journeys in the book from Eatanswill to Bury, which seem to furnish data for both theories — the Ipswich and the Norwich ones. But if we have to take the *déjeûner* in its literal sense, and put it early in the day, say, at eleven, and Mr. Pickwick’s arrival at Bury, “wery late,” as Sam had it, we have some six hours, or, say, forty miles, covered by the journey. But the events at Mrs. Leo Hunter’s were certainly at mid-day — between one and three o’clock. It was, in fact, a grand lunch. So with Winkle’s journey. He left Eatanswill half-an-hour after breakfast, and must have travelled by the same coach as Mr. Pickwick had done, and reached Bury just in time for dinner, or in six or seven hours. Now it will not be said that he would not be a whole day going four-and-twenty miles.

A fair answer to these pleas might be that Boz was not too scrupulous as to times or distances when he was contriving incidents or events; and numberless specimens could be given of his inaccuracies. Here, “panting time toiled after him in vain.” It was enough to talk of breakfast and dinner without accurately computing the space between. But a close admeasurement of the distance will disprove the Norwich theory. Bury was twenty-four miles from Ipswich, and Ipswich forty miles from Norwich — a total of seventy-four miles, to accomplish which would have taken ten, eleven or twelve hours, to say nothing of the chance of missing the “correspondance” with the Northern Norwich coach. Then again, Boz is careful to state that Eatanswill was “one of the smaller towns.” In this class we would not place Norwich, a large Cathedral City, with its innumerable churches, and population, even then, of over 60,000, whereas Ipswich was certainly one of these “smaller towns,” having only 20,000. It must be also considered, too, that this was a cross road, when the pace would be slower than on the great main lines, say, at five miles an hour, which, with

stoppages, &c., would occupy a period for the twenty-four miles of some four hours, that is, say, from two to six o'clock. Boz, by his arrangement of the traffic, would seem to assume that a conveyance could be secured at any time of the day, for Mr. Pickwick conveniently found one the instant he so abruptly quitted Mrs. Leo Hunter's, while Winkle and his friends just as conveniently found one immediately after breakfast. He appears to have been seven hours on the road. But the strong point on which all Ipswichians may rest secure is Mr. Pickwick's statement to Mrs. Leo Hunter that Bury was "not many miles from here."

But an even more convincing proof can be found in Jingle's relation to Eatanswill. He came over from Bury to Mrs. Leo Hunter's party, leaving his servant there, at the Hotel, and returned the same evening. The place must have been but a short way off, when he could go and return in the same day. Then what brought him to Eatanswill? We are told that at the time he was courting Miss Nupkins, the Mayor's daughter; of course, he rushed over in the hope of meeting her at Mrs. Leo Hunter's *déjeûner*. Everything, therefore, fits well together.

I thought of consulting the report of the House of Commons Committee on the Election Petition, and this confirmed my view. There great stress is laid on the Blue and Buff colours: in both the report and the novel it is mentioned that the constables' staves were painted Blue. Boz makes Bob Sawyer say, in answer to Potts' horrified enquiry "Not Buff, sir?" "Well I'm a kind of plaid at present — mixed colours" — something very like this he must have noticed in the Report. A constable, asked was his comrade, one Seagrave, Buff, answered, "*well, half and half, I believe.*" In the Report, voters were captured and put to bed at the White Horse; and Sam tells how he "pumped over" a number of voters at the same house. The very waiter, who received Mr. Pickwick so contemptuously, was examined by the Committee — his name was Henry Cowey — and he answered exactly like the waiter with the "fortnight's napkin and the coeval stockings." When asked "was not so-and-so's appearance that of an intoxicated person?" the language seemed too much for him, rather, he took it to himself: "If I *had* been intoxicated, I could not have done my business." This is quite in character.

Boz calls the inn at Eatanswill, "The Town Arms." There was no such sign in all England at the time, as the Road Book shows. Why then would he call the White Horse by that name? The Town Arms of Ipswich have

two white *Sea Horses* as supporters. This had certainly something to do with the matter.

Mr. Pott was surely a real personage: for “Boz,” who presently did not scruple to “takeoff” a living Yorkshire schoolmaster in a fashion that all his neighbours and friends recognised the original, would not draw back in the case of an editor. Indeed, it is plain that in all points Pott is truly an admirable figure, perfect in every point of view, and finished. In fact, Pott and Pell, in their way, are the two best pieces of work in the book. How admirable is the description; “a tall, thin man with a sandy-coloured head, inclined to baldness, and a face in which solemn importance was blended with a look of unfathomable profundity. He was dressed in a long, brown surtout, with a black cloth waistcoat and drab trousers. A double eye-glass dangled at his waistcoat, and on his head he wore a very low-crowned hat with a broad rim.” Every touch is delightful — although all is literal the literalness is all humour. As when Pott, to recreate his guest, Mr. Pickwick, told Jane to “go down into the office and bring me up the file of the Gazette for 1828. I’ll read you just a few of the leaders I wrote at that time upon the Buff job of appointing a new tollman to the turnpike here. I rather think they’ll amuse you.” This was rich enough, and he came back to the same topic towards the end of the book.

It will be remembered Mr. Pott went to Mrs. Leo Hunter’s *Fête* in the character of a Russian with a knout in his hand. No doubt the Gazette had its “eye on Russia” and like the famous *Skibbereen Eagle* had solemnly warned the Autocrat to that effect. It is, by the way, amusing to find that this organ, *The Eagle* to wit, which so increased the gaiety of the nation, has once more been warning the Autocrat, and in a vein that proves that “our filthy contemporary,” *The Eatanswill Gazette*, was no exaggerated picture. This is how *The Eagle*, in a late issue, speaks of the Russian occupation of Port Arthur: — “And once again that keen, fierce glance is cast in the direction of the grasping Muscovite; again, one of the foulest, one of the vilest dynasties that has impiously trampled on the laws of God, and has violated every progressive aspiration the Almighty implanted in the human heart when He fashioned man in His own image, and breathed into his soul the breath of life, threatens, for the moment at least, to put back the hands of the clock that tells the progress of civilisation. The Emperor of all the Russias, this wicked enemy of the human race, has succeeded in raising his hideous flag on Port Arthur, and planting his iron heel and cloven hoof on

the heathen Chinese — filthy, degenerate creatures, who, it must be admitted, are fitting companions for the tallow-eating, ‘knouting’ barbarian.”

III. — Nupkins and Magnus.

Who was intended by Nupkins, the intolerable Mayor of Ipswich? An odious being. We may wonder at “Boz’s” courage, for, of course, the existing Mayor of Ipswich might think that the satire was pointed at *him*. There can be little doubt, however, that Nupkins was drawn from a London Police Magistrate, and is, in fact, another portrait of the functionary whom he sketched specially for “*Oliver Twist*” under the name of Mr. Fang. Nupkins, however, is more in the comedy vein — ridiculed rather than gibbeted — than was Mr. Fang. We have only to compare the touches in both descriptions:

“I beg your pardon for interrupting you,” said Mr. Pickwick, “but before you proceed to act upon any opinion you may have formed, I must claim my right to be heard.”

“Hold your tongue,” said the magistrate, peremptorily.

“I must submit to you, sir — ” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Hold your tongue, or I shall order an officer to remove you.”

“You may order your officers to do whatever you please, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick.

Compare with this “*Oliver Twist*”:

“Who are you?” said Mr. Fang.

“Before I am sworn, I must beg to say one word, and that is I really never, without actual experience, could have believed — ”

“Hold your tongue, sir,” said Mr. Fang, peremptorily.

“I will not, sir.”

“Hold your tongue this instant, or I’ll have you turned out of the office.”

Mr. Pickwick, it will be remembered, made a communication to Mr. Nupkins which changed the whole state of affairs. Mr. Nupkins, with all his insolent despotism, was held in check by conference with his clerk, Jinks, who kept him from making mistakes by judicious hints.

Fang’s clerk, like Mr. Jinks, interposed:

“How do you propose to deal with the case, sir?” inquired the clerk, in a low voice.

Mr. Jinks pulled him by the sleeve and whispered something. He was evidently remonstrating. At length the magistrate, gulping down with a

very bad grace his disinclination to hear anything more, said sharply, "What do you want to say?"

When Mr. Fang was about to commit Oliver, the Bookstall-keeper rushed in, and insisted on being heard, and, like Mr. Nupkins, Mr. Fang had to listen:

"I demand to be sworn," said the man, "I will not be put down."

"Swear the man," growled Mr. Fang, with a very ill grace. "Now, what have you got to say?"

Again, Mr. Nupkins said of Sam:

"He is evidently a desperate ruffian."

"He is my servant, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, angrily.

"Oh, he is your servant, is he. A conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice."

Compare Fang and the Bookseller:

"That book, is it paid for? No, it is not."

"Dear me, I forgot all about it," exclaimed the old gentleman.

"A nice person to prepare a charge against a poor boy," said Fang; "the law will overtake you yet, &c."

and so on.

In short, Nupkins is a softened edition of Fang. It was curious that he turned out at the end not altogether so badly, and there is certainly a little inconsistency in the character. After Mr. Pickwick's disclosures, he becomes very rational and amiable. We may wonder, too, how the latter could have accepted hospitality from, or have sat down at the board of, the man who treated him in so gross a fashion, and, further, that after accepting this entertainment, Mr. Pickwick should take an heroic and injured tone, recalling his injuries as he withdrew, but *after* his dinner.

This magistrate was despotic enough, but we might have expected that he would have had Mr. Peter Magnus brought before him also, and have issued a warrant. The lady, however, was silent as to her admirer, and this difficulty appears to have occurred to the author for he makes Mr. Nupkins remark: "The other principal *you say* has absconded," she having said nothing whatever. Being at the "White Horse," too, he was accessible. He may, however, have gone off to secure "a friend."

In Ipswich there is controversy as to the exact whereabouts of his mansion. But there can be little doubt as to the matter, as the directions given are minute. The guide books take care to point it out. "Bending his steps towards St. Clement's Church" — that is leaving the "White Horse"

and following the street on the right, “he found himself in a retired spot, a kind of courtyard of venerable appearance, which he discovered had no other outlet than the turning by which he had entered.” I believe it is the house at the far end of the lane — now Mr. Bennett’s. The street has been cut through the lawn. There are here, as there were then, “old red brick houses” and “the green gate of a garden at the bottom of the yard.” Nothing could be more precise, allowing of course for the changes, demolitions, re-buildings, &c., of sixty years.

What became of Mr. Peter Magnus and his lady? Did they “make it up”? or was Mr. Pickwick enabled to make such explanations as would clear away all suspicions. Did the two angry gentlemen meet again after Mr. Pickwick’s return to the “White Horse?” These are interesting questions, and one at least can be answered. Owing to an indiscretion of the foolish Winkle’s, during the famous action of *Bardell v. Pickwick*, we learn that Mr. Pickwick “being found in a lady’s apartment at midnight had led to the *breaking off of the projected marriage* of the lady in question.” Now this seems a serious result of Mr. Pickwick’s indiscretion, and very unfortunate for the poor lady, and ought to have caused him some remorse. No doubt he explained the incident, which he had better have done at first, for *now* it had the air of attempting to shield the lady. It was odd that Mr. Pickwick should thus have interfered with the marriage of *two* elderly spinster ladies.

There is, by the way, a droll inconsistency on the part of the author in his description of a scene between Mr. Magnus and Mr. Pickwick. When the former was about to propose to the middle-aged lady, he told Mr. Pickwick that he arranged to see her at eleven. “It only wants a quarter now.” Breakfast was waiting, and the pair sat down to it. Mr. Magnus was looking at the clock every other second. Presently he announced, “It only wants *two minutes*.” Notwithstanding this feverish impatience, he asks Mr. Pickwick for his advice in proposing, which the latter gave at great length. Mr. Magnus listened, now without any impatience. The clock hand was “verging on the five minutes past;” not until it was *ten* minutes past did he rise.

IV. — Had Mr. Pickwick ever Loved?

Mr. Pickwick’s early history is obscure enough, and we know no details save that he had been “in business.” But had he ever an affair of the heart? Just as in real life, when a stray allusion will occasionally escape from a person betraying something of his past history, so once or twice a casual

remark of Mr. Pickwick's furnishes a hint. Thus Mr. Magnus, pressing him for his advice in this delicate matter of proposing, asked him had he ever done this sort of thing in his time. "You mean proposing?" said the great man. "Yes." "Never," said Mr. Pickwick, *with great energy*, and then repeated the word "Never." His friend then assumed that he did not know how it was best to begin. "Why," said the other, cautiously, "I may have formed some ideas on the subject," but then added that he had "never submitted them to the test of experience." This is distinct enough, but it does all the same hint at some *affaire de cœur*, else why would he "have formed some ideas upon the subject." Of course, it may be that he was thinking of Mrs. Bardell and her cruel charges. Still, it was strange that a man should have reached to fifty, have grown round and stout, without ever offering his hand. The first picture in the book, however, helps us to speculate a little. Over his head in the room at Dulwich hangs the portrait of an old lady in spectacles, the image of the great Samuel; his mother certainly. He evidently regarded her with deep affection, he had brought the picture to Dulwich and placed it where it should always be before his eyes. Could it not be, and is it not natural that in addition to his other amiabilities he was the best of sons — that she "ruled the roast" — that in the old Mrs. Wardle, to whom he so filially attended, he saw his mother's image, that she was with him to the day of her death, and that while she lived, he resolved that no one else should be mistress there! After her death he found himself a confirmed old bachelor. There's a speculation for you on the German lines.

We might go on. This self denial must have been the more meritorious as he was by nature of an affectionate, even amorous, cast. He seized every opportunity of kissing the young ladies. He would certainly have liked to have had some fair being at home whom he could thus distinguish. How good this description of the rogue —

"Mr. Pickwick kissed the young ladies — we were going to say as if they were his own daughters, only, as he might possibly have infused *a little more warmth into the salutation*, the comparison would not be quite appropriate."

He never lost a chance. In the same spirit, when the blushing Arabella came to tell of her marriage, "can you forgive my imprudence?" He returned "no verbal response" — not he — "but *took off his spectacles in great haste*, and seizing both the young lady's hands in his, kissed her a

great many times — perhaps a greater number of times than was absolutely necessary.” Observe the artfulness of all this — the deliberation — taking off the spectacles so that they should not be in the way — seizing her hands — and then setting to work! Oh, he knew more of “this sort of thing” than he had credit for. He had never proposed — true — but he had been near it a precious sight more than he said.

Miss Witherfield is a rather mysterious personage, yet we take an interest in her and speculate on her history. She lived some twenty miles from Ipswich — no doubt at a family place of her own. She had come in to stay at the White Horse for the night and the morning. She was, no doubt, a person of property — otherwise Mr. Magnus would not have been so eager, and he must have been a fortune hunter, for he confided to Mr. Pickwick, that he had been jilted “three or four times.” What a quaint notion by the way that of his: “I think an Inn is a good sort of place to propose to a single woman in, Mr. Pickwick. She is more likely to feel the loneliness of her situation in travelling, perhaps than she would be, at home.”

We find here some of the always amusing bits of confusion that recur in the book. Here might be a Calverley question, “When was it, and where was it, that the Pickwickians had *two* dinners in the one day?” Answer: At the Great White Horse on this very visit. When Mr. Nupkins retired to lunch, after his interview with Miss Witherfield, the Pickwickians sat down to their dinner “quietly,” and were in the midst of that meal, when Grummer arrived to arrest them. They were taken to Nupkins’, and there dined with him. This dinner would have brought them to five o’clock: — we are told of candles — so that it was dark — yet this was the month of May, when it would been light enough till eight o’clock. Mrs. Nupkins’ dress, on coming in from lunch, is worth noting. “A blue gauze turban and a light brown wig.”

Again, it was to Mr. Pickwick’s watch, that we owe the diverting and farcical incident of the double bedded bedroom — and indeed we have here all the licensed improbabilities of a Farce. To forget his watch on a hotel table was the last thing a staid man of business would do. How could he be made to forget it? “By winding it up,” said the author. “Winding up his watch, and *laying it on the table.*” This was of course in the *Fob* days, when the watch had to be drawn from the deep pocket; not as now when it is secured with a “guard chain.” Naturally, he might in an abstracted moment have so laid it down.

As an instance of the natural, every-day sort of tone prevailing through the book, it may be noted that it is mentioned as a matter of history, that the breakfast next day was at eleven o'clock — a late hour. But we know, though it is not pointed out, that Mr. Magnus and Mr. Pickwick had sat till morning drinking brandy and water, and that Mr. Pickwick had spent a portion of the night wandering about the Hotel. Naturally he came down late.

We are also minutely told that Mr. Magnus left the room at ten minutes past eleven. Mr. Pickwick “took a few strides to and fro,” when it became half past eleven! But this is a rather mysterious passage, for we next learn that “the *small hand* of the clock, following the *latter part* of his example, had arrived at the figure which indicates the half hour.” The “latter part,” would refer to “fro.” Perhaps it is a fresh gibe at the unlucky White Horse and its administration. The “small hand,” in any case, could not, and would not, point to the half hour, save that it had got loosened, and had jumped down, as hands will do, to seek the centre of gravity.

How natural, too, is the appearance of Jingle. With Wardles' £120 in his pocket, he was flush of cash, and could make a new appearance — in a new district — as an officer — Captain FitzMarshall. He was “picked up,” we are told, at some neighbouring races. Sudbury and Stowmarket are not far off.

Some years ago, the late Lady Quain was staying at Ipswich and took so deep an interest in the “Great White Horse” and its traditions that she had it with all its apartments photographed on a large scale, forming a regular series. Her husband, the amiable physician whose loss we have to deplore, gave them to me. The “White Horse” was decidedly wrong in having Mr. Pickwick's double-bedded room fitted up with brass Birmingham bedsteads. Were I the proprietor I would assuredly have the room arranged exactly as in Phiz's picture — the two old-fashioned four-posts with the dimity curtains, the rush light and shade on the floor, the old glass on the dressing-table. To be even more realistic still there might be added Mr. Pickwick's night-capped head peeping out, and the lean presentment of the lady herself, all, say, in wax, *à la Tussaud*. What a show and attraction that would be!

The author's ingenuity was never at fault in the face of a difficulty. Mr. Pickwick was to be got to Nupkins' in a sedan chair, a grotesque incident; but then, what to do with Tupman, also arrested? As both would not fit in

an ordinary sedan, the sedan was made to fit *them*, and thus it was done. “It was recollected that there stood in the Inn yard an old sedan chair, which, having been originally built for a gouty gentleman with funded property, would hold Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman at least as conveniently as a modern postchaise.”

Nothing is more remarkable than the ingenious and striking fashion in which “*Boz*” has handled the episode of the double-bedded room and the yellow curl papers. The subject was an awkward one and required skilful management, or it might have repelled. The problem was how to make the situation amusing and yet not too realistic? It will be seen that all the *appearances* of a most embarrassing situation are produced, and yet really neither the lady nor Mr. Pickwick have taken off their garments. To produce this result, much elaborate machinery was requisite. The beds were arranged as if on the stage, one on each side of the door with a sort of little lane between the wall and each bed. Mr. Pickwick, we are told, actually crept into this lane, got to the end where there was a chair, and in this straight, confined situation proceeded to take off his coat and vest and to fold them up. It was thus artfully brought about that he appeared to have gone to bed, and could look out from the dimity curtains without having done so. It does not strike every one that Mr. Pickwick, under ordinary circumstances, would have taken off his “things” before the fire just as the lady did, in the free and open space, and not huddled up in a dark corner. However, as Mr. Weller says: “It wos to be, and — it wos,” or we should have had no story and no laugh.

There is a pleasant story — quite akin to Mr. Pickwick’s adventure — of what befell Thackeray when travelling in America. Going up to bed, he mistook the floor, and entered a room the very counterpart of his own. He had begun to take off his clothes, when a soft voice came from within — “*Is that you, George?*” In a panic, he bundled up his things, like Mr. Pickwick, and hurriedly rushed out, thinking what would be the confusion should he encounter “George” at the door. Anthony Trollope, my old, pleasant friend and sponsor at the Garrick Club, used to relate another of these hotel misadventures which, he protested, was the most “side-splitting” thing ever he heard of. A gentleman who was staying at one of the monster Paris hotels with his lady, was seized with some violent cold or pulmonary attack. She went down to try and get him a mustard plaster, which, with much difficulty, she contrived. Returning in triumph, as Mr. Pickwick did

with his recovered watch, she found that he had fallen into a gentle sleep, and was lying with his head buried in the pillows. With much softness and deftness, she quickly drew away the coverings, and, without disturbing him, managed to insinuate the plaster into its proper place. Having done her duty, she then proceeded to lie down, when the sleeping man, moving uneasily, awoke and showed his face. It was *not* her husband! She fled from the room. The humour of the thing — as described by Trollope — was the bewilderment of the man on discovering the damp and burning mass that had been applied to him, and the amazing disappearance of his visitant. What did it all mean? The mystery probably remained unsolved to the day of his death.

But the Great White Horse received an important cosmopolitan compliment from across the seas — at the Chicago Exhibition — when a large and complete model was prepared and set up in the building. This was an elaborate as well as important tribute to the Book which it was assumed that every one knew by heart.

V. — Ipswich Theatre

Boz, on his travels, with his strong theatrical taste, was sure to have gone to the little theatre in Tacket Street, now a Salvation Army meeting-house. It is the same building, though much altered and pulled about, as that in which David Garrick made his first appearance on the stage, as Mr. Lyddal, about 150 years ago. I have before me now a number of Ipswich play bills, dated in the year 1838, just after the conclusion of “Pickwick,” and which, most appropriately, seem to record little but Boz’s own work. Pickwick, Oliver, Nickleby, and others, are the Bill of Fare, and it may be conceived that audiences would attend to see their own Great White Horse, and the spinster lady in her curl papers, and Mr. Nupkins, the Mayor, brought on the boards. These old strips of tissue paper have a strange interest; they reflect the old-fashioned theatre and audiences; and the Pickwickian names of the characters, so close after the original appearance, have a greater reality. Here, for instance, is a programme for Mr. Gill’s benefit, on January 19, 1839, when we had “The Pickwickians at half-price.” This was “a comic drama, in three acts, exhibiting the life and manners of the present day, entitled —

“Pickwick, or the sayings and doings of Sam Weller!”

*Adapted expressly for this Theatre from the celebrated Pickwick Papers,
by Boz!*

“The present drama of Pickwick has been honoured by crowded houses, and greeted by shouts of laughter and reiterated peals of applause upon every representation, and has been acknowledged by the public Press to be the only successful adaptation.

The Illustrations designed and executed by popular Phiz-es.

The new music by Mr. Pindar. The quadrilles under the direction of Mr. Harrison.”

All the characters are given.

“Mr. Pickwick,” founder of the Club, and travelling the counties of Essex and Suffolk in pursuit of knowledge.

“Snodgrass,” a leetle bit of a poet.

“Winkle,” a corresponding member also; and a something of a sportsman.

“Job Trotter,” thin plant o’ ooman natur; something between a servant and a friend to Jingle; a kind of perambulating hydraulic.

“Joe,” a fat boy, addicted to cold pudding and snoring.

“Miss Rachel Wardle,” in love with Jingle or anybody else that will have her.

“Emily” was appropriately represented in such a Theatre, by Miss Garrick.

The scenes are laid at first at the Red Lion, Colchester, close by which is Manor Farm, where a ball is given, and, of course, “the Pickwickian Quadrilles!” are danced “as performed at the Nobility’s Balls.” (I have these quadrilles, with Mr. Pickwick, on the title.) Then comes the White Hart, and “How they make sausages!” displayed in large type. The scene is then shifted to the Angel, at Bury, and the double-bedded room with its “horrible dilemma,” and

“Scene of Night Caps!”

It will be noticed that there is nothing of the Great White Horse in the very town. The reason was that the proprietor was disgusted by the unflattering account given of his Inn and must have objected. It winds up with the Fleet scenes, where Mr. Weller, senr.,

“Arrests his own Offspring.”

That this notion of the Great White Horse being sulky and hostile is the true one is patent from another bill, December 10, 1843, some four years later, when the proprietor allowed his Inn to be introduced. The piece was called —

“Boots at the White Horse.”

“Now acting in London with extraordinary success.” This was, of course, our old friend “Boots at the Swan,” which Frank Robson, later, made his own. As Boz had nothing to do with it, there could be no objection. Barnaby Rudge, however, was the piece of resistance. On another occasion, January, 1840, came Mr. J. Russell, with his vocal entertainment, “Russell’s Recollections” and “A Portrait from the Pickwick Gallery.” “Have you seen him? Alphabetical Distinctions. A sample of Mister Sam Weller’s Descriptive Powers.”

Some adaptation or other of Dickens seems to have been always the standing dish. The old Ipswich Theatre is certainly an interesting one, and Garrick and Boz are names to conjure with.

VI. — Who was Pott?

There have been abundant speculations as to the originals of the Pickwickian characters — some Utopian enough, but I do not think that any have been offered in the case of Mr. Pott, the redoubtable editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette*. I am inclined to believe that the notorious and brilliant Dr. Maginn was intended. He and Pott were both distinguished for their “slogging” or bludgeoning articles, and both were High Tories, or “Blue,” as Mr. Pott had it. But what is most significant is that in the very year Pickwick was coming out, to wit, 1836, Maginn had attracted general attention and reprobation by the scandal of his duel with Grantley Berkely, arising out of a most scurrilous review of the latter’s novel. To this meeting he had been brought with some difficulty — just as Pott — the “Pot-valiant,” declined to “serve him so,” *i.e.*, Slurk; being restrained by the laws of his country. He was an assistant editor to the “Standard,” and had furnished scurrilites to the “John Bull.” He had about this time also obtained an influence over the interesting “L. E. L.,” whom John Forster, it is known, was “courting,” and by some rumours and machinations succeeded in breaking off the business. Now Forster and Boz, at the time, were bosom friends — Forster could be unsparing enough where he was injured: and how natural that his new friend should share his enmities. Boz was always glad to gibbet a notorious public abuse, and here was an opportunity. Maginn’s friend, Kenealey, wrote to an American, who was about to edit Maginn’s writings, “You have a glorious opportunity, where you have no fear of libel before your eyes. *Maginn’s best things can never be published till his victims have passed from the scene.*” How significant is this! Then Pott’s “combining his information,” his “cramming” critic, his

using the lore of the Encyclopedia Britannica for his articles suggest Maginn's classical lucubrations. A well-known eminent *Littérateur*, to whom I suggested this view, objected that Pott is not shown to be such a blackguard as Maginn, and that Maginn was not such an ass as Pott. But Boz generalised his borrowed originals. Skimpole was taken from Leigh Hunt, yet was represented as a sort of scoundrel; and Boz confessed that he only adapted his lighter manner and airy characteristics.

In these latter days, people have been somewhat astonished by the strange "freak" of our leading journal in so persistently offering and pressing on the public their venture of a new edition of the Encyclopedia. Every ingenious variation of bold advertisement is used to tempt the purchaser — a sovereign down and time for the rest; actual pictures of the whole series of volumes; impassioned arguments, pleadings, and an appeal to take it at the most wonderfully low price. Then we have desirable information, dealing with topics of varied kind, and assurances that material would here be found for dealing conveniently with every known subject. Still, what a surprise that use was not made of "the immortal Pickwick" in whose pages these peculiar advantages were more successfully and permanently set forth and illustrated by one most telling example furnished by no other than Mr. Pott himself, the redoubtable editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette*. To him and to no other is due the credit of being the first to show practically *how to use* the Encyclopedia. He has furnished a *principle* which is worth all the lengthy exhortations of the *Times* itself.

Pott seems to have kept the work in his office, and to have used it for his articles in a highly ingenious fashion. For three months had he been supplying a series of papers, which he assures us "appeared at intervals," and which excited "such general — I may say, such universal attention and admiration." A fine tribute surely to the Encyclopedia. For recollect Pott's was a newspaper. The *Times* folk say nothing of this important view. Poor, simple Mr. Pickwick had not seen the articles because he was busy travelling about and had no time for reading. (Probably Pott would have put him on the "free list" of his paper, but for the awkward Winkle flirtation which broke up the intimacy). Nay, he might have had "the revolving book case," which would handily contain *all* the volumes.

And what were these articles? "They appeared in the form of a *copious*" — mark the word! — "review of a work on Chinese Metaphysics." It had need to be copious therefor, for it is a very large subject. Mr. Pickwick

himself must have been very familiar with the Encyclopedia, for he at once objected that he was not aware that so abstruse a topic was dealt with in its pages. He had perhaps consulted the book, say, at Garraway's Coffee House, for, alas! the good man was not able to have a library of his own, living, as he did, in lodgings or at the "George and Vulture." Mr. Pott, however, who also knew the work well, had then to confess that there was no such subject treated separately in it. But the articles were from the pen of his critic (not from his own), "who *crammed* for it, to use a technical but expressive term; he read up for the subject, at my desire, in the Encyclopedia."

Now, as the subject was *not* treated in the work, how could this "cramming" help him? Here comes in the system, so unaccountably overlooked by the *Times*, *i.e.*, the Combination Method. "He read, sir," rejoined Pott, laying his hand on Mr. Pickwick's knee and looking round with a smile of intellectual superiority, "he read for metaphysics under the letter *M*, and for China under the letter *C*, and *combined his information, sir.*" There we have it! We find separate articles *De omni scribili*, and many topics unavoidably passed over; but we see how this can be cured by the ingenious Pott system. Combine your information! There you are! Here for instance — under "Metaphysics" we do find something about Confucius and the other Pundits; we then turn to China and get local colour, Chinese writers. &c., and then proceed "to combine our information." And so with hundreds of other instances and other topics. Pott, therefore, has been overlooked by the managers of the *Times*, but it is not yet too late for them to call attention to his system. It is of interest to all at Eatanswill.

Pott was in advance of his time. His paper was not wholly the sort of scurrilous organ it has been shown to be. To weight its columns with "Chinese Metaphysics," was a bold, reforming step — then the going on for three months, *i.e.*, *twelve* articles — and all read with avidity. And what are we to think of the Eatanswill readers — surely in advance, too. And here we have him, nearly seventy years ago, giving a well-deserved puff to the Encyclopedia, which is really worth the innumerable columns the leading journal has devoted to the book. Its last effort was to show an ingenious connection between the British Association and the Encyclopedia, on the ground of its various Presidents. "It stimulates, in fact creates, the necessity for a good working Library of Science. It is here that the Encyclopedia comes in as of especial service."

CHAPTER II. BATH

I. — The Old City

Bath, which already owed so much to famous writers, was destined to owe even more to Boz, the genial author of "Pickwick" — a book which has so much increased the gaiety of the nation. The scenes at the old city are more minute and vivid than any yet offered. But, if it owe much to Boz, it repaid him by furnishing him with a name for his book which has gone over the world. Everything about this name will be interesting; and it is not generally known when and how Boz obtained it.

There is a small hamlet some few miles from Bath and 97 from London — which is 106 miles away from Bath — bearing the name of "Pickwick." The Bath coach, by the way, started from the White Horse Cellars, Piccadilly, at half-past seven in the morning, and took just twelve hours for the journey. Now it is made by the Great Western in two! Here, many years ago, at the time of the story, was "Pickwick House, the seat of C. N. Loscombe, Esq.," and also "Pickwick Lodge," where dwelt Captain Fenton. Boz had never seen or heard of such places, but all the same they indirectly furnished him with the name. A mail-coach guard found an infant on the road in this place, and gave it the name of "Pickwick." The word "Pickwick" contains the common terminal "wick," as in "Warwick," and which means a village or hamlet of some kind. Pickwick, however, has long since disappeared from the face of the map. Probably, after the year 1837, folk did not relish dating their letters from a spot of such humorous memories.

This Moses Pickwick was taken into the service of the coaching hotel, the White Hart, gradually devoted himself to the horse and coaching business, and, at the time of Boz's or Mr. Pickwick's visit, was the actual proprietor of the coaches on the road. "The name," said Sam, "is not only down on the vay-bill, sir, but they've painted vun on 'em on the door of the coach." As Sam spoke he pointed to that part of the door on which the proprietor's name usually appears, and there, sure enough, in gilt letters of a goodly size, was the magic name of Pickwick. "Dear me," said Mr. Pickwick, quite staggered by the coincidence, "what a very extraordinary thing!" "Yes; but that ain't all," said Sam, again directing his master's attention to

the coach-door. "Not content with writin' up 'Pickwick,' they put 'Moses' afore it, which I calls adding insult to injury." "It's odd enough, certainly," said Mr. Pickwick. When he was casting about for a good name for his venture, it recurred to him as having a quaint oddity and uncanniness. And thus it is that we owe to Bath, and to Bath only, this celebrated name. It is said that he rushed into the publisher's office, exultingly proclaiming his selection.

Few cities have had their society and manners sketched by such eminent pens as Bath — Smollett, Miss Burney, Miss Austen, and Boz. The old walls and houses are thus made to live. Boz has given one of the most vivid and vivacious pictures of its expiring glories in the thirties, when there were still "M.C.s," routs, assemblies, and sedans. His own connection with the place is a personal, and a very interesting one. He was there in 1835 on election business hurrying after Lord John Russell, all over the country, to report his speeches — a young fellow of three and twenty, full of "dash," "go," and readiness of resource, of immense energy and carelessness of fatigue, ready to go anywhere and do anything. While thus engaged on serious business, he kept his eyes wide open, took in all the humours of Bath, and noted them in his memory, though he made no use of this till more than two years later, when he was well on into "Pickwick."

The entering an old city by night always leaves a curious romantic impression, and few old cities gain so much as Bath by this mode of approach. The shadowy houses have a monumental air; the fine streets which we mostly ascend show a mystery, especially as we flit by the open square, under the great, black Abbey, which seems a beetling rock. This old Bath mysteriousness seems haunted by the ghosts of Burney, Johnson, Goldsmith, Wilkes, Quin, Thrale, Mr. Pickwick, and dozens more. Fashion and gentility hover round its stately homes. Nothing rouses such ideas of state and dignity as the Palladian Circus. There is a tone of mournful grandeur about it — something forlorn. Had it, in some freak of fashion, been abandoned, and suffered, for a time at least, to go to neglect and be somewhat overgrown with moss and foliage, it would pass for some grand Roman ruin. There is a solemn, greyish gloom about it; the grass in the enclosure is rank, long, and very green. Pulteney Street, too: what a state and nobility there is about it! So wide and so spacious; the houses with an air of grand solidity, with no carvings or frittering work, but relying on their fine lines and proportion. To lodge there is an education, and the

impression remains with one as of a sense of personal dignity from dwelling in such large and lofty chambers, grandly laid out with noble stairs and the like. The builders in this fine city would seem to have been born architects; nearly all the houses have claims to distinction: each an expression and feeling of its own. The fine blackened or browned tint adds to the effect. The mouldings are full of reserve and chastened, suited exactly to the material. There is something, too, very stately about the octagon Laura Place, which opens on to Pulteney Street.

In this point of view Bath is a more interesting city than Edinburgh. Mr. Peach has written two most interesting little quartos on the "Historic Houses of Bath;" and Mr. T. Sturge Cotterell has prepared a singularly interesting map of Bath, in which all the spots honoured by the residence of famous visitors are marked down. It is very extraordinary the number and distinction of these personages.

I don't know anything more strange and agreeable than the feeling of promenading the Parades, North and South — a feeling compounded of awe, reverence, and exciting interest. The tranquil repose and dignity of these low, solid houses, the broad flagged Promenade, the unmistakable air of old fashion, the sort of reality and self-persuasion that they might in a moment be re-peopled with all these eminent persons — much as Boz called up the ghosts of the old mail-coach passengers in his telling ghost story — the sombre grey of the walls, the brightness of the windows: these elements join to leave an extraordinary impression. The houses on these Parades are charming from their solid proportions, adapted, as it were, to the breadth of the Parade. Execrable, by the way, are the modern attempts seen side by side; feeble and incapable, not attempting any expression at all. There is a row of meagre tenements beside the Abbey — attempts at pinnacled gables — which it is a sorrowful thing to look on, so cheap and starved is it. Even the newer shops, in places like Milsom Street, with nothing to do but to copy what is before them, show the same *platitude*. Here and there you are constantly coming upon one of these beautifully designed old mansions piteously disguised, cut up in two or three it may be, or the lower portion fashioned into a shop.

II. — The Pump Room and Assembly Rooms

No group of architectural objects is more effective or touches one more nearly than the buildings gathered about the Baths. There is something quaint and old-fashioned in the arrangement, and I am never tired of

coming back to the pretty, open colonnade, the faded yet dignified Pump-room, with the ambitious hotel and the solemn Abbey rising solemnly behind. Then there is the delightful Promenade opposite, under the arcades — a genuine bit of old fashion — under whose shadow the capricious Fanny Burney had often strolled. Everything about this latter conglomeration — the shape of the ground, the knowledge that the marvellous Roman baths are below, and even the older portion of the municipal buildings whose elegant decorations, sculptured garlands, &c., bespeak the influence of the graceful Adam, whose pupil or imitator Mr. Baldwin may have been.

Boz's description of the tarnished Pump-room answers to what is seen now, save as to the tone of the decorations. I say "Boz's," for Pickwick, it should be recollected, was not actually acknowledged by the author, under his proper name. It was thought that the well-known and popular "Boz" of the "Sketches" would attract far more than the obscure C. Dickens. Now Boz and the Sketches have receded and are little thought of. Boz and Pickwick go far better together than do Pickwick and Dickens. There is an old-fashioned solemnity over this Pump-room which speaks of the old classical taste over a hundred years ago. How quaint and suitable the inscription, "“Á1ÃÄ½ yµ½ Å'¿Á,” in faded gilt characters. Within it is one stately chamber, not altered a bit since the day, sixty-three years ago, that Boz strolled in and wrote this inscription: As I sat with a friend beside me in the newly finished concert-room, which is in *happy* keeping, I called up the old genial Pickwick promenading about under the direction of Bantam, M.C., and the genial tone of the old gaiety and good spirits.

The "Tompion Clock," which is carefully noted by Boz, seems to have been always regarded as a sort of monument. It is like an overgrown eight-day clock, without any adornment and plain to a degree — no doubt relying upon its Tompion works. It is in exactly the same place as it was over sixty years ago, and goes with the old regularity. Nay, for that matter, it stands where it did a hundred years ago — in the old recess by Nash's statue and inscription, and was no doubt ordered at the opening of the rooms. In an old account of Bath, at the opening of the century, attention is called to the Tompion clock with a sort of pride. The steep and shadowy Gay Street, which leads up to the inviting Crescent and the more sombre Queen's Square, affects one curiously. Then we come to the old Assembly Rooms close by the Circus, between Alfred Street and Bennell Street — a stately,

dignified pile — in the good old classical style of Bath. One looks on it with a mysterious reverence: it seems charged with all sorts of memories of old, bygone state. For here all the rank and fashion of Bath used to make its way of Assembly nights. Many years ago, there was here given a morning concert to which I found my way, mainly for the purpose of calling up ghostly memories of the Thrales, and Doctor Johnson, and Miss Burney, and, above all, of Mr. Pickwick. Though the music was the immortal “Passion” of Bach, my eyes were travelling all the while from one piece of faded *rococo* work and decoration. Boz never fails to secure the *tone* of any strange place he is describing. We all, for instance, have that pleased, elated feeling on the first morning after our arrival over night at a new place — the general brightness, surprise, and air of novelty. We are willing to be pleased with everything, and pass from object to object with enjoyment. Now all this is difficult to seize or to describe. Boz does not do the latter, but he conveys it perfectly. We see the new arrivals seated at breakfast, and the entrance of the Dowlers with the M.C., and the party setting off to see the “Lions,” the securing tickets for the Assembly, the writing down their names in “the book,” Sam sent specially up to Queen’s Square, and so on. All which is very exhilarating, and reveals one’s own feeling on such an occasion. The “Pump-room books” are formally mentioned in the regulations. We can see the interior of the Assembly Rooms in Phiz’s plate, with its huge and elaborately framed oval mirrors and chandeliers — the dancing-room set round with raised benches. After the pattern of Ridotto rooms abroad, there were the card-rooms and tea-rooms, where Mr. Pickwick played whist with Miss Bolo. We note the sort of Adam or Chippendale chair on which the whist Dowager is sitting with her back to us.

Considering that the rules of dress were so strict, pumps and silk stockings being of necessity, we may wonder how it was that the President of the Pickwick Club was admitted in his morning dress, his kerseymere tights, white waistcoat, and black gaiters. It is clear that he never changed his dress for evening parties, save on one occasion. Mr. Pickwick’s costume was certainly in defiance of all rules and regulations. It is *laid* in the regulations of Mr. Tyson, M.C., who directed that “no gentleman in boots or half-boots be admitted into the rooms on ball nights or card nights.” Half-boots might certainly cover Mr. Pickwick’s gaiters. So accurate is the picture that speculation arises whether Phiz went specially to

Bath to make his sketches; for he has caught in the most perfect way the whole *tone* of a Bath Assembly, and he could not have obtained this from descriptions by others. So, too, with this picture of the Circus in Mr. Winkle's *escapade*. It will be remembered that Boz was rather particular about this picture, and suggested some minute alterations. Bantam, the M.C., or "the Grand Master" as Boz oddly calls him, was drawn from life from an eccentric functionary named Jervoise. I have never been quite able to understand his odd hypothesis about Mr. Pickwick being "the gentleman who had the waters bottled and sent to Clapham." But how characteristic the dialogue on the occasion! It will be seen that this M.C. cannot credit the notion of anyone of such importance as Mr. Pickwick "never having been in *Ba-ath*." His ludicrous and absurd, "Not bad — not bad! Good — good. He, he, re-markable!" showed how it struck him. A man of such a position, too; it was incredible. With a delightful sense of this theory, he began: "It is long — *very long*, Mr. Pickwick, *since you drank the waters* — it appears an age." Mr. Pickwick protested that it was certainly long since he had drunk the waters, and his proof was that he had never been in Bath in his life. After a moment's reflection the M.C. saw the solution. "Oh, I see; yes, yes; good, good; better and better. You are the gentleman residing on Clapham Green who lost the use of your limbs from imprudently taking cold *after port wine*, who could not be moved in consequence of acute suffering, and who had the water from the King's Bath bottled at 103 degrees and sent by waggon to his bed-room in town, where he bathed, sneezed, and same day recovered." This amusing concatenation is, besides, an admirable and very minute stroke of character, and the frivolous M.C. is brought before us perfectly. While a capital touch is that when he saw young Mr. Mutanhead approaching. "Hush! draw a little nearer, Mr. Pickwick. You see that splendidly dressed young man coming this way — the richest young man in Bath!"

"You don't say so," said Mr. Pickwick.

"*Yes, you'll hear his voice in a moment, Mr. Pickwick. He'll speak to me.*" Particular awe and reverence could not be better expressed.

It is curious how accurate the young fellow was in all his details. He describes the ball as beginning at "precisely twenty minutes before eight o'clock;" and according to the old rules it had to begin as soon after seven as possible. "Stay in the tea room and take your sixpennorths." Mr. Dowler's advice was after a regulation "that everyone admitted to the tea-

rooms on dress nights shall pay *6d.* for tea.” The M.C.’s visit to Mr. Pickwick was a real carrying out of the spirit of the regulations, in which it was requested that “all strangers will give the M.C. an opportunity of being introduced to them before they themselves are entitled to that attention and respect.”

Nothing is more gratifying to the genuine Pickwickians than to find how all these old memories of the book are fondly cherished in the good city. All the Pickwickian localities are identified, and the inhabitants are eager in every way to maintain that Mr. Pickwick belongs to them, and had been with them. We should have had his room in the White Hart pointed out, and “slept in” by Americans and others, had it still been left to stand. Not long since, the writer went down to the good old city for the pleasant duty of “preaching Pickwick,” as he had done in a good many places. There is an antique building or temple not far from where an old society of the place — the Bath Literary and Scientific Institute — holds its meetings, and here, to a crowded gathering under the presidency of Mr. Austen King, the subject was gone into. It was delightful for the Pickwickian stranger to meet so appreciative a response, and many curious details were mentioned. At the close — such is the force of the delusion — we were all discussing Mr. Pickwick and his movements here and there, with the same *conviction* as we would have had in the case of Miss Burney, or Mrs. Thrale or Dr. Johnson. The whole atmosphere was congenial, and there was an old-world, old-fashioned air over the rooms. It was delightful to be talking of Mr. Pickwick’s Bath adventures in Bath.

Nor was there anything unreasonably fantastical in making such speculations all but realities. Bantam lived, as we know, in St. James’s Square — that very effective enclosure, with its solemn house and rich deep greenery, that recall our own Fitzroy. No. 14 was his house, and this, it was ascertained, was the actual residence of the living M.C. How bold, therefore, of Boz to send up Sam to the very Square! Everyone, too, knew Mrs. Craddock’s house in the Circus — at least it was one of two. It was No. 15 or 16, because at the time there were only a couple in the middle which were let in lodgings, the rest being private houses. This was fairly reasonable. But how accurate was Boz! No doubt he had some friends who were quartered in lodgings there.

I scarcely hoped to find the scene of the footmen’s “swarry” tracked out, but so it was. On leaving Queen Square in company with Mr. Smauker to

repair to the scene of the festivity, Sam and his friend set off walking “towards High Street,” then “turned down a bye-street,” and would “soon be there.” This bye-street was one turning out of Queen Square at the corner next Bantam’s house; and a few doors down we find a rather shabby-looking “public” with a swinging sign, on which is inscribed “The Beaufort Arms” — a two-storied, three-windowed house. This, in the book, is called a “greengrocer’s shop,” and is firmly believed to be the scene of “the Swarry” on the substantial ground that the Bath footmen used to assemble here regularly as at their club. The change from a public to a greengrocer’s scarcely affects the point. The uniforms of these gentlemen’s gentlemen were really splendid, as we learn from the text — rich plushes, velvets, gold lace, canes, &c. There is no exaggeration in this, for natives of Bath have assured me they can recall similar displays at the fashionable church — of Sundays — when these noble creatures, arrayed gorgeously as “generals,” were ranged in lines outside “waiting their missuses,” *pace* Mr. John Smauker. At the greengrocer’s, where the Bath footmen had their “swarry,” the favourite drink was “cold srub and water,” or “gin and water sweet;” also “S’rub punch,” a West Indian, drink, has now altogether disappeared. It sounds strange to learn that a fashionable footman should consult “a copper timepiece which dwelt at the bottom of a deep watch-pocket, and was raised to the surface by means of a black string with a copper key.” A *copper* watch seems extraordinary, though we have now those of gun metal.

The Royal Crescent, with its fine air and fine view, always strikes one with admiration as a unique and original monument: the size and proportions are so truly grand. The whole scene of Mr. Winkle’s escapade here is extraordinarily vivid, and so protracted, while Mrs. Dowler was waiting in her sedan for the door to be opened, that it has the effect of imprinting the very air, look, and tone of the Royal Crescent on us. We seem to be waiting with her and the chair-man. It seems the most *natural* thing in the world. The houses correspond almost exactly with Phiz’s drawing.

Pickwick, it has been often pointed out, is full of amusing “oversights,” which are pardonable enough, and almost add to the “fun” of the piece. At the opening, Mr. Pickwick is described as carrying his portmanteau — in the picture it is a carpet-bag. The story opens in 1827, but at once Mr. Jingle begins to talk of being present at the late Revolution of 1830. The “George and Vulture” is placed in two different streets. Old Weller is called Samuel. During the scene at the Royal Crescent we are told that Mrs.

Craddock threw up the drawing-room window “just as Mr. Winkle was rushing into the chair.” She ran and called Mr. Dowler, who rushed in just as Mr. Pickwick threw up the other window, “when the first object that met the gaze of both was Mr. Winkle bolting into the sedan chair” into which he had bolted a minute before. The late Charles Dickens the younger, in the notes to his father’s writings, affects to have discovered an oversight in the account of the scene in the Circus. It is described how he “took to his heels and tore *round* the Crescent, hotly pursued by Dowler and the coachman. He kept ahead; the door was open as he came *round* the second time, &c.” Now, objects the son, the Crescent is only a half circle; there is no going round it, you must turn back when you come to the end. Boz must have been thinking of the Circus. Hardly — for he knew both well — and Circus and Crescent are things not to be confused. The phrase was a little loose, but, as the Circus was curved “round,” is not inappropriate, and he meant that Winkle turned when he got to the end, and ran back.

It must have been an awkward thing for Winkle to present himself once more at Mrs. Craddock’s in the Crescent. How was the incident to be explained save either at his own expense or at that of Mr. Dowler? If Dowler were supposed to have gone in pursuit of him, then Mr. Winkle must have fled, and if he were supposed to have gone to seek a friend, then Dowler was rather compromised. No doubt both gentlemen agreed to support the one story that they had gone away for mutual satisfaction, and had made it up.

Then, we are told, if it were theatre night perhaps the visitors met at the theatre. Did Mr. Pickwick ever go? This is an open question. Is the chronicler here a little obscure, as he is speaking of “the gentlemen” *en bloc*? Perhaps he did, perhaps he did’nt, as Boz might say. On his visit to Rochester, it does not appear that he went to see his “picked-up” friend, Jingle, perform. The Bath Theatre is in the Saw Close, next door to Beau Nash’s picturesque old house. The old grey front, with its blackened mouldings and sunk windows, is still there; but a deep vestibule, or entrance, with offices has been built out in front, which, as it were, thrusts the old wall back — an uncongenial mixture. Within, the house has been reconstructed, as it is called, so that Mr. Palmer or Dimond, or any of the old Bath lights, to say nothing of Mr. and Mrs. Siddons, would not recognise it. Attending it one night, I could not but recall the old Bath stories, when this modest little house supplied the London houses regularly

with the best talent, and "From the Theatre Royal, Bath," was an inducement set forth on the bill.

III. — Boz and Bath

After his brilliant, genial view of the old watering-place, it is a surprise to find Boz speaking of it with a certain acerbity and even disgust. Over thirty years later, in 1869, he was there, and wrote to Forster: "The place looks to me like a cemetery which the dead have succeeded in rising and taking. Having built streets of their old gravestones, they wander about scantily, trying to look alive — a dead failure." And yet, what ghostly recollections must have come back on him as he walked those streets, or as he passed by into Walcot, the Saracen's Head, where he had put up in those old days, full of brightness, ardour, and enthusiasm; but not yet the famous Boz! Bath folk set down this jaundiced view of their town to a sort of pique at the comparative failure of the Guild dramatic performance at the Old Assembly Rooms, where, owing to the faulty arrangement of the stage, hardly a word could be heard, to the dissatisfaction of the audience. The stage, it seems, was put too far behind the proscenium, "owing to the headstrong perversity of Dickens, who never forgave the Bath people." Charles Knight, it was said, remonstrated, but in vain. Boz, however, was not a man to indulge in such feelings. In "Bleak House" he calls it "dreary."

There had been, however, a previous visit to Bath, in company with Maclise and Forster, to see Landor, who was then living at No. 35 St. James's Square — a house become memorable because it was there that the image of his "Little Nell" first suggested itself. The enthusiastic Landor used, in his "tumultuous" fashion, to proclaim that he would set fire to the house and burn it to the ground to prevent its being profaned by less sacred associations. He had done things even more extravagant than this, and would take boisterous roars of laughter as his odd compliment was discussed.

The minuteness of his record of the gaities shows how amused and interested Boz was in all that he saw. Nothing escaped him of the routine, day, hour, and place; all is given, even the different rooms at the Assembly House. "In the ball-room, the long card-room, the octagon card-room, the staircases, the passages, the hum of many voices and the sound of many feet were perfectly bewildering; dresses rustled, feathers waved, lights shone, and jewels sparkled. There was the music, not of the quadrille band, for it had not yet commenced," &c. Here Bantam, M.C., arrived at precisely

twenty minutes before eight, “to receive the company.” And such company! “Brilliant eyes, lighted up with pleasurable expectation, gleamed from every side, and, look where you would, some exquisite form glided gracefully through the throng, and was no sooner lost than it was replaced by another as dainty and bewitching”; the warmth of which description showing how delighted was the young man with all he saw. But how did he secure admission? For it was a highly fashionable company; there were vouchers and tickets to be secured. But these were slight difficulties for our brilliant “pushful” young man. He could make his way, and his mission found him interest. He certainly saw as much of Bath as anyone could in the time. Yet, gay and sprightly as was his account of Bath, there may have been a reason why Boz may have not recalled the place with pleasurable feelings. It will be recollected that, after giving a few lines to the account of Mr. Pickwick and friends being set down at the White Hart, he carries them off at once to lodgings in the Crescent. That first-class hotel was, alas! not open to the poor, over-worked reporter; and he could tell of nothing that went on within its portals. Hotel life on a handsome scale was not for *him*, and he was obliged to put up at far humbler quarters, a sort of common inn.

There is nothing more quaint or interesting than this genuine antique — the Saracen’s Head in Walcot. It may pair off with the old White Horse in Canongate, where “Great Sam” put up for a night. It is surely the most effective of all the old inns one could see. It has two faces, and looks into two different streets, with its double gables, and date (1713) inscribed on a tablet outside. It is a yellow, well-worn little building. And you enter through darkened tunnels, as it were, cut through the house, coming into a strange yard of evident antiquity, with a steep, ladder-like flight of stone steps that leads up to a window much like the old Canongate houses. Here, then, it was that Boz put up, and here are preserved traditions and relics of his stay. One of the tales is that, after some exuberant night *in the election time*, he would get his candle and, having to cross the court, would have it blown out half a dozen times, when he would go back patiently to relight it. They show his chair, and a jug out of which he drank, but one has not much faith in these chairs and jugs; they always seem to be supplied to demand, and must be found to gratify the pilgrims.

One of the examination queries which might have found a place in Mr. Calverley’s paper of questions is this: “When did Mr. Pickwick sit down *to*

make entries in his journal, and spend half an hour in so doing?" At Bath on the night of Mr. Winkle's race round the Crescent. What was this journal? Or why did he keep it? Or why are so few allusions made to it? Mr. Snodgrass was the appointed historiographer of the party, and his "notes" are often spoken of and appealed to as the basis of the chronicle. But half an hour, as I say, was the time the great man seems to have allotted to his posting up the day's register: "Mr. Pickwick shut up the book, wiped his pen *on the bottom of the inside of his coat-tail*, and opened the drawer of the inkstand to put it carefully away." How particular — how real all this is! This it is that gives the *living* force to the book, and a persuasion — irresistible almost — that it is all about *some living person*. I have often wondered how it is that this book of Boz's has such an astounding power of development, such a fertility in engendering other books, and what is the secret of it. Scott's astonishing Waverley series, Thackeray's "Vanity Fair," Boz's own "Nicholas Nickleby," "Oliver Twist," in fact, not one of the whole series save "the immortal 'Pickwick'" has produced anything in the way of books or commentaries. I believe it is really owing to this. Boz was a great admirer of Boswell's equally immortal book. I have heard him speak of it. He attempted parodies of it even. He knew all the turns, the Johnsonian twists, "Why, sirs," &c., and used them in his letters. He was permeated with the Johnsonian ether; that detail, that description of trifling things which was in Boswell, attracted him, and he felt it; and the fact remains that Pickwick is written on *the principles* — no copy — of the great biography, and that Boz applied to a mere fictional story what was related in the account of a living man. And it is really curious that Boswell's "Life of Johnson" should be the only other book that tempts people to the same rage for commentary, illustrations, and speculations. These are of exactly the same character in both books.

The MS. that Mr. Pickwick so oddly found in the drawer of his inkstand at Mrs. Craddock's, Royal Crescent, Bath, offered another instance of Boz's ingenious methods of introducing episodical tales into his narrative. He was often hard put to it to find an occasion: they were highly useful to fill a space when he was pressed for matter. He had the strongest *penchant* for this sort of thing, and it clung to him through his life. Those in "Pickwick" are exceedingly good, full of spirit and "go," save one, the "Martha Lobbs" story, which is a poorish thing. So good are the others, they have been taken out and published separately. They were no doubt written for

magazines, and were lying by him, but his Bath story — "The True Legend of Prince Bladud" — was written specially. It is quite in the vein of Elia's Roast Pig story, and very gaily told. He had probably been reading some local guide-book, with the mythical account of Prince Bladud, and this suggested to him his own humorous version. At the close, he sets Mr. Pickwick a-yawning several times, who, when he had arrived at the end of this little manuscript — which certainly could not have been compressed into "a couple of sheets of writing-paper," but would have covered at least ten pages — replaced it in the drawer, and "then, with a *countenance of the utmost weariness*, lighted his chamber candle and went upstairs to bed." And here, by the way, is one of the amusing oversights which give such a piquancy to "Pickwick." Before he began to read his paper, we are carefully told that Mr. Pickwick "unfolded it, lighted his bedroom candle that it might burn up to the time he had finished." It was Mr. C. Kent who pointed this out to him, when Boz seized the volume and humorously made as though he would hurl it at his friend.

Anyone interested in Bath must of necessity be interested in Bristol, to which, as all know, Mr. Winkle fled after the unhappy business in the Circus. He found a coach at the Royal Hotel — which no longer exists — a vehicle which, we are told, went the whole distance "twice a day and more" with a single pair of horses. There he put up at the Bush, where Mr. Pickwick was to follow him presently. The Bush — a genuine Pickwick inn — where Mr. Pickwick first heard the news of the action that was to be brought against him, stood in Corn Street, near to the Guildhall, the most busy street in Bristol; but it was taken down in 1864, and the present Wiltshire Bank erected on the site. Mr. Pickwick broke off his stay at Bath somewhat too abruptly; he left it and all its festivities on this sudden chase after Winkle. But he may have had a reason. Nothing is more wonderful than Boz's propriety in dealing with his incidents, a propriety that is really instinctive. Everything falls out in the correct, natural way. For instance, Mr. Pickwick having received such a shock at the Bush — the announcement of the Bardell action — was scarcely in heart to resume his jollity and gaieties at Bath. We might naturally expect a resumption of the frolics there. He accordingly returned there; but we are told curtly, "The remainder of the period which Mr. Pickwick had assigned as the duration of his stay at Bath passed over without an occurrence of anything material. Trinity term commenced on the expiration of the first week. Mr. Pickwick

and his friends returned to London; and the former gentleman, attended of course by Sam, straightway repaired to his old quarters at the George and Vulture.”

And now in these simple sentences have we not the secret of the great attraction of the book? Who would not suppose that this was a passage from a biography of some one that had lived? How carefully *minute* and yet how naturally the time is accounted for — ”passed over without the occurrence of anything material.” It is impossible to resist this air of *vraisemblance*.

CHAPTER III. OLD ROCHESTER

I. — Jingle and the Theatre

The little Theatre here must be interesting to us from the fact of Jingle's having been engaged to play there with the officers of the 52nd Regiment on the night of May 15th, 1827. Jingle was described as "a strolling actor," and belonged to the "Kent circuit," that is, to the towns of Canterbury, Rochester, Maidstone, &c. To this circuit also belonged "Dismal Jemmy," who was "no actor," yet did the "heavy business." It does not appear that he, also, was engaged for the officers' performance. We often wonder whether Jingle *did* perform on the night in question; or did Dr. Payne and Lieutenant Tappleton tell the story of his behaviour to their brethren: of his passing himself off as a gentleman, his wearing another gentleman's clothes, and his insults to Dr. Slammer. Tappleton scornfully recommended Mr. Pickwick to be more nice in the selection of his companions. No doubt Jingle was suggested to the officers by the manager: "knew a really smart chap who will just do for the part." On the whole, I think they must have had his services, as it was too late to get a substitute. Jingle, as we know, was played successfully by Sir Henry Irving in the early 'seventies, *tempore* Bateman. His extraordinary likeness to the Phiz portrait struck every one, and it was marked, not only in face, but in figure, manner, &c. The adaptation of "Pickwick," however, was very roughly done by the late James Albery, who merely *tacked* together the Jingle scenes. Those, where there is much genial comedy, such as the Ball scene at Rochester, were left out. It is likely that the boy, Boz, noticed Dismal Jemmy among the strollers, and possibly may have seen a Jingle himself. But the characters of Jingle and his confederate, Job, were certainly suggested by Robert Macaire and Jacques Strop, which, a little before the appearance of Pickwick, were being played in London — in "*L'Auberge des Adrets*."

Mr. Pickwick had discovered in the morning that Jingle was "connected with the Theatre in that place, *though he is not desirous to have it generally known*."

Now considering generally the different "games" he was pursuing, his passing himself off as an officer, an amateur of cricket, &c., it was not altogether desirable to have his profession known. Knowing also that Mr.

Pickwick intended staying at Rochester, and that the gay Tupman or Snodgrass would find out his engagement and witness his performance, he likely enough confided his secret to Mr. Pickwick. "Dismal Jemmy," the odd being who appears at Rochester for a short time, had promised Mr. Pickwick a tale which he never gave him. At the end of the story, *Boz*, having forgotten the engagement, is driven to supply a far-fetched reason. He was Job's brother, and went to America "in consequence of being too much sought after here." It will be recollected he was of a depressed and gloomy cast, and on the Bridge at Rochester talked of suicide. He also told the dismal "stroller's tale." Now, it is plain that *Boz* drew him as a genuine character, and his behaviour to the stroller was of a charitable kind. *Boz*, in fact, meant him to be a suitable person to relate so dismal an incident. However, all this was forgotten or put aside at the end, and having become Job's brother, he had to be in keeping. The reformed Jingle declared he was "merely acting — clever rascal — hoaxing fellow." His brother Job added that he himself was the serious one, "while Jemmy never was." Mr. Pickwick then presumed that his talk of suicide was all flam, and that his dismals were all assumed. "He could assume anything," said Job. *Boz*, too, forgot that his name was James Hutley, whereas the brothers' was Trotter — though this may have been an assumed one.

The condition of the Rochester stage must have been rather low, when we find two such persons as Jingle and Dismal Jemmy members of the corps. Jingle's jerky system of elocution would seem a complete disqualification. From sheer habit, it would have been impossible for him to say his lines in any other fashion — which in all the round of light "touch and go" comedy, would have been a drawback.

The little Theatre is at the farther end of the town, where the road turns off to the fields, a low, unpretending building with a small portico. I recall it in the old days, on a walk from Gads Hill, when I paused to examine the bills of the benefit of a certain theatrical family of the Crummles sort — father, mother, sons, and daughters, who supplied everything. The head founded his claims to support on being a fellow townsman, winding up with Goldsmith's lines:

And as the hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the spot from whence at first it flew;
I still had hopes, my lengthened wanderings past,
Here to return, and die at home at last.

Boz was hugely amused when I rehearsed this to him at lunch.

He himself, on his later visit, noted the strange encroachments that were being made on the Theatre. A wine merchant had begun on the cellars, and was gradually squeezing himself into the box-office, and would no doubt go on till he secured the auditorium, the lobbies, etc. When I last passed by that way, it had become the Conservative Club, or some such institution.

The wonderful picture, given in “Nickleby,” of the Portsmouth playhouse, with all its characters and accessories and inner life, shows the most intimate familiarity with all the ways and fashions of the old Provincial Theatre. Every touch — Crummles, Folair, Lenville, Snivelicci — proves clearly that he knew perfectly the life behind the scenes, and that he wrote of it *con amore*. There was a firm belief at the Theatre Royal, Portsmouth, that all the performers in “Nickleby” were personal sketches of this corps. One actor told my friend, Mr. Walter Pollock, that they could even identify Folair, Lenville & Co., and that there was a playbill still extant in which either the names or the pieces corresponded. But in this theory, however, little faith can be placed; for at the time the family was at Portsmouth, Dickens was but a child not more than ten or twelve years old, and not likely, therefore, to be taken behind the scenes, or to pick up or observe much. It is certain that the whole description of the Theatre and its company, with the minute and intimate details of stage life, was drawn from this little house at Rochester. But we can go beyond mere speculation.

In one of his retrospections, Boz tells us of a visit he paid to Rochester in the fifties, “scenes among which my *early days* were past.” The town he calls Dullborough, which is a little hard on the place. He went to look at the old theatre, and reveals to us how it brought back to him a number of reminiscences, which shows that he was much associated with stage matters when a youth, for he describes Richard III. and Macbeth all “cast” and mounted exactly as Mr. Crummles would have mounted them. “There was Richard in a very uncomfortable wig, and sleeping in war time on a sofa that was much too short for him, and his conscience fearfully troubled his boots.” There was the lovely young woman, “who went out gleaning, in a narrow, white muslin apron, with five beautiful bars of five different colours across it. The witches bore an awful resemblance to the Thanes and other inhabitants of Scotland; while the good King Duncan couldn’t rest in his grave, but was constantly coming out of it and calling himself somebody else.” These are all Crummles touches, only he refrained from going again

over the old ground. But one point further favours the theory — he recalls his alarm when Richard in his terrific combat was “backing up against the stage box.” He was in the stage box then, and therefore a privileged person at the theatre. His uncle, “Dr. Slammer,” no doubt was thus complimented as being “in Her Majesty’s service.” “Of course,” he goes on, “the town had shrunk fearfully since I was a child there.”

The description of the outlaw drama which Nicholas Nickleby saw on the night of his arrival is exactly in the key of the account of the performance of “Richard III.” just given: also the account of the London manager, who was in the boxes; still more so when Mr. Crummles and all the company *died at him*. And as in Nickleby we have “the Comic Countryman” who so inopportunately caught a bluebottle when Mrs. Crummles was making her great point for the London Manager: so in the account of Dullborough we are told of “the *Funny* Countryman” who sustained the comic, bucolic parts. This alone would show that the Rochester and Portsmouth Theatres were the same, while the beautiful young lady in the white apron performed the same sort of characters that Miss Bravassa, or Miss Snivelicci did.

And in this connection may be supplied a further speculation which is interesting. In *Boz’s* earlier works it is plain that he relies for his most striking effects of character on his own recollections and personal observations. They might be considered passages from his autobiography. I have thought that much in “Nickleby” of Nicholas’s career and Nicholas’s own character was drawn from himself. Nicholas suggests Boz in appearance, in his spirit and vehemence, and in some of his adventures. Some years ago a remarkable letter appeared in the papers, in which Dickens, then a mere youth, made an application to one of the managers, Mr. Webster I think, for a situation in his theatre. He wanted to go on the stage. Was not this like Nicholas? This desire was surely founded on intimate acquaintance with the boards and amateur experience.

“I had entertained the impression,” he goes on, “that the High Street was as wide as Regent Street — I found it little better than a lane. There was a public clock in it which I had supposed to be the finest clock in the world, whereas it now turned out to be *as inexpressive, moon-faced and weak* a clock as ever I saw.” The Town Hall was a “mean little brick heap, like a demented chapel.”

II. — The Bull

Jingle, it will be recollected, on the party arriving at the Bull, gave that Inn the highest praise, recommending them to stay there — "*good house — nice beds —*" a testimonial that used to be displayed in gold letters at the door, but which, I have seen it stated, has been removed. I have also read the same testimonial in the guides and advertisements. Jingle warned them against another Inn hard by, — "Wright's — next house — *dear — very dear —* half-a-crown if you look at the waiter, making a charge for dinner, all the same, if you dined out"; a practice, however, not altogether unknown to modern Hotels. It was bold in Boz, thus to publicly disparage Hotels that he did not approve. "Wright's" could not have relished so public an allusion. What or where was Wright's — "next house?" There is now — in the same High Street — "The King's Head," described as "Family and Commercial, one of the oldest-established in the Kingdom, close to the Cathedral and Castle — home comforts." This being its position — the Castle on one side, the Cathedral on the other — situated exactly as the Bull was — and therefore "next house," accurately described its position. Being "one of the oldest-established," it must have been there at the time of the Pickwickian visit.

At the Bull, they show you "Mr. Pickwick's room" — as well as Tupman's and Winkle's — Boz's very particular description enables this to be done. Mr. Pickwick's was, of course, to the front — when, roused by the Boots, he gave the direction of his followers' bed-room, "next room but two on the right hand." Winkle's room was inside Tupman's — so we are shown a room in the front with another inside of it — and the *third* on the left will, of course, be Mr. Pickwick's, Q.E.D. The waiters know all these points, and prove them to the bewildered visitors. "You see, sir, there is the very room *where the clothes were stolen.*"

III. — Jingle's Love Affairs

Jingle's elopement with the spinster aunt was ingeniously contrived, but it seemed rather speculative and rash — she might not have had a penny. His only ground for jumping to the conclusion that she *had* a fortune was that, on his saying that "Tupman only wants your money"; "The wretch!" she exclaimed — "Mr. Jingle's doubts were resolved — she *had* money." More wonderful, too, were the very easy terms on which he was "bought off" — a hundred and twenty pounds. Her fortune might be estimated at some thousands. He was really master of the situation. The lady was of mature age — her own mistress, Wardle and his attorney could do nothing

to stop the business. He certainly might have held out for four or five hundred pounds. Perker's diplomacy was wretched, and his plea about the age of the old lady mere burlesque. "You are right, my dear sir — she is rather old. The founder of the family came into Kent when Julius Cæsar invaded Britain; only one member of it since who hasn't lived to eighty-five, and *he* was beheaded by one of the Henrys. The old lady is not seventy-three now, my dear sir." Which seems like buffooning in a man of business.

Jingle's course, after he left Rochester, can be traced very readily. With plenty of money in his pocket, he found his way to Ipswich (or Eatanswill), assuming the name of Captain FitzMarshall, and taking with him, as his confederate, Job Hutley. There he got introduced to Nupkins, the Mayor, who presided at the election, and who had made his money in "the nail and sarsepan business" — that is, as an ironmonger. The few words this functionary uttered on the hustings are of the same pompous character as his later magisterial deliverances.

"'Whiffin, *proclaim* silence,' said the Mayor, with air of *pomp*, &c., where this superciliousness is emphasised. 'Gentlemen,' he went on, 'brother electors of the Borough of Eatanswill, we are met here to-day for the purpose of choosing a representative in the room of our late' — but the noise and interruptions prevented the rest of the speech being heard. Notwithstanding, he characteristically 'thanked the meeting for the patient attention with which they had heard him throughout,' a declaration that excited roars of laughter, lasting for a quarter of an hour."

This is exactly what one might expect from the self-sufficient Nupkins, who was evidently understood and laughed at by his fellow townsmen. Later, when the confusion and "row" grew fast and furious, our Mayor "issued imperative orders to twelve constables to seize the ringleaders, who might amount in number to two hundred and fifty or thereabouts." We can recall Nupkins' dealing with the schoolboys in exactly the same sapient spirit.

Into the family of this worthy Jingle insinuated himself. But would he not be recognised by Mr. Pickwick and his friends? Yes; but we find that he took up his quarters at Bury St. Edmunds, conveniently near, and, assuming that the Pickwickians had departed after the election, thought he might safely exhibit himself at Mrs. Leo Hunter's party, whence he was tracked back to Bury by Mr. Pickwick. It is certainly fresh evidence of the identity

of Eatanswill with Ipswich that Jingle should have appeared in both places as “Captain FitzMarshall.” Once established in the Mayor’s family, the insinuating Jingle devoted himself to the capture of the haughty and ill-natured Henrietta Nupkins, making his way into her good graces, and “cutting out” Sidney Porckenham, her old-established admirer. This was Jingle’s second attempt at matrimony which failed like the first. It may be said, after all, that his behaviour was not so heinous. He was a fortune hunting adventurer — such was his role — which was common enough in those times. The unlucky Leo Hunter meeting, however, spoiled all.

After the trick on Mr. Pickwick at the school, and which was a fair retort, the pair left Bury that very night.

By an odd coincidence, they were taken up the next day by old Weller at Chelmsford — a stage or two from London. He was driving the Ipswich coach, and brought them to that town. It is clear, therefore, that they took this round from Bury in dread of pursuit, and with a view to throw Mr. Pickwick off the scent. The latter gentleman never dreamed that they were so near him, dismissed the whole matter, and returned to town to arrange about his action. By a happy chance he met old Weller, and, within a few days, set off for Ipswich and unmasked Captain FitzMarshall in Nupkins’ own house. After this failure, his course was downward, and we next meet him in the Fleet.

Job’s story was that Jingle dragged him away in a post-chaise and persuaded the girl at the boarding-school to tell Mr. Pickwick that she knew nothing of the matter. He had also bribed the schoolmistress to tell the same story. He had then deserted her for a better speculation, to wit, Miss Nupkins, to whom he had hurried back.

But for Mr. Pickwick’s unfortunate adventure at the “White Horse,” Jingle would likely enough have captured Henrietta Nupkins. When Sam so opportunely met Job in the Inn yard at Ipswich, he, instead of punishing him as he had so often threatened to do, merely bid him be at the Inn at eight o’clock. Why did he not bring him straight to Mr. Pickwick who was upstairs? Instead, he went up himself, told his master it was “all in trainin’,” and “detailed the plan of action.” Mr. Pickwick was curious, but Sam only said “all in good time.” We never learn what the plan of action was to be. Indeed, what could the pair do to Jingle?

IV. — The Garrison

The military recollections of Rochester and Chatham are amusingly confused, or rather, in defiance of all known regulations. Thus, at the Ball, we find Colonel Bulder as “head of the garrison” — one would think at so important a quarter, where there was a large garrison, a General at least would be in command. Then we may ask the question, why was not Dr. Slammer in uniform — always required in presence of a commander? It was wonderfully bold, too, on Boz’s part to give the *numbers* of the regiments. Hon. Wilmot Snipe of the 97th, who *was* in full uniform, which Mr. Tupman took for “a fancy dress.” It was, of course, a Highland one. We learn, too, that the other regiment was the 43rd, to which Dr. Payne belonged, and that the 52nd was getting up plays at the local theatre. And why did Boz select these particular numbers?

The Chatham garrison consisted of “half-a-dozen regiments,” with which a fair display at a Review could be made on “The Lines.” Temporary fortifications had been erected, the citadel was to be attacked and taken — Fort Pitt we may assume — and a mine was to be sprung. Servants were keeping places for the ladies “on the Batteries” — an alarming position it would seem. The Sergeants were running “with vellum books” under their arms, usually left at home on Review-day. The Officers were “running backwards and forwards,” while Colonel Bulder was seen “galloping” (with two p’s) at large, “prancing and curvetting,” that is, making his steed curvet. The operations were, however, not under his command, but directed by the “Commander-in-Chief,” not, of course, of the Army, but, we may presume, the General of the district. His behaviour was the most extraordinary of all, for, instead of cultivating a solemn reserve and quietude, and standing still, surrounded by his staff, he was seen “backing his horse *among the people*,” and heard shouting “till he was hoarse.” The soldiers wore the old, stiff leather stock, choking them, which was heard of so much in Crimean days. They were also arrayed in *white* trowsers. Boz is here wonderfully accurate, for these garments were always worn after May came round, and this was May.

The catastrophe to the Pickwickians from their having got between the two lines of soldiers, is somewhat perplexing. One line was advancing to the attack, the other firmly awaiting it. They were shouted at to get out of the way. Suddenly the half-dozen regiments had overthrown them. Mr. Pickwick was upset. Winkle received a bloody nose, after performing a compulsory *somerset*; then, at the same moment — wonder of wonders —

we were told that the regiments were “half-a-thousand yards off,” — that is about a third of a mile away — all in a second! It is hard to understand why they were so maltreated. The soldiers would, of course, never have met; and in our own time the amenities of a Review and the police would have secured stray civilians from such rough treatment. We do not know whether the evolutions described were accurate — such as “one rank firing over the heads of another and then running away.”

It was to this exciting spectacle that old Wardle brought a party in that wonderful Barouche of his — which is really phenomenal for its accommodation. When Mr. Pickwick recovered his hat, he found these persons in the carriage: — 1, Wardle; 2, a daughter; 3, a second ditto; 4, a sister; 5, Trundle; 6, Tupman; 7, Fat Boy, on the box. The Pickwickians were actually summoned by the hearty Wardle to join. “Room *for you all* — two inside and one on the ox,” where there was one already. All accepted the invitation, making *ten* persons in all who were accommodated in the Barouche! But this does not exhaust its wonders. When lunch time came round, with plates, dishes, bottles, eight persons were squeezed together inside, so no wonder Wardle said, “We must sit close.” How it was done is not to be conceived — two sitting together is the usual allowance for a modern Barouche, but four on one side! — and yet we are told, when the horses were put to, the Barouche “rattled off.”

The boy Dickens had carefully noted the behaviour of the garrison, and described them as “staggering about the streets of Chatham dead drunk,” more especially when we remember that the “following them about, and joking with them, affords *a cheap and innocent amusement for the boy population* — ” (*vide Mr. Pickwick's notes*). The boy, no doubt, often witnessed the incident of the private, “drawing his bayonet, and stabbing the barmaid who had refused to draw him more liquor.” It is characteristic, by the way, of the police in a garrison town, for this fellow appears to have been at large on the next day, as he went down to the Tavern and tried to “square it” with the girl.

And now, is not this a testimony to this strange book, that we should be thus introduced to old Rochester and its doings, and out of the scant materials furnished, can really reconstruct the time and the place, and find out, as if by enquiries, all about Jingle and his connections and the theatre — such is the fruitfulness of the text?

CHAPTER IV. BOZ AND BLACKING.

One of the remarkable things associated with "Pickwick" is its autobiographical character, as it might be termed, and the amount of the author's personal experience which is found in passages. Such are his sketches of Rochester and Chatham life during his boyhood, his recollections of Grimaldi's dissolute son, his own poignant sorrow on the death of Mary Hogarth, and the painful memories of his boyish apprenticeship to an uncongenial trade more than hinted at. The election matters were also particular memories of his own, so was the scene of the ghostly mail coaches. Then there was the hideous recollection of the life in a debtors' prison, of which he had such sad personal experience, with much more. He recalled the time when he had a miserable lodging in Lant Street, Borough, and Lant Street was for him always a fixed point in his memory, and grew in size and importance. And when he described some wretched creature hiding himself in London purlieu, he chose some miserable place like College-street in Camden Town, whither his own family had retired.

All these things supply a singular vitality and realism, and also a distinct interest for those who are "in the know," for Boz himself at the time was a dramatic and interesting figure, and this story of his struggle out of a state of squalid misery is truly pathetic.

Readers of Forster's interesting "Life" will recall the dismal passage in the account given by Dickens to his friend, and his agonising experience when he was employed at the blacking factory. Many at the time thought that this painful episode might have been spared the reader, but the uncompromising biographer would not sacrifice it. On the whole, he was right, as the trial had an important influence on the writer's character. It will be recollected that he was employed at a place set up in Chandos Street, just out of the Strand, by one of the firm of Warrens, and his duties seemed to consist in pasting the labels on the bottles. Many will still recall the keen rivalry that existed between the famous firms, Warren and Day and Martin, which brought much amusement to the public from the arts of "bold advertisement" with which the war was waged. There were ingenious "Crambos," such as a cat gazing with well-assumed surprise at her face reflected in one of Day and Martin's well-polished shoes. These things

made a deep impression on the boy, who saw their grotesque side. They were oddly bound up with his early impressions and sorrows.

Hence, we find in the course of "Pickwick," a few allusions to these blacking rivals and their ways, which might seem mysterious and uncalled for to those not in the secret, but which for himself had the highest significance. When Sam is first introduced at the "White Hart," he is in the very act of cleaning boots, and we have almost an essay on the various species of boots and polishing. We are told minutely that he was engaged in "brushing the dirt off a pair of boots . . ." "There were two rows before him, one cleaned, the other dirty. "There were *eleven* pair, and one shoe, as belongs to No. 6 with the wooden leg." "The eleven boots is to be called at half-past eight (an odd consensus in eleven persons), and the shoe at nine." He set to work upon a top-boot.

The landlady then made her appearance in the opposite gallery and flung down a pair of shoes to be cleaned for No. 5, first floor. There is a dramatic action in these calls from the different galleries, which shows that Boz had the stage before him. Sam then chalked the number on the sole. When he found that it was for people of consequence in a private room that the articles were required, he set to work with a will and produced a polish "that would have struck envy to the soul of *the amiable Mr. Warren, for they used Day and Martin's at the 'White Hart.'*" Here will be noted the compliment to his old employer, though it was of a conventional sort.

With this very number "Pickwick" was destined to leap into its amazing popularity, and the advertisement must have been a valuable one. There may have been another reason, for there was to be a "Pickwick advertiser," which was patronised by the firms, and it may have been stipulated as a condition that the author was to give them this "lift." Another patron was Rowland, whose real name was Rouland, of "Maccassar oil" and "Kalydor" celebrity. We have a relic of one of these forgotten nostrums in the familiar "Anti-maccassar" known to every good housewife. To Rowland or Rouland he later made an allusion in the text.

This method of calling attention to the merits of wares was a French one — a sort of *réclame* introduced by Villemessant in his journal *La Sylphide*. Thus "Pickwick" was quite "up-to-date." After Jingle had gone off to Doctors Commons for his license, Sam renewed his efforts, "burnishing a pair of *painted tops*, worn by a farmer." Then, interrogated by Perker, he

described the tenants of the inn by their boots — a pair of “Hessians” in 13, two pair of “halves,” with six “tops.”

In chapter xxxiv. we have another allusion to blacking. “No man,” said Sam, “ever talked in poetry ‘cept a beadle on Boxin’ Day, or *Warren’s blackin’*.” This referred to the rhymes — or verses — with which the firm filled the newspapers in praise of their article. It will be remembered that Mrs. Jarley, in the “Old Curiosity Shop,” employed “a poet” to celebrate her waxworks in similar fashion, and who was content with a few shillings for each effort. We may be certain that this was a boyish recollection, and that he had seen this blacking “poet” making his calls in Chandos Street or haggling for his miserable wage. The beadle, also alluded to, was a prominent figure with Boz; but he has disappeared, with his huge cocked hat, scarlet waistcoat, and uniform. He is to be seen in Wilkie’s brilliant picture in the National Gallery. It is evident from the passage that he came round on Boxing Day for his *douceur*, reminding his patrons, as the dustmen now do sometimes, by a copy of verses. Sam adds that no one did this sort of thing except the persons mentioned — ”and *Rowland’s oil*, or some of them low fellows.” The perfumer could only have been half pleased with this uncomplimentary form. Still, such as it was, it *was* an advertisement. Boz also makes several allusions to the inventor, Bramah, mentioning Bramah locks and keys with plugs, &c. Old Weller talks of being locked up “in a fireproof chest with a patent *Bramin*.” Bramah’s hydraulic press was a scientific novelty then, as were also his “patent safes.” Bramah appears to have advertised in “Pickwick.” These *réclames* are of a rather elaborate kind, as when Lowten arrived at the office (lii), we are told, he drew “a Bramah key from his pocket, with a small plug therein to keep the dust out.” Then “comforting himself with this reflection, Mr. Lowten extricated the plug from the door key; having opened the door, re-plugged and re-pocketed his Bramah.”

Note. — The horrors of the Blacking episode were ever present to Dickens’ recollection, and, as if under a sort of fascination, he later seemed almost impelled to refer to them. Thus, in *Copperfield*, we find him describing, but under a disguise, the same incident. As when he was sent to Murdstone and Grimby’s warehouse, it was still the washing and labelling of bottles — ”*not of blacking*,” but of wines and spirits. “When the empty bottles ran short, there were labels to be pasted on the full ones, or corks to be fitted to them, &c.” But there is also another allusion to the same, but

curiously veiled, when he speaks of the carman, Tipp, who “wore a red jacket.” Now, to this day Day and Martin’s carmen wear red jackets, and Warren’s men probably did so; but, at all events, it is clearly an allusion to the costume of the blacking drivers. There are allusions to blacking in Little Dorrit and Bleak House.

CHAPTER V. SINGLE SPEECH TRUNDLE

This gentleman, as we know, was the affianced husband of Isabella Wardle, and to the scenes of their marriage, the festivities, &c., we owe some pleasing incidents. Trundle was a good specimen of the *cypher* or nullity; naturally, he is a figure at Manor Farm, but does nothing, and practically says nothing. He was clearly a neighbouring squire of limited ideas, or plain country gentlemen, that could do no more than love his Isabella. Yet, while Boz describes the “affairs” of Arabella and Winkle, of Emily and Snodgrass, he wholly passes by Trundle and his *inamorata*. We can see what manner of man Trundle was, as he is shown seated in the barouche, at the review, between the two sisters, each with long ringlets and parasols. He is a good-looking young man, with mutton-chop whiskers and black hair, on which his hat is set jauntily. He is described as “a young gentleman apparently enamoured of one of the young ladies in scarfs and pattens.” Wardle introduced him in a rather patronising way. “This is my friend, Mr. Trundle.” When the firing began, there was much agitation among the young ladies, screaming, &c., so that the gentlemen had to support them: Mr. Trundle “was actually obliged to hold one of them up.” But after the lunch was unpacked, the wine uncorked, &c., there came a remarkable development — Trundle actually spoke, made the one single remark that is recorded of him in the whole chronicle! Never before or after did he say a word. He was, in fact, “single speech Trundle.” And what were these words: “Will you permit me to have the pleasure, Sir?” said Mr. Trundle to Mr. Winkle; a proposal to “take wine with him,” as it is called, Winkle had a bottle all to himself on the box seat, which, no doubt, attracted the reticent Trundle. The two gentlemen not only took wine together, but had “a glass round, ladies and all.” But we should note that Trundle phrase, the almost too humble form: “Will you permit me the pleasure, Sir.” It looks as though Trundle were “an ass,” as it is called. The fact remains, however, that Trundle’s single speech was: “Will you permit me to have the pleasure, Sir?”

After a few days’ interval, when Mr. Pickwick and party found their way to Manor Farm, there were games *galore*, and at the “round one,” Isabella and Trundle, we are told, “went partners,” so all was going on well. The

Squire had been nearly brought up to the point. It is painful to come to the conclusion, but Isabella's admirer, though a country gentleman, was nothing of a sportsman, and rather a poor creature. When Mr. Pickwick and his followers were up early and out at the rook shooting, we find no Trundle. He was lying a-bed, no doubt. Stranger still, when the whole party went in for a day to Muggleton for the cricket match, Trundle was the only one who stayed behind. He remained with the ladies, for a purpose, no doubt; still, ladies don't like this sort of thing. The evening came. "Isabella and Emily strolled out with Mr. Trundle." I have an idea that on this very day matters came to a crisis in that quarter. Everything favoured — all the men were away — he may have seized the opportunity to "propose." At all events, we are significantly told that at the supper "Isabella Wardle devoted herself *exclusively* to Mr. Trundle." Pointed enough, surely. We may be fortified in this view by finding that on the return of the party, all dead drunk, at one in the morning, on Trundle was specially cast the degrading menial duty of carrying Wardle to bed — his future father-in-law.

Did Boz dislike this man all this while, or did he feel that he could do nothing with him in the story? It is certain, however, that in the talks at Bury over the Bardell action, the Boarding School adventure, &c., we never hear the sound of Trundle's voice. He is effaced. He makes no remark on anything.

One of Boz's most daring pantomime changes, is the sudden arrival of old Wardle at Bury, when Mr. Pickwick was released from the cupboard — and sandwich bags — in Miss Tomkins' school. The door was unlocked, and there stood Wardle and the silent Trundle. A rather lame account is given of the coincidence. Mr. Pickwick naturally asked, "How did you come here?" "Trundle and I came down here for some good shooting on the first," &c. Now, here it is evident Wardle good-naturedly saddled himself with the company of the silent man, but he had his reasons. Trundle was now son-in-law *elect*. They were both at the "Angel" at Bury, and for some days here were Mr. Pickwick and his "followers." There was the exciting notice of action *re* Bardell v. Pickwick. There had nearly been Pott v. Pott and Winkle. And yet, all the time, this Trundle listens, and eats and drinks; but there is no sign of him on the record. He is busy maintaining his character as a cypher.

Everything, however, points to show the all but contemptuous opinion that was held of this Trundle. Wardle had been there two or three days

when Winkle and the others came over from Eatanswill, yet he had never told Mr. Pickwick or Winkle that Trundle was to be married at Christmas, and that they were all to be invited to the wedding. By the oddest of coincidences, Tupman and Snodgrass, getting down from the coach at the “Angel,” were met by Wardle, who at once said, “I have *just been* telling Pickwick that we must have you all down at Christmas. We’re going to have a wedding.” But I doubt if this *be* an oversight. The fact was, no one thought anything of that cypher Trundle, or of his marriage — a matter of no importance to anybody. That this is the true explanation is plain, for Snodgrass, fancying that the wedding was of *his* lady, turned pale. What was old Wardle’s remark? Most significant of Trundle’s *status*. “Don’t be frightened,” he said, “*it’s only* Trundle *there* and Bella.” “Only Trundle there,” *i.e.*, only that poor insignificant thing there! No more depreciatory words could be chosen, or put into the mouth of an honest country gentleman. I am certain that old Wardle gave his child reluctantly to this soft sort of fellow — “Only Trundle there!” Then for the shooting party. We hear of Tupman and Winkle even, with their guns, &c., but not a sign of this Trundle, a country gentleman, supposed to enjoy field sports. If Tupman and Winkle had to carry their guns reversed “like privates at a funeral,” was Trundle excepted? We cannot tell, for he is not even named. Or was he of the shooting party at all? It has always seemed astonishing that Winkle should have been allowed, particularly by Mr. Pickwick, to join the *second* shooting party. Everyone seemed to have forgotten his first performance, when he might have shot his friend Tupman dead, and, as it was, “peppered” him severely. Tupman would naturally have objected to so dangerous a companion. Wardle, at whose home the casualty occurred, merely said, “I beg my friend Winkle’s pardon, though; he has had some practice.” Was this ironical? I fancy the whole scene had passed out of the author’s mind.

Well, the Christmas season having come round — and certainly Trundle must have been a very feeble creature to allow himself to be “kept over” for so long a time — the whole party assembled at Manor Farm; now there, and on such an occasion at least, Trundle, being one of the two central figures, will certainly assert himself. We shall expect to see and hear him to good effect. Never was there a greater mistake. As the Pickwickians arrived, the whole “house party” were in the lane to greet them; we are told in careless fashion that among them “there were Isabella and *her faithful* Trundle,” *i.e.*,

the poor insignificant “chap” who was about to enter the family by particular favour. Then Mr. Pickwick was told that they had all been to “inspect the furniture and fittings-up of the new house which the young couple were to tenant.” This is very significant, for it throws a certain light on Trundle’s situation. It is plain that this house was on Wardle’s property, and that Trundle had none of his own. It was, in fact, a poorish match and the young couple were dependent more or less on Wardle. Even the old lady didn’t like it, she resented their going to look at the house, and her son, to soothe her, made this significant speech: “Recollect Bella; *come, you must keep her spirits up, poor girl.*” “Poor girl!” “Keep her spirits up!” Why?

On the wedding day, however, Trundle made an effort to assert himself. He was “in high feather and spirits,” *i.e.*, awkwardly pretended to be, but, of course, took nobody in. Indeed, we are told he was “a little nervous withal.” We may be sure he was, and therefore looking “more of an ass” than ever. For such *must* appear to be a really nervous man in high spirits and going to be married. All the girls were in tears, Wardle himself quite broken down, for they knew what was before the poor child. At the wedding banquet Mr. Pickwick made an admirable, natural speech, which was greeted with tumults of applause, and was reported word for word. Then we are told how Wardle proposed Mr. Pickwick; Mr. Pickwick, the old lady; Snodgrass, Tupman, the poor relations, all had their speeches; but there is not a single word of Trundle, who appears to have been mumchance — no one wanted him. In his speech at the wedding, the amiable Pickwick had, of course, to give the expected conventional praises to Trundle. But how guarded he is! “God bless ‘em,” he says; “my young friend I believe to be a very excellent and manly fellow.” *I believe, i.e.*, he did not *know* it. “Manly,” we might question, for in manliness he was deficient. We could hear the rustics below: “Squire Trundle manly! he! he! not he!” But on the bride, Mr. Pickwick was enthusiastic: “*I know* her,” he said, “to be a very, very amiable and lovely girl; I admire, love, and esteem her.” At the close he prayed that Wardle’s daughter “might enjoy all the happiness that even he could desire.” Not that he was sure of, but that he could desire. But Trundle, the cypher, no one thought of him, no one cared about his speech. Most likely, in his “nervousness,” he mumbled forth some indistinct words which no one could hear, so it was best and most charitable to pass him by altogether in the report. At the dance at night, where he surely would have

led off the movements, still not a word of him. And at last, “long before Mr. Pickwick was weary of dancing, the newly-married pair had retired from the room.” Mr. Lang fancies that they had gone upstairs; but I imagine they repaired to their new home close by. But then, with that minuteness which never fails Boz, we had been told that they were not to go there till after the Christmas holidays.

But, after all, one might be inclined to doubt this theory of the young pair remaining at the house. For do we not find that on the next day, which was Christmas day, when there was the going to Church, and the skating and sliding, and Mr. Pickwick’s immersion, there is no mention of the happy pair? It looks as though they were at their own home.

After this, many events occurred. Mr. Pickwick was “tried” and “convicted,” as old Weller has it; was sent to prison and released. On his return from Birmingham we have some signs of Wardle and his family. That gentleman was sorely disturbed by Emily’s “goings on” with Snodgrass, and forecasted another imprudent marriage like Trundle’s. He had a suitable match for her in his eye: “a young gentleman down in our neighbourhood,” but Arabella’s elopement set the fire to the powder, and here it is worth while comparing the marriages of Emily and her sister Isabella as a test of the relative importance of Snodgrass and this Trundle. The one took place in London with great show and pomp, all the family going up specially for it. “A handsome portion was bestowed on Emily,” but there is not a word to show that Trundle received a halfpenny.

Then followed the scenes at Osborne’s Hotel in the Adelphi, when all was made up and Snodgrass accepted. And now, at last, we hear something of Trundle. Mrs. T., as we might expect, was in an “interesting way,” and had to be informed of what was going on. But it had to be broken to her by Trundle, in right of his office. Good, easy man! We can hear him: “the news will be too much for her” (this is on the record). She would insist on going, and it would be fatal. He would, of course, implore her not to agitate herself in her present state. As a matter of course he was all astray. The news was *not* too much for her. She ordered at once a cap and a new dress, and declared that she *would* go up for the wedding. The horrified Trundle, who had clearly no authority whatever, called in the Doctor to exert *his*, which he did in this way: by leaving it all to herself. Boz emphasizes it, by way of contrast to Trundle, saying that “he was a wise and *discreet fellow*.”

Of course the foolish Trundle was put aside; the lady went and suffered no harm. This proves that Trundle was the *mari de la femme*, with no will of his own.

At Dulwich Church, the bridegroom was met “by the bride, the maids, the Winkles, the Wardles, and Trundles,” always to be last and insignificant. In course of time we are told that Mr. Pickwick was much troubled at first by the numerous applications made to him to act as Godfather to the offspring of his friends! These came from Mr. Winkle, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Trundle. Last of course. Poor soul! We can see him, grown elderly, sitting at his own table, smiling or silent, or with an occasional “yes, my dear,” “certainly, my dear,” “by all means, my dear.”

CHAPTER VI. MUGGLETON AND ITS CRICKET

The situation and real name of Muggleton has always been a hotly debated point; many have been the speculations and many the suggestions as to the original. I was once inclined to adopt Gravesend, on the statement of the author's daughter, that, one day, driving with her father towards Cobham, he said that "it was here that Mr. Pickwick dropped his whip." Cobham would be on the way to Gravesend.

Now what was Muggleton? A large town, with Mayor, Burgesses, and Freemen — an ancient and loyal Borough, much given to petitioning Parliament. It is insinuated that these petitions were guided by Stiggins-like instincts — "a zealous advocacy of Christian principles combined with a devoted attachment to commercial rights. Hence they were against negro slavery abroad and *for* the factory system at home. They were for abolishing Sunday trading in the streets, and for maintaining the sale of church livings." A member of Boz's family has assured me that Maidstone was in the author's mind: it is only some eight miles from Rochester. But "The Bull" waiter informed the Pickwickians that Muggleton was nearly double the distance, or fifteen miles; while Gravesend is about six miles from Rochester — so the evidence of distance does not help us. Where, too, did Mr. Pickwick drop his whip? The Pickwickian enthusiast can ascertain this — 'an he will — by a little calculation. After leaving "The Bull," the tall quadruped exercised his "manœuvre" of darting to the side of the road, rushing forward for some minutes — *twenty times* — which would cover about an hour. In the etching, there is a picture of the spot — a hedge-lined road. Mr. Pickwick and his friends had to walk the whole way; yet they arrived late in the afternoon. No one could walk from Rochester to Maidstone in that time.

It was natural that Mr. Pickwick should drop his whip — but most unnatural that he should ask Winkle to dismount and pick it up for him; and most unnatural of all that Winkle, in his precarious situation, should consent to dismount. The ordinary course would be that Tupman or Snodgrass should get down. Then, for the great marvel of all, we have Mr. Pickwick, who *would not* get down, or *could not* get down to pick up his whip, getting

down to help Mr. Winkle on to his horse! Thus, on the two occasions, the useless or lazy Tupman and Snodgrass kept their seats.

It has been claimed — by the late Charles Dickens the younger — that Town Malling was Muggleton, and on the ground that it has always had a reputation for good cricket. It is not far from Maidstone. But this is easily disposed of. Muggleton is described as an important corporate town, with a Mayor, etc. Further, the cricketing at Muggleton was of the poorest sort. There was an elderly gentleman playing who could not stop the balls — a slim one was hit on the nose — they were a set of “duffers,” in fact. As for Dickens knowing nothing about cricket, as Mr. Lang contends, I can say, that he was always interested in it. I myself have seen him sit the whole day in a marquee, during a match got up by himself at Gads Hill, marking (or “notching”) in the most admirable manner. Anything he did or described, he did and described according to the best fashion he could compass.

Wishing, however, to investigate this knotty question thoroughly, I lately communicated with the Town Clerk of Maidstone, Mr. Herbert Monckton, who was good enough to search the Books with reference to certain queries which I furnished. Dickens states of the mysterious and unnamed Borough, that it had its Mayor, Burgesses, and Freemen — which at once excludes Town Malling which the younger Charles Dickens had selected. The Clerk has found that, at the period in question, there were 813 Freemen on the roll. It has always been held to be “an ancient and loyal Borough,” but this, of course, most boroughs of its standing would claim to be. Boz speaks of innumerable Petitions to Parliament, and Mr. Monckton tells me that he has found many petitions in the Books — one in 1828 *against* the Licensing Bill, which seems to prove that Maidstone, like Muggleton, “mingled a zealous advocacy of Christian principles with a devoted attachment to commercial rights.” Then as to the description: Both Maidstone and Muggleton have an open square for the market: there are also in both places in the square a fire office, linendraper, corn factor, saddler, grocer, shoe-shop, but apparently no distiller. It was curious, certainly, that there should be an Inn with so odd a sign as the Blue Lion in Maidstone — and also a post bearing this sign, in front. Then as to the cricket, the cricket field was in the Meadow, Maidstone, not far from the High Street; while at Muggleton, we are told that Mr. Pickwick’s friends “had turned out of the main street and were already within sight of the field of battle.”

And here we may admire the wonderful walking powers that Boz allots to his heroes — Tupman and Pickwick, who were elderly persons and stout withal. Fifteen miles to Muggleton — two miles further to Manor Farm — and all done between eleven o'clock, and a period "late in the afternoon" — say five o'clock. At a later visit came the memorable five-and-twenty-mile walk to get an appetite for dinner. The truth was, such stretches were as nothing to Boz himself. Walking was his grand pastime and one absolute necessity. He tramped on with an amazing energy and vigour, which, as I know from experience, it was impossible to match. Sometimes he walked the streets for nearly the whole night. This personal element helps to explain many things in "Pickwick" which contains the early life of Boz.

CHAPTER VII. GOSWELL STREET

A question that has often exercised ingenious folk is, why did Mr. Pickwick choose to live in Goswell Street? rather, why did Boz select such a quarter for him? Of course, at that time, it was really a “genteel” neighbourhood, as anyone can see who walks along the desolate streets and terraces, the forlorn squares and enclosures that are close by, and where the New River runs. Nothing is more depressing than the aspect of these fallen places; but, in Mr. Pickwick’s time, they had not been very long erected. Indeed, this offers yet another department which his wonderful Book suggests: that it is the best record of all the changes that have taken place in London. This Goswell Street tenancy shows clearly that the neighbourhood was a desirable one for residents of position. Mr. Pickwick was a City man, and his club met in Huggin Lane, in the City. He generally put up, or, as Bob Sawyer had it, “hung out,” at the “George and Vulture,” also in the City. One side of Goswell Street, in those days — a road ascending to the old Angel Inn — faced, near the top, a number of the pretentious squares and terraces I have been describing. That interesting old theatre, Sadler’s Wells, was in the rear, and the New River passed beneath it or beside it, and, quite uncovered in those days, rippled along on its course from the country.

All the houses were private houses. Some enthusiasts have actually identified Mrs. Bardell’s apartments — but without a particle of evidence. Now it has become a busy thoroughfare, with a noisy tramway: nearly all the houses have been turned into shops, and Mr. Pickwick could scarcely recognize his old quarters. The whole region bears a faded air. Amateurs, who love exploring their London, will find entertainment in wandering about Islington and the adjoining districts, experiencing quite a new sensation and hardly realizing that they are so close to Aldersgate. The New River itself, which ends its course here, is a pleasant attraction, with its great basin, and ancient offices by the edge of the water.

Imitating Elia, I once set out from here, and followed its course and its many windings far out into the country, taking up the journey on successive days, going towards its source in Hertfordshire, and a most pleasant, interesting voyage of discovery it was. For it so winds and bends, now passing through fields and demesnes, now skirting towns and villages, that

it is just as picturesque as any natural stream. Such being its attractions, Mr. Pickwick was virtually living in the country or in the suburbs, and enjoying the fine, keen, inspiring air which the jaded Londoner from lower districts may, even now, still inhale. There is no Goswell Street now, but Goswell *Road* — a very noisy, clattering thoroughfare.

Another remark to be made is this: — how much do we owe to the vivifying power of Boz's descriptions of these old Towns, Inns, and Streets? The ordinary provincial town — unsung and undescribed by him — remains what it is and nothing more. York and Manchester stir no memories, and are unvisited by pilgrims, because *they are not in Pickwick*. Boz seems to have found the true *interpretation* and inner meaning of each place, and has actually preserved the tone and flavour that existed in his own time. This continues even now. As we stroll through Rochester or Ipswich, Bath or Bury, Pickwick and his friends walk with us. And, as if well contented to rest under the spell, these antique towns have made no effort at change, but remain much as they were.

And this prompts the question: *Where did Mrs. Cluppins live?* At the trial we learned that she was a friend and neighbour of Mrs. Bardell's, one of her *commères*. She had “looked in” on the momentous morning, having been out to purchase “kidney pertaties,” yet, on their Hampstead junketting, we find her coming with the Raddles, in their cab, all the way from Lant Street, Borough. She was clearly Mrs. Raddle's friend and neighbour. Perhaps she had moved, though this is not likely. The household gods of such, like Elia's, strike a deep root.

In his descriptions of the Bardell party's journey to Hampstead, which ended so disastrously, the art of Boz is shown as usual by supplying the notion of movement — he seems to take us along up the northern heights — we feel the pleasurable anticipations of a party of pleasure for the lower middle class. From the lower end of Goswell Street — where Mr. Pickwick's lodgings must have been, for, in the upper part, there are no houses opposite for Mrs. Raddle to call at — it must have been a long drive for the party. I assume they must have made for Kentish Town, and toiled up Haverstock Hill at a walk, for the coach was heavily laden enough. Pleasant Hampstead! One is always glad to find Boz associating his humour with places that we are deeply interested in. The Hampstead of this hour, though changed enough, may remind us very fairly of Boz's time. It has still the attractions of the old-fashioned, red-brick houses, and terraces,

the mixture of green, and the charming, even seductive, heath. “The Spaniards” at Hampstead — Boz calls it “*The Spaniard*” — is scarcely altered from the day of the Bardell visit, and is as picturesque as ever with its Tea Gardens and Bowers. I never pass it without seeming to see Jackson’s hackney-coach waiting and the Sheriff’s man at the gate taking his drink. The other Inn, also bound up with memories of Boz, “Jack Straw’s Castle,” also stands, but one reads with alarm on this day of grace (June 12th, 1898): —

There are few Londoners who will not grieve to hear that the well-known inn on the Spaniards Road, “Jack Straw’s Castle,” famous as the rendezvous of authors, artists, statesmen, and many a celebrity of old days, is going the way of other ancient buildings. The low rooms and quaint interior of the hostel are now being entirely transformed and modernised. The only concession made to the prejudices of the old frequenters of the inn is that the outer face is to be preserved intact. To the passer by, no great change will perhaps be apparent; but within, the charm of the place will have vanished entirely. A spacious saloon bar flooded with glaring light, with modern furniture and appliances, is to take the place of the old rooms, coffee-room, billiard-room, and bar. In fact, it is to become a modern hotel. The change is quite enough to make the shade of Dickens arise. As John Forster has told us, the great novelist loved this old chop-house, and, after a ramble on the Heath, often adjourned here for a good, wholesome dinner.

CHAPTER VIII. MARY HOGARTH

This young girl — to whom a touching interest attached from her being so prematurely cut off — was a most interesting creature, one of three sisters, daughters of Mr. George Hogarth, a Writer to the Signet, who is a sort of link between Scott and Dickens. For he had acted as the former's man of business in the Ballantyne disputes, and must have prompted Dickens in the article that he wrote on that thorny subject. He was a good musician and a writer in the magazines. We find his work in the old "Monthly Magazine" where Dickens made his *début*; and when Boz was installed as editor of "Bentley's," we find him admitting much of his father-in-law's writing. His "Memoirs of the Opera" are well-known. There is a charming outline sketch of Maclise's, showing the profiles of two of the sisters with Dickens, all three of the most refined and interesting cast — but Boz's face is certainly the handsomest of the three. He must have been a most attractive young man — something of the pattern of his own Nicholas Nickleby.

One of the most interesting features of the episode is the reference the author was constantly making to this bereavement. In the rollicking "Pickwick," any serious introduction of such a topic would have been out of place: though I fancy a little paragraph in the account of the Manor Farm Christmas festivities is connected with it. But about the same time, or rather, some six months later, he was busy with his "Oliver Twist," and it seems certain that Rose Maylie was drawn from this sympathetic creature, for there is a feeling and a passionate grief displayed that could only be caused by the loss of a person that he had known and loved. Here is his description of Rose: — "The younger lady was in the lovely bloom and springtime of womanhood, at that age when, if ever angels be for God's good purposes enthroned in mortal forms, they may be without impiety supposed to abide in such forms as hers. She was not *past seventeen*. Cast in so slight and exquisite a mould; so mild and gentle; so pure and beautiful; that earth seemed not her element, nor its rough creatures her fit companions."

We may compare with this the touching inscription placed by Dickens on her tomb in Kensal Green: "Young, beautiful and good, God, in His mercy, numbered her among His angels at the early age of seventeen." He had

long planned that he should be laid beside her, but on Mrs. Hogarth's death, some five years later, he had to resign his place to her. This was a renewal of the old grief. The epitaph nearly seems the epitome of all that he says of Rose Maylie.

“The very intelligence that shone in her deep blue eye, and was stamped upon her noble head, seemed scarcely of her age, or of the world; and yet the changing expression of sweetness and good humour, the thousand lights that played upon the face and left no shadow there; above all, the smile, the cheerful, happy smile, were for Home, and fireside peace and happiness.” She is then described as “playfully putting back her hair, which was simply braided on her forehead; and threw into her beaming look such an expression of affection and artless loveliness that blessed spirits might have smiled to look upon her.”

The earnestness, the feeling of sincerity thrown into this description — the tone of reality — leave a conviction that this must have been drawn from a person who had lived and in whom the writer had the deepest interest. Further, it is clearly the description of a person who had passed away: of one who was no longer with him. “She was at the theatre with us on Saturday night, well and happy, and expired in my arms a few hours afterwards.” So he wrote to Mr. Cox.

At the end, he returns to the subject, and retouches the picture:

“I would show Rose Maylie in all the bloom and grace of early womanhood, shedding on her secluded path in life the soft and gentle light that fell on all who trod it with her and shone into their hearts; I would paint her *the life and joy of the fireside circle*, and the lively summer group; I would follow her through the sultry fields at noon, and hear the low tones of her sweet voice in the moonlit evening walk; I would watch her in all her goodness and charity abroad, and the untiring discharge of domestic duties at home; I would summon before me again those joyous little faces that clustered round her knee; I would recall the tone of that clear laugh, and conjure up that sympathizing tear that glistened in the soft, blue eye. These, and a thousand looks and smiles, and turns of thought and speech, I would fain recall them, every one.”

Again, it is clear that all this is personal, and written of one that he knew and deeply loved.

In “Nickleby,” there is yet another allusion to this sad subject — it is suggested by Kate's grief for Smike:

“It is an exquisite and beautiful thing in our nature that, when the heart is softened and touched by some tranquil happiness or affectionate feeling, the memory of the dead comes over it most powerfully and irresistibly. It would almost seem as though our better thoughts and sympathies were charms in virtue of which the soul is enabled to hold some vague and mysterious intercourse with the spirits of those whom we dearly loved in life. Alas! how often and how long may these patient angels hover above us, watching for the spell which is so seldom uttered, and so soon forgotten.”

This is no artificial utterance. He had clearly interrupted himself to indulge in this sad retrospect. He then points a moral from Mrs. Nickleby, who, he says, could not conceive the idea of anyone dwelling on such thoughts in secret. I have always had a notion that this worthy lady’s incongruities and rambling methods were suggested by one of his own household, whose imperfection was found to be a complete lack of sympathy with him in all his feelings.

The devotion of Oliver Twist to Rose, it is not fanciful to say, was intended to symbolise his own to Mary. We can recall the passionate, agitated excitement with which Rose’s illness is described — the hanging on the doctor’s sentence, &c. — a reminiscence certainly, and we have only to look at the sketch by Cruikshank of his friend (given in my “*Bozland*”) to recognise the likeness to Oliver. Oliver’s sufferings were his own.

How tremendous the blow of her death must have been to the successful writer may be conceived when he did not scruple to interrupt the book and cast it aside altogether from sheer incapacity to write a line. The June number did not appear. No one can imagine the inconvenience, the loss, the enormous risks that were run by taking this step — the horror and consternation of the publishers and all concerned. It proved how indifferent he had become to his prospects and prosperity when he could hazard such a thing. The first of the month came round, but no “*Pickwick*.” It was a public catastrophe. When he was able to resume his story, he found it necessary to issue an explanation in the form of an address.

186 Strand,
June 30th, 1837.

The author is desirous to take the opportunity afforded him by the resumption of his work to state, once again, what he thought had been stated sufficiently emphatically before, namely, that its publication was

interrupted by a severe domestic affliction of no ordinary kind; that this was the sole cause of the non-appearance of the present number in its usual course; that, hereafter, it will continue to be published with its accustomed regularity. However superfluous this *second notice* may appear to many, it is rendered necessary by various idle speculations and absurdities which have been industriously propagated during the past month and which have reached the author's ears from many quarters, and have grieved him exceedingly. By one set of intimate acquaintances, especially well-informed, he has been killed outright; by another, driven mad; by a third, imprisoned for debt; by a fourth, left per steamer for the United States; by a fifth, rendered incapable of mental exertion for evermore; by all, in short, represented as doing anything but seeking by a few weeks' retirement, the restoration of cheerfulness and peace, of which a sad bereavement has necessarily deprived him.

CHAPTER IX. THE PICKWICK CLUB

This was a common form of social meeting, and we find in the memoirs of Adolphus and John Taylor and Frederick Reynolds descriptions of the “Keep the Line,” “The Finish,” and other oddly-named societies. The cheerful glass was the chief object. Mr. Lowten’s Club, “The Magpie and Stump,” in Clare Market, supplies a specimen of a lower class club. “Veels vithin veels,” as Sam would say.

In his speech at Dulwich, at the close of the book, Mr. Pickwick spoke rather pathetically of the closing of his wanderings. “I shall never forget having devoted the greater part of two years to mixing with different varieties and shades of human character, frivolous as my pursuit of novelty may have appeared to many.” He spoke of the club also, to which “he had communicated both personally and by letter,” acquainting them with his intention of withdrawing from public life to the country. He added that “during our long absence it had suffered much from internal dissensions,” and this, with other reasons, had obliged him to dissolve it. This “absence,” both as planned and carried out, was merely occasional. Mr. Pickwick and his friends were rarely, and only now and then, absent from town, going away for short spells, save, of course, the enforced absence in the Fleet Prison and the months or weeks (as it may be) in Bath. “The George and Vulture” was not far from Huggin Lane, so Mr. Pickwick must have been constantly at the Club, or *could* have been had he chosen to go there. All this notion of severance, therefore, was somewhat sentimental.

But the “dissensions” the President spoke of were natural enough. He was the founder and mainstay of the association — probably paid its expenses. The whole object of the institution, it may be suspected, was to exalt the founder. In such a state of things, it was natural that there should be an opposition, or discontented party, headed by “that Blotton.” When Blotton was got rid of, his friends would think that he had been badly treated and take advantage of the occasional absences of the chief to foment revolt. Then Blotton was expelled, assuredly unfairly, for he merely took the opposite view on the Cobham stone, and he might have left some who belonged to his faction and who thought he had been harshly dealt with. Mr. Pickwick, in fact, merely returned from his agreeable junketting to have

this gentleman expelled. Despotism of this sort always leads to discontent and parties — hence the “dissensions.” Mr. Pickwick, from his treatment of Blotton, must have been a Tory of the old Eldon school. Here was his blemish. He had no toleration for others, and had an undue idea of his own position. We can trace the whole thing perfectly. He was a successful man of business — an export merchant apparently — being connected with an agent at Liverpool whom he had “obliged.” Round such a man who was good-natured and philanthropic would gather flatterers and toadies; hence the suggestion to found a club with his own name and “button.” Of this he could be “Boss,” and he was listened to and courted. It was like the devotion of satellites to the late Mr. Gladstone. We can see all this in the picture of the club at the beginning, where, with the exception of the four legitimate Pickwickians, all seem rather of the tradesman class, and are vulgar types enough. In such surroundings, Mr. Pickwick could “rule the roast” and grow despotic and even arrogant.

Blotton, however, who seems to have been an independent sort of fellow, could not submit to this, was of the Opposition, and, no doubt, a thorn in Mr. Pickwick’s side. And here is yet another point of the likeness to the Johnsonian coterie. In “The Club,” Hawkins — Sir John of that ilk — was uncongenial — “a detestable fellow,” Bozzy calls him — objecting, quarrelling, and, at last, on one occasion was so rude that he had to withdraw. Now, that this offence was rankling is evident, and it explains the fracas which took place at the opening. Blotton looked on Mr. Pickwick’s travelling as pure humbug. The idea of his contributing anything useful or instructive in his so-called reports seemed nonsense. Further, was it not something of a job? Pickwick was taking three of his own special “creatures” with him — Winkle, to whom he had been appointed governor; Snodgrass, who was his ward; and Tupman, who was his butt and toady. They were the *gentlemen* of the club. None of the outsiders were chosen. From Blotton’s behaviour, too, on the Cobham business, it is clear he thought Mr. Pickwick’s scientific researches were also “humbug.” A paper by that gentleman had just been read — “The tracing of the source of the ponds at Hampstead” and “Some observations on the theory of tittlebats.” There was somewhat too much of this “bossing.” The whole report read by the secretary was full of gross flatteries. They had “just heard read with feelings of unmingled satisfaction and unqualified approval,” &c., “from which advantages must accrue to the

cause of science” — cause of rubbish! Then, it added, obsequiously, something about “the *inestimable* benefits from carrying the speculations of that *learned* man” &c. Mr. Pickwick, in his speech, was certainly self-laudatory and provocative. He talked of his pride in promoting the Tittlebatian theory, and “let *his enemies make the most of it.*” This was marked enough, and no doubt caused looks at Blotton. Then he began to puff his new enterprise at “a service of some danger.”

There were, were there not, upsets of coaches “in all directions,” horses bolting — boats overturning, and boilers bursting? Now, Blotton — after all the humbug that had gone before, and particularly after a provocative reference to himself — could not stand this, and, amid the obsequious cries and “cheers,” said, boldly, “No!” (A Voice: “No!”) That is, signifying there were no such dangers. The fury of the orator on “the Windsor chair,” was quite Gladstonian. “No!” he cried; on which the cheers of his followers broke out. “Who was it that cried No?” Then he proceeded to imagine it came from some “vain and disappointed man — he wouldn’t say haberdasher.”

To the Pickwick Club there was a Vice-President, named Smiggers — Joseph Smiggers, Esq., P.V.P.M.P.C., that is, Perpetual Vice-President and Member of the Pickwick Club. Smiggers was, of course, supposed to be “Pickwick’s creature,” or he would not have been there. He was a tall, corpulent man, with a soft face — as we see him in his picture. As Mr. Pickwick speaks, it is remarkable that both Vice-President and Secretary — the two officers — have each one arm raised as if in ecstatic rapture — clear proof of their subservience to Pickwick. On Smiggers’ right is a “doddering” old fellow of between seventy and eighty — clearly a “nullity” — on his left, another member nearly as old, but with a glimmer of intelligence. Down the side of the table, facing the orator, are some odd faces — one clearly a Jew; one for whom the present Mr. Edward Terry might have sat. Blotton is at the bottom, half turned away in disgust. His neighbour looks at him with wonder, as who should say, “How can you be so insensible?” Odd to say — and significant, too — Blotton has brought into the club his *dog*, a ferocious looking “bull,” which sits at his feet under the table. We should say, on the whole, that Blotton could only count on — and that, with but a limited sympathy — the Terry-faced and Jew-faced men — if he *could* count on them. The Secretary was like a clerk — a perky fellow — and had a pen behind his ear; probably in some Bank or Counting

House, so strong is habit. One member of the Club alone is invisible — the one beyond Tupman — all that is seen of him is a hand holding a tumbler as if about to drink. The Dodderer is applauding; so are the Jew, Blotton and Tupman; so is the round-faced man, just beyond the invisible one.

Mr. Pickwick and his three friends being removed or absent, and Blotton expelled, out of the fourteen members there were left but nine, whereof we reckon four or five as Pickwickians and the rest as *Blottonites*.

And how easily can we imagine the acrimonious discussions that went on!

“This ‘ere Pickwick, who was always making the club a hend to his own glorification, had gone off on his touring to get more grist for his mill.” It was really, a “mutual admiration society,” and as for the reports, notes, &c., he was sending back “they ‘ad ‘ad enough of it.” The club didn’t meet to be listening to long-winded yarns to be read out by their worthy secretary, but for a glass and social intercourse. As for the “travels and preambulations,” what were they more than visits to genteel ‘ouses where Pickwick was “showing oft” at their expense? Then where were the “Sportin’ transactions?” The whole thing was “rot.” Then the Cobham stone business, at which the whole town was laughing, and which their worthy friend Blotton had exposed. Blotton was the only long-headed, creditable man they had. *He* ought to have been their president. But he had been turned out by the “*lick-spittles*” of the society.

CHAPTER X. ROADSIDE INNS

I. — The Bell at Berkeley Heath

In the animated journey, from Bristol to Birmingham, the travellers stopped at various posting-houses where the mercurial Sawyer would insist on getting down to lunch, dine, or otherwise refresh — his friends being always ready to comply after a little decent hesitation. It was thus that they drew up at The Bell at Berkeley Heath, which our writer presently sketches. It will be seen there is more of the drink at the Bell than of the Bell itself. It is, indeed, no more than *cœcum nomen* — much as though we read the name at the end of “Bradshaw” — yet, somehow, from the life and movement of the journey, it offers a sort of attraction: it seems familiar, and we have an interest in it. The Bell now “goes on,” as the proprietor tells me. There are travellers who come there and drink Boz’s health in the snug parlour. It is, in fact, a Pickwickian Inn, and is drawn within the glamour of the legend, and, what a marvel! the thing is done by the magic of those three or four lines. “The Bell,” says Mrs. Hooper, “lies back on the main road from Bristol to Gloucester, and is just nineteen miles from Bristol. It is a rambling old house and a good deal dilapidated, and of good age.”

With this meagre record it yet offers such Pickwickian interest that, not many months ago, a photograph was taken of it which was engraved for the *Daily Graphic*. There is no Mr. Pickwick’s room to be shown, as undoubtedly there *would* be had that gentleman only stayed the night there; but he only lunched and then went forward. There is a mistiness as to whether the Pickwickians sat in the public coffee-room or had a private “settin’-room.” It was to a certainty the coffee-room, as they only stayed a short time. So the proprietor, with a safe conscience, might exhibit “the room where Mr. Pickwick lunched.” On the face is imbedded a tablet bearing the date 1729, and there is an ancient farmer close by who was born in “The Bell” in the year 1820. If we lend ourselves properly to the delusion, he might recall Mr. Pickwick’s chaise drawing up full sixty years ago. “Ay, I mind it well. I were joost then fifteen. A stoutish gent in gaiters — might ‘ave been a bishop — and sich a lively young chap as wos with him, full o’ spirits, chucking a’ the gurls under the chins. And their sarvant! O *he* were one. Sam, he were caa’d — I moind that — Sam

Summut. And they caa'd for the best o' everythin', and took away wi' them a lot, Madeary, and wot not," and so on.

II. — The Greyhound, Dulwich

Mr. Pickwick, as we know, at the close of his wanderings retired to this tranquil and pleasant suburb — then much more retired than it is now. In accordance with his habit of enshrining his own personal sympathies in his writing, Boz was, as it were, conveying that it was such a sequestered spot as he himself would choose under similar conditions. Last year (1898), the interesting old road-side Inn, The Greyhound, was levelled — an Inn to which Mr. Pickwick must have found his way in the dull evening to drink “cold Punch” or preside at the club which he most certainly — if we know him well — must have founded. A wealthy gentleman of social tastes, and with a love for tavern life, would have no difficulty in establishing a new Pickwick Club.

At the Greyhound, nigh a century ago, there was actually a club which entertained Tom Campbell, Mark Lemon, Byron's tutor, and many more. Boz himself, we are told, used to find his way there with Theodore Hook, Moore, and others. Boz, therefore, must have regarded this place with much favour, owing to his own experiences of it — and to have selected it for his hero's tranquil old age shows how high a place it had in his memory. The description is charming and brings this sylvan retreat to which we have walked many a time perfectly before us.

This taste for surrounding himself with persons of lower degree — such as were the rank and file — was curiously enough shared by Mr. Pickwick's predecessor, Dr. Johnson, who, when he found the Literary Club somewhat too much of a republic, and getting “out of hand,” established a social meeting at the Essex Head Club — in the street of that name, off the Strand — composed in the main of respectable tradesmen, who would listen obsequiously. Thus, it may be repeated, does the same sort of character develop invariably on the same lines, and thus did Mr. Pickwick unconsciously follow in the footsteps of the “great Lexicographer.”

III. — Grimaldi the Younger

As I was the first to point out, the powerful “Stroller's Tale” of which Boz himself thought so highly, was founded on the career of the unfortunate son of the great Grimaldi. The story is related by “Dismal Jemmy,” the actor, who, in the tale itself, is called Hutley, and it corresponds in all its details with Grimaldi's history. He died in September, 1832, nearly four

years before Pickwick was thought of, but Boz had learned the incident long before the Grimaldi MSS. were given him to edit, and I am inclined to think he must have learned them from his friend Harley who was intimate with the Grimaldis. In the memoirs it is stated that Gledinning, a Printer, was sent by the father to his son's dying bed, and he was probably the Hutley of the Stroller's Tale, and, perhaps, the person who brought old Grimaldi the news of his death. We are told in the "Tale" that he had an engagement "at one of the Theatres on the Surrey side of the water," and in the memoirs we find that he was offered "an engagement for the Christmas at the Coburg." There his death is described: — "He rose in bed, drew up his withered limbs — he was acting — he was at the Theatre. He then sang some roaring song. The walls were alive with reptiles, frightful figures flitted to and fro . . . His eyes shone with a lustre frightful to behold, the lips were parched and cracked, the dry, hard skin glowed with a burning heat, and there was an almost unearthly air of wild anxiety in the man's face." Hutley also describes how he had to hold him down in his bed. Compare with this the account in the memoirs — "his body was covered with a fearful inflammation — he died in a state of wild and furious madness, rising from his bed, dressing himself in stage costume to act snatches of the parts, and requiring to be held down to die by strong manual force." This dreadful scene took place at a public house in Pitt Street, out of Tottenham Court Road.

"The man I speak of," says Boz in the story, "was a low, pantomime actor and an habitual drunkard. In his better days he had been in the receipt of a good salary. His besetting sin gained so fast on him that it was found impossible to employ him in the situations in which he really was useful." In the "memoirs" this is more than supported: "The man who might have earned with ease and comfort from six to seven hundred a year, was reduced to such a dreadful state of destitution and filth . . . In fact, at one time, it was thought he might have succeeded his father."

It is quite plain, therefore, that Boz was recalling this tragic episode. Boz remarks that pantomime actors — clowns and others "either die early or, by unnaturally taxing their bodily energies, lose prematurely their physical powers." This was what occurred to Grimaldi, the father, whose curious decay he was to describe later in the memoirs. It may be added that there is an Alderman Harmer, Hatton Garden, mentioned in the memoirs, with

whom Grimaldi *père* had some dealings; and, long after, this name was introduced by Boz into “Our Mutual Friend.”

CHAPTER XI. MR. PICKWICK'S PROTOTYPE

We had a narrow escape of losing our Pickwick and his familiar type. The original notion was to have "a tall, long, thin man," and only for the late Edward Chapman, who providentially thought of the Richmond gentleman, Foster, we should have lost for ever the short, rotund Pickwick that we so love and cherish. A long, thin Pickwick! He could not be amiable, or benevolent, or mild, or genial. But what *could* such a selection mean? Why, that Boz saw an opening for humorous treatment in introducing a purblind, foolish Professor, or scientist — one with spectacles — prying into this and that, taking notes &c. As Winkle was the sportsman, Tupman, the lover, Snodgrass, the poet, so Mr. Pickwick was to be a sort of Pangloss or Dominie Sampson. His curiosity and love of enquiry were to get him into scrapes, just as Mr. Winkle's sham sportsmanship was to get him into embarrassments. In fact, the first appearance in Seymour's plate — the scene with the cabman — shows him as quite a different Pickwick; with a sour, cantankerous face; not in "tights," but in a great coat; he is scarcely recognisable. Seymour was then determined to show him after his own ideal. But when the poor artist destroyed himself the great man was brought up to the fitting type. So undecided were the parties about that type that the author had to leave it altogether an open question — a *tabula rasa* — not announcing that his hero was either tall or short, fat or lean, pale or rosy; all he commits himself to in his opening chapter is that he was bald, that he wore tights and gaiters, and, what is rather singular, *circular spectacles*. I suppose, in contrast to the more elongated glasses.

It might be an interesting question for the "paper of questions," "Why did Mr. Pickwick wear circular spectacles?" Was there any local weakness? The artist never forgot this direction. In the author of the Tittlebatian system, &c., the "circular spectacles" would impart a sort of wise and owl-like stare. It was, of course, due to Chapman, the publisher, and was another of his "happy suggestions."

This Mr. Foster, of Richmond — fortunately for himself — was not known to be the original of "Pickwick," though many must have been struck by the likeness, both in physique and costume, to the picture. It is not stated that the features were copied, though, no doubt, Chapman would

have vividly described them also; and Seymour was so ready and deft with his pencil that he must have certainly caught the likeness even from the description. We could fancy him rapidly making trial sketches, "Is that near it?" "No, fatter in the cheeks." "Is *that*?" "No, forehead a little higher, more bald," and so on. I myself was at Richmond, having just come from school, about ten years after the appearance of Pickwick — and for aught I know may have seen this Foster promenading it on the Hill. There was no particular interest then in Pickwick — which was somewhat forgotten, the interest being absorbed in the newer and brilliant works which Boz was bringing out. The society there was thoroughly Pickwickian; there were many old-fashioned figures, including the Mr. Jesse at whom the "Ponto" story was directed. We were gay enough. The old Star and Garter was flourishing. There were the Assembly Rooms at the Castle Inn, with "Almack's Balls"; barges coming down on Regatta days, when people danced on the deck and feasted in the cabin. There were private parties and dinners, and the old Theatre — Kean's, with the manager's house adjoining — was still standing on the Green, opening fitfully enough for a few nights, and then closing as fitfully. There I saw "The Green Bushes." Such a little Bandbox as it was! There were the two wooden staircases *outside*, of quaint appearance. Mr. Tupman may have been then alive and walking on the Terrace. He had retired there just twenty years before. He had probably rooms on the Green, near Maid of Honour Row. This little sketch shows clearly that Richmond is very nearly associated with Pickwick. But here comes in another reminiscence of Richmond, for there rises before me, about a dozen years after the appearance of the book, the image of a very Pickwickian figure — bald and "circular," cozy, wearing a white tie and glasses — a favourite gossip with all the ladies — no other indeed than Maria Edgeworth's brother. He was a florid, good-humoured personage, a great talker, knew everybody in the place, and, like Mr. Pickwick, was an old bachelor, and kept an important housekeeper. He was genial and hospitable, would give parties, dinners, and dances. But the likeness in physique was the oddest part.

As the outside of Foster, of Richmond, supplied Mr. Pickwick's outside and habit as he lived, so his "in'ards," or character, was also turned to profit and not wasted. And here suggests itself a very likely speculation. This image of the Richmond Foster was before him; through the book he thought of the old Beau and the ladies' protests. The amorous element would not do

for his hero, for whom he had other work; but while he left the physique to Pickwick he certainly transferred the *character* to one of his leading figures. That this is not fanciful will be seen. Mr. Chapman described Foster as “a fat old Beau”: he was very popular, or, it may be, exceedingly well off. And at a place like Richmond he would be very *recherché*. But is it not exactly suggestive of Tupman — this “fat old Beau” devoted to the ladies? (“Because you are too old, sir; and too fat, sir,” said his chief.) And on the first opportunity he *did* get into tights, viz., as the brigand. What is more convincing is that at the close Boz sent Tupman back to Richmond whence he came, and where we are carefully assured “he walks constantly on the Terrace during the summer months with a youthful and jaunty air which has rendered him the admiration of the numerous elderly dames of single condition who reside in the vicinity.” Seeing Mr. Foster’s occupation, I really think that this accounts for the novelist’s selection of Richmond.

Mr. Chapman recalled that not even the persuasion of the Richmond ladies could induce Mr. Foster, of Richmond, to forego his “tights” and gaiters — and much amusement was caused by the idiosyncrasy. This persistence, it is clear, was before Boz, who makes Mr. Pickwick abandon his gaiters only at the Ball at Manor Farm, but we are distinctly told “that it was the first time” he did so “within the memory of his oldest friends.” Thus we have Foster, of Richmond, brought into actual touch with his double. Thus much for his physique, which, it is admitted, was all that was drawn from Foster. But that friendly manner; that genial, amiable nature which made him think “the whole world akin;” whence did Boz import all that? I believe he found this genial, friendly type in the very man who had suggested Foster, of Richmond, to him. That this is not purely fanciful will be seen from an account of Edward Chapman kindly supplied to me by one of his family.

“He was a short, stoutish person, very good-humoured, an affectionate family man, unaffected, and fond of the country. But touching his character; the first feature that came into my mind was his extreme justice; in my very earliest years I remember being impressed by it — one *felt* it: all actions and motives were judged with a catholicity and charity that made us trust him implicitly, and I see my sister has the same remembrance. He was naturally of a quiet, easy disposition; not much of a talker, but when he spoke he was always worth listening to. I see also she mentions his sense

of humour, when his eyes would light up with a merry twinkle. I never remember hearing him say an unkind word to anyone. It is very pleasant to hear that papa is to be mentioned in connection with Pickwick, and I will gladly tell you all I can regarding my impressions of his character and tastes, &c. We only saw him for a short hour in the evening when he was tired after his day's work and little inclined to talk, but we always had a child-like instinct of his great justice and impartiality — an impression that I retained all through his life.

“Later on, at Tunbridge Wells, where we saw more of him, I learned to admire his vast store of knowledge, as there was hardly a subject that I asked for information on that he did not know a great deal about. Also he had a great love of beauty in nature, and was never so happy as when he had his favourite, shabby old hat on and a long stick, which he had cut himself, in his hand, and poked about the grounds which surrounded our house, inspecting the holly hedge and shrubs he had planted — in fact it used to be a standing joke that he used to measure his holly bushes every day to see how much they had grown in the night. He was perfectly happy in such a life, as it suited his peaceful contented nature.

“He was a man who never used a rough word to anyone, but his remarks, if he were angry, could sting sharply. He had a fund of quiet humour, like a Scotchman, and his sallies told all the more, as they generally came when least expected and without an effort. Later on, I travelled with my mother and him for several years and benefited greatly through his knowledge and love of art, and his recognition and appreciation of all that was good and worthy of admiration in foreign lands and peoples. He had a soft heart, too, and was always ready to help those who asked for aid.”

Next is introduced the prototype of Mr. Pickwick in a few touches: —

“There was an old family friend living at Richmond, named John Foster, *not Forster*, who was quite a character, especially in his personal appearance; it occurred to my father to introduce him to Dickens who had just commenced the Pickwick Papers. Accordingly, they were invited to meet one another at dinner, and, from this copy, Dickens turned out Pickwick.

“The trial in Pickwick was not originally written as it is given to the public. The number was just coming out and in the hands of “the reader” (I believe John Forster was my father's reader at that time, and had been educated for the Bar), when the following occurred: Dickens was going to

dine that evening at my father's house; they were waiting for dinner to be announced, when a messenger came in a great hurry (I think it must have been from the reader) to say that Dickens was wrong on a point of law, and that something must be done at once as the number was on the eve of publication, and the printers were waiting. They rang the bell, ordered dinner to be put back, and placed pen and paper before Dickens who set to work at once and re-wrote part of the trial, there and then; it was given to the messenger waiting in the hall, and Dickens sat down to dinner with a comfortable feeling that the publication had been saved in time.

"I have given these anecdotes as we remember hearing them spoken about in our home. I can picture the last one so well, the rapidity with which it was done, the young author, my parents, and the pretty home in which it took place.

"My father's marriage was a romantic one. Visiting at Hitchin, he fell in love with his next door neighbour, a very pretty little Quakeress, dressed in the Quaker fashion of those days; her father was a very strict Friend, and was made very uneasy at the attentions of this London lover; but Mary was bright and vivacious, and encouraged him, and many were the interviews contrived by the young couple. Their rooms were on the same floor, though in different houses; my father, behind a piece of furniture, bored a hole through the dividing wall, and the lovers slipped notes backwards and forwards by this means. I am not aware that the simple-hearted parents ever found it out.

"But, at last, Mary was persuaded to leave her sheltered home and launch out into the world by his side. They were married in the north of England, from her brother's house; the bridegroom sending from London, the day before the marriage, the dresses the little Quakeress was to robe herself in when she slipped out of her garb. The fit must have been greatly left to chance!

"Being full of tact and of engaging manners, she proved an excellent hostess, and well fitted for the position she held.

"My father died 20th February, 1880, aged 76, and was buried at Hitchin, beside my mother. He had long retired from business, and spent many years abroad on account of my mother's health."

This pleasing sketch quite suggests the account given by Sterne of his father. There is a quaint, old-world air about it — and the traits are really those of Mr. Pickwick in his later development. We could imagine the latter

at Dulwich examining and measuring his holly bushes. It would not be too fanciful to suppose that Boz — constantly with him, dining with him, and consulting him on every point — must have been impressed, and influenced too, by those amiable qualities, particularly by that unaffected simplicity and good-will which is also so notable in his hero. So the figure stands thus — first, the long, thin man with Dry-as-dust tastes: then the short, round philanthropist, whose externals were suggested by the Foster, of Richmond, the latter's "internals" being transferred to Tupman. Not only do "Vith and Visdom" go together, but also "Vith" and good humour and benevolence, which Boz felt were necessary adjuncts to such a physique. Where was he to find these? Now, we know how much Boz was inclined to draw from what was before his eyes. It saved him trouble and also set his imagination at work. The Cheeryble Brothers, each a *Pickwick redivivus*, were taken from the Grant Brothers, merchants, at Manchester. And here he had this very exceptional character daily before him, in the person of Edward Chapman.

CHAPTER XII. THE CALVERLEY EXAMINATION PAPER

Few things have been more interesting to the Pickwickian, or have done more to elevate Pickwickian study, than this celebrated *jeu d'esprit*. Calverley, or Blayds — his original name — was a brilliant creature, well known for his scholarship, verses, and sayings. He early obtained a fellowship at Cambridge, and was one of the youngest “Dons.” Like Dr. Thomson, the celebrated Master, he is felt to be a characteristic and a real personage, even by those little familiar with his work or writings. He was, moreover, an ardent Pickwickian and thoroughly saturated with the spirit of the immortal book, to appreciate which a first-rate memory, which he possessed, is essential; for the details, allusions, names, suggestions, are so immense that they require to be present together in the mind, and jostle each other out of recollection. In the ‘fifties, there were at Cambridge a number of persons interested in the Book, who were fond of quoting it and detecting oddities. It was in the year 1858 or 1859 — for, curious to say, the year cannot be fixed — that Calverley conceived the *bizarre* idea of offering a premium for the best answers to a series of searching examination questions, drawn from this classic. It was held at his own rooms at 7 o’clock in the evening, as Sir Walter Besant, one of the candidates, recalls it. There were about a dozen entered, the most formidable of whom were Skeat, the present professor of Anglo-Saxon, a well-known Chaucerian scholar, and Sir Walter Besant aforesaid. The latter describes the scene in very dramatic fashion — the Examiner, in his gown, cap, and hood, gravely walking up and down during the two hours the examination lasted, going through the ceremonial with all the regular solemnity of the Senate House. The candidates, we are told, expected a sort of jocose business, and were little prepared for the “stiffness” of the questions which were of the deep and searching kind they were accustomed to in the case of a Greek Play or a Latin Epic. Almost at once, three-fourths showed by their helpless bewilderment that the thing was beyond them; and the struggle lay between the two well-versed Pickwickians — Besant and Skeat. The latter was known to have his “Pickwick” at his fingers’ ends, and Besant confessed that he had but small hopes of success. Both plodded

steadily through the long list of questions. It should be said that the competition was open only to members of Christ Church College, which thus excluded the greatest reputed Pickwickian of them all, John Lemprière Hammond — the name, by the way, of the “creator” of Sam Weller on the stage. Besant went steadily through his list of questions to the end, revised his answers, and got his paper ready for delivery, but Skeat worked on to the very last moment. An evening or two later, as they were going into Hall, Calverley pinned up his report on the board at the door just like one of the usual University reports, and there was read the result: —

Besant . . . 1st Prize

Skeat . . . 2nd Prize

The authorities were not a little shocked at a liberty which assumed the aspect of a burlesque of their own proceedings, and Calverley was spoken to gently by a Don of the older school. The paper of questions certainly shows what ability may be brought to bear on so trifling a matter; for there is really a power of analysis and a grasp of “inner meaning” that is most remarkable. Sir Walter has very acutely commented on this little “exercise,” and has shown that it reached much higher than a mere jest. It brought out the extraordinary capacities of the book which have exercised so many minds. For “The Pickwick Examination,” he says, “was not altogether a burlesque of a college examination; it was a very real and searching examination in a book which, brimful as it is of merriment, mirth, and wit, is just as intensely human as a book can be. The characters are not puppets in a farce, stuck up only to be knocked down: they are men and women. Page after page, they show their true characters and reveal themselves; they are consistent; even when they are most absurd they are most real; we learn to love them. It is a really serious test paper; no one could answer any of it who had not read and re-read the Pickwick Papers, and acquired, so to speak, a mastery of the subject. No one could do well in the examination who had not gone much further than this and got to know the book almost by heart. It was a most wonderful burlesque of the ordinary College and Senate House examination, considering the subject from every possible point of view. Especially is it rich in the department then dear to Cambridge: the explanation of words, phrases, and idioms.”

Some of these cruxes, Sir Walter tells us, could not be solved by the examiner, and were laid before Boz himself, with a copy of the questions. Needless to say, Boz was infinitely amused, but, to the general

disappointment, could or would give no information. The answer of Browning on a similar appeal is well known — he referred his questioners to the Browning Society, as knowing as much as he did on the point. There is no doubt that this is the true philosophy of the thing: that, once his ideas are in print, the author has no more to do with them or their meaning than anyone else has. The passages must speak for themselves; they are children sent into the world — helpless infants like those Pickwickian “expletives, let loose upon society.” Among these unexplained things were “my Prooshan Blue” and “Old Nobs.” Sir Walter, with real Pickwickian sagacity, points to a true explanation which may be applied in other cases. “Probably it was a phrase *which he had heard in a crowd*, and had never asked himself what it meant,” *i.e.*, it seemed appropriate, and what a person in such a case would use. This is in fact part of that “hallucination” of which G. H. Lewes spoke; the scene came so completely before Boz that the words and phrases suggested themselves to him and could not be denied, and he did not ask them to give any account. This principle, however, does not hinder an amusing display of speculation. Mr. Andrew Lang’s explanation of “My Prooshan Blue” is certainly far fetched. He thinks it refers to a dreamy notion of George IV., who, at one moment, thought of changing the British uniform to the Prussian Blue. Now, this was not known at the time, and came out years later. It had certainly not reached persons of the Weller class. The truth is that most of Sam’s grotesque epithets, *e.g.*, “young Brokiley sprout,” were the arbitrary coinage of a fantastic mind. This, too, as Sir Walter said, “he may have heard in a crowd,” or in the mazes of his own brain. “Old Nobs” is just as reasonable as Hamlet’s “Old Truepenny.” “Are you there, Old Truepenny,” might have been said by Sam to his father, as Hamlet addressed it to *his*.

CHAPTER XIII. PICKWICK IN REAL LIFE

I. — Dowler and John Forster

The truculent Dowler figured before in “The Tuggs at Ramsgate” — a very amusing and Pickwickian tale — under the title of Capt. Waters, who exhibits the same simulated ferocity and jealousy of his spouse. Cruickshank’s sketch, too, of the Captain is like that of Dowler when throwing up the window in the Crescent. Mrs. Waters is made as attractive as Mrs. Dowler, and Cymon Tuggs, like Winkle, excites the jealousy of the husband.

“Stop him,” roared Dowler, “hold him — keep him tight — shut him in till I come down — I’ll cut his throat — give me a knife — from ear to ear, Mrs. Craddock, I will.” And Captain Waters: “Ah! what do I see? Slaughter, your sabre — unhand me — the villain’s life!”

In the same story we have an anticipation of another incident: the shutting up and detection of Pipkin in the cupboard, who is discovered by a pipe being required, just as young Tuggs was by his coughing from the tobacco smoke. Boz was partial to this method of discovery, for, at the close, Snodgrass was thus concealed and shut up at Osborne’s Hotel. His detection, through the stupidity of the Fat Boy, is singularly natural and original.

Some of Dowler’s dictatorial ways may have been suggested by Boz’s friend, the redoubtable John Forster. There is one passage in the Bath chapters where we almost seem to hear our old friend speaking, when he took command of his friends and introduced them, “My friend, Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, know each other.” “Bantam; Mr. Pickwick and his friends are strangers. *They must put their names down. Where’s the book?*” Then adds: “This is a long call. It’s time to go; I shall be here again in an hour. *Come.*” And at the assembly he still continued his patronage and direction of everybody. “Step in the tea-room — take your sixpenn’orth. They lay on hot water and call it tea. Drink it,” said Mr. Dowler, *in a loud voice, directing Mr. Pickwick.*” Forster “all over.” We have heard him “direct” on many an occasion. When starting from the White Horse Cellars, Dowler, fancying that more passengers were to be

squeezed into the coach, said he would be d — -d if there were; he'd bring an action against the company, and take a post chaise.

II. — Thackeray

In Thackeray's "Newcomes," the writer had some reminiscences of a place like Eatanswill, for we are told of the rival newspapers, "The Newcome Independent" and "The Newcome Sentinel," the former being edited by one Potts. These journals assailed each other like their brethren in "Pickwick." "Is there any man in Newcome except, perhaps, our *twaddling old contemporary, the Sentinel*," &c. Doyle's picture of the election is surely a reminiscence of Phiz's. There is the same fight between the bandsmen — the drum which someone is kicking a hole in, the brass instrument used, placards, flags, and general *mêlée*.

Doyle could sketch Forster admirably. Witness the drawing of the travelling party in a carriage, given by Mr. Kitton in his wonderful collection, "Dickens, by pen and pencil," where he has caught Forster's "magisterial" air to the life. The picture, "F. B.," Fred Bayham in the story, is certainly the figure of Forster (vol. ii., pp. 55 and 116.) F. B. is shown both as a critic and pressman, though he has nothing of J. F.'s domineering ways. Again, the waiter, speaking of Lord Highgate, said he was a *most harbitrary gent*. This refers to the memorable story of Forster being summoned by the cabman who said he did so because "he were such a harbitrary cove." The truth was, Forster knew the distance to a yard, and would tender the cabman his exact fare and no more. Once, dining with Forster at a hotel in the country where he had rooms, we lit our cigars after dinner, on which the waiter remonstrated, saying it was not allowed. Then I knew the meaning of a "Harbitrary Cove." How the irate Forster blew him up, roared at him, and drove him out, terrified! It was, indeed, Dowler threatening the coach proprietor.

Thackeray would of course have known the story; he meant a sort of veiled allusion which had or had not a reference. We have the key to this sort of thing in the strange, uncomplimentary reference to Catherine Hayes, the murderess, but which was at once applied to an interesting and celebrated Irish singer of the same name. The author must have anticipated this, and, perhaps, chuckled over the public ignorance, but the allusion was far-fetched. In the same fashion a dramatist once chose to dub one of his characters by my own rather unusual name, on which he protested that he

never dreamt of it, that others bore it; still he, however, was obliged to remove it.

Again, on p. 55 we have this passage: "I was thirsty, having walked from "Jack Straw's Castle," at Hampstead, where poor Kiteley and I had been taking a chop." This was written in 1855, only a few years after Forster's admirable performance of Kiteley with the other amateurs in "Every man in his humour." "Jack Straw's Castle," too, was a regular haunt of Forster and Dickens. It is as certain as anything can be that this allusion was not an accidental one.

III. — Tupman

Tupman's relations to Mr. Pickwick were somewhat peculiar; he was elderly — about Mr. Pickwick's age — whereas Winkle and Snodgrass were young fellows under Mr. Pickwick's guardianship. Over them he could exercise despotic authority; which he did, and secured obedience. It was difficult to do this in the case of his contemporary, Tupman, who naturally resented being "sat upon." In the incident of the *Fête* at Mrs. Leo Hunter's, and the Brigand's dress — "the two-inch tail," Mr. Pickwick was rather insulting and injudicious, gibing at and ridiculing his friend on the exhibition of his corpulence, so that Tupman, stung to fury, was about to assault him. Mr. Pickwick had to apologise, but it is clear the insult rankled; and it would appear that Tupman was never afterwards much in the confidence of his leader, and, for that matter, in the confidence of his author. Boz, either consciously or unconsciously, felt this. Tupman, too, never seems to have got over the figure he "cut" in the spinster aunt business, and the loss of general respect.

Still he submitted to be taken about under Mr. Pickwick's patronage, but soon the mutual irritation broke out. The occasion was the latter's putting on speckled stockings for the dance at Manor Farm. "*You* in silk stockings," exclaimed Tupman, jocosely; a most natural, harmless remark, considering that Mr. Pickwick invariably wore his gaiters at evening parties. But the remark was hotly resented, and challenged. "You see nothing extraordinary in the stockings *as* stockings, I trust, sir?" Of course his friend said "No, certainly not," which was the truth, but Mr. Pickwick put aside the obvious meaning. Mr. Tupman "walked away," wishing to avoid another altercation, afraid to trust himself; and Mr. Pickwick, proud of having once more "put him down," assumed his "customary benign expression." This did not promise well.

In all the Manor Farm jollity, we hear little or nothing of Tupman, who seems to have been thought a cypher. No doubt he felt that the girls could never look at him without a smile — thinking of the spinster aunt. In the picture of the scene, we find this “old Buck” in the foreground, on one knee, trying to pick up a pocket handkerchief and holding a young lady by the hand. Snodgrass and his lady are behind; Winkle and his Arabella on the other side; Trundle and his lady at the fire. Then who was Tupman’s young woman? She is not mentioned in the text, yet is evidently a prominent personage — one of the family. At Ipswich, he was crammed into the sedan chair with his leader — two very stout gentlemen — which could not have increased their good humour, though Tupman assisted him from within to stand up and address the mob. We are told that “all Mr. Tupman’s entreaties to have the lid of the vehicle closed” were unattended to. He felt the ridicule of his position — a sedan chair carried along, and a stout man speaking. This must have produced friction. Then there was the sense of injustice in being charged with aiding and abetting his leader, which Mr. Pickwick did not attempt to clear him from. When Mr. Pickwick fell through the ice, Tupman, instead of rendering help, ran off to Manor Farm with the news of the accident.

Then the whole party went down to Bath and, during their stay there, we have not a word of Tupman. He came to see his friend in the Fleet — with the others of course. But now for the remarkable thing. On Mr. Pickwick’s happy release and when every one was rejoining, Wardle invited the whole party to a family dinner at the Osborne. There were Snodgrass, Winkle, Perker even, but no Tupman! Winkle and his wife were at the “George and Vulture.” Why not send to Tupman as well. No one perhaps thought of him — he had taken no interest in the late exciting adventures, had not been of the least help to anybody — a selfish old bachelor. When Mr. Pickwick had absented himself looking for his Dulwich house, it is pointed out with marked emphasis that certain folk — “among whom was Mr. Tupman” — maliciously suggested that he was busy looking for a wife! Neither Winkle nor Snodgrass started this hypothesis, but Tupman. He, however, was at Dulwich for Winkle’s marriage, and had a seat on the Pickwick coach. In later days, we learn that the Snodgrasses settled themselves at Dingley Dell so as to be near the family — the Winkles, at Dulwich, to be near Mr. Pickwick, both showing natural affection. The selfish Tupman, thinking of nobody but himself, settled at Richmond where he showed himself on the

Terrace with a youthful and jaunty air, “trying to attract the elderly single ladies of condition.” All the others kept in contact with their chief, asking him to be godfather, &c. But we have not a word of Tupman. It is likely, with natures such as his, that he never forgot the insulting remark about his corpulence. That is the way with such vain creatures.

Boz, I believe, had none of these speculations positively before him, but he was led by the logic of his story. He had to follow his characters and their development; they did not follow him.

IV. — Grummer

This well drawn sketch of an ignorant, self-sufficient constable is admirable. I have little doubt that one of the incidents in which he figures was suggested to *Boz* by a little adventure of Grimaldi’s which he found in the mass of papers submitted to him, and which he worked up effectively. A stupid and malicious old constable, known as “Old Lucas,” went to arrest the clown on an imaginary charge, as he was among his friends at the theatre. As in the case of Grummer, the friends, like Winkle and Snodgrass, threatened the constable. The magistrate heard the case, sentenced Grimaldi to pay 5s. fine. Old Lucas, in his disappointment, arrested him again. Being attacked by Grimaldi, as Grummer was by Sam, he drew his staff and behaved outrageously. The magistrate then, like Nupkins, had him placed in the dock, and sentenced.

It has also been stated that Grummer was drawn from Towshend — the celebrated Bow Street Runner again introduced in “*Oliver Twist*.” Towshend was a privileged person, like Grummer, and gave his advice familiarly to the magistrates.

CHAPTER XIV. CHARACTERISTICS

I. — The Wardle Family

Here is a very pleasing and natural group of persons, in whom it is impossible not to take a deep interest. They are like some amiable family that we have known. Old Wardle, as he is called, though he was under fifty, was a widower, and had remained so, quite content with his daughters' attachment. He had his worthy old mother to live with him, to whom he was most dutiful, tolerant, and affectionate. These two points recommend him. There was no better son than Boz himself, so he could appreciate these things. The sketch is interesting as a picture of the patriarchal system that obtained in the country districts, all the family forming one household, as in France. For here we have Wardle, his mother, and his sister, together with his two pleasing daughters, while, later on, his sons-in-law established themselves close by. The "poor relations" seem to have been always there. It is astonishing how Boz, in his short career, could have observed and noticed these things. Wardle's fondness for his daughters is really charming, and displayed without affectation. He connected them with the image of his lost wife. There is no more natural, truly affecting passage than his display of fretfulness when he got some inkling that his second daughter was about to make a rather improvident marriage with young Snodgrass. The first had followed her inclinations in wedding Trundle — a not very good match — but he did not lose her as the pair lived beside him. He thought Emily, however, a pretty girl who ought to do better, and he had his eye on "a young gentleman in the neighbourhood" — and for some four or five months past he had been pressing her to receive his addresses favourably. This was clearly a good match. Not that he would unduly press her, but "if she *could*, for I would never force a young girl's inclinations." He never thought, he says, that the Snodgrass business was serious. But, how natural that, when Arabella, their friend, had become a regular heroine and had gone off with her Winkle, that this should fill Emily's head with similar thoughts, and set the pair on thinking that they were persecuted, &c. What a natural scene is this between father and daughter.

"My daughter Bella, Emily having gone to bed with a headache after she had read Arabella's letter to me, sat herself down by my side the other

evening, and began to talk over this marriage affair. "Well, pa," she says; "what do you think of it?" "Why, my dear," I said; "I suppose it's all very well; I hope it's for the best." I answered in this way because I was sitting before the fire at the time, drinking my grog rather thoughtfully, and I knew my throwing in an undecided word now and then would induce her to continue talking. Both my girls are pictures of their dear mother, and as I grow old I like to sit with only them by me; for their voices and looks carry me back to the happiest period of my life, and make me, for the moment, as young as I used to be then, though not quite so light-hearted. "It's quite a marriage of affection, pa," said Bella, after a short silence. "Yes, my dear," said I; "but such marriages do not always turn out the happiest." "I am sorry to hear you express your opinion against marriages of affection, pa," said Bella, colouring a little. "I was wrong; I ought not to have said so, my dear, either," said I patting her cheek as kindly as a rough old fellow like me could do it, "for your mother's was one and so was yours." "It's not that, I meant, pa," said Bella. "The fact is, pa, I wanted to speak to you about Emily." The long and the short of it is, then, that Bella at last mustered up courage to tell me that Emily was unhappy; that she and your young friend Snodgrass had been in constant correspondence and communication ever since last Christmas; that she had very dutifully made up her mind to run away with him, in laudable imitation of her old friend and schoolfellow.

Another member of this pleasant household was "The Fat Boy." There is nothing humorous or farcical in the mere physical exhibition of a fat person, *quâ* his fat. It was, indeed, the fashion of the day — and on the stage particularly — to assume that fatness was associated with something comic. There are a number of stout persons in *Pickwick* — the hero himself, Tupman, old Weller, and all the coachmen, the turnkeys, Slammer, Wardle, Fat Boy, Nupkin's cook, Grummer, Buzfuz, Mrs. Weller, Mr. Bagman's uncle, and others. Thackeray attempted to work with this element in the case of Jos Sedley, and his fatness had a very close connection with his character. But, in the case of Boz, his aim was much more intellectual and, as it were, refined. For his object was to show what was a fat person's view of this world, as seen through the medium of Fat. The Fat Boy is not a selfish, sensual being by nature — he is really helpless, and the creature of necessity who is forced by his bulk to take a certain *fat* view of everything round him." If we reflect on it we shall see how clearly this is carried out. It is curious that, in the instance of the Fat Boy, Boz

should have repeated or duplicated a situation, and yet contrived to impart such varied treatment, but I suspect no one has ever noticed the point. Joe, it will be remembered, witnessed the proceedings in the arbour, when Mr. Tupman declared his passion for the spinster aunt, and the subsequent embracing — to the great embarrassment of the pair. At the close of the story he also intruded on another happy pair — Mr. Snodgrass and his *inamorata* — at a similar delicate moment. Yet in the treatment, how different — "*I wants to make yer flesh creep!*" — his taking the old lady into confidence; and then he was pronounced by his master, Wardle, to be under some delusion — "let me at him" — &c., so his story and report led him into a scrape. When he intruded on the pair at Osborne's Hotel, and Snodgrass was, later, shut up there, again he was made the scapegoat, and Wardle insisted that he was drunk, &c. So here were the incidents repeating themselves.

II. — Shooting, Riding, Driving, etc.

Boz declared in one of his Prefaces that he was so ignorant of country sports, that he could not attempt to deal with them in a story. Notwithstanding this protest, he has given us a couple of shooting scenes which show much experience of that form of field sports. There is a tone of sympathy and freshness, a keen enjoyment of going forth in the morning, which proves that he himself had taken part in such things. Rook-shooting was then an enjoyable sport, and Boz was probably thinking of the rooks at Cobham, where he had no doubt hovered round the party when a lad. As we know, Mr. Tupman, who was a mere looker-on, was "peppered" by his friend Winkle, a difficult thing to understand, as Winkle must have been firing high into the trees, and if he hit his friend at all, would have done so with much more severity. The persons who were in serious danger from Mr. Winkle's gun were the boys in the trees, and we may wonder that one, at least, was not shot dead. But the whole is so pleasantly described as to give one a perfect *envie* to go out and shoot rooks. There are some delightful touches, such as Mr. Pickwick's alarm about the climbing boys, "for he was not quite certain that the distress in the agricultural interest, might not have compelled the small boys attached to the soil to earn a precarious and hazardous existence by making marks of themselves for inexperienced sportsmen." And again, "the boy shouted and shook a branch with a nest on it. *Half-a-dozen young rooks in violent conversation*

flew out to ask what the matter was.” Does not this bring the whole scene before us.

The other shooting scene is near Bury St. Edmunds — on Sir Geoffrey Manning’s grounds — on September 1st, 1830, or 1827, whichever Boz pleases, when “many a young partridge who strutted complacently among the stubble with all his finical coxcombry of youth, and many an older one who watched his levity out of his little, round eye with the contemptuous air of a bird of wisdom and experience, alike unconscious of their approaching doom, basked in the fresh morning air with lively and blithesome feelings, and, a few hours later, were laid low upon the earth.” Here we have the beginning of that delightful fashion of Dickens’s, which he later carried to such perfection, of associating human feelings and associations with the animal creation, and also inanimate objects.

Everything connected with “the shooting” is admirably touched: The old, experienced “shot,” Wardle; the keepers and their boys; the dogs; the sham amateurs; the carrying of the guns “reversed arms, like privates at a funeral.” Mr. Winkle “flashed and blazed and smoked away without producing any material results; at one time expending his charge in mid-air, and at others sending it skimming along so near the surface of the ground as to place the lives of the two dogs on a rather uncertain and precarious tenure. ‘What’s the matter with the dogs’ legs? How *queer* they’re standing!’ whispered Mr. Winkle. ‘Hush, can’t you! Don’t you see they are making a point?’ said Wardle. ‘Making a point?’ said Mr. Winkle, glaring about him, as if he expected to discern some particular beauty in the landscape which the sagacious animals were calling special attention to. ‘What are they pointing at?’ ‘Keep your eyes open,’ said Wardle, not heeding the question in the excitement of the moment. ‘Now then.’” How natural and humorous is all this.

This was partridge shooting, “old style” — delightful and inspiring, as all have felt who have shared in it. Now we have “drives” on a vast scale; then you would follow the birds from field to field “marking them down.” I myself with an urchin, a dog, and a single-barrelled old gun have thus followed a few precious birds from field to field all the day and secured them at the last. That was true enjoyment.

III. — Horses and Driving in “Pickwick.”

For one who so modestly disclaimed all knowledge of sporting and country tastes, Boz shows a very familiar acquaintance with horses and

their ways. He has introduced a number of these animals whose points are all distinctly emphasized: a number of persons are shown to be interested in horses, who exhibit their knowledge of and sympathise with the animals, a knowledge and sympathy which is but a reflection of his own. The cunning hand that could so discriminate between shades of humorous characters would not be at a loss to analyse traits of equine nature. There is the cab horse, said to be forty years old and kept in the shafts for two or three weeks at a time, which is depicted in Seymour's plate. How excellently drawn are the two Rochester steeds: one "an immense brown horse, displaying great symmetry of bone," which was to be driven by Mr. Pickwick, and Mr. Winkle's riding animal, another immense horse "apparently a near relative of the animal in the chaise." "He don't shy, does he?" The ostler guaranteed him quiet — "a hinfant in arms might drive him" — "He wouldn't shy if he met a whole waggon-load of monkeys with their tails burnt off." A far more original illustration than anything used by the Wellers, whose special form that was. I pass over the details of the driving and the riding which show a perfect knowledge of animals, such as "the tall quadruped." Nothing is more droll than the description of the loathing with which the party came to regard the animal they were compelled to lead about all day. Then we have the post horses and all connected with them. There is Tom Smart's "vixenish mare," quite an intelligent character in her way. The account of the coach drive down to Muggleton shows admirable observation of the ways of the drivers.

Ben Allen's aunt had her private fly, painted a sad green colour drawn by a "chubby sort of brown horse." I pass over the ghostly mailcoach horses that flew through the night in "The Story of the Bagman's Uncle," flowing-maned, black horses. There are many post horses figuring in Mr. Pickwick's journey from Bristol to Birmingham and thence home; horses in the rain and out of it.

Namby's horse was "a bay, a well-looking animal enough, but with something of a flash and dog-fighting air about him." The horses which took the hackney coach to the Fleet jolted along as hackney coaches usually do. "The horses 'went better,' the driver said, 'when they had anything before them.' They must have gone at a most extraordinary pace when there was nothing." Visiting the Fleet with Mrs. Weller and the deputy Shepherd, Mr. Weller drove up from Dorking with the old piebald in his chaise cart, which, after long delay, was brought out for the return journey.

“If he stands at livery much longer he’ll stand at nothin’ as we go back.” There is a capital scene at the opening of Chapter XLVI., when the “cabriolet” was drawing up at Mrs. Bardell’s, and where so much that is dramatic is “got out” of such a simple incident between the contending directions.

IV. — Mr. Pickwick in Silk Stockings.

How well Boz knew how to touch the chords of human character — a power that certainly needs long experience to work — is shown by the scene at Wardle’s dance, where Mr. Pickwick is nettled by Tupman’s remarking that he was wearing “pumps” for the first time. “*You* in silk stockings,” said that gentleman. Mr. Pickwick had just called attention to the change which he considered a sort of public event to be admired by all. “See this great man condescending to our frivolous tastes,” and his host had noted it in a flattering way. “You mean to dance?” But Tupman did not look at it in this respectful way — he made a joke of it! “*You* in silk stockings.” This was insolent to the grave, great man and philosopher, so he turned sharply on his familiar: “And why not, sir — why not?” This with warmth. The foolish Tupman, still inclined to be jocose, said, “Oh, of course, there is no reason why you shouldn’t wear them” — a most awkward speech — as who should say, “This is a free country — a man can wear a night cap in public if he chooses.” “I imagine not, sir — I imagine not,” said Mr. Pickwick, in a *very peremptory* tone. Mr. Tupman had contemplated a laugh, but he found it was a serious matter, so he looked grave, and said *they were a pretty pattern*. How natural is all this! And still more so his leader’s reply. “I hope they are,” he said, fixing his eyes upon his friend, “You see nothing extraordinary in the stockings, *as* stockings, I trust, sir.” The frightened Tupman said, “Certainly not, Oh, certainly not,” and walked away. Mr. Pickwick’s face resumed its customary benign expression. This little picture of weakness in an eminent man is characteristic. For observe, when Tupman showed the folly of wearing a “two inch tail” to the brigand’s coat, Mr. Pickwick was furious, told him he was too old and too fat; but when someone remarks on *his* silk stockings he gets deeply offended. His vanity is touched, there should have been no remark, or, at least, only of admiration. He was, in fact, one of those flattered and spoiled personages who cannot see any harm in their doing what they reprove in others. Many a really great character is weak in this direction. Observe the disingenuousness of the great man; he knew,

perfectly, that Tupman noticed nothing odd in the stockings, “*as stockings,*” he meant the oddity of his wearing them at all, and he had said so, plainly. But, ignoring this, the great man chose to assume that he was insolently reflecting on their pattern as outlandish. With his despotic pressure, he forced him to say they were of a “pretty pattern,” and thus vindicated his authority.

V. — Violent Assaults, Shooting, &c

Duelling, imprisonment for debt, intoxication, elopements, are, perhaps, the most striking social incidents in “Pickwick” that have disappeared and become all but antiquarian in their character. Yet another, almost as curious, was the ready recourse to physical force or violence — fistic correction as it might be termed. A gentleman of quiet, restrained habit, like Mr. Pickwick, was prepared, in case of call, either to threaten or execute summary chastisement on anyone who offended him. The police or magistrates seemed not to have been thought of, for the victim would not think of appealing to either — all which seems strange to us nowadays. At the Review even, the soldiers coolly overthrew Mr. Pickwick and his friends who had got in their way. Winkle was maltreated so severely that the blood streamed from his nose; this would not now be tolerated. When Jingle affronted the great man by calling his friend “Tuppy,” Mr. Pickwick, we are told, “hurled the inkstand madly forward and followed it up himself.” This hurling of things at offenders was a common incident, particularly in quarrels at table, when the decanter was frequently so used, or a glass of wine thrown in the face. After the adventure at the Boarding School, Mr. Pickwick “indented his pillow with a tremendous blow,” and announced that, if he met Jingle again, he would “inflict personal chastisement on him”; while Sam declared that he would bring “real water” into Job’s eyes. Old Lobbs, in the story, was going to throttle Pipkin. Mrs. Potts insisted that the editor of *The Independent* should be horsewhipped. More extraordinary still, old Weller, at a quiet tea-meeting, assaulted the Shepherd, giving him “two or three for himself, and two or three more to hand over to the man with the red nose.” Everyone set themselves right in this way and, it is clear, knew how to use their “bunch of fives.” Nor were there any summonses or police courts afterwards; the incident was closed. Sam, attempting to rescue his master at Ipswich, knocked down the “specials” right and left, knocking down some for others to lie upon, yet he was only fined two pounds for the first assault and three for the second —

now he would have been sent to jail under a severe sentence. Mrs. Raddle insisted that her husband should get up and knock every one of the guests down stairs, while Jack Hopkins offered to go upstairs and “pitch into the landlord.” At the Brick Lane meeting, Brother Stiggins, intoxicated, knocked Brother Tadger down the stairs, while old Weller violently assaulted Stiggins. At Bath, Dowler hunted Winkle round the Crescent, threatening to cut his throat; and at Bristol, when the terrified Winkle tried to ring the bell, Dowler fancied that he was going to strike him. At Bristol, Ben Allen flourished the poker, threatening his sister’s rival, and when Mr. Pickwick sent Sam to capture Winkle, he instructed him to knock him down even, if he resisted; this direction was given with all seriousness. “If he attempts to run away from you, *knock him down*, or lock him up, you have my full authority, Sam.” The despotism of this amiable man was truly extraordinary, he ruled his “followers” with a rod of iron. That such should be exercised, or accepted even by the reader, is a note of the time. It was, however, only a logical consequence of the other summary methods.

The altercation between Mr. Pickwick and his other “follower,” Tupman, arising out of the “two-inch tail” question, was on the same lines. For the affront of being called fat and old the latter scientifically turned up his cuffs and announced that he would inflict summary chastisement on his leader. Mr. Pickwick met him with a cordial “come on,” throwing himself into a pugilistic attitude, supposed by the two bystanders to have been intended as a posture of defence. This seems to have been accepted as a natural incident, though it was deprecated. In the Fleet Prison, when Mr. Pickwick’s nightcap was snatched off, he retorted with a smart blow, and again invited everyone, “all of you,” to “come on.” When the coachmen attended Sam to the Fleet, walking eight abreast, they had to leave behind one of the party “to fight a ticket porter, it being arranged that his friends should call for him as they came back.” Even in a moment of agitation — as when Ben Allen learned that his sister had “bolted,” his impulse was to rush at Martin the groom and throttle him; the latter, in return, “felling the medical student to the ground.” Then we have the extraordinary and realistic combat between Pott and Slurk in the kitchen of the “Saracen’s Head,” Towcester — the one armed with a shovel, the other with a carpet bag — and old Weller’s chastisement of Stiggins. In short, this system of chastisement on the spot, it is clear, was a necessary equipment, and everybody, high and low, was understood to be ready to secure satisfaction

for himself by the aid of violence. No doubt this was a consequence of the duel which was, of course, to be had recourse to only as the last resort.

When the wretched Jingle, and the still more wretched Job met Mr. Pickwick in the Fleet, and the latter, giving money, had said, "Take that, sir," the author adds, "Take what? . . . As the world runs, it ought to have been a sound, hearty cuff, for Mr. Pickwick had been duped, deceived, &c." Thus, Boz thought, as of course, that this was the suitable method of treatment in such cases. "Must we tell the truth?" he goes on; "it was a piece of money." The unconsciousness of all this is very striking.

VI. — Winkle and Snodgrass

It has always seemed a matter of astonishment to me how such a creature as Winkle should have won the fair Arabella. Every act of this man was a deception — he could not help pretence, or, shall we say it boldly, lying. His duel was a series of tricks — his shooting, skating, etc., all a sham. Even when found out as an impostor before all the keepers and others, we find him impudently saying, "I'll tell you what I shall do *to get up my shooting again.*" The fellow never had any shooting to get up. But the mere habit of untruth was ingrained in the man. His undignified race, in a dressing-gown, round the Crescent was no doubt concealed from Arabella — she would never have got over that! As a display of cowardice it was only matched by his hypocritical assumption of courage before Dowler when he found he could assume it safely. He deceived his father and Mr. Pickwick as to his marriage, and dropped on his knees to the latter to beg pardon. How mean, too, was his behaviour to Mrs. Pott in the difficulty with her husband. But nothing could shake the interest of the fair Arabella in her lover, even his ignominious and public treatment by Mr. Pickwick at the skating exhibition. How *can* we account for it. But Boz knew the female nature well, and here is the explanation: Winkle had been "out" — had figured in a duel with a real officer in the army. There was no mistake about *that* — gone out, too, in what appeared a chivalrous manner to save the honour of the club. At least it had the appearance of all that (though here was another falsehood). This had been told to all — no doubt by Winkle himself — many times over. Nothing could enfeeble that, it seemed heroic, and covered all other *laches*. Neither did it lose in *his* telling of it.

The most ridiculous feature surely in the man was his costume — meant to be of a sporting complexion — which he never abandoned: green

shooting coat, plaid neckchief, and closely fitting drabs. When he returned from his honeymoon, he was still in this uniform.

We may assume, however, that this points to a custom of the time: that the sportsman was *always* a sportsman. Even at the club meeting, at a poorish room in a tavern, he must carry on the fiction that he has just come back from a day's sporting, for there on the floor, conspicuous, are the fowling piece, game bag, fishing rod, &c.

Snodgrass was another incapable and quite uninteresting — a person whom we would not care to know. He posed as a poet and, to this end, wore, even at the club, “a mysterious blue cloak, with a canine skin collar”; imagine this of a warm evening — May 12 — in a stuffy room in Huggin Lane! He must, however, live up to his character, at all hazards.

Snodgrass and his verses, and his perpetual “note book,” must have made him a bore of the first water. How could the charming Emily have selected him. He, too, had some of Winkle's craft. He had been entertained cordially and hospitably by old Wardle, and repaid him by stealing his daughter's affections in a very underhand way, actually plotting to run away with her.

There was something rather ignominious in his detection at Osborne's Hotel. He is a very colourless being. As to his being a Poet, it would seem to be that he merely gave himself out for one and persuaded his friends that he was such. His remarks at the “Peacock” are truly sapient: “Show me the man that says anything against women, as women, and *I boldly declare he is not a man!*” Which is matched by Mr. Winkle's answer to the charge of his being “a serpent”: “Prove it,” said Mr. Winkle, warmly. It is to be suspected that the marriage with the amiable Emily was not a success. The author throws out a hint to that effect: “Mr Snodgrass, being occasionally abstracted and melancholy, is to this day reputed a great poet among his acquaintance, though we do not find he has ever written anything to encourage the belief.” In other words he was carrying on the old Pickwick game of “Humbug.” So great an intellect had quite thrown itself away on poor Emily — even his abstraction and melancholy. How natural too that he should “hang on” to his father-in-law “and establish himself close to Dingly Dell” — to “sponge,” probably — while he made a sham of farming; for are we not told that he purchased and cultivated a small farm — “*more for occupation than profit*” — thus again making believe. Poor Emily!

I lately looked through the swollen pages of the monster London Directory to find how many of the Pickwickian names were in common use. There was not a single Snodgrass, though there was one Winkel, and one “Winkle and Co.” in St. Mary Axe. There was one Tupman, a Court dressmaker — no Nupkins, but some twenty Magnuses, and not a single Pickwick. There were, however, some twenty-four Wellers.

CHAPTER XV. — DULWICH

I. — Mr. Pickwick's Diversions

Mr. Pickwick, as we know, retired to end his days at peaceful Dulwich — placid and tranquil as his own amiable heart. It is as certain as though we had been living there and had seen all that was going on, that he became universally popular, and quite a personage in the place. Everyone was sure to meet him taking his afternoon walk along the rural lanes, or making his way to the Greyhound, where he was often found of an evening — possibly every evening. This Greyhound, an old-fashioned and somewhat antique house, though not mentioned in the story, is linked to it by implication; for to settle at Dulwich and ignore the Greyhound was a thing that could not be. There is a Pickwickian tone — or was, rather, for it is now levelled — about the place, and Boz himself used to frequent it, belonging to a sort of dining club that met down there.

Such a paper as say the *Dulwich Observer* would make much account of a man like Mr. Pickwick; all his movements would be chronicled, and anyone that chooses to bid Sarah or Mary “bring up the file for the year of Mr. Pickwick’s residence,” must find innumerable entries. Let us supply a few of these imaginative extracts:

MR. PICKWICK AT THE OPENING OF THE DULWICH LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION.

A meeting of this admirable and thriving society — which, as our readers know, was founded by Mr. Pickwick — was held on Saturday, at the Greyhound Inn, where this learned and popular gentleman read a special paper on Ralph Alleyne and his celebrated college at Dulwich. There was a large attendance. Mr. Pickwick stated that he had long been making researches into the Alleyne pedigree, and had made an astonishing discovery — Alleyne, he found, was the family of the Allens! A very dear and intimate friend of his own — a high member of the medical profession — with whom he had spent some of the pleasantest hours of his whole life, and who was now following his practice in India, also bore the name of Allen — Benjamin Allen! It will be said that there was not much in this; there were many Allens about, and, in the world generally (loud laughter);

but what will be said when, on carelessly turning over the old rate-books, he came on this startling fact? That at the beginning of the century his old friend's grandfather actually occupied a small house on Tulse Hill, not five minutes' walk from the college (loud applause). He saw, they saw the significance of this. Following up the clue, he next found that this gentleman was a person of literary tastes — and, mark this, often went into town to scientific meetings and to the theatres (loud applause). Further, he had discovered one or two very “oldest inhabitants” (a laugh) who had known this very Benjamin Allen, the grandfather, and who could not recall anything precise about him: but all agreed, and they should further mark this, that he had the air and bearing of a man of theatrical tastes, and that “it was as likely as not” — to use their very words — “that he belonged to the family of Ralph Allen” (applause). The learned gentleman then proceeded to work out his clever theory with much ingenuity, and, at the end, left “not a shadow of a shade of a doubt” in the minds of his hearers in general, and in his own mind in particular, that this Dr. Benjamin Allen — of the East Indies — was the lineal descendant of our own Ralph Allen. We have, however, with regret to add, that this evening did not pass over so harmoniously as it could be desired. As soon as Mr. Pickwick had sat down and discussion was invited — Mr. Pickwick, however, saying that there was really nothing to discuss, as no one knew the facts but himself — a visitor from Town, who had been introduced at his own request by one of the members, stood up, will it be believed, to *attack* Mr. Pickwick and his paper! It transpired that this intruder's name was Blotton, a person in the haberdashery line, and that he came from somewhere in the neighbourhood of Huggin Lane. He said that all they had been listening to was simple moonshine. (*No! No!*) But Yes! Yes! Had they ever heard of a river in Monmouth and another in Macedon? There was an Allen some hundred years ago — and a Ben Allen now alive in India. What rubbish was this? (“*Shame*” cries of “*put him out*”). Where was the connection, he asked. Some old dotard or dodderer, they were told, said so. The doddering in the case was not confined to that individual. Here Mr. Pickwick rose, and, with much heat, told the intruder to sit down. He would not hear him; he ought to be ashamed of himself. “Would you believe it,” went on Mr. Pickwick, “this is a person who was actually *expelled* — yes, expelled — from a club — the well-known Pickwick Club of which I was the founder. Let him deny it if he dare.” Here the individual called out “Bill Stumps! Tell ‘em

about that.” “I will not tell ‘em, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, warmly; “they know it too well. It shall be known as long as my name is known and when this person is consigned to the gutter whence he came.” “It’s all Humbug,” said Mr. Blotton, “humbug you were and humbug you ever will be.” Here Dr. Pettigrew, our excellent local practitioner, interposed, “Gentlemen, gentlemen,” he said; “is this to go on; are we to listen to this low abuse?” A number of persons closing round Blotton succeeded in ejecting him from the room, and this truly painful incident closed.

VISITORS AT THE DELL.

During the past week, Mr. Pickwick has been entertaining a series of visitors — among others, Mr. Wardle, of Manor Farm, Muggleton, Kent, with Miss Wardle, his sister — the heroine of a most romantic story communicated to us by Mr. Weller, though we are not privileged to lift the veil from this interesting episode. But suffice it to say that it comprised an elopement and exciting chase, in which Mr. Pickwick, with his usual gallantry, took part. The estrangement which necessarily followed between brother and sister has long since been happily healed. Mr. Perker, the eminent London solicitor — Mr. Pickwick’s “guide, philosopher and friend” — has also been staying at the Dell.

HUMOROUS ADVENTURE.

Our readers will be entertained by the following droll contretemps which befel our deservedly popular fellow-citizen, as we may call him, Mr. Pickwick. As our readers know, the Annual Charity Dinner took place at the Greyhound, on Tuesday, Mr. Pickwick being in the chair, and making many of his happiest speeches during the course of which he related many curious details about himself and his life. The party did not break up till a late hour — nearly eleven o’clock. A fly — a special one, as usual — had been retained to take Mr. Pickwick home, but as the trusted Hobson, who invariably attends Mr. Pickwick on such occasions, had another engagement, a stranger was procured from Camberwell. Mr. Pickwick was placed in the vehicle not, as he says, without misgivings, and, as he admits, fell fast asleep. He was driven home — as he fancied. On arriving, the coachman had much difficulty in making himself heard. Mr. Pickwick entered the house, still scarcely aroused, and turning into the study, sank into an armchair, and once more fell into a slumber. He was presently aroused, he says, by voices, and found himself surrounded by strange faces

and figures in various states of *déshabillé*. The head of the house, the well-known Mr. Gibson, who had been roused from his slumbers, on the maid, Mary Perkes, giving the alarm that robbers were in the house, had rushed down in his trousers only; the man-servant ditto; the young ladies in anything they could find. Mr. Pickwick describes his alarm as he found these faces round him, and, not unnaturally, conceived the idea that robbers had broken into *his* house, and that his was in their power! A humorous imbroglio followed. He instantly rushed to secure the poker, and, flourishing it round his head, cried out repeatedly, "Keep off! every one of you! or I'll brain the first man that comes near me!" Fortunately, the respected man-servant, who had been many years with Mr. Gibson, and had met Mr. Weller, at once recognized Mr. Weller's master, and said: "Why, its Mr. Pickwick! ain't it? Don't you know *this* ain't your own house, sir." The truth then all flashed upon him. Mr. Pickwick relates that he became so tickled with the odd humour of his situation that he fell into his chair in convulsions of laughter, and laughed long and loudly, for many minutes. The more he laughed, the more Mr. Gibson laughed. At last, all was explained, and the amusing scene ended by a room being hastily got ready for Mr. Pickwick (for the cabman had gone away). No one was more amused, or indeed, more pleased, at these "mistakes of a night" than Mr. Gibson, who always tells the story with infinite drollery. Mr. Pickwick takes all the blame on himself, declaring, as he says his old friend Winkle used to say: "*It wasn't the wine, but the salmon.*"

ATTEMPTED ROBBERY AT MR. PICKWICK'S HOUSE.

Last night, we are sorry to learn, a very daring attempt was made to rob the mansion of our much esteemed resident, Mr. Pickwick. The Dell, as our readers know, is a substantial dwelling-house, standing in its own grounds, and comparatively unprotected. The family, consists of the owner, his housekeeper, Mrs. Purdy, and his faithful servant, Mr. Samuel Weller, whose pleasant humour is well-known, and who is deservedly popular in Dulwich. Nothing was noticed until about two o'clock in the morning, when, as Mr. Weller has informed us, he was awakened by a low, grinding sound, which, in his quaint style, he says reminded him "a fellow in *quad* a-filing his irons." With much promptitude he rose and, loosening the dog, proceeded in the direction of the sounds; the villains, however, became alarmed, and Mr. Weller was just in time to see them, as he says, "a-cuttin'

their lucky” over the garden wall. Much sympathy is expressed for the worthy and deservedly esteemed Mr. Pickwick, and for the outrage done to his feelings.

FETE AT MR. PICKWICK’S.

On Thursday last, this amiable and always benevolent gentleman, who, it is known, takes the deepest interest in the stage, invited all the brethren of the college to a dinner, after which, he threw open his grounds to all his acquaintances, indeed, to all Dulwich. The banquet was of a sumptuous character, and was provided from the Greyhound. After the usual loyal toasts, the warden proposed Mr. Pickwick’s health in appropriate terms, to which that gentleman responded in an admirable speech, in which he reviewed some portions of his life. After stating how dear and near to his affection was the college and all that was concerned with it, he entered into some various details of Ralph Alleyne, who, as we all know, was an actor and connected with actors. “I have already, by means of my researches, shown how strangely related he was to myself, being of the same family with an eminent physician in India, Mr. Benjamin Allen. (Cheers.) I, myself, have known actors — one who was known to his brethren as ‘dismal Jemmy’ — (loud laughter) — from, I suppose, the caste of characters he was always assuming. Dismal Jemmy, however, had to leave the country — (laughter) — I will not say why.” (Roars of laughter.) Another actor whom he had known was one of the most remarkable men he had ever met, for talent and resources — would that he had confined his talent to its legitimate sphere, namely, on the *boards* — but, unfortunately, he had chosen to exert it at his, Mr. Pickwick’s, expense. (Loud laughter.) This performer tried to live by his wits, as it is called, and he, Mr. Pickwick, had encountered him, and his wits, too and nearly always with success. Mr. Pickwick then humorously described some of his adventures with this person, causing roars of laughter by a description of a night in the garden of a Boarding School, into which he had been entrapped on the pretext that the actor was about to run away with one of the young ladies. In the most comic fashion, he related how he had been captured by the whole school, headed by its principal, and locked up in a cupboard, and was only released by his faithful man, Sam, whom, personally, some of them knew — (loud applause.) Well, after frustrating the knavish tricks of this actor, he at last found him in a debtors’ prison in the most abject misery and destitution,

and he was happy to tell them, that the man was completely reformed, and getting an honest livelihood in one of our colonies. Such was his experience of the actors' profession.

MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE AT IPSWICH.

An interesting event, in which our esteemed fellow-citizen, Mr. Pickwick, has taken a deep interest, took place at the historic town of Ipswich, when Mr. Sidney Porckenham, eldest son of — - Porckenham, Esq., led to the altar at St. Clement's Church, Henrietta, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of — - Nupkins, Esq., late Mayor of that city. Among the guests were J. Grigg, Esq., Mrs. and the Misses Grigg, Mr. and Mrs. Slummin Towken and Mr. Slummin Towken, jun, — - Jinks, Esq., and many more. Mr. Pickwick had intended to be present and had already promised to stay with Mr. Nupkins, but was prevented by illness. His present to the bride, a costly one and in exquisite taste, was purchased at Micklethwaite's, High Street, Camberwell, where it was exhibited and excited universal admiration. It consisted of a watch and curb chain of the finest workmanship, for Mr. Pickwick placed no limit on Micklethwaite. We understand that at a recent dinner at Mr. Humberstone, our esteemed rector's, Mr. Pickwick, after alluding to Miss Nupkins and the coming marriage, literally convulsed the party by relating his famous adventure at the Great White Horse, which he tells in the raciest style, and how it led to his being led off prisoner, and brought before his friend, Mr. Nupkins, then Mayor of Ipswich. At the close he became a little pensive. "Ah! poor Peter Magnus! and Miss W — -, sorry! I'm sorry, very." Our Rector has often "chaffed" this worthy gentleman on his midnight adventure, saying, waggishly, "there was more in it than met the eye." We have seen Mr. Pickwick smile, and he would say, "well, sir, she was a fine woman, a very fine woman, and I'm not going to kiss and tell."

MR. PICKWICK AT DULWICH POLICE COURT.

Thomas Bardell, aged 19, was charged before His Worship, with extorting money under false pretences from Mr. Pickwick. It appears from the gentleman's evidence, which he gave with great fulness, that, many years ago, a woman of the name of Bardell, a lodging-house keeper, brought an unfounded action against Mr. Pickwick, and obtained damages which Mr. Pickwick refused to pay, preferring to go to the Fleet Prison. This person had a son, then a mere child, who was the prisoner. A week

ago, Mr. Pickwick received a piteous letter, signed Tommy Bardell, saying that his mother was dying, and in the deepest distress, all their furniture sold, or pawned. After making some inquiries, and finding that there was a woman in distress at the place, Mr. Pickwick sent the prisoner two sovereigns. Within a fortnight he received a second application, saying that the unhappy woman's bed was being taken away, &c.; he sent another sovereign. When he received a third application he thought it high time to put it into the hands of his man, Sam Weller, who made enquiries and found out there was no mother, Mrs. Bardell being long, long since dead. His worship committed him to jail for six months as a vagabond, but, at Mr. Pickwick's request, reduced his sentence to two months.

II. — Mr. Pickwick's Funeral.

The funeral *cortège* left the Dell at ten o'clock, and was one of the most striking displays of public feeling that Dulwich has seen for many years. And not only was Dulwich thus affected, but in Camberwell all the numerous shops were closed, and the inhabitants turned out in crowds. The procession comprised many mourning coaches containing all Mr. Pickwick's oldest friends. He had survived all his relations. Among the mourners were Mr. Wardle, of Dingley Dell, with his son-in-law, — - Trundle, Esq.; Mr. Tupman, who travelled specially from Richmond; Messrs. Winkle and Snodgrass, who had been his inseparable companions in his famous tours; and — - Perker, Esq., who was the deceased's legal adviser and confidential friend. An interesting incident was the appearance among the mourners of an elderly gentleman, Mr. Peter Magnus, between whom and Mr. Pickwick, as we learn from his faithful servant, there had for many years been a cloud or misunderstanding on account of some lady whose marriage with Mr. Magnus Mr. Pickwick had unwittingly frustrated. This injury, if injury there was, Mr. Magnus had buried in the grave, and had rushed to Dulwich to lend his heartfelt sympathy. Such things go far to reconcile one to human nature, if such reconciliation be incumbent. A deputation from the Dulwich Literary and Scientific Association, of which Mr. Pickwick was Perpetual President, walked in the procession. Passing the well-known Greyhound Inn, one of Mr. Pickwick's favourite haunts, it was noticed the blinds were drawn down.

We copy from the *Eatanswill Gazette* the following admirable tribute to Mr. Pickwick's merit, from the vigorous pen, as we understand, of its Editor, Mr. Pott: — "Not only in Dulwich, but in Eatanswill, is there

mourning, to-day. We have lost Pickwick — Pickwick the true and the Blue. For Blue he was, to the very core and marrow of his bones, and it was we ourselves, who first permeated him with real Blue principles. Many a time and oft has he sat at our feet, drinking in with rapture, almost, the stray scraps of immortal doctrine with which we favoured him. Is it not an open secret that, but for Pickwick's exertions — exertions which laid the foundations of the disease which ultimately carried him off — our late admirable member, the Honourable Samuel Slumkey, would not have been returned? The *Gazette*, it is true, first burst open the breach, in which Pickwick threw himself, waving his flag on high, and led us on to victory. Of course, our verminous contemporary, the *Independent*, will scoff, and wipe its shoes on the illustrious dead. Of course, the mangey creature — ceasing the while from its perennial self-scratching — will hoot something derogatory. Let it sneer, yelp aloud in its impotent hog-like manner; let it root with its filthy snout among the heaps of garbage where it loves to make its unclean haunt in unspeakable Buffery. 'Twill not serve — the noisome fumes will stifle it."

We regret to say that these prognostications of Mr. Pott's were but too soon, and too fatally realised, for in almost the next issue of the *Independent*, we find a scandalous and indecent attack on our late beloved Mr. Pickwick. Shocking as it is, we cannot forbear, in duty to the deceased gentleman, presenting it to our readers —

"POTT'S PICKWICK."

"Our emasculated contemporary, not content with debauching Eatanswill politics, must go far afield and drag from his grave an obscure and feeble being whom he claims to make one of his besmirched heroes. But Potts' praise, as we have learned long since, is no more than daubing its object with dirt. Why, this very Pickwick whom he belauds — can it be forgotten how Eatanswill shook its sides with laughter at the figure he made our besotted contemporary cut? Who will forget Mr. W — -le, his creature, whom Pickwick introduced into the Potts' household and the resulting scandal, how Mr. W — -le, aforesaid, fled from the house, leaving the belated Ariadne in tears? Does Pott forget who it was put his finger on this spot and, for the fair fame of Eatanswill, clamoured for its extinction? Who forgets our warnings and their fulfilment? The arrival of the Lieutenant; the menaced proceedings in a certain court; the departure of the fair but frail

culprit. And yet Pott with an ineffable effrontery that would do credit to a fishwife in and from Billingsgate, clamours about this Pickwick and his virtues, and drops his maudlin tears upon his coffin! Why was he not there to give his hand to Mr. Lothario W — -le, who, we understand, was also present? By the way, we have received the following lines from a valued correspondent: —

Your tears you may sprinkle
O W — -le, O W — -le,
With more of this same kind of rot.
The lady so gay
Could not say you nay,
Merely bidding you ‘*Go to Pot.*’

Our hide-bound contemporary, will not, of course, see the point — ”

We are grieved to say, that the indecent Eatanswill controversy over the lamented Mr. Pickwick still goes on. More strictly speaking, however, he has dropped out of sight owing to the inflamed passions which have been roused between the editors. Our sympathies are, we need not say, with Mr. Pott, still we wish he would somewhat temper his language, out of respect for the dead. Here is his crushing retort —

“FILTH ON THE COFFIN.”

“We have seen at some historic funeral, say of some personage obnoxious to the mob, dead dogs, cats, rats, and rotten eggs, hurled from a safe distance at the passing coffin. This is what our fast decomposing and wholly noisome contemporary is now doing. Shall we say it? How beastly, how congenial to the man’s feelings! Paugh! Decency; propriety; sense of restraint; all unknown terms in his Malay tongue — for this Swift’s yahoo. But we know what rankles. Has our contemporary in mind a chastisement that was inflicted on him in the kitchen of a certain inn, and in the presence of Pickwick himself — has he forgotten the fire irons — or, to speak accurately, *the* fire irons. That bruise, we dare swear, is still raw. But there are pole-cats who cannot divest themselves of their odour, do what they will, and this festering mass of decaying garbage, which goes by the name of *The Independent*, and which is unaccountably overlooked by the night men in their rounds, is fast breeding a pestilence in the pure air of Eatanswill.” This lamentable controversy still continues.

STRANGE INCIDENT.

We noticed among the company at Mr. Pickwick's funeral a gentleman of unobtrusive exterior, who seemed to be vainly seeking his place, and to whom our representative offered his services. It turned out that his name was Trundle, and that he was one of the appointed pall-bearers, but that he had been unaccountably overlooked, and his place taken by someone else. Mr. Trundle made no complaint, but our representative thought it his duty to mention the circumstance to Mr. Wardle, who, it appears, is his father-in-law, but who only smiled, good-humouredly saying "O, Trundle, to be sure. No one minds him and *he* won't mind." But no further attention was paid to the matter. Mr. Trundle, our representative adds, was a man of modest and retiring ways, and did not seem in the least put out by the mistake.

**PHIZ AND DICKENS, AS THEY APPEARED TO
EDGAR BROWNE**



Edgar Browne, James Nelson and Co., Limited, 1913



Hibbard

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PREFACE

During the last few years I have been repeatedly urged to put on paper my recollections of my father, Hablot Knight Browne, who is equally well known under his pseudonym of Phiz. It has even been urged upon me as a duty. No one except myself has seen any difficulty, though memory is a coy jade, and will not come for the asking. But it has been represented that, like Mrs. Dombey, all I needed was to make an effort. I have made an effort, and the following pages are the result. They are partly retrospective and partly critical, and even the critical are partly retrospective, as they embody opinions formed a long time ago, and modified, but scarcely changed, by a late review.

I have endeavoured to select from a chaos of youthful memories those facts and circumstances most important in serving to form the picture of the early Victorian society in which I opened my wondering eyes.

In the beginning I have taken my father as a central figure, and I have grouped around him such people and incidents as seemed most interesting, and as a man cannot be separated from his times, I have endeavoured to describe the manners and customs and the mode of life of that section of the middle classes among whom I passed my early days.

I was desirous of veiling my own personality, but I found it impossible to justify my point of view without describing some of the circumstances which bore directly on myself.

I have given some account of the chief writers for whom he worked, including especially the greatest figure in Victorian literature, Dickens.

Of course for the early part of his career I have had to rely to a considerable extent on information derived from friends and family tradition. Later on in the book I have described him as I knew him from my own personal knowledge in middle life, and have given some account by the aid of the Dickens books (as those are the best known of all his works) of his development.

The illustrations to the present volume have been skilfully reproduced with a fidelity not formerly attainable, and are mostly from hitherto unpublished work. They are fairly representative of the artist's different

styles and periods. Some are mere scraps done in odd moments, which by some fortunate chance escaped the waste-paper basket. Several are merely tentative designs not intended to be seen by any eye but his own. For the most part they bear no reference to the text, but are interesting in revealing a personal character not discernible in more formal productions.

39 Rodney Street, Liverpool, September 30th, 1913.

CHAPTER I

HABLOT KNIGHT BROWNE: HIS NAME AND CALLING

My father's uncommon Christian name was given him in memory of a French officer who was engaged to marry his eldest sister, my aunt Kate. But the marriage did not take place, as the young man was unfortunately killed either in the battle of Waterloo, or in some of the skirmishing that occurred before the combat. My father was born in July of the same year, and was therefore enveloped in a sentimental atmosphere. It was, of course, a surname. Journalists seem to have agreed to spell the word with a circumflex accent over the o thus — Hablot. The precise significance of this addition has not yet been manifested. It is probably intended as a short and easy way of denoting the French origin of the word, and providing for the elision of the final *t* in speaking, so that the name is pronounced "Hablo." I cannot pretend to be an authority on the French language, but I believe the accent usually denotes the suppression of the *s* or other letter in words derived from the Latin, as *hostis*=*hote*, *festa*=*fete*, and so forth. But my father's name not being derived from the Latin, as far as I can see, we might just as well write *Haric6t* mutton or *Bonm6t* with an accent. The name seems to be a rare one even in France. Though I have cycled through innumerable small French towns and kept a good look-out, I have only once seen the name, and that was on a little brass plate on a *prie-dieu* in Auxerre Cathedral. Then it served as the name-plate of a certain Madame Hablot, indicating that she was both pious and prosperous. I have often lamented that I did not get her address from the verger, but I fancy there may have been no verger at hand, and anyhow I believe I should have been too retiring to have called, and incurred the suspicion of being a mendicant.

The name in English has the merit of being distinctive, though its varying pronunciation somewhat obscures its identity. In the family we aspirated the *H*, which the French do not, and suppressed the *t*. Tradesmen and others were in the habit of reversing this arrangement, and spoke of Mr. "Abblut

Browne.” I rather agree with the nursery-maid who said, “I *do* think ‘Avvelo’ is such a pretty name.” So it is, besides harmonising euphoniously with the familiar “‘Enery.”

On leaving school, Browne showed such a strong bias towards the arts, and such a great disinclination to move in any other direction, that with the advice and aid of his brother-in-law, Mr. Elhanan Bicknell, he was placed as pupil or apprentice at Finden’s. They were the leading engravers of the day, and executed a large number of plates of all sorts, either for framing, or as illustrations for books. These were the days of keepsakes, books of beauty, and annuals of various kinds. Line-engraving has never been equalled as a means of producing luminous little pictures for book illustrations, but the expense and tediousness of the process caused it to be disused as soon as a reasonably good substitute could be found. A great many hands were employed at Finden’s, and several men were often engaged on one plate. Here Browne learnt the technical details of engraving. In after life he described himself as an engraver in all formal documents.

It is reported that he was not always solicitous for the finish of his plates, but was accustomed to etch little original sketches on the margin, which could be printed off and afterwards obliterated, and served more for amusement than edification. Similar little sketches are frequently made seriously by engravers, and are termed *remarques*.

The suggestion made shortly after his death that he was unacquainted with etching, and had to call in aid to complete the illustrations of *Pickwick*, had no foundation in fact. He was, indeed, ignorant of nearly all technical processes in the arts except those of etching and engraving, but that he was a more than competent etcher is shown by his winning in 1833, while a youth at Finden’s, a medal from the Society of Arts for the best etching of a “Historical Subject.” (It is quite impossible that a man who had been an apprentice at Finden’s and a medallist at the Society of Arts should not have been able to etch his own plates.) The dimensions of this particular plate, representing John Gilpin at the turnpike, were about 20 inches by 13 inches. The design is full of rude vigour.

We first meet with Hablot Browne’s name, in connection with any works of art, as one of several co-operating in the production of a book called *Winkle’s Cathedrals*. The views generally aim at giving the picturesque aspect of architecture. The first of these drawings is dated 1835. The work seems to have been issued in parts, with two plates to each number, and

Browne's last contribution appeared in January 1837, but may have been executed some little time before that. These draw



JOHN GILPIN.
Engraving for which the author was awarded by the Society of Arts, London, from 1835 to 1837.

ings afford definite indisputable proof that, as early as 1835, he was capable of preparing work suitable for engraving and publication in important books under his own name.

His drawings in this book are characterised by a lively chiaroscuro, and by the vivacity of the groups of figures, especially horsemen, which the other artists do not seem to have cared to tackle. The plates are mostly engraved by two of the Winkles, but other hands seem to have been employed as well.

There was at Finden's another apprentice, Robert Young, with whom Browne struck up a friendship which lasted all his life. The two determined to set up in business for themselves, and formed a sort of partnership, and started in a studio, in imitation of Finden's. For this purpose they took chambers in No. 3 Furnival's Inn, having as neighbour, though they knew it not, the man who was so greatly to influence their lives — Dickens was already living at No. 15. The entrance to the quadrangle was by a *porte cochere* from High Holborn. Dickens occupied chambers on the right as you entered the gateway, and Browne and Young had their rooms on the

left. The far side of the quadrangle was taken up by Wood's Hotel, a respectable house where a kind of domestic comfort was provided for country visitors, including family prayers night and morning. The whole building has been knocked down, and the site is occupied by the huge offices of the Prudential Insurance Company.

In the course of time Dickens removed to Doughty Street, in the neighbourhood of Euston Square, and a few years later Browne married and started housekeeping in Howland Street, in the neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square, then an artistic centre. In the *Newcomes* Thackeray so describes it: — "One day on our way from the Temple through Howland Street to the Colonel's house, we beheld Major-General Thomas de Boots in full uniform rushing from Smee's door to his brougham. The coachman was absent, refreshing himself, the little boys cheered and hoorayed Sir Thomas, as arrayed in gold and scarlet he sat in his chariot. He blushed purple when he beheld us — no artist would have dared to imitate those purple tones. He was one of the numerous victims of Mr. Smee (a fashionable portrait painter). ..."

The joint business of Browne and Young as engravers had actually made a start, and sundry plates were engraved as illustrations to books or having a separate existence, when Seymour's unfortunate death occurred. *Pickwick*, not at first a very flourishing publication, stood a chance of coming to an end. Seymour occupied a prominent position in the enterprise, and his death was a serious blow. The attempt to replace him by Mr. Buss was a failure. Then it was that Browne was engaged as illustrator. His offer of comic drawings was accepted, but it was because he was a competent etcher that he came to the front. His ability as a designer had to be proved, though indeed it had been exhibited on the plate of John Gilpin, which was an original composition. Whether they actually took Browne on the faith of John Gilpin, or whether he offered himself, or whether they came to him, is not known, but such reputation as he had won was due to his work on *Winkle's Cathedrals*, in everything except the significant name far enough away from Mr. Pickwick and his friends.

It must be remembered that the employment of Phiz as the etcher of illustrations of Dickens and other writers brought a certain amount of jobbing work to the studio, because the plates for the larger issues were printed rapidly, in order to fulfil the demand, and therefore deteriorated to

such an extent as to require repair. This work was of course done by assistants.

Some years ago, one pouring wet day, I took refuge in a little curiosity shop near Leicester Square. The proprietor, partly to pass the time, and partly to magnify himself a little, told me that he was a kind of literary character, having stitched the first numbers of *Pickwick*, which he considered a failure, till the fourth number; then the sales went up with such a bound that he had to employ hands to carry out his contract. "It was Sam Weller that did it," he said; then after a pause, "and the illustrations."

A confirmatory opinion of how it struck contemporaries is afforded by a review in the *Quarterly*. The reviewer is evidently puzzled to account for the great popularity enjoyed by *Pickwick*, which, as we know from my friend in Leicester Square, was cumulative from the fourth number onwards. When the last number was published, it had become emphatically the book of the year. The reviewer remarks on the absence of plot and says, "It can hardly be as a story that the book before us has attained its popularity. . . . Our next proposition, that Mr. Dickens does not strikingly excel in his sketches of character or descriptions, is, we feel, open to dispute, and it is far from our intention to deny that he has considerable merit in both respects, but certainly not enough to found a reputation, or account for a tithe of his popularity. Incomparably one of the best sustained characters is that of Mr. Pickwick, whose every action seems influenced by the same untiring and enlightened spirit of philanthropy throughout,"

The modern reader will scarcely agree with this estimate of Mr. Pickwick. He will probably consider Sam Weller and his father Tony as the real heroes. Mr. Pickwick and his friends only occupy secondary places — in themselves they are not very amusing, although their adventures certainly are.

The reviewer goes on to estimate the value of the illustrations. Speaking of Mr. Pickwick sliding on Wardle's pond, he first considers that scene (as a specimen of the writing), and then he says: "This scene, with all its bearings, is brought fully home to the mind's eye, without the aid of Phiz's illustrative sketch; but the success of many other passages is due in a great measure to the skill of that artist in embodying them. Indeed, only a faint notion could be formed of the outward man of the great Pickwick himself from the scattered hints afforded in the letterpress; namely, that he wore tights, gaiters, and spectacles. It is the pencil, not the pen, which completes

the vivid conception we undoubtedly possess of his personal appearance; and how tame, without that, would be such situations as those in which he is detected holding Mrs. Bardell in his arms, or represented peeping through the bed curtains at the unknown lady at the inn.”

The reader will remember that the portrait of Mr. Pickwick was drawn by Seymour.

Mr. J. G. Fennell, another friend, was clerk at Finden’s, and had the business details at his finger ends. He seems to have occupied himself in acting as intermediary between promising young artists in want of cash and likely purchasers. In this manner he offered the plate of John Gilpin to Chapman and Hall, probably to put in their window for sale. Later on he appears to have got some commissions for Browne for small illustrations to pamphlets entitled “ Sunday under Three Heads,” and studies of young couples, and others which were in reality early efforts of Charles Dickens, under various pseudonyms, including Boz. So that Dickens and Browne really stood in relation to one another as author and illustrator from an early date, though neither of them had seen the other, nor indeed was aware of his real name. After Phiz became a busy man Mr. Fennell’s occupation was gone, so far as Browne was concerned. In later years, when Browne was occupying himself with water-colour drawing, Fennell again came on the scene, and must have effected many sales. Browne himself was quite incapable of selling anything, but Fennell was full of enterprise and push, and as an Irish friend said to me, “He would make a living in a desert island, where you and I would starve.”

The following correspondence indicates his resource and cleverness when he was desirous of gaining his point. He was a fisherman, and desired to have some fishing in water belonging to Lord D , and wrote as follows:

“Mr. J. G. Fennell presents his compliments to Lord D, and requests permission for a day’s fishing in such and such waters, &c.” The reply was, “Lord D presents his compliments to Mr. J. G. Fennell, and begs to inform him that he only gives permission to fish to his relations and intimate friends.” “Mr. J. G. Fennell presents his compliments to Lord D , and learns with deep regret that his Lordship only gives permission to fish to his relations and intimate friends. Mr. J. G. Fennell begs to remind his Lordship that it is not his fault that he is neither the one nor the other.”

His Lordship evidently had a sense of humour, for Fennell got his fishing.

Just about the time of the completion of *Pickwick*, in the winter of 1838, Browne went with Dickens on a special journey to Yorkshire to inspect some schools which had obtained an evil reputation, and to collect materials for the opening chapters of *Nicholas Nickleby*. They seem to have fastened on one particular man as the model for Squeers. I once asked my father what the original man was really like. He went so far as to say that the etching was not unlike him. The particular features of the school as represented by both author and illustrator are probably largely imaginary, but the journey goes to show that some effort was made to establish a basis of fact. It is by no means certain that they got hold of the right man. Some of the material, including a wonderful letter from a father to a son who would not eat boiled mutton, was not derived from the man in question, but from a schoolmistress whom they met in the coach, who succumbed to the effects of liquor before she went to bed. John Browdie does not seem exactly like a Yorkshireman, but he is certainly quite unlike a Londoner, and may be counted as part of the spoils of the expedition.

Afterwards they made a journey together into the Midlands through Shakespeare's country. They posted from Stratford to Shrewsbury through Birmingham and Wolverhampton, where they had their first glimpse of the black country, the beginning of that devastating industrialism which has since spread over many of the fairest spots in England. To this there is a reference in a letter from Dickens to his wife. "Starting at eight o'clock, through a cold wet fog, and travelling when the day had cleared up, through miles of cinder paths, and blazing furnaces, and roaring steam engines, and such a mass of dirt and gloom and misery as I never before witnessed."

Then further he says, "We were at the play last night. It was a bespeak — 'The Love Chase,' a ballet (with a Phenomenon), divers songs, and 'A Roland for an Oliver.' It is a good theatre, but the actors are very funny. Browne laughed with such indecent heartiness at one point of the entertainment, that an old gentleman in the next box suffered the most violent indignation. The bespeak party occupied two boxes, the ladies were full-dressed, and the gentlemen, to a man, in white gloves, with flowers in their buttonholes. It amused us mightily, and was really as like the Miss Snellicci business as it could well be."

From here they went on to Manchester, where they had some letters of introduction to persons who could help them to see the sights, in the shape of the cotton mills and factories, but the important persons they saw were

the two brothers Grant, who afterwards figured as the Cheeryble brothers in *Nicholas Nickleby*.

When I first came to Liverpool, an old lady told me she was intimately acquainted with the originals of the Cheeryble brothers, and described them as self-made men of great wealth and boundless generosity. She considered the descriptions very good.

CHAPTER II

HIS LIFE AND FRIENDS IN LONDON

During the time Browne remained in London he mixed in a circle of friends and acquaintances all occupied with the arts, and capable of stimulating his activities, encouraging him and criticising his works. He knew what was going on in the world of art among the younger men. He was appreciated and he was criticised; he had, in short, that miscellaneous teaching that comes from emulation in a common pursuit.

We have a glimpse of him at a party at the house of John Lucas, a fashionable portrait painter, where he was evidently sociable. I owe this fact to an extract from a private letter by Miss Mitford. She writes:

“I passed one evening in town with dear Mr. Lucas. He is painting Prince Albert just now. He speaks very highly of him, and of his knowledge and love of art especially. He says that he could not speak with more taste of painting if he had studied under Raphael. At Mr. Lucas’s I met Mr. Browne,



SKETCH OF A GIRL
BY JOHN LUCAS

the young artist who, under the name of ‘ Phiz,’ has so much aided Dickens’ reputation. He has just returned from Brussels, where he had been spending three weeks with Mr. Lever (‘ Harry Lorrequer’), and of him he speaks enthusiastically, as the pleasantest man in the world, his store of anecdote never flagging for a moment. “I like Mr. Browne himself exceedingly.

“January 10, 1852.”

The fame of John Lucas has not endured to the present day; his pictures have certainly not yet been boomed in the auction-room, nor is he mentioned in ordinary biographical dictionaries, but in his day he was somebody. In a review in an old number of the *Illustrated London News*, 1843, of the Royal Academy exhibition, he is mentioned as showing a portrait of Lady Mary Vyner and her son. The reviewer seems to have been a person of discernment, as he picks out Turner for special commendation, and advises Etty to study a particular picture of Rubens for his improvement. He says: “The great deficiency of modern portraiture is found in a want of that vivid individuality which living originals always present. The picture before us is a partial exception to the remark, but not in a

degree to command great praise. It is thinly but carefully painted, and the hands are drawn with more than usual accuracy” — from which we gather Mr. Lucas was probably not at his best that year.

In the same number, a half-page illustration of the public viewing the exhibition can be ascribed, on internal evidence, to John Leech, of whom mention is made hereafter.

I remember, when I was a very small and very inquisitive boy, being taken by my mother for an afternoon call at Lucas' house in St. John's Wood. I still retain the impression of the splendour of the house, and the magnificence of his garden enclosed by walls in the usual St. John's Wood fashion, and I have still a preference, probably from my early association, for this form of housing the middle classes. It is sad to think that all this magnificence has probably been swallowed up in workmen's flats.

Other friends there were probably not so high up on the ladder of fame, among whom we may count John Wood, an unfashionable portrait painter, who painted in backgrounds and drapery for his more fortunate friend and others. He was distinguished as being the first man whose pictures were burgled by being cut out of their frames. The robbers must have made a poor haul, and probably had mistaken the house.

Daniel Maclise, an excellent draughtsman, the leader of the romantic school, who described himself as hindered in his painting by seeing too much. His brother, Joseph Maclise, was almost, if not quite, as good a draughtsman, although he was a surgeon.

Then there was W. P. Frith, who advised Browne to paint scenes from real life, and was most successful when he followed his own receipt. It is rather the fashion to decry Mr. Frith, but he has left some works which in a faithful manner portray his own times. Curiously, though he always embodied a story in his pictures, he was singularly uninventive, and later on in life went so far as to offer £100 to anyone who would find him a subject. Popular pictures such as Ramsgate Sands, The Derby Day, The Railway Station, lasted him a long time, and brought in considerable sums.

Patrick Park, a sculptor, was also a friend, of whom I have not found any record. He especially admired my mother's hands, and cast and modelled them several times. I used to hear him spoken of a good deal at home.

Another of my father's acquaintances was Thackeray, who, like Buridan's donkey, hovered uncertainly between the arts and literature, until, by his fortunate rejection as an illustrator by Dickens and his happy

acceptance as a writer by Punch, it was decided for him in favour of literature. I believe his influence, with his knowledge, his sane outlook on life, and his appreciation of its pathetic and humorous sides, would have been most beneficial to my father. I have always thought Thackeray's illustrations underrated. They were often ill-drawn, unfinished, and the characters' clothes were generally floppy and flappy, but there was nearly always a clear presentation of the idea. The initial letters at beginning of chapters were among the very best that were ever executed. The *Christmas Books* illustrated by himself, or rather, I should say, written to his own illustrations, still delight us. His drawing was not sufficiently good to allow him to picture a pathetic situation, but except in that particular he is entitled to an honourable place among the humorous draughtsmen of his time.

Beyond these, Browne was brought into contact with many men in the making, at the Langham Sketching Club, which met about once a week, and may be in existence at the present day. Here the work was of the nature of exercises. All took part, and as subjects varied a good deal, each man's excellences and deficiencies were revealed. It was the only thing I ever heard him lament giving up. "I used to enjoy my evenings at the Langham," he said, and when he came back to London I urged him to rejoin, but it was too late.

Besides this he did some intermittent work at a private school for art, perhaps the original of Gandish's, and certainly bearing a close resemblance to it, so amusingly described by Thackeray in *The Newcomes*. These private schools (with the exception of Heatherley's in Newman Street) were mostly killed by the extension of the Government system, but they served a purpose as affording a place of practice for those who either could not or did not want to join the Academy. Here Browne must have made many acquaintances, but he was especially attracted by Etty, whose work interested him considerably.

Browne evidently knew Leech from his earliest days. He told me he had been to his studio in the beginning, and it contained a very large easel, and scarcely anything else, evidently in preparation for some great work which was never even begun. Indeed Leech seems to have lost all desire or aptitude for painting early in his career.

One day when walking with my father down Regent Street we met Leech. While we were chatting a man came up and very politely said, "Have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Leech?" "You have." He took him

on one side for a minute or so. Leech on rejoining us told us the man was quite unknown to him, but that he had given him a joke for *Punch*. He said people frequently did offer him subjects in this manner. Most of his work was executed on wood, and appeared in the pages of *Punch*. I was astonished when looking through his scrapbooks, where he seems to have preserved any designs he had ever made, to notice how tentative and hesitating they were, the figures being mapped out by little short strokes more like the work of an amateur than a professional. One of my father's designs for the *Knight of Gwynne*, which was amongst them, was remarkable by its contrast of precision and directness. But when Leech came actually to draw on the wood all indecision vanished, and he drew with firm, strong, impressive lines. He was essentially a comic draughtsman, that is to say, the drawings themselves were funny and mirth-provoking without any aid from the legend or literary explanation beneath. He excelled in the delineation of respectable middle-aged gentlemen in farcical predicaments. There is a whole series extending over a great length of time recording the experiences of Mr. Briggs, who, in his own way, was as funny as Mr. Pickwick. Besides woodcuts, he executed a number of etchings illustrative of Surtees' sporting novels, comic histories of Rome and England, and Dickens' *Christmas Books*. The etchings were very slight in character, but were given solidity by being coloured. This was a primitive process. Leech of course set the pattern, the copyist would spread out a number of prints all round a large table, having a number of saucers ready prepared with the appropriate tints, blue for skies, red for hunting coats, brown for earth, and then would start off and tint all the skies, then all the coats, and so on, till every object was separately coloured, and the work was done. The effect was certainly gay, but generally too crude to be pleasant. The excellent etchings to the Chimes are considerably injured by the crudeness of their colouring.

Somewhere about 1860 a process was invented and taken up by Bradbury by which drawings could be enlarged or diminished. The design was drawn or printed on a block of India rubber, which by a specially contrived apparatus could be drawn out and expanded, or allowed to contract and diminished. A number of Leech's drawings from *Punch* were so treated, and greatly enlarged, and then coloured by Leech himself, and were shown in an exhibition at the Egyptian Hall. They were afterwards reproduced by some process of colour printing and sold to the public, and specimens may often

be seen framed as decorations to halls and billiard-rooms in country houses. The drawings themselves suffered by their increase in size. Leech was a very amiable man, but in the latter part of his life he became irritable, over-sensitive to noises, and was positively vindictive towards barrel-organ grinders. His death was currently reported to have been due to mental overstrain, but bearing in mind that a man in easy circumstances can recover from that condition by a few months' rest, it seems more probable that he died from some definite disease, of which nervous irritability was merely a symptom. "God knows," said Mr. Evans to my father, "'tis not from any overwork we gave him; he did what he liked, and it has been for years considerably less than was originally arranged." His death created a blank which has never been filled.

George Cruikshank was twenty years older than Dickens, but may be counted amongst the early Victorians, as he illustrated the collected *Sketches by Boz*, about 1833, and later on *Oliver Twist*. He was incomparably the finest etcher of his time, and his work is known all over the civilised globe. Although he was a caricaturist as regards his figures, he was a realist in regard to all the objects composing his picture. He excelled in the representation of squalor and misery; a slum, a workhouse ward, a scullery or a prison; he drew household implements, tools, the mean furniture of mean houses with the fidelity of a Dutchman. He had no sense of beauty either in architecture, landscape, or the female figure. Sir Frederick Wedmore goes so far as to say, in an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, "He drew horses badly, dogs indifferently, women atrociously."

I have seen him frequently. His face appeared to me extremely individual and of an exceptional type. I used to think he had a Jewish look, but I doubt if it was more than a casual resemblance to the Semitic type. He was reported to have an enormous family, but his gifts do not seem to have been inherited; at all events, none of his children have become known in the arts. In his latter years he became a violent teetotaler, and published his powerful set of drawings called "The Bottle," illustrating the downfall of a family who began a career of drunkenness by unfortunately taking a glass of spirits to aid the digestion of a roast goose!

In the illustration to chapter xlvi. of *Dombey*, representing Mr. Carker riding home, among a number of placards to be seen on the wall which forms the background, the most conspicuous is that of Cruikshank's Bottle, a delicate compliment from Browne to his distinguished contemporary. He

lived to a great age, retained his physical vigour, and was proud of being able to dance a hornpipe at the age of eighty. He was fully persuaded, and persuaded some others, that he was the author of *Oliver Twist*. The same form of hallucination, in a more altruistic form, haunts some people with regard to the authorship of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. It seems a pity that a lapse of about three hundred years prevented Cruikshank from illustrating Bacon.

I never saw Doyle. His work was greatly esteemed in our house, and the lamp of his charming fancy helped to banish the gloom in which the early Victorians were supposed to live. He so far resembled Browne that he depended on his imagination for his designs, and never used a model. He was not so excellent in dealing with real life as he was with fairies, grotesques, and other personages not inhabitants of this base world. He had a comradeship with elves and fairies, but he successfully illustrated *The Newcomes*, and his etchings executed for that book have certainly a very considerable grace and character. Still more original are the small woodcuts and initial letters interpolated in the text. One of his works continues to have the most enduring fame, and is viewed once a week by all English-speaking persons without satiety, although they have seen it fifty times a year for seventy years. The front cover of *Punch* in decorative effect and lively fancy and aptness of character has never been equalled, and we should just as soon think of changing it as we should think of altering the royal arms.

He left the staff of *Punch* at the time of the Papal aggression. His most popular work was the *Tour of Brown, Jones and Robinson on the Continent*. He also drew a few illustrations for Dickens' *Christmas Books*.

Doyle's father was a political caricaturist who enjoyed a considerable reputation in his time. His portraits, half fact and half fancy, resembled those which have since appeared in *Vanity Fair*, except that they were lithographs executed in black and white instead of colours. He signed them for some unknown reason H. B., and in later days the works were not unnaturally attributed to Phiz. In fact some people have so strongly held this view, that in spite of my denials they have insisted that he was not only the author of these works, but of my being. Truly it is a wise son who knows his own father, but I may be permitted to know who was not, and on this head I am confident.

CHAPTER III

HOME LIFE IN CROYDON

We moved to Croydon on account of my mother's health. The move answered its purposes; my mother recovered her natural activity, and from being a person who required waiting upon, became one who looked after everybody else.

Croydon was then a country town about ten miles from London on the Brighton road, passing through Brixton and Streatham. We often drove into town, putting the pony and trap at livery at a stable on the Surrey side of Westminster Bridge during the time we were occupied with our business. Or, if we pleased, we could go by railway to London Bridge by a train, not drawn by a locomotive, but propelled by an atmospheric tube, a mechanism which soon became obsolete. Things were so primitive that a porter used to come out from the station yard into the road and ring a big dinner-bell five minutes before the train started. We lived about three-quarters of a mile from the station on the London road, in a sort of outskirts of Croydon, called Thornton Heath. The house was small and straggling, and had been contrived by knocking two still smaller into one. Consequently one side was a very funny duplicate of the other — two little entrances, two little staircases, two little front rooms, were visible from whichever door you entered, so that strangers were often brought to great confusion by the superfluity of landmarks, and turned in wrong directions to recover their hats and coats, although the place was so small. The ground floors, however, towards the back, were not exactly symmetrical. On the southern side was the kitchen and its offices, with a little back stair leading to the servants' bedrooms, but on the northern side the kitchen had been absorbed and thrown into another room to make a really good dining-room, and at the back of the house, on the first floor, and approached by a separate staircase, making the fourth, was the Governor's studio, a room held sacred, and supposed to be full of invisible dangers for intruders, like Bluebeard's chamber. By joining the original two gardens together a very good one had

been formed, growing plenty of fruit on trees and bushes, besides a profusion of old-fashioned flowers. We were especially proud of an acacia tree, partly because it was supposed to be a rarity, and partly because it served as shelter for out-of-door tea in fine weather; but the crowning glory was a morella cherry-tree, which bore exactly the proper fruit for conversion into cherry-brandy. At the end was the field which served for pasturing the animals. There was also a pond which we used for launching Robinson Crusoe's raft. This magnificent structure took weeks to build, and invariably upset on its first voyage, submerging its crew. No matter how often the attempt was made, the result seemed always the same.

We were separated from our neighbours partly by a row of trees and partly by stables, which would appear to modern eyes considerably too large for the house. We lived a good deal in the trees and the sloping roof between our own and our neighbours' stables. We mostly lived free from the embarrassing presence of grown-ups, as pirates or Saracens, or other terrible kinds of men, and we were wont to summon three girls who lived next door, and who were treated as female slaves.

Years afterwards, one day when I was sitting in the sun on the shore at Hastings recovering from an illness, I noticed a nice-looking lady approaching me with her eyes fixed intently on my face. When she came close to me a gleam of recollection passed over her face, and she said, "I am sure you are Edgar Browne." I replied, "I also am sure on that point." She then told me she was one of the girls who lived next door at Croydon, and had been for some time happily married and the mother of children. She was so feminine, sympathetic, and gentle, that I felt hideously ashamed that I had formerly driven her round the garden with a whip. I have always lamented since that I had not sufficient presence of mind to ask her address before she rejoined her friends.

The Governor laid claim to the whole of the lower parts of the stables, and kept there a strong saddle horse, which could be used as hack or hunter, a big pony (or cob) which could be driven in the chaise or do an easy day's hunting. There was also at times a donkey with two panniers, a goat and a carriage which was used for a small person to practise driving. When there was not a small person of the appropriate size the goat or donkey would be temporarily abolished, but the two horses constituted a permanent stud; and there were also two Scotch terriers.

This rambling place was exactly suited to Browne's wants and his temperament. He was extremely industrious, and disappeared into his studio soon after breakfast, and sometimes could only with the greatest difficulty be brought down to meals. In the winter he hunted with some regularity, and the rest of the year rode about a good deal in the country in the afternoons. He often took one of us boys with him and gave us practical hints in horsemanship. These were sometimes a little rough. I have a vivid remembrance of the cob putting his foot in a rabbit hole on Smithum's bottom, and flinging me outspread like a frog on the hard chalky surface of the downs, not at all mitigated by what appears to be a covering of grass. I recall the sound of the fall, and the universal shake up of every atom of my body, and hearing the Governor's voice, apparently from an enormous distance, asking if I were dead. I rather wished I had been.

Our home resembled some couple of hundred or so that stretched along the line of the Brighton road. Of what happened in the homes of the very rich I can scarcely speak, but the professional classes have never been more comfortable than they were in the early Victorian years. Parsons, doctors, lawyers, authors, artists, and returned Anglo-Indians lived comfortably on moderate but sufficient incomes. Competition was not severe, and industry in any profession would secure a livelihood — openings were not difficult to find.

Home life was remarkably simple and comparatively cheap, as very little was sacrificed to display, and next to nothing on luxury. Food was plain and very solid, and, I may add, genuine. The roast



FIVE SKETCHES ILLUSTRATING THE HUMOURS OF A RACECOURSE.

Pen and Ink, on Letter Paper

Early drawings showing habit of jotting down ideas as they occurred.

beef of Old England was not from America, and was not baked. Entrees were called “made dishes,” and in some houses tabooed as “kickshaws,” a species of food only fit for foreigners. Fruit was seldom imported from a greater distance than the next county, except in the case of oranges, figs, raisins, and the like, and therefore the limits of the seasons were rigidly defined and maintained. There was a firm belief in the virtues of port as a tonic. Formal dinner parties were rare, but there was a great deal of dining together in a casual way. The dinner-hour varied surprisingly, according to the season and our occupations; sometimes you might suppose it to be lunch, and another time suppose it to be supper, and nobody, not even the cook, seemed to mind. As there were no telephones, a good supply of eatables was kept in the larder for emergencies, as people had a habit of “dropping in to dinner,” as the phrase ran, and our nearest tradesman being half a mile off, someone on occasions had to go off hurriedly on the pony to get an extra chop.

This kind of irregularity was not peculiar to us, on account of the artistic temperament of the head of the household. It was more or less common at this period. The railway has been the real promoter of regularity and punctuality in daily life. The train presses more inexorably on the doings of a household than time or tide, which were the stimuli relied on by our forefathers for egging on laggards.

There was a much greater friendliness between mistress and servant than in the present day, though the class distinctions were much more strongly marked. No servant ever thought she was a lady; nor did a mistress, though she might make a friend of a servant, consider her on the same level as herself. The footing of mistress and servant is very well described in the account of Mrs. Copperfield and Clara Peggotty. In the morning servants appeared in short sleeves, showing a considerable proportion of red arm, in the afternoon they changed into long-sleeved gowns. There was great restriction in the amount of liberty allowed for going out, and kitchen visitors, called "followers," were regarded with suspicion, and sometimes entirely prohibited.

Croydon was situated in a most beautiful country. London bricks and mortar extended no nearer to us than Brixton, which was then a compact and grubby suburb. Intervening there were commons — Streatham, Tooting, Balham — and only scattered houses. East, west, and south was entirely country — hills, heaths, commons, scattered villages and small towns, extending into Kent, Sussex, and Hampshire.

As boys we were given great liberty in wandering over this delightful land, and at a very early age were allowed to take out the pony-chaise, and drive ourselves whithersoever we liked. No anxiety seems to have been felt about our absence, as our splendid appetites were excellent timekeepers, and could be relied on to bring us home within a reasonable time. We all of us acquired a passionate liking for natural scenery, and a great taste for investigating churches, farmyards, and other people's premises. How we were tolerated I cannot imagine, but we seem to have been considered quite nice little boys — the London hooligan was scarcely known — and therefore boys in general had not a bad reputation. Our mother, of course, was greatly occupied with household affairs and the upbringing of the last new baby, who might almost be described as a hardy annual. Large families were the rule, and were considered a blessing, and not even an inconvenience.

My father himself was a member of a family that would be considered large at the present day, being one of fourteen — ten boys and four girls. He was the youngest but one, and came between Octavius and Decimus, and it was a safe rise to pretend that his real name was Nonus. There was a Septimus, Octavius, and Decimus. I have in my possession a statement of his private baptism, probably on account of a suspicion that he was not going to live. In that document his names are given as Hablot Knight Nonus Browne. The Nonus is erased and underlined, and in an official certificate of his formal baptism in the Church of St. Mary, Lambeth, 21st December 1815, the name is given as Hablot Knight — no Nonus. The officiating clergyman was the same on both occasions, the Rev. Henry White, so that we can safely conclude that there was an intention of numbering him, which was immediately relinquished.

Some friends of ours who lived at the other end of the town had eighteen children. We frequently spent the afternoon with them, to prevent them feeling lonely. As a gracious acknowledgment, deputations made return visits to us; but I do not think the whole eighteen ever came at one time, but certainly they appeared in sufficient numbers to produce a shortage of chairs.

Occasionally the two families made expeditions, accompanied by an extraordinary number of acquaintances and female slaves, carrying bows and arrows, and provisions to an amount suitable apparently for a long voyage, but actually only capable of lasting a few hours. The ammunition was intended for the slaughter of squirrels or any small birds that might be about. I have considerable satisfaction in saying not a single death resulted in spite of all our preparations — we might as well have carried some salt to put on their tails. But the best of all our expeditions was when a farmer would invite us to assist in the taking down of a haystack and killing the rats. Then with leathern gaiters, or with string wound round our trousers, sticks in our hands, and our dogs in attendance, we indulged in a slaughter which would have satisfied savages. The female slaves did not desire to join this expedition.

By degrees we were more and more brought under the influence of the ordinary educational people, beginning with the usual governess, and ending with the clergyman, who took a few young gentlemen before they were sent off to boarding-school. Though we passed through several hands they all taught the same subjects, in very much the same method, as if there

was a well-known receipt for teaching little boys the rudiments of learning. Latin was the principal subject, beginning with delectus and passing on to the Gallic War, and including the syntax of the Eton Latin grammar committed to memory. We had a little arithmetic, very unintelligently taught, and as much geometry as is contained in the first book of Euclid; history consisting of the kings of England, with their dates and the names of their wives; and geography, including the names of places, but not a single geographical idea; and we learned to recite certain stock pieces of English poetry, such as "Hohenlinden " and the " Burial of Sir John Moore." We also committed portions of the Scriptures to memory, certain Psalms, either the Epistle or the Gospel for the Sunday, not forgetting the Collect for the day. This exercise I consider to have been most valuable in giving us some knowledge of the English language, an advantage which lasts throughout life. No sort of utilitarian or practical lesson can for a moment be compared with it. The child is more carefully studied in the present day, but it is doubtful whether his education has correspondingly improved.

From these people we learnt something, but not so much as we did from the liberty to use a very good little library, which suited our tastes, as it was largely composed of illustrated editions.

Means of illumination were poor, and in the long winter evenings during blind-man's holiday we were accustomed to sit round the fire, developing the family circle from a figment to a fact. Before dinner a difficult process of illumination began, generally by the appearance of a single candle, brought in by the maid, to serve as a focus. This was followed by heroic efforts to light the lamp, which had to be wound up like a clock. There was no mineral oil, so some variety of animal or vegetable origin had to be employed, and being of difficult inflammability, it often spluttered and smoked, and gave forth very little light.

At one time we had a machine, shaped like the Duke of York's column, which carried a three-wick candle, big enough for a Roman Catholic Cathedral, and thrust upwards by a spiral spring. Occasionally, as the wax became heated, the catch would become loose, and the candle would be jerked upwards to the ceiling. Matches were called lucifers, and required a good deal of smart rubbing to make them catch fire. They were tipped with sulphur, which had a private little stage of ignition all to itself, giving rise to a good deal of bubbling and a foul-smelling vapour. As the slightest damp rendered them untrustworthy, prudent housekeepers, like so many Vestals,

maintained a number of constant flames during the night for use in case of illness. Our bedrooms were each provided with a rushlight placed in a shade, which was stationed in a basin on the floor, where it glistened away like a gigantic lighthouse in a particularly small piece of water.¹ The holes in the shade were represented on the walls by large discs of light, which had an uncanny movement in the slightest draught, and caused me (and other children) a vague terror only one degree less terrible than the darkness. Child's night lights were a great improvement, but were easily put out in the efforts to light a candle from their tiny flames, and were therefore disliked by housemaids.

My father sat with us when etchings were in progress, as the glare from the plate was unpleasant in artificial light, but if he was designing or working on wood, he might come down later. The conversations were by no means banal. My father was full of information and a good talker, and his simplicity of character made him put himself instinctively on our level. We discussed books and pictures, historical events from Alfred the Great to the flight of Louis Philippe. Nelson and Napoleon, and the almighty Duke of Wellington, were viewed under strange and unfamiliar lights. Our science had the merits of originality, and owed nothing to previous investigators. We had an extensive and peculiar knowledge of savages, which could be crystallised into a dramatic form from such excellent books as *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Omoos*, *Typee*, and Brace's *Travels*. We were also greatly interested in the lives of great painters, which the Governor read to us with much spirit from a popular book. This concerned itself with the old masters, and was more to be depended on for anecdotes of their lives than criticisms of their works. He also read us extracts from Froissart's *Chronicles* (translation), and entertained us greatly by showing us the armour and dresses of the Middle Ages from coloured books of costume, which we honestly believed were the finest books in the world, and too valuable to be handled unless under supervision. In the same way we made acquaintance with the *Arabian Nights*, and insensibly gained a knowledge of the glitter and splendour of Oriental life. Thus at an early age we learned to look critically upon pictures and illustrations, and not merely regard them as representations of scenes. We learnt to separate the wheat from the tares according to our lights. The Governor would explain his own preferences, which we could follow or not as we pleased. His thoughts were entirely original. He had no idea of adopting anybody's opinion second-hand, but

did not suppose that his own was of the slightest value or interest to anybody else. In this he differed from the majority of people, who seem to suppose

1 Pickwick.

that their opinion matters a great deal and other people's nothing at all; whereas the prosperity of a criticism like a jest's lies in the ear, and the listener's mental capacity is as important as the speaker's. No opinion is worth uttering if it fall on an unreceptive mind. The only criticism of value is one appreciable by the listener.

For instance, one night a foreigner was seated next to my Aunt Kate at dinner, and he happened to mention the works of Van Eyck. My aunt, who was a precise lady, said, "I suppose you mean Van Dyck." "No, no," he said, "I mean Van Eyck." "Was *he* a great painter?" "Of the greatest — he paint every 'air on the legs" — a just remark, but hardly a convincing argument for a maiden lady.

From an early age we were accustomed to go to picture galleries. I cannot remember the time when we did not go to the National Collection, then housed partly in Trafalgar Square and partly in Marlborough House. We were given shillings to go to the Water Colours, with strict injunctions to look out for the works of David Cox.

Needless to say, Browne made very few acquaintances amongst the neighbours; any remnant of sociability he had left in him was effectively dissipated by the evident wish to treat him as a lion. The neighbourhood thought it too good a chance to be lost. Ladies would occasionally stop us on the road, and ask us whether the Governor did not use us for models, and other questions of an embarrassing nature. These symptoms of a popular interest were more than sufficient to drive him to take refuge in the shell of his own house, his innate dislike to publicity was strengthened, and his natural shyness increased.

However, he made one firm and valued friend in the person of Dr. Westall, who was summoned as a doctor and remained as a friend. He was a tall, good-looking man, with a healthy pink complexion, white hair, and a cheerful expression. He always dressed in black, with a white choker wound two or three times round his neck, and was invariably spick and span even if he had been up all night. He had a large practice, including

several local celebrities, but he was very glad to have the opportunity of adding the Hablot Browne family to his list. As he was a doctor, he could penetrate to any room in the house without giving offence, and he was not long in making his way into the studio. How could he be repulsed when he brought tidings of wife and child? Being accustomed to put people at their ease, he soon overcame the Governor's reserve, and made frequent visits, and found a welcome. He took a great interest in the work, and especially admired the water-colour sketches, of which in course of time he acquired several. He was very much interested and not a little shocked at my father's carelessness in business affairs, and if a chronic condition could have been remedied by a few doses of good advice, it is probable that our income would have been considerably increased.

My father enjoyed his society very much. His was the only house I remember which we would visit without a special or repeated invitation. We made the acquaintance of the family through the only son, who was our senior, and greatly respected as an authority on school games. Through him we came to know the four daughters, to whom we became greatly attached.

It is the fashion in our times to suppose that the early Victorian girl was kept under lock and key, but my experience leads me to think that in the country there was fully as much liberty as there is now. We walked or rambled about when and where we pleased, with no weightier obligation on us than bringing the girls back in time for meals. It was a free and happy existence.

Unfortunately the Westall boy was attacked by rheumatic fever, and died of heart disease, to the great grief of the two families. As they had no sufficient memorial of him, Westall begged my father to do a portrait. In order to accomplish this, I remember, he shut himself up for some days, and refused to see any of his family, lest he should have wrong impressions on his mind, and painted a life-size portrait, which had considerable merit, and was considered an excellent likeness by the poor lad's friends, and supposed to have no drawback beyond a certain sadness of expression.

Dr. Westall was always anxious my father should have some permanent regular source of income, and at one time used his influence to obtain for him the post of drawing-master in the East India Company's military college at Addiscombe. The Governor consented to stand, and I cannot sometimes help smiling at the idea of the delineator of Micawber instructing future generals in the drawing of fortresses or the contour of

hills. I believe Mr. Callow was the successful candidate, and the better man for the post.

One result of my father's move to Croydon was to separate him from his artistic friends, and to deprive him of the valuable influences by which he was surrounded. He was definitely out of town and in the country; he could only be visited by dint of special effort. He might have gone, and perhaps may occasionally have gone, and visited some of his old acquaintances on his own account, but ten miles to the early Victorians seemed an almost unbridgeable chasm, and indeed would be now as far as regards keeping up acquaintance.



LABOUR IN VAIN.

Line engraving by Robert Young from an oil-painting by Hablot K. Browne published for joint benefit.

Means of communication were poor and inadequate, but nearly every Sunday, and sometimes on week-days, my father's partner, Robert Young, paid us a visit. He was a good-looking man of medium height, broad chested, and would have been powerful but for a wasted leg, so that he had to walk, ~ and could only walk, by the aid of a stick. He was at this time at Furnival's Inn, carrying out two lines of business for the benefit of the

partners, one the biting in and repairing of Browne's etchings, the other the production of line engravings suitable for book illustrations or for framing. For these latter Browne often provided original drawings, but were sometimes taken from existing pictures. The establishment at Furnival's Inn was of the same nature as Finden's, but on a smaller scale. In the family Young was known as Uncle Bob, and even now I have difficulty in remembering his proper name, and that he was not a relation. He did not concern himself much with the arts generally, but only as connected with the business and the process of engraving. He was a cheerful, well-read man, and had the most sincere attachment to my father, and a profound admiration for his intellect and skill. He died only a few years ago. He introduced us to many books which afterwards became famous. Occasionally he brought down small parties of men, who often stopped to dinner. But the persons whom we saw were not painters, but literary men, authors and publishers, and they mostly came to talk over their illustrations and to hurry things up. They exercised a deleterious influence over my father's artistic development, for they absorbed his attention and dissipated his energy.

Of those who visited I can remember best among many others Mark Lemon, who must in the first instance have asked as a matter of politeness to see the family, for we all came down to the little drawing-room on show. He made himself most agreeable to us children, contrasting in this respect with some of the other authors. He was immensely stout, and being very witty, was forthwith dubbed Sir John Falstaff. So far from being offended, he was delighted with what must have been to him a familiar jest, but it fell upon a prepared mind, and some time afterwards he started an entertainment and enacted the part of Falstaff himself. Except that he was the great editor of *Punch*, his literary fame is hardly remembered.

In more senses than one he entirely overshadowed Dickens, who apparently was not much interested in us personally, and whom we only saw in uncertain glimpses by no means free from an uncomfortable sense of awe. He appeared to us overwhelming, very splendid as to his clothing, and rather unapproachable. Reflection in after years has convinced me that our impression was erroneous. What we saw and felt was the contrast between ourselves and a being of superhuman energy and vigour of expression. Added to that, it is quite certain that he came about business, and on most occasions we were bundled out of the way. Of course the names of the

leading writers were more familiar in our mouths than household words, and we took them for granted, as we did the Queen and Prince Albert.

It might be supposed that the members of Browne's family might have played some part in his development. There were several living within easy distance. His brother Octavius lived at Brixton, and as they both had pony-chaises, there was a good deal of intercourse between the two families. Octavius went out to Melbourne as agent for a business firm, and happening to arrive at the beginning of the gold fever, he made a large fortune, and retired to Devonshire. But he had no sympathy with the arts.

We used occasionally to drive over to see Great Uncle Moxon, who had a nice place at Twickenham, and whom we regarded as a very wonderful old gentleman ; what his real claims to admiration were I really do not know, but he was a great centre in the family. Our youthful admiration rested on the facts that he had an apple-room, a deep fish-pond, two turnspit dogs, and a dinner-bell that rang in the grounds. A delightful custom existed at his house. Before dinner a large block of cannel coal was put on the drawing-room fire to be warmed through, and when we left the table was broken up with a poker, and gave rise to a most cheerful blaze, which excited the admiration of all beholders.

His son John, my father's cousin, was boundlessly kind to me. He lived at Regent's Park, and for some years I passed the Christmas holidays at his house, in companionship with his children, two sons and two daughters. This, besides softening my manners and not allowing them to grow brutal, carried with it a permanent free admission to the Zoological Gardens and to the Polytechnic, an institution for the purpose of popularising science.

The entertainment here varied from the subaqueous wonders of a diving-bell and the electric eel, to the marvels of dissolving views, and lectures illustrated with dazzling experiments by Professor Pepper, a gentleman who afterwards became celebrated as being the only man who had a ghost who walked in his lifetime.

It was here, at Hanover Terrace, that I saw the only Dickens character that I ever beheld quite complete with my own eyes. She was a dwarf, and the etching was remarkably like her, though I do not think my father ever saw her. In the book she was Miss Mowcher, in real life she was a married lady, and a professional chiropodist and manicurist. She was driven on her professional rounds in a very narrow little brougham of a kind known as a pillbox, because it was patronised by doctors. I am sorry to say I

contributed to a slight accident which she suffered when she was visiting professionally at Regent's Park. I had been concerned with one or two friends in an assault and repulse on the stairs with peashooters; as the little creature came down the stairs, she slipped on some of the peas, and sat down very suddenly and alarmingly. We restored her with a glass of sherry, and she sat on the lowest stair rocking her body to and fro, saying as a sort of refrain between the sips, " You see the body is so long, and the legs so short, and stairs are difficult," all quite in the genuine Dickens manner.

Miss Mowcher dwelt within a stone's-throw of No. i Devonshire Terrace, where Dickens lived for some years, and he must have known her well by sight. Generally his characters owe a good deal to the imagination, and are compounded of more than one model, but in this case the sketch, as far as externals go, was a veritable portrait.

When we drove over to visit Great-Uncle Moxon, it was often to pay our respects to my grandmother, who frequently stayed there. She used also to come out and stay at West Barns Park, a farm near Merton, which was within an easy drive of us, where we also visited. We considered it an earthly paradise, and in addition to sundry barns and haystacks to play amongst, there was a pond sufficiently large to carry a real rowing-boat.

I was once so happy as to be weather-bound in the farm by a flood, and passed some three or four days tinged with romance. My elders, I need hardly say, were not only very uncomfortable, but suffered from the destruction of their property.

The farm belonged to Mrs. Rayne and her sons, who I fancy often experienced the bad times which were frequent with farmers. Miss Rayne married a son of the painter Robert Haydon. In passing lately along the line going south I have noticed a station called Rayne's Park, and I am happy to suppose that the family have found bricks and mortar more profitable than hay-making.

If the grandmother had confined her invitation to the country we should have looked back on our visits to her with unmixed pleasure, but she habitually lived in Bedford Place, Bloomsbury, a district which became afterwards much identified with Dickens. It was separated from the adjoining district as trenchantly as if it had been in a ring fence. It is very well described in *Vanity Fair*. The inhabitants were eminently respectable, and mostly dull. They went very little afield for their shops or amusements. The lawyers, who were of prodigious numbers, went to their business in

Bedford Row, or their chambers in Inns of Court, and business men went to their occupations in the City by the buses, which plied down Holborn or the New Road. The great archway of the Euston Station was a recent intrusion. The district was so little separated from the country, that the smell of hay could be distinctly perceived with a northern wind blowing over Hampstead, though I never heard of a Master in Chancery having hay fever.

I suffered a good deal from my grandmother's pet parson, the Hon. and Rev. Montague Villiers, Rector of St. George, Bloomsbury. The church, besides having a classic portico, has a queer steeple, composed of four pyramidal flights of steps, surmounted by what appears to be a statue of no less eminent a Christian than one of the Georges in a toga. This steeple was popularly said to be the steps to a bishopric, and so it was, for Villiers was promoted first to Carlisle, and subsequently to Durham. In the pulpit I do not suppose he was duller than anyone else, but I was taken to hear him on compulsion, and the whole service was oppressively tedious and long. But I also suffered from him in private life. He seemed to know when I was on a visit by some sort of sixth sense, and though he was a most courtly, affable man, I used to think he was far too unctuous. He invariably improved the occasion, and he had the air of being desirous of leaving the impression that he had a peculiarly good receipt for living a pious and godly life.

I have been much interested lately, in reading Mrs. Earle's *Memoirs and Memories*, to learn that he wrote letters to members of his family (for he was related to her) as if they shamefully neglected their opportunities, though from what I can gather from the correspondence generally, they were as unaffectedly good as people can well be. But it was the fashion in those days for people to call themselves professing Christians, and openly draw attention to their scheme of life.

He was not a learned man, but belonged to a class called Lord Shaftesbury's bishops. There used to be a floating story that he was once approached by a curate anxious for an explanation of a tough passage in the Greek Testament. The Bishop had not a working familiarity with the work, and is reported to have taken up a copy of the Authorised Version, saying, "Let us consult the divine original." He had a son-in-law, and the patronage of a fat living fell into his hands. What could be more natural than to unite the two? To have a bishop's son-in-law for a rector would be undoubtedly good for the parish, and the parish good for the son-in-law. Unfortunately the beneficiary's name was Cheese, and immediately after the appointment,

while the cry of nepotism was in the air, *Punch* had a cartoon of a stout ecclesiastic pouring port into a Stilton, and saying, “ This cheese wants a little ripening.” An enormous number of copies were sold in the parish. If a stranger went into the local booksellers’ shop, “ Swale & Wilson,” almost before the customer could get the words out of his mouth, one or other of them would say, “ I know, Sir, the picture of the late Rector.”

Some time after the foregoing account was written I accidentally came upon a letter from Dickens saying, “I took a young lady unknown down to dinner, and talking to her about the Bishop of Durham’s nepotism in the matter of Mr. Cheese, I found she was Mrs. Cheese “ (28th April 1861).

My grandmother evidently had considerable affection for my father, and showed a grandmotherly interest in us, evinced by lessons in deportment and manners, but I never remember her showing the slightest interest in my father’s profession. I am sure she never read a line of Dickens, and I am doubtful whether, with the exception of such pictures as hung on our walls, she ever cast an eye on any of his works in her life. The rest of the relations were equally indifferent, with the sole exception of Mr. Elhanan Bicknell.

Naturally there ought to be a considerable number of letters from authors, publishers, and engravers about illustrations, but though it seems scarcely credible, it is the veritable fact that when he was leaving Croydon, Hablot Browne made a bonfire of the accumulated correspondence of many years. Among these manuscripts were hundreds of sketches, either illustrations to books, or designs for works of his own. If they had been merely taken haphazard and bound they would have formed several very interesting volumes. But incredible as this may seem, it is still more astonishing to learn that Dickens, with less excuse, did the same thing. In 1860, at Gad’s Hill, he writes: —

“Yesterday I burnt, in the field at Gad’s Hill, the accumulated letters and papers of twenty years. They sent up a smoke like the genie when he got out of the casket on the seashore; and as it was an exquisite day when I began, and rained very heavily when I finished, I suspect my correspondence of having overcast the face of the heavens.”



HEADS

Watercolor and gouache on paper, 19th century

CHAPTER IV

MR. BICKNELL AND HIS FRIENDS

Mr. Elhanan Bicknell was a noteworthy man who became related to Browne by his marriage to my Aunt Lucinda as his second wife. He was the son of a schoolmaster at Dulwich, then a delightful little town on the borders of Kent and Surrey. He began life as an usher in his father's school, but must have exhibited some indications of financial ability, for two friends who were managing, or mismanaging, a business, invited him to join them for the purpose of improving affairs. He fully justified their choice, turned the business into a prosperous concern, and made a huge fortune.

I was about the age of his youngest son. When I first remember him he was living, simply indeed, but in considerable splendour, at Heme Hill. My aunt was a notable woman, and managed her household affairs with a skill truly early Victorian. She had that art of organising which comes from natural capability, and which made the management of a big house and wealth no more difficult to her than a cottage home would have been, and she always seemed to have leisure for various pursuits.

The house had originally been a medium-sized one. My uncle had built a wing at each end larger than the original structure, so that on the ground floor, among others, there were three large rooms, entirely given up to the display of pictures, which constituted the splendour of the place. In the middle was the old drawing-room. This was a low room, which, for the sake of protection against damp, had been entirely lined with mahogany. The wood was not apparent, as it was covered over with a sort of rococo panelling in white and gold, according to the prevailing taste of the time in drawing-room decorations. The pictures in this room were all watercolours, and were not hung in the usual manner, but inset, the gilded mouldings serving as frames, and the water-colours serving as decorative panels. Turner's "Rivers of France," if I remember rightly, served as decoration of the doors. The effect was altogether admirable, and the individual pictures,

when looked into, were found to be works of the most distinguished men of the time.

I have often wondered since, what provision was made for the removal of these precious objects in case of fire.

The dining-room and the big drawing-room were devoted to oils; in the latter were a considerable number of Turners. Besides the pictures on the walls, Mr. Bicknell had stowed away others of equal importance.

I shall never forget the thrill I experienced when he produced from a portfolio Turner's four Yorkshire drawings which had never been exposed. At the sale after his death, the Marquis of Hertford sent over an agent with strict orders to buy these four drawings regardless of cost. This was unknown at the time, or there might have been some very spirited bidding, but they were bought in fair competition, and they now hang as part of the Wallace Collection in Hertford House.

There is nothing remarkable in a rich man making a collection of pictures, but it was not so common in the early Victorian days, and this was done entirely at first hand, on his own judgment, and without the aid or intervention of dealers. He had a most extensive knowledge of the works of contemporary English painters, and he must have had a shrewd idea of their pecuniary value and prospects, as the collection sold for about three times its original cost, fetching something about eighty thousand pounds. The sale made a great stir. There were 122 oils, including ten important Turners, and 270 water-colours. ¹

Among other interesting works there hung in the drawing-room a pencil sketch of Turner. According to my recollection it represented him as a squat man dressed in a very ill-fitting kind of frockcoat, and holding a cup and saucer in one hand. The preliminary sketch was made by Landseer at a party at Heme Hill for the assistance of Count D'Orsay, who was accustomed to take portraits of celebrities and publish them. The Count's finished drawing of Turner was afterwards lithographed and sold in the usual manner.

1 The Oil Paintings By Turner Included —
Antwerp: Van Goyen looking out for a subject.
Helvoetsluys: The City of Utrecht; 64 going to Sea.
Ivy Bridge, Devonshire.

Wreckers: Coast of Northumberland; Steamboat assisting Ship off the Shore.

Calder Bridge, Cumberland.

Venice: The Campo Santo.

Venice: The Giudecca, Santa Maria della Salute, and San Giorgio Maggiore.

Ehrenbreitstein.

Port Ruysdael.

Palestrina.

The Water-colours Included —

The Himalaya Mountains.

The Rhigi.

The Castle Elz near Coblenz.

Rouen: Chateau Gaillard.

Lake of Lucerne.

The Four Yorkshire Drawings.

1. Scarborough Castle.

2. Mowbray Lodge, Ripon.

3. The Moor: Grouse Shooting (dogs painted by Stubbs).

4. Woodcock Shooting.

Mr. Bicknell was, however, restricted in his appreciation of art, and only cared for modern work. On returning from an extensive tour in Italy, undertaken for the purpose of seeing works of art, I remember hearing him say he had not seen a picture he would give a damn for.

In appearance he was a biggish man, with a florid complexion and a rather thick utterance, which in his children became converted into an extreme difficulty with the letter “ r “. In order to improve their speech some of them, at all events, were taught elocution by a distinguished actor, Alfred Wigan. Whether it was owing to his efforts, or some other reason, the difficulty disappeared as they attained adult age.

There were seven children, all above the average in personal appearance and intelligence. The eldest daughter, Mrs. Berry, was handsome, a large woman, with splendid physique, regular features, and fine colouring, altogether a very striking personage. Once she had to appear in a county court in consequence of repudiating some claim. The plaintiff, in course of explaining the hardness of his treatment, described how he had actually

applied at the house, and been sent empty away. "Did you see Mrs. Berry herself?" said the Judge. "I cannot remember," said the plaintiff. "What?" said the Judge. "You have seen Mrs. Berry in the witness box, and you cannot remember whether you have seen her before!"

The eldest son by the second wife, Hermann, had a brilliant and versatile intellect, but probably on account of having command of too much money did not possess sufficient stability to keep for long in one groove. He began as surgeon in the Indian Army, but as regimental doctoring was not to his taste he soon gave it up, and took to travelling in Cashmere and other unfrequented parts of the East. His great achievement, known only to a few, was the pilgrimage to Mecca. The accomplishment of this task required enormous patience and perseverance. He was obliged to learn a great number of details, and to transform himself entirely from a European into an Oriental. He even underwent a painful surgical operation which necessitated some weeks in the Suez hospital, and delayed the pilgrimage a whole year. In spite of all his careful preparations for concealing his heretical identity one little lapse nearly cost him his life, but his dragoman had the wit to say that he was only acting as the orthodox in Cashmere did. However, he remains one of the very few Christians who succeeded in entering Mecca, and coming back again. He meant to write a full account of his adventures, but he was unfortunately prevented doing so by his death. A short statement of the facts appeared in *The Times* of August 1862. In May 1869 he succeeded in entering, in disguise, the shrine of Fatima in the sacred mosque of Kum, which, it is believed, had been seen only once before (in 1821) by a Christian.

The second son, Sidney, lived as a man of means, and though he was for a short time in the Army, he followed no profession, but was an adventurous traveller in many unfrequented parts. He entered Naples with Garibaldi, and wrote a book on the events of the campaign. He was greatly interested in genealogy, and occupied himself in compiling an account of the lives and deaths of the members of three families, viz. the Bicknells, the Brownes, and the Wildes (Mrs. Sidney Bicknell). To accomplish this task he spent a considerable sum of money, and travelled to many places to verify facts from registers, tombstones, and other records. He was greatly interested in my discovery of the name Hablot in Auxerre, and would certainly have journeyed there if he had lived.

In spite of the little encouragement he received he always kept in touch with my father, and in speaking of his early days, he described him as a handsome man, and repeatedly impressed the fact on me. My memory does not run to that — I do not know that it ever crossed my mind to consider whether he was good-looking or not. I saw my cousin for the last time a few weeks before his death in the autumn of 1911.

The youngest son, Clarence, has lived for many years in the Riviera. He has distinguished himself, I believe, in botany, and published a work on the flora of his district. He is an ardent propagandist of Esperanto.

The house at Heme Hill was a delightful one at which to visit, not only on account of the profusion and excellence of its art treasures, but from the certainty of meeting, especially on Sundays, a number of men occupying distinguished positions in the world of art.

Hither too, but before my time, came frequently a vehement young man who was greatly attached to my aunt. He would read to her long screeds of a work in manuscript. Sometimes he would set the whole household running about fetching colours, brushes, paper, that he might on the spur of the moment copy a flower from the conservatory. He was supposed to be brilliantly clever, and in the course of a few years became recognised as one of our most original and eloquent writers. He was the son of a near neighbour, and his name — John Ruskin.

Ruskin's fame is part of the glory of English literature. The passion, splendour, and opulence of his style will attract readers for sheer delight, long after his detailed opinions on art have become waste paper. But he has before him a certain immortality in virtue of his works on social science, for in remodelling political economy by the light of Christian ethics he was original and sound.

During the latter years of his life, the workings of his great intellect were hampered by illness. As he had no immediate family he would have had a long period of solitary suffering, but fortunately that was not the case. There were relations who loved and understood him, and devoted their lives in tending on him, so that to the end he lived in the midst of the beautiful Lake country he loved so well. The nation's gratitude is due to Mr. and Mrs. Severn for their unwearied care of John Ruskin in the day of his trouble and darkness.

From the beginning he was capricious in his opinions, and very unwilling to accept a lead from anybody. Mr. Bicknell told me that one day on leaving

the dining-room Ruskin's attention was strongly attracted by a large picture by Calcott, called "Crossing the Brook," which hung over the mantelpiece. It was a picture of lofty trees and cattle crossing a shallow stream, the whole suffused with a golden light expressive of the sentiment of evening calm. Ruskin appeared to be looking at it with great enjoyment. Bicknell, after waiting some time, said, "How do you like it, John?" "I don't like it at all," he replied; "I don't care for cows in a ditch," thus exhibiting on a small scale those traits which afterwards became characteristic. The tendency to refuse to acquiesce in an opinion because it was expressed by another, and to deprive a subject of its rights by describing it in lower terms, as in the substitution of the ditch for the ford, was a very effective stroke, but neither truthful nor fair.

I met Mr. Ruskin many years afterwards at the house of Mr. Philip Rathbone. Mr. Ruskin sat surrounded by a bevy of ladies, mostly young, like a modern Apollo in the midst of muses and nymphs. He was holding a desultory conversation after the manner of some philosophers who ask questions and allow their disciples to arrive at the goal by dint of answers which require reiterated correction to make them within a measurable distance of the truth, after the fashion of children playing "man and his object," which are ultimately named by players who are entirely ignorant of both. I only remember one instance. The professor asked, "What is the characteristic of Greek art?" A very pink young lady opined that it was "Strong." "My dear," said Mr. Ruskin in a very soft voice, "the Devil is strong," and for a time the nymphs were covered with confusion.

The number and importance of Mr. Bicknell's examples certainly contributed a good deal to enhance the appreciation of Turner's gifts, and when we consider that Mr. Ruskin, senior, had also a number of very valuable Turners, we can see how the early life of John Ruskin was so strongly influenced. He had that intimate knowledge which only an early and daily association with these pictures could have furnished, and he brought to bear on the subject an astonishing store of natural facts and phenomena. No flower that grew on the earth, no branch that sprung from a tree, no cloud that floated in the sky, but had been watched and noted, and grouped in his wonderful memory. He endeavoured to coax and coerce painters into an accurate observation and a laborious imitation of natural objects, and he was always ready, out of his accumulated knowledge, to vituperate against anyone who failed in any minute particular. He certainly

had immense influence, and if he could have produced genius, instead of merely stimulating patient industry, he might have founded an immortal school of painting. As it was, it merely resulted in a number of transcripts from Nature so elaborately finished and crowded with bud and blossom, that the pictures could not be seen for the botany. But though his precepts and criticisms of painting are no longer greatly valued, his expositions of the principles of architecture are still of abiding interest and value.

Although the merits and beauties of Gothic architecture had been excellently described, both by writing and drawing, by such men as Pugin, Rickman, and Petit, no one but John Ruskin had laid open the inmost and secret meaning of the art of the Middle Ages. By his upbringing he was narrowly Evangelical, yet his innate sense of rectitude enabled him to see the spiritual and moral side of the great mediaeval builders and decorators. He described their technique as deriving its perfection from the underlying piety of the heart rather than from their academic practice of the hand. He disentangled beauty from prettiness. He was more than enthusiastic in his praise of their workmanship. He was also, characteristically, so unfair in his denunciation of all forms of Classic and Renaissance architecture, that no one dare look at it sideways. He positively revolutionised English thought and taste for a time, and if Gothic architecture could by any possibility





SKETCHES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Probably connected with a series illustrating the five senses — a favourite subject Pen and ink on scraps of letter paper.

have been adapted to modern wants, our land would have been covered by imitations and modifications of thirteenth-century work. What really did happen was the erection of a few churches which were actual forgeries of old work, and things like the museum at Oxford.

He began by contributing a series of papers to the *Architectural Magazine* for 1837 on the poetry of architecture, under the *nom de plume* of Kata Phusin (according to Nature). He says himself in the preface to their collection in book form, “The adoption of a *nom de plume* at all implied (as also the concealment of name on the first publication of *Modern Painters*) a sense of a power of judgment in myself which it would not have been becoming in a youth of eighteen to claim.”

He is generally classed as a critic, but he was deficient in the essential qualities of good criticism. He had no sense of justice; he was in reality a great special pleader, and he had the quality of many great special pleaders, of aiding his cause by material which might be effective, but was certainly not veracious. His great book *Modern Painters* had as an avowed theme a

demonstration of the greatness and superiority of Turner over every landscape painter of any nation and of any time. In order to make this an effective plea, and addressing himself to the jury and ignoring the judge (who might probably ask for confirmation of the evidence), he described an imaginary Turner, neglected, persecuted, and dying of a broken heart. It is hardly credible to the present generation how the intelligent and right-thinking people of the sentimental early Victorian time were moved by this pathetic picture. It did not seem to occur to them that a man might be a fine painter and at the same time a prosperous man, so they wasted their tears on the greatest literary bogus of any age.

As a matter of fact, Turner in youth met with an intelligent patron, was admitted an Associate of the Royal Academy at a very early age, had rich men clamouring at his door for pictures that he refused to sell, and died leaving a very large fortune and those of his pictures that he considered his masterpieces to form an integral part of the National Collection.

Though, as I have said, I think the Ruskin and Bicknell Turners had a great influence in forming John Ruskin's mind, I do not think he ever influenced Mr. Bicknell's taste in the slightest degree. Mr. Bicknell had made up his mind about Turner before Ruskin was breeched, and he had that instinctive taste which is an inborn quality with some men, and the faculty of knowing what he liked and what he did not. He was certainly never persuaded into admiring any of the pre-Raphaelites, who started with Mr. Ruskin as fogleman. I never remember him taking any notice of them except his saying as a sort of pleasantry, " Millais was always bought by telegraph."

Mr. Ruskin, I need hardly remind my readers, poured forth pamphlets, articles, letters to the newspapers, to prove that Turner was really a pre-Raphaelite in disguise, that his young friends were always in the right, and everybody else considerably in the wrong. No one who did not experience it can imagine the excitement at the time. The pamphlets reached the man in the street, or were read aloud at dinner in ladies' schools. All the world talked about Ruskin, or apologetically endeavoured to stand up for the other side. Mr. Ruskin continued his denunciations, sometimes with the acerbity of Serjeant Buzfuz, and sometimes with the haughty majesty of a Hebrew prophet. He dictated for the sake of dictating, and he brooked no opposition. In an evil hour he ran across Mr. Whistler, whose work was the antithesis of anything of which he had ever approved. He said " he had lived long

enough to see a coxcomb ask £200 for flinging a paint-pot in the public's face." No man in a public position had a right to call another a coxcomb, even if he had a white lock and carried a long walking-stick.

Harmless eccentricities are the individual right of any man, and certainly do not affect the quality of the painter's work. Whistler resembled the creature described by the French naturalist, "cet animal est tres mechant; quand on l'attaque il se defend."

"Mr. Ruskin," said Whistler, "had no right to criticise pictures. He is not acquainted with the art of painting." "What?" said Mr. Ruskin; "I not acquainted with the art of painting? I have passed my life in contemplation of the old masters." "So," said Whistler, "has the policeman in the National Gallery."

An action at law like that which followed cannot, in the nature of things, bear any relation to serious criticism, and the astonishing effect apparently produced was not due to the verdict, but to the demonstration of the fact that a revolution had silently taken place, and was successful. Mr. Whistler's gibe was as unfair as any of Mr. Ruskin's contemptuous phrases, but it was more fatal, because it was supported by an open contempt of all those standards of right and wrong that had been carefully set up and implicitly believed.

According to the new view, a picture was to be judged by a competent painter on account of the quality of its paint, and not by a moralist on account of its didactic lesson. It is not the story, nor the archaeology, nor even the imitation of natural objects that count. It is the sheer quality of the paint, tone, colour, harmony, and abstract beauty. A picture is an affair of the effect produced upon the eye of the spectator by the eye and the hand of the painter. A difficult and strait gate to enter, and the early Victorian had learnt to walk in a very different path. Mr. Whistler had the courage of his opinions. He had the conviction born of experience, that an easy dab of the brush with exactly the right colour could only be acquired by years of devoted labour and a specially trained mind and hand. So that a hasty scrub of a big brush might really be more laborious than elaborate stippling in spots that could only be seen by a magnifying glass.

When the Grosvenor Gallery was first opened, with the avowed intention of showing works which did not conform to the academical standard, a friend of mine saw in the catalogue, let us say 240, a Nocturne in grey and green, and 301, a Harmony in rose and silver, by Mr. Whistler. On looking

at the pictures the colours appeared reversed, as he noticed that 301 had certainly a prevailing tint of green, and 240 of rose and silver. After puzzling over this for some time, mistrusting his own judgment and fancying he was going colour-blind, he made his way to the secretary, and told him there was an error in the catalogue. "Oh," he said, "hundreds of people have pointed it out to us, and we have told Mr. Whistler." "What did Mr. Whistler say?" "He said it did not matter a damn." Nor did it.

But behind all the flourish there remains a solid rule for guidance in appreciating any artistic works, namely, that under all circumstances the best and worst criticism must involve the personal impression of the spectator, and in spite of all that may be said by the professional critic, an intellectually honest man will judge a work of art in proportion as it embodies qualities he thinks desirable; and the lesson to be derived is, that we can no more afford to be intolerant in art than we can in religion. No one can know more than a little of either, and a word may even be said for the policeman in our National Collection.

Two young artists were wandering in South Kensington, and they came upon a cast of Rodin's "Saint John the Baptist." The work is in the Luxembourg, and the reader will remember that the sculptor has desired to show that the great message was not sent to the world by a person of surpassing beauty and royal appearance, but by a poor peasant, worn and deformed by poverty and toil, and consequently with no comeliness of shape nor pleasant proportions.

My young friends, with their minds full of academic grace, proceeded after the manner of artists to view the work with much gesticulation and drawing of imaginary lines with their hands, shading their eyes, and discussing the proportions and so forth with great vigour. They especially fell foul of the left shoulder, and they were arranging for a great many alterations to be made to bring this statue into conformity with their ideas. So doing, they became conscious of a stealthy step behind them, and a voice said, "Admiring the Evangelist, gentlemen?" They said, "Well, not exactly admiring, we were criticising. We don't like this," and they pointed, "and we don't like that," and again they fell foul of the left shoulder. The guardian said, "We've got eighteen St. John's on the premises, and I do say for sheer downright ugliness this one takes the cake."

CHAPTER V

DICKENS AND SOME OF HIS ILLUSTRATORS

On the whole Dickens seems to have agreed well with his illustrators, which is more than can be said of many authors, who as a race are touchy, and often as difficult to please as fond mothers with the portraits of their children. He does not seem to have had any very strong perception of the artistic side of drawing and painting, and did not always realise that literary exaggeration can only be represented by caricature.

The basis of his observation of character was a very remarkable realism, to which he added all sorts of ornaments and exaggerations for dramatic presentation. He seems to have been quite unconscious that in some instances the realism was obscured by ornamentation, and that the realist was not apparent.

For literary purposes the outward appearance of a character can be so described as to seem quite independent of, or even opposed to, his moral nature. For pictorial purposes they must agree; it is all very well to write that a man “ may smile and smile and be a villain,” but it would be beyond the powers of a draughtsman to make a man smile so as to appear genial, and yet make it apparent that he has a black soul within. He must either look a villain, or he won't represent one. That is where the enormous capacity of the stage for complete expression of emotion is most apparent. An actor by his elocution represents the literary side, and by his facial expression becomes his own illustrator.

In the ordinary routine of business a design was drawn and submitted to Dickens, who made any suggestions that occurred to him, which the illustrator cheerfully adopted. Whether it was from accident that this precautionary measure was omitted or some other reason, on some few occasions the work seems to have passed into its final stage without his having seen the sketch, and in certain instances he did not see the drawings till they were included in the complete book. The first in order of time was an illustration by Cruikshank in *Oliver Twist*, representing Rose Maylie and

Oliver standing in front of the memorial tablet put up in memory of Oliver's mother. With this Dickens seems to have been disappointed, and writes in the following manner to Cruikshank: "Without entering into the question of great haste, or any other cause, which may have led to its being what it is, I am quite sure there can be little difference of opinion between us with respect to the result. May I ask you whether you will object to designing this plate afresh, and doing so *at once*, in order that as few impressions as possible of the present one may go forth? I feel confident you know me too well to feel hurt by this enquiry, and with equal confidence in you I have lost no time in preferring it."

I have not had an opportunity of seeing the original plate, but the revised version is certainly tame and undistinguished.

Then again he disapproves of the sketches made by Leech and Doyle for two illustrations in *The Chimes*. Here both the artists failed in the representation of character according to the author's ideas. Owing to his absence in Italy Dickens did not see the designs, and on his return arranged to have fresh drawings made, as the following letter to his wife explains: —

"Dec. 2nd, 1844,
"Piazza Coffee House,
"Covent Garden.

"The little book is now, as far as I am concerned, all ready. One cut of Doyle's and one of Leech's I found so unlike my ideas, that I had them both to breakfast with me this morning, and with that winning manner which you know of, got them with the highest good humour to do both afresh. They are now hard at it."

On another occasion Dickens considered that Leech had egregiously erred in his illustration to *The Battle of Life* in representing Michael Warden accompanying Marion in flight. Dickens writes from Paris to Forster as follows : —

"When I first saw it, it was with a horror and agony not to be expressed. Of course I need not tell you, my dear fellow, Warden has no business in the elopement scene. He was never there! In the first hot sweat of this surprise and novelty I was going to implore the printing of that sheet to be stopped, and the figure taken out of the block. But when I thought of the pain that this might give to our kind-hearted Leech, and that what is such a monstrous enormity to me, as never having entered my brain, may not so

present itself to others, I became more composed, though the fact is wonderful to me.”

On this I would remark that our dear delightful Dickens, who when dealing with a comic situation is clear, precise, and lucid, in describing a serious and sentimental incident, is often obscure, and contrives to involve circumstances, which might be advantageously told plainly, in a fog of mystery which is never cleared away.

We may remind the reader that we first make acquaintance with Dr. Jeddler's ward, Alfred Heathfield, when he is setting out for three years' residence on the Continent to perfect his medical knowledge. He is betrothed to his guardian's youngest daughter, Marion, and it is understood he is to marry her on his return. At the moment of parting we are given a hint that the course of true love may not be altogether smooth, for Grace, the eldest sister, is active in her farewells, and Marion remains inexplicably silent. Alfred says, “ Marion, dearest heart, goodbye! Sister Grace! remember!” The quiet household figure, and the face so beautiful in its serenity, were turned towards him in reply; but Marion's look and attitude remained unchanged. The coach was at the gate. There was a bustle with the luggage. The coach drove away. Marion never moved. “He waves his hat to you, my love,” said Grace. “Your chosen husband, darling. Look!” The younger sister raised her head, and, for a moment, turned it. Then, turning back again, and fully meeting, for the first time, those calm eyes, fell sobbing on her neck. “Oh, Grace. God bless you! But I cannot bear to see it, Grace! It breaks my heart.” Nearly three years after, Michael Warden, the young squire of the district, has an interview with his lawyers, Craggs and Snitchey, concerning the management of his nearly ruined estate. At the same time he announces he is in love with Marion. The lawyer Snitchey tells him she is engaged. Warden replies, women have been known to change their minds. He says, “ I mean, if I can, to marry Marion, the doctor's lovely daughter, and to carry her away with me. I am not going to carry the young lady off without her own consent. There's nothing illegal in it.” Mr. Snitchey says, “It can't be done. She dotes on Mr. Alfred.” Warden says, “I did not live six weeks some few months ago in the doctor's house for nothing, and I doubted that soon. She would have doted on him if her sister could have brought it about, but I watched them. Marion avoided his name, avoided the subject, shrunk from the least allusion to it, with evident distress.

“But I mean to do the doctor no wrong or harm, but I hope to rescue his child, my Marion, from what I see. I know she dreads and contemplates with misery, that is, the return of this old lover. If anything in the world is true, ‘tis that she dreads his return.”

Michael arranges to leave the country that day month. On the same day a letter is received by the doctor from Alfred, saying he will return that day month. Soon after this we learn that Michael Warden, after the family have retired to rest, has a clandestine interview with Marion in the garden, with the sole connivance of Clemency, the old servant.

“Sorrowing and wondering, Clemency turned the key, and opened the door. Into the dark and doubtful night that lay beyond the threshold Marion passed quickly, holding by her hand. In the dark night he joined her, and they spoke together earnestly and long: and the hand that held so fast by Clemency’s now trembled, now turned deadly cold, and now clasped and closed on hers, in the strong feeling of speech it emphasized unconsciously. When they returned, he followed her to the door; and pausing there a moment, seized the other hand, and pressed it to his lips, then stealthily withdrew. The door was barred and locked again, and once again she stood beneath her father’s roof. Not bowed down by the secret she had brought there, though so young, but with that same expression on her face, for which I had no name before, and shining through her tears. Again she thanked and thanked her humble friend, and trusted to her, as she said, with confidence implicitly. Her chamber safely reached, she fell upon her knees, and with her secret weighing on her heart, could pray! Could rise up from her prayers, so tranquil and serene, and bending over her fond sister in her slumber, look upon her face and smile, though sadly, murmuring as she kissed her forehead, how that Grace had been a mother to her, ever, and she loved her as a child! Could draw the passive arm about her neck when lying down to rest — it seemed to cling there, of its own will, protectingly and tenderly even in sleep — and breathe upon the parted lips, God bless her! Could sink into a peaceful sleep, herself, but for one dream, in which she cried out, in her innocent and touching voice, that she was quite alone, and they had all forgotten her.”

The lawyer has another long interview with Michael Warden, who definitely arranged to go away an hour before midnight, when the tide serves. On the day of Alfred’s return Dr. Jeddler is giving a party to

welcome the traveller home. Towards the end of the party, shortly before Alfred's return, Marion quits her home, without acquainting anyone of the intention, but she leaves a letter saying she has made her innocent and blameless choice, and entreats they will forgive her. He disappears at the same time as Marion; they both disappear into the darkness of the night. He returns without warning six years afterwards on the same day that she returns to her family, and it is only then that Marion explains the motive which actuated her.

The foregoing is the full and particular account of the occurrence, and it must be obvious that if Dickens did not intentionally mislead the reader, he did so accidentally. The account certainly presents that appearance. Leech not having been specially warned, fell into the trap, as any ordinary reader must have done.

In the illustration by Maclise, Michael Warden is shown with his hand on his heart (the right-hand side!), and Marion is holding Clemency's hand, so that Michael Warden seemed indubitably to have a finger in the pie.

At another time a difficulty arose over one of my father's illustrations to *Dombey and Son*. At the time he began the book Dickens was abroad, and he indicates subjects for illustration, not directly to Browne, but by letter to Forster. Among them he suggested "The best subject for Browne will be at Mrs. Pipchin's, and if he liked to do a quiet odd thing, Paul, Mrs. Pipchin and the cat by the fire, would be very good for the story." Dickens does not seem to have seen the sketch, but when he saw the illustration, he expressed himself as grievously



ILLUSTRATION TO “THE BATTLE OF LIFE.”

By J. Leech, showing Michael Warden eloping with Marion.

disappointed with what he considered a misrepresentation of the text. Here follows the text: —

“This celebrated Mrs. Pipchin was a marvellous ill-favoured, ill-conditioned old lady, of a stooping figure, with a mottled face like bad marble, a hook nose, and a hard grey eye, that looked as if it might have been hammered at on an anvil without sustaining any injury. At this exemplary old lady, Paul would sit staring in his little arm-chair by the fire for any length of time. He never seemed to know what weariness was, when he was looking fixedly at Mrs. Pipchin. He was not fond of her, he was not afraid of her; but in those odd moods of his, she seemed to have a grotesque attraction for him. There he would sit, looking at her, and warming his hands, and looking at her, until he sometimes quite confounded Mrs. Pipchin, Ogress as she was.

“From that time, Mrs. Pipchin appeared to have something of the same odd kind of attraction towards Paul, as Paul had towards her. She would make him move his chair to her side of the fire, instead of sitting opposite;

and there he would remain in a nook between Mrs. Pipchin and the fender, with all the light of his little face absorbed into the black bombazeen drapery, studying every line and wrinkle of her countenance, and peering at the hard grey eye, until Mrs. Pipchin was fain to shut it, on pretence of dozing. Mrs. Pipchin had an old black cat, who generally lay coiled upon the centre foot of the fender, purring egotistically, and winking at the fire until the contracted pupils of his eyes were like two notes of admiration. The good old lady might have been — not to record it disrespectfully — a witch, and Paul and the cat her two familiars, as they all sat by the fire together.”

The above extract contains every word of description that could be of any guide to the illustrator. Her hard grey eye, her mottled complexion, quite incapable of representation in black and white. Dickens in his mind’s eye had in view an old lady with whom he lodged in Camden-town during that period of misery and suffering at the blacking warehouse. In an account of his own life he writes to Forster as follows: —

“The key of the house was sent back to the landlord, who was very glad to get it; and I (small Cain that I was, except that I had never done harm to anyone) was handed over as a lodger to a reduced old lady, long known to our family, in Little-college Street, Camden-town, who took children in to board, and had once done so at Brighton; and who, with a few alterations and embellishments, unconsciously began to sit for Mrs. Pipchin in *Dombey*, when she took me in. She had a little brother and sister under her care then; somebody’s natural children, who were very irregularly paid for; and a widow’s little son. The two boys and I slept in the same room. My own exclusive breakfast, of a penny cottage loaf and a pennyworth of milk, I provided for myself. I kept another small loaf, and a quarter of a pound of cheese, on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard.”

The etching evidently did not correspond with Dickens’ preconceived idea, and he writes in his exaggerated manner: —

“I am really distressed by the illustration of Mrs. Pipchin and Paul. It is so frightfully and wildly wide of the mark. Good Heaven! In the commonest and most literal construction of the text, it is all wrong. She is

described as an old lady, and Paul's 'miniature arm-chair' is mentioned more than once. He ought to be sitting in a little arm-chair down in the corner of the fireplace, staring up at her. I can't say what pain and vexation it is to be so utterly misrepresented. I would cheerfully have given a hundred pounds to have kept this illustration out of the book. He never could have got that idea of Mrs. Pipchin if he had attended to the text. Indeed I think he does better without the text; for then the notion is made easy to him in short description, and he can't help taking it in."

In regard to the chair, it is mentioned in an earlier part of the book as a miniature arm-chair, and once as a "little chair" and as "his chair" without any qualifying adjective. Two points may be noticed. Dickens was thinking of a particular old lady, and expected to see her in the illustration, and was therefore disappointed when he saw Browne's old lady; who was similar, but not the same, and, Dickens imagined, or remembered, a child's chair with short legs, but Browne imagined a child's chair with long legs, and a foot-rest, but it is not "frightfully and wildly wide of the mark," and of course there is an artistic reason for putting little Paul where he is, as to have put him lower down would have left a gap in the composition, and Paul is seated in a nook between Mrs. Pipchin and the fireplace. Sir Frederick Wedmore, the distinguished art critic, in a comparison between Browne's drawing and etching, speaks thus: "In *Dombey* the drawing of Dr. Blimber walking out with his 'young gentlemen' excels in fine expressiveness the etching, good as that is; and desirable as the etchings are to possess, seeing that the first copies cannot be multiplied, it is to be feared the superiority of the drawing must be again allowed in the lovely design of little Dombey sitting up in his high chair under Mrs. Pipchin's mantelpiece, and in that of the devoted Florence doing Paul's exercises while a stupid companion slumbers by the wall. In a word, the drawings are often better than the prints, because though Hablot Browne was an expressive etcher and handled the needle artfully, yet his command was more curiously complete over one of the most delicate tools ever invented for the suggestion of the artistic fancy — the common lead-pencil."

The conclusion inevitably forced upon us is that Dickens was suffering from a nervous breakdown of a nature that makes the slightest contretemps unbearable, and also suffering (in consequence of the approaching death of little Paul) from that species of emotion which he had formerly experienced

when he approached the death of Nell in the *Old Curiosity Shop*. One thing is certain, that this dissatisfaction never reached Browne's ears, for he was so good-natured, prolific and rapid, that he would have thought nothing of producing another plate. At the beginning of the work, when he desired to know from Dickens what *Dombey* was like, he did not merely sketch off one head, but twenty-nine; and Dickens himself, in writing of the cover, says, "I think the cover very good, perhaps with a little too much in it, but that is an ungrateful objection." But to show that the most intimate acquaintance with the text will not always preserve even the author (let alone the illustrator) from making small slips, we find Dickens himself describing old Sol "squeezing both the Captain's hands with uncommon fervour." Well may we say "in the commonest and most literal construction of the text it is all wrong," as everybody knows Captain Cuttle had only one hand and a hook. But the fact is, no text or set of illustrations is likely to be found without errors which have crept in and escaped correction. That Dickens afterwards thought enormously highly of the drawings can be seen by the following letter: —

Devonshire Terrace,
Thirteenth June, 1848.

My Dear Browne, — A thousand thanks for the *Dombey* sketches, which I shall preserve and transmit as heirlooms.

This afternoon, or Thursday, I shall be near the whereabouts of the boy in the flannel gown, and will pay him an affectionate visit. But I warn you, now and beforehand (and this is final you'll observe),

with my kindest and affectionate

down a sulphurous trap, with the
boy in my grasp — and you with pleasure
not to imagine him merely in my grasp,
but to hand him over.

For which this is your warrant
and requirement.

(Signed)

Witness
William
Topping
his
groom

Charles Dickens

that you are not a-going to back out of the pigmental finishing of said
boy, for if ever I had a boy of my own, that boy is
MINE!

and, as the Demon says at the Surrey,
I CLAIM MY VICTIM.

HA! HA! HA!

at which you will imagine me going down a sulphurous trap, with the boy
in my grasp — and you will please not to imagine him merely in my grasp,
but to hand him over.

For which this is your warrant and requirement.

(Signed) Charles Dickens.

Witness: William Topping, his groom.

CHAPTER VI

THE REPUTED ORIGINALS OF SOME DICKENS CHARACTERS

Among the minor celebrities whom I ought to mention are Samuel Carter Hall and Anna Maria, his wife. They were connecting links between art and literature. He was the Editor of the *Art Journal*, an excellent illustrated periodical. Each number had three line-engravings, sundry woodcuts, besides letterpress. Amongst other things they published engravings of a considerable number of Turner's best pictures. Jointly the Halls produced a big book on Ireland, its people, scenery, and characters. It was lavishly illustrated; I believe my father had something to do with it, but I cannot clearly remember how much. Although he was the figure-head, she was supposed to carry the brains. In later times he had fictitious celebrity on account of being the reputed model for Pecksniff. It is true he did affect that mild and persuasive piety that is imputed to the character, but the resemblance went no farther. We must remember Dickens' uncomfortable trick of compounding his



"WINE."

*Design in red chalk for a decorative panel on a sideboard, one of a pair.
The other represents "WATER." *Artists' Studio* vol. 26, p. 636.*

characters from more than one original, and it must not be supposed that Hall resembled Pecksniff in anything but an unctuous manner and a godly way of speech. Pecksniff was before all things a sneaking, contriving villain, hiding his wickedness under an appearance of godliness and high morality. There was no reason to suppose that Hall was anything but what he seemed. It was the fashion of the time to be pious, and to let your piety be known. Hall was only a rather more brilliant performer in an art which had many professors. Among the general public Hall was probably accepted at his own valuation, but literary men generally, from Moliere downwards, have been suspicious and intolerant of any kind of hypocrisy; they are not allured, but repelled. This is illustrated by Tom Hood in his Ode to Rae Wilson, where the groom, speaking of the overreaching nature of a man who was trying to sell a house, says:

“He axed surely a sum prodigious,
And drove a bargain precious hard,
But being so particularly religious,
Why, that, you see, put Master on his guard.”

Although Hall happened to exhibit the means of hiding a villainous nature, it does not necessarily follow that he had a villainous nature to hide. Dickens undoubtedly had a genuine dislike for his ways. Probably his connection with art was the occult reason why Mr. Pecksniff happened to be an architect, and he was moved to the neighbourhood of Salisbury to cover up the trail, for assuredly there was not the slightest reason given why he was placed there; indeed, it seems an inconvenient and unpropitious place for an architect, and especially inconvenient for the assemblage of relations of whom we have a transient glimpse in the opening chapters.

I saw S. C. Hall a good many years after the publication of *Chuzzlewit*; he then appeared to be a benevolent, kindly, white-haired old gentleman, profoundly interested in Spiritualism. It was at a séance, whereto a considerable company was invited to witness the doings of a man (a medium) and a boy and girl (subjects), humbugs all three. Hall seemed to me one of the most credulous of the party, and swallowed any bait that was cast before him. The performance was of a low type, consisting of tricks that could have been performed in a show at a fair. The girl assumed a cataleptic rigidity, and defied the efforts of strong men to bind her limbs. She also raised a stout man in an arm-chair from the ground. Under various guises these tricks have been seen before and since, and their success sometimes said to be due to electricity or animal magnetism, well-known causes of the miraculous when spiritual influence runs short. The boy was strongly magnetic, and was said to be greatly affected by metals. When he was told to touch the brass handle of a door, he shied and whimpered, and betrayed intense reluctance to go near it. Being violently scolded by the man, with many contortions he shuffled across the room, and was finally made to touch the door handle with the tips of his fingers. At the moment of contact he was thrown violently back, and fell on the floor in a sort of epileptic fit. Then occurred a unrehearsed incident. He seated himself on the corner of a sofa in a sulky attitude. An old gentleman who had shown a lively interest in his proceedings sat down by him, and set to work to feel his head. Suddenly there was a yell of terror, a snarl, a struggle, the boy had turned, and was seen to be busily engaged in throttling his tormentor. He was dragged off, and the old gentleman, as soon as he could recover a little breath, exclaimed with great satisfaction, "I must have touched the bump of combativeness." The boy did not smile, but he had evidently enjoyed his

triumph, and as he was obviously acting under spiritual influence, he was admired, and even the old phrenologist was gratified.

Those were the days of table-turning, when people asked their friends to dinner, and passed the evening furniture moving. The spirits had many a lively evening, but tables have since then quieted down under the mundane influence of "bridge." But to believe in spiritual agencies playing foolish pranks under the guidance of a third-rate conjurer is certainly not in any sense of the word wicked, and Hall's amiable weakness is not mentioned in connection with Pecksniff, but it must be owned that there was no special characteristic about Pecksniff clearly identifying him with Hall. A reader who knew Hall might read the account of Pecksniff without suspecting the source of his origin, so no one could have any cause for grievance.

But it was different in the case of Leigh Hunt, whom Dickens confessedly used as a model for Harold Skimpole in *Bleak House*. He was, besides being Editor of the *Examiner*, a poet and pleasant essayist, a great supporter of Keats, and though he might appear to be nothing greater than a literary man with elegant tastes, there was in him an underlying vein of seriousness sufficiently deep to get him into trouble. He was imprisoned for two years on account of libelling or defaming the character of the Prince Regent. Though technically amenable to the law, public sympathy was on his side, and in the present day he would properly be considered an upholder of morality. Thackeray, a few years later, expressed the same sort of view of the same exalted personage with full approbation of everybody. Hunt was a kind of Socialist, and like many of the species, had a convenient notion that it was only right and proper that those who were better off than himself should supply his needs when he was in low water, and as high tide very seldom occurred, he had not the opportunity of testing the truth of his theory by applying it in an opposite direction. His manner of living and speaking is amusingly caricatured in Skimpole, and not altogether untruthfully, but unfortunately he is made at the same time to appear as an unscrupulous man, hiding his irregularities under an affectation of childishness. The idea that Skimpole was intended as a portrait of Leigh Hunt got abroad at a very early date, and circulated as a bit of mischievous gossip, even before the number in which he first appears was published, and so well was the imitation executed, that Forster and Barry Cornwall saw a resemblance, and solemnly warned Dickens of the danger he was running.

But Hunt, however irresponsibly he might talk, would not have covered a bad action by persiflage. He would never have taken a bribe from a scheming attorney, nor would he have behaved inhumanly towards a poor castaway like "Jo," as Skimpole did. A man who had gone into prison for conscience' sake had surely a strong hold on the distinction between right and wrong. Dickens was warned of the trouble that was likely to arise, and it seems strange that he did not entirely suppress the objectionable parts of the character. It was no unusual thing for him to have a carefully worked out amusing character who had no particular connection with the plot, and Skimpole might have been paired off against Mrs. Jellaby as living contentedly in a prodigious muddle, in contrast to the orderliness of Bleak House, or the formality of Chesney Wold, and no great harm would have been done. Dickens, however, clung obstinately to the objectionable character he had originally compounded, and when he found that Hunt was naturally hurt and offended, he was obliged to apologise, but he did so reluctantly. But it is radically a faulty method to ingraft the traits that belong to an artificial character on to one that is natural. However inconsistent a man's actions may be, he is always himself, and not sometimes another person. Skimpole in his way was a humbug, a cheerful humbug, and the light and airy way in which he describes his pleasure in the sunshine, fruit, and wine is certainly entertaining, and without offence might have been allowed as bearing a resemblance to the harmless affectations of a poetic genius. But you cannot invite a reader to separate characteristics which are harmless and genuine from those which are fictitious and detestable. We scarcely need Dickens' disclaimer that he intended no harm, but he certainly was betrayed into doing a wrong both to his model and to the character he intended to portray. He evidently was under the impression that he had altered some of the marks of likeness, for he writes to Forster, " Browne has done Skimpole, and helped to make him singularly unlike the great original." The matter will be made clearer by quotation from Esther's narrative. Mr. Jarndyce, with Esther and Ada, call on Mr. Skimpole at his residence in the Polygon, Somers Town. Esther describes the scene as follows: —

"We went upstairs to the first floor, still seeing no other furniture than the dirty footprints. Mr. Jarndyce, without further ceremony, entered a room there, and we followed. It was dingy enough, and not at all clean, but furnished with an odd kind of shabby luxury, with a large footstool, a sofa,

plenty of cushions, an easy-chair, and plenty of pillows, a piano, books, drawing materials, music, newspapers, and a few sketches and pictures. A broken pane of glass in one of the dirty windows was papered and wafered over; but there was a little plate of hothouse nectarines on the table, and there was another of grapes, and another of sponge cakes, and there was a bottle of light wine. Mr. Skimpole himself reclined upon a sofa in a dressing-gown, drinking some fragrant coffee from an old china cup — it was then about mid-day — and looking at a collection of wallflowers in the balcony. He was not in the least disconcerted by our appearance, but rose and received us in his usual airy manner. ‘Here I am, you see!’ he said when we were seated; not without some little difficulty, the greater part of the chairs being broken. ‘Here I am! This is my frugal breakfast. Some men want legs of beef and mutton for breakfast; I don’t. Give me my peach, my cup of coffee, and my claret; I am content. I don’t want them for themselves, but they remind me of the sun. There’s nothing solar about legs of beef and mutton. Mere animal satisfaction!’ ‘This is our friend’s consulting room (or would be, if ever he prescribed), his sanctum, his studio,’ said my guardian to us. ‘Yes,’ said Mr. Skimpole, turning his bright face about, ‘this is the bird’s cage. This is where the bird lives and sings. They pluck his feathers now and then, and clip his wings; but he sings, he sings!’

“He handed us the grapes, repeating in his radiant way, ‘He sings; not an ambitious note, but still he sings.’ ‘These are very fine,’ said my guardian. ‘A present?’ c No,’ he answered. ‘No! Some amiable gardener sells them. His man wanted to know, when he brought them last evening, whether he should wait for the money. “Really, my friend,” I said, “ I think not — if your time is of any value to you.” I suppose it was, for he went away.’”

This is undeniably Leigh Hunt, and there is no great offence in it.

The second extract tells how “Jo,” the outcast, has been found sick and weary with wandering. Esther takes him home, and shows him to Mr. Jarndyce and Harold Skimpole.

““ This is a sorrowful case,’ said my guardian, after asking him a question or two, and touching him, and examining his eyes. ‘What do you say, Leonard?’ ‘You had better turn him out,’ said Mr. Skimpole. ‘What do you mean?’ enquired my guardian almost sternly. ‘My dear Jarndyce,’ said Mr. Skimpole, ‘you know what I am: I am a child. Be cross to me if I deserve it. But I have a constitutional objection to this sort of thing. I always had,

when I was a medical man. He's not safe, you know. There's a very bad sort of fever about him.' Mr. Skimpole had retreated from the hall to the drawing-room again, and said this in his airy way, seated on the music-stool as we stood by. 'You'll say it's childish,' observed Mr. Skimpole, looking gaily at us. 'Well, I dare say it may be; but I am a child, and I never pretend to be anything else. If you put him out in the road, you only put him where he was before. He will be no worse off than he was, you know. Even make him better off, if you like. Give him sixpence, or five shillings, or five pound ten — you are arithmeticians, and I am not — and get rid of him!' 'And what is he to do then?' asked my guardian. 'Upon my life,' said Mr. Skimpole, shrugging his shoulders with his engaging smile, 'I have not the least idea what he is to do then. But I have no doubt he'll do it.'"

This also is the voice of Harold Skimpole, but the character is completely altered, and certainly very unlike Leigh Hunt, and a serious reflection upon any man's humanity.

The third extract shows how the detective engaged in investigating Mr. Tulkinghorn's murder contrived to get hold of "Jo," who has been put to bed in the loft.

"'He's a queer bird is Harold,' said Mr. Bucket, eyeing me with great expression. 'He is a singular character,' said I. 'No idea of money,' observed Mr. Bucket — 'he takes it though!' I involuntarily returned for answer, that I perceived Mr. Bucket knew him. 'Why, now, I'll tell you, Miss Summerson,' he rejoined. 'Your mind will be all the better for not running on one point too continually, and I'll tell you for a change. It was him as pointed out to me where Toughey was. I made up my mind, that night, to come to the door and ask for Toughey, if that was all; but willing to try a move or so at first, if any such was on the board, I just pitched up a morsel of gravel at that window where I saw a shadow. As soon as Harold opens it and I have had a look at him, thinks I, you're the man for me. So I smoothed him down a bit, about not wanting to disturb the family after they were gone to bed, and about its being a thing to be regretted that charitable young ladies should harbour vagrants; and then, when I pretty well understood his ways, I said I should consider a fypunnote well bestowed if I could relieve the premises of Toughey without causing any noise or trouble. Then says he, lifting up his eyebrows in the gayest way, 'It's no use mentioning a fypunnote to me, my friend, because I'm a mere child in such matters, and have no idea of money.' Of course I understood what his

taking it so easy meant; and being now quite sure he was the man for me, I wrapped the note round a little stone and threw it up to him. Well! He laughs and beams, and looks as innocent as you like, and says, ‘ But I don’t know the value of these things. What am I to *do* with this?’ ‘Spend it, Sir,’ said I. ‘But I shall be taken in,’ he says, ‘they won’t give me the right change, I shall lose it, it’s no use to me.’ Lord, you never saw such a face as he carried with it! Of course he told me where to find Toughy, and I found him.”“

This is also Harold Skimpole, and not Leigh Hunt.

The Leigh Hunt episode was familiarly known to the whole of the inner circle, which was generally well informed on all matters of the kind. London was a comparatively small town, and those who were engaged in the business of amusing the public, however they might hold themselves aloof, lived in a ring fence, and were continually in touch with one another. News spread mysteriously, as it is said to do amongst the Indians, but we must remember that there was a constant intercommunication between authors, artists, engravers, printers, and the like, and anything interesting was continually carried to and fro by a mob of subordinates. What we did not learn from these sources was sure to be filtered to us through Robert Young, who was personally in constant communication with a great variety of people.

The affair was much more widely known than Forster would lead us to suppose, and the general opinion was strongly in favour of Hunt. Dickens, however, was supposed to have done his best to have put matters right. It was a case for radical measures, and Dickens only tried palliation. After owning that Hunt was the great original, and thereby settling the matter, he tried to persuade himself that it was equally fitting to 50,000 other people, which, as Euclid wisely observes, is absurd. After successfully making Hunt’s airy manner exactly fit Skimpole, he took great pains to destroy the likeness, and probably by taking out some of the caricature left the reality more apparent. He says that he has done something by changing the name Leonard to that of Harold, but the reader will notice that the original name still remains in the second quotation, where Mr. Jarndyce addresses Skimpole as Leonard, thus illustrating the incompleteness of the reconstruction.

There is no doubt Dickens floundered and failed to extricate himself. The episode is interesting in supplying a little light on Dickens’ method of

working up a character. Having joined two incompatible characters, he so fused and welded them by the fire of his imagination that they became one, and consequently not separable again to him. He regarded his characters, however oddly they were compounded, as realities, and could not take them to pieces by a mere effort of the will. Therefore it was impossible for him to subtract the objectionable features of Skimpole without affecting the whole. He did not feel, as his readers certainly did, that the light and airy manner of Skimpole, assumed for the purpose of veiling his chicanery, had no note of joyousness in it, and made the whole character insincere and repellent. It was only hypocrisy under another name, and Skimpole became an inferior Pecksniff. But his readers did not possess an imagination which enabled them to separate the two elements in the character, and Dickens was such a master in the description of a certain person, that all the qualities described would be assumed to be equally true, so that the victim was, as it were, condemned for another man's sins, like the unfortunate hero in the *Lyons' Mail*.

In the case of Miss Mowcher (*David Copperfield*), Dickens, as we learn on the authority of Forster, had a narrow escape. I have already mentioned the original as being known to me as a most respectable lady, earning her living in the honourable exercise of a useful calling, but distinguished by certain unmistakable physical peculiarities. These being described by Dickens with his usual accuracy and detail, served as an infallible means of identification. It is therefore not surprising that the lady wrote an expostulation. Forster quotes from Dickens, "I have had the queerest adventure this morning (28th of December 1849), the receipt of the enclosed from Miss Mowcher! It is serio-comic, but there is no doubt one is wrong in being tempted to such a use of power." Forster goes on to say that Dickens was shocked at discovering the pain he had given, and had sent assurances to the complainant that he was grieved and surprised beyond measure, as he had not intended her altogether, but all his characters being made up out of many people were composite, and therefore never individual. He further wrote to Forster "That he had intended to employ the character in an unpleasant way, but he would, whatever the risk or inconvenience, change it all, so that nothing but an agreeable impression should be left. The reader will remember how this was managed, and that the thirty-second chapter went far to undo what the twenty-second had done."

But supposing “Miss Mowcher” had not happened to see the chapter twenty-second on its first appearance, the character might have been described on the unpleasant lines only too plainly intended, and the great wrong irretrievably done.

CHAPTER VII

THE THEATRE: MACREADY, THE KEANS, PHELPS AND SADLER'S WELLS, ROBSON, T. P. COOKE

It must be confessed that although the early Victorians of the professional class led blameless lives, they would be considered dull by the present generation. There were not the numerous theatres which now exist. There were no picturedromes for a very good reason, and practically no music halls that a well-bred person would put his nose in. Dining at a restaurant was almost unknown, week-ends were not invented. Travel beyond the degree of a walking tour was only for the rich and leisured. There was no golf except on Blackheath or in Scotland. Cards were played, whist predominating, though various gambling games were by no means unknown. Still from time to time the early Victorian required some recreation other than that afforded by the domestic hearth, and therefore occasionally he visited the theatre in a critical frame of mind, having a distinct preference for the legitimate drama, and a clear perception how certain characters ought to be played.

Every reader of Dickens' Life must remember his passionate addiction to the theatre, and his special admiration and friendship for Macready. This curious man, who detested his profession, took his farewell of the stage in 1851. My father knew him, and as a matter of compliment went to the farewell performance, though he had not a wholehearted admiration for him as an actor. He complained of certain mannerisms, excessive pauses, and some defects in delivery which he evidently disliked. It is only fair to say that he was not very fond of Shakespere on the stage, as he considered a performance occasionally destroyed his ideal. He was a constant reader of Shakespere, and had a curious preference for *Cymbeline*, which he called the poet's play. Years afterwards this opinion was confirmed by Mr. Swinburne, a poet, if ever there was a poet, who ends his panegyric on the bard with the words, "The play of plays, which is *Cymbeline*." This shows

that Browne, contrary to expectation, was more sensitive to the poetic than the dramatic qualities of the works. He carried a volume of a very small edition of the plays in his waistcoat pocket, and he continued that custom until a week or so of his death. I was too young to have seen Macready, but I have a remembrance of his retirement from hearsay and seeing pictures of the event in a back number of the *Illustrated London News*. I was myself a reader of Shakespere from a very early age, partly incited thereto, perhaps, by having for some time a nurse who was named Shakespere. Some of our friends (who probably also belonged to the circle of Mr. Peter Magnus) were amused by hearing a small child shouting the illustrious name up the nursery stairs. I also had the opportunity, which I commend to all parents, of a free run of Mr. Knight's excellent pictorial edition, the illustrations and the notes to which beguiled me into the knowledge of the works almost as soon as I could read, and long before I could comprehend what it was all about.

In this and other matters my father was not theoretically an educationist, but he had certain practical ideas which were excellent. We were not forced into learning to read, but we were beguiled into acquiring the art because we found it was worth while. Later on, we went to the theatre when there was anything that attracted us. Even in those days there was a late train back to Croydon. Sometimes in very fine weather we managed the transit by driving. The theatrical centre of gravity had shifted from Drury Lane to the Princess' Theatre in Oxford Street, and the leading position was held by Charles, son of Edmund Kean. He was a little man, with an insignificant nose and a guttural voice, jerky and undignified in his action, and without a trace of the paternal fire. He was a well-read painstaking man, and if scholarship ever contributed anything towards the making of an actor, he would have achieved a distinguished position. He knew how everything ought to be acted, but fell short in the execution for the lack of emotional power. Still he played Shakesperean parts with so much intelligence, that he must be counted as one of the long line of those who have kept Shakespere in the front as an acting author.

But his best parts were in such plays as the *Corsican Brothers* and *Louis the Eleventh*. His wife was a really excellent actress, with a fine contralto voice and a good stage presence, albeit she would have been improved by a little banting; but she was exceedingly skilful in concealing her fulness of outline, so much so, that she actually succeeded in Hermione, a difficult

task, as though it is always easy to pad out from leanness, a reduction in circumference involves an enormous amount of skill in cutting and contriving garments so as to deceive the eye. Behind the scenes she was a very dragon of virtue, and ruled her little court with no less virginal propriety than did Queen Victoria herself.

Everything was splendidly managed, down to the parting of the hair of the meanest super, and Kean issued playbills (now called programmes) containing historical and archaeological hints and statements of why he had chosen particular costumes and special architectural features and no others, so that altogether there was a certain solemnity and responsibility which made a visit to the Princess's a serious matter, like going to the Francais; when we laughed we laughed decorously, as we would at a dinner party, and we never forgot our manners.

The first play I remember was *Twelfth Night*, which I have reason to believe was admirably played. I was very well acquainted with the text, and was delighted by seeing the characters actually living and moving. Afterwards Charles Kean began a series of revivals, in which archaeology, tailoring, and stage carpentry were brought to a perfection never before seen. *Macbeth*, *Richard II*, *The Tempest*, *Henry VIII*, and other plays were magnificently mounted, and attracted enormous audiences.

In this connection I may refer to another early Victorian who belonged to a practical, and not an artistic, family, but who strongly influenced me in the direction of the poetic drama. I was sent to school at Bruce Castle, Tottenham, then kept by



ARTHUR HILL.
From an oil painting by Croker.

Arthur Hill, brother of Rowland Hill, originator of the Penny Postage.¹

When I first knew him he was an elderly man with long grey hair, and possessed of great activity of mind and body; he devoted an enormous amount of attention to promoting punctuality throughout the school. I am not sure that his efforts led to any permanent results. But he had one habit which did not appear on the prospectus, of continually learning Shakespere by rote. At an early hour every morning, except Sundays, he disappeared by a postern gate with an octavo volume under his arm. He reappeared in about an hour, having combined physical exercise with his lesson. He always had three plays on hand, one which might be a little forgotten, another in a state of perfection, and a third which was beginning to be prepared.

On certain evenings he would invite any of us who cared to come into the drawing-room. Placing a volume on a reading desk to be ready in case of emergencies, he would recite to us (not read) for an hour or so, giving all the characters, stage directions, and necessary explanations as he went along. He used to enjoy himself thoroughly, and so did we.

He encouraged us to perform plays on our own account, and we had a kind of portable proscenium which could be fitted up by the school carpenter in the fives court. His son, Gray Hill (now Sir John Gray Hill of

Liverpool), himself an excellent declamatory actor, was stage manager. One of my brothers and myself were valued as scene painters, and produced some surprising results in distemper.

1 *Vide infra.*

On one occasion I won great distinction as an actor. I think the play was called *Brutus*, and I had to enact the part of a Roman whose wife had been massacred behind the scenes. I had to make my entrance overcome with emotion, exhorting my fellow-citizens to share my grief. My opening words were, "Howl, howl, ye men of Rome." As I was pushed on to the stage by the prompter or some other friend, I was not only in a state of stage fright on account of being close to the audience, and painfully conscious of my legs, which being insufficiently protected by a pair of housemaid's stockings filled me with a sense of indelicacy, so that I visibly shook from head to foot, in spite of strenuous efforts to keep steady. After the performance, when I was more nearly dead than alive, a lady belonging to the family asked that I should be introduced to her, saying, "I like that boy, he felt his part, his very legs trembled."

This was my first and greatest dramatic triumph, but it was bought at the price of so much suffering, that I have never since felt the slightest desire to shine upon any stage.

But above all, some of us who desired, on Saturday nights, were allowed to go, in charge of Gray Hill as prefect, to the performance at Sadler's Wells. That was really going to the play! It was possible then to walk from Bruce Castle to Islington almost entirely through country, and we walked briskly so as to be well against the pit door amongst the very earliest arrivals; and then with our blood well warmed with healthy exercise, we waited with perfect content until some mysterious being drew back a bolt, when we rushed in as if there was not a second to spare, to take up our places on the front row of the pit, an advantageous and much coveted position against the orchestra, stalls not being then in existence. As we were in possession of a few halfpenny playbills we had plenty of time and subject for conversation before the curtain rose, and we were rewarded with an excellent all-round performance of a Shakesperean play.

Phelps, the actor-manager, was a good allround tragedian of the old-fashioned elocutionary class, with a mysterious face, and small twinkling eyes and a stalwart figure. He had a great intelligence and a profound knowledge of the bard, and he continued to produce all the plays, and not

merely the twelve, that Henry Irving thought were all that were playable on the modern stage. He did not stop to consider whether a play was or was notactable, but he acted it, and he did not trouble about scenery, archaeology, or costume, and therefore one play cost no more than another. It was a mere question of rehearsals. With him it was the words, and the appropriate actions to carry them over the footlights, that mattered — the rest was only leather and prunella; and if the leather was a bit fissured and the prunella ragged, we cared not, as we were concentrated on the bard and his prophet, Phelps. In tragedy he was good, and though he somewhat dragged at times, he was generally interesting and sometimes moving, as in the ending of *Othello*, and the death of *Lear*.

He attracted around him an excellent troupe. Amongst the men I only remember Mr. Marston, the ghost in *Hamlet*, and Mr. Rae, the Polonius, “the rest I have forgot.” One night this last must have dressed in a hurry, for though he wore his crimson tights beneath his velvet gaberdine, he had only hastily rolled up his everyday trousers, and that not too securely, for when he gave his valedictory advice to Laertes, saying impressively “costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,” in apparent accompaniment to the words the left trouser leg unfolded itself and descended, so that he presented the remarkable appearance of a Danish gentleman with one leg crimson like a flamingo, and the other in a well-worn and muddy grey of the early Victorian pedestrian. Whether Mr. Rae was or was not conscious of the change in his appearance, the speech had to be delivered, and it was finished to the inexpressible — I flatter myself “inexpressible” is a good word — delight of the pit and the gallery.

Phelps may have had the defects of his temperament in tragedy, but in high comedy he was most excellent.

Bottom, Falstaff, Sir Anthony Absolute, Sir Pertinax Macsycophant were all as good as need be, and have never been improved on.

The actresses were more frequently changed than the men, as I seem to remember that we saw Miss Glynn, Miss Atkinson, Miss Heath, and Miss Herbert. I think they all played at other theatres, but the men were to all intents and purposes permanent.

Phelps himself is reported, like Mr. Crummies, to have carried the tragedian into private life, and that his slow stage utterance had become with him second nature. This was especially noticeable when he was

unfolding a humorous idea, as his funereal utterance contrasted very funnily with the jocosity.

One of his stories which lent itself to imitation was retailed to me, to the following effect, with a tremendous and indescribable emphasis on the vowel sounds. "I was standing the other day, after rehearsal, at the side, when, looking across, who should I see but Herman Vezin, dressed to the nines. White hat, if you please, blue tie, white waistcoat, linen cuffs, frockcoat, grey trousers and white spats — quite the dandy — so I crossed over and said, 'How do you do, Mr. Vezin?' and after a few words of ordinary salutation, I said, 'And how is your excellent father?' by which I meant to imply that I had ho! ho! ho! ho! that I had ho! ho! ho! ho! mistaken him for his own son ho! ho! ho! ho!"

He never succeeded rightly in the West End, though he was selected to play at Drury Lane before some foreign potentate as the typical English tragedian. With the dispersion of his company the old style of acting vanished from the stage. He was probably the last actor who rested on the Shakesperean tradition, and gave us the play as it had been handed down from generation to generation. He would not have astonished Charles Lamb, as some of our modern tragedians with their naturalism certainly would.

Whatever he might play on other nights, he always played the bard on Saturdays and Mondays, so that anyone going on those nights might go in confidence that he would certainly know the author, and might even guess the play without looking in the paper. After I became a medical student I occasionally allowed myself a night off, and went with unabated enjoyment.

I fancy Sadler's Wells is now demolished, but I doubt if there is any public memorial of the man who so finely accomplished this great task.

In that part of the Strand which lies between St. Mary-le-Strand and St. Clement Danes there was a squalid little thoroughfare called Wych Street, wherein was situated a grubby little theatre called the Olympic. For a time this was one of the most popular playhouses in London, owing to the most remarkable performances of an actor named Robson. He was a little man, with a pointed nose and birdlike expression, and a curious slit in the middle of his lower lip. His limbs were very small, but well proportioned and shapely. He was nothing of a dwarf, but undeniably grotesque, and therefore could not assume romantic parts. He was of all the actors of his time the one most undeniably possessed of genius. He could vary from the

representation of homely pathos to broad farce, like Mr. Toole, but had in addition very short flashes of tragic emotion that no other English actor has possessed in our time. He could hold the audience in the hollow of his hand. I mentioned this once to Irving, and he said that Robson possessed the rare gift of what he called "the electric thrill." It was always of short duration in any actor; Kean had it for a minute and a half, Robson only for thirty seconds, and when it was over, an actor either had to leave the stage, or to turn abruptly to some other stage business, or suffer an anti-climax. Kean, of course, I never saw, but Robson would in a few short moments reduce his audience to tears, and then suddenly throw them into laughter.

His greatest tragic success was in *Daddy Hardacre*, an adaptation from Moliere's *L'Avare*. There was one scene where he descends to the cellar to look at his money, finds he has been robbed, suspects his daughter, rushes at her storming, drags her about the stage by her hair. So terrible was this scene that the audience almost rose at him, yet this same man in the concluding farce could dance about on the stage, and provoke the whole house to laughter by his fooling. He had also something of the same effect on the actors on the stage. As he by no means confined himself to the text, there were often some curious whimsicalities introduced, and as they were unexpected by the other



actors, upset the progress of the play. He exercised a particular magnetic effect on Miss Herbert, an excellent actress, and I have seen him literally drive her into hysterics by his oddities.

When Charles Kean left the Princess' the Shakesporean repertory was continued by Fechter. He was a man of mixed nationalities, but more a Frenchman than anything else, and had a good reputation as a romantic actor in Paris. Greatly daring, he took the Princess' in order to play *Hamlet* in English. Remember that the tradition of fine Shakesporean acting was not forgotten, though it had nearly died out, and you can easily imagine the incredulity and derision that his proposal excited. As a matter of fact he could only speak English imperfectly, with slips in accent and intonation, but he was a thoroughly trained actor, and could deliver lines in any language he chose. He was coached in the play by the Rev. J. C. M. Bellew, the best declamatory reader of his time.

Fechter conquered by sheer charm; on the stage his presence was beautiful, every action grace. He discarded the gloomy tradition of the old-fashioned Hamlets, and he played the Dane, as he naturally ought to be, a fair man. Off the stage, he was by no means so impressive.

His blank verse in one or two places left something to be desired, for, after all, a man's accent will creep out. But apart from slight defects his delivery of the great soliloquies, his conversations and badinage, and his fencing have never been equalled for romantic beauty. Hardened old play-goers were utterly dumbfounded. Their most cherished traditions were upset, but they were conquered; the old box-keeper was reported to have said, "I have seen a many Hamlets, and all of them different; I have seen Mr. Kean, he made it tragedy, but Mr. Fechter he has raised it to Melodrama."

Fechter afterwards tried *Othello*, but failed. He moved into the Lyceum, where he had a long series of triumphs in the romantic drama. Associated with him was Miss Kate Terry, and when we take into account the disadvantage on the stage of being only a man, it is a wonderful testimony to his force and grace and charm, that she, the most charming member of a charming family, only divided and did not monopolise the attention of the house. They were equally matched in physical perfections, and in subtlety and delicacy in the expression of the ideal side of love. I remember one scene, though I have forgotten the play; Fechter the hero was deeply in love

with Miss Terry, the heroine, but was uncertain of her feelings towards him. In the course of a conversational scene he placed her with her back towards the audience, so that we did not see her face, but we saw his; he was watching her intently, and we saw by his expression how he read her mind — uncertainty, fear, hope, a gleam of happiness, questioning of the truth, joy, rapturous ecstasy as he threw up his arms and said, "Blanche, you love me, good gracious!" with a strong foreign accent on the gracious! How poor the words, but they were the dramatist, it was the actor who transformed them with an expression of pure emotion.

Fechter was a great friend of Dickens, who was his firm supporter, and as the office of *All the Year Round* was nearly opposite the Lyceum, it is needless to say that Dickens was constantly in the theatre, and his opinion of the two may be gathered from the following extract from a letter to Macready, which I have happened on since the above lines were written. I do not know if it refers to the same play, but the general truth is the same.

"Office Of 'All The Year Round,' "February 19th, 1863.

"Fechter doing wonders over the way here with a picturesque French drama. Miss Kate Terry, in a small part in it, perfectly charming. You may remember her making a noise, years ago, doing a boy at an inn, in *The Courier of Lyons*. She has a tender love scene in this piece, which is a really beautiful and artistic thing. I saw her do it at about three in the morning of the day when the theatre opened, surrounded by shavings and carpenters, and (of course) with that inevitable hammer going; and I told Fechter: 'That is the very best piece of womanly tenderness I have ever seen on the stage, and you'll find that no audience can miss it.' It is a comfort to add that it was instantly seized upon, and is much talked of."

I never remember my father going to Sadler's Wells. He spoke of Phelps as a small Macready, and the theatre was on the opposite side of London, and not very accessible from where we lived. He required no persuasion to go to Fechter, and he delighted in Robson. We were occasionally taken to the Haymarket to see the old comedies, such as *The School for Scandal*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and some others. Altogether we went to the theatre some four or five times a year, which was very frisky for early Victorians.

Of course these were not the only theatres. There were others which did not happen to concern us, but there were two deserving of mention on the

Surrey side of the water, close to Westminster Bridge, one called simply the "Surrey Theatre." Readers of Lamb will remember that he describes it as the last refuge in the downward progress of the great Elliston, who even here did not lose his grand manner. "'Quite an opera pit,' he said to me (Lamb) as he was courteously conducting me over the benches of his Surrey Theatre, the last retreat and recess of his everyday waning grandeur."

Probably here for a time the legitimate drama found a home on this side of the Thames, whereon in bygone times it had flourished. But the days of Victoria were not those of Elizabeth, and despite the "opera pit," the theatre became celebrated for melodrama.

One play indeed forecasted the long runs of the present day, *Black-Eyed Susan*, by Douglas Jerrold. In this the hero William was played with immense dash and vigour by Mr. T. P. Cooke, affectionately known as "Tippy." The play was full of tears, nautical expressions, shivers, frights, scenes of violence, scenes of sentiment, court-martials, sentence of death, respite and a happy ending, but the great feature, although merely an episode, was the vigorous hornpipe which William danced in his few spare moments. It was one of those popular successes which united the suffrages of all classes. Douglas Jerrold's brains and "Tippy" Cooke's legs, with the smell of salt water, captured the British nation.

Thackeray assumes him to be familiar to all, and uses his name as an aid to a description thus, by the mouth of Pleeceman X:

"Vich he was a British sailor,
For to judge him by his look,
Tarry jacket, canvas trousers,
Ha — la, Mr. T. P. Cook."

Years afterwards, when joints had stiffened and hornpipes were impossible, and "Tippy" had retired, some friends called upon him in his retreat in Torrington Square. He and his wife were seated, after the manner of old people, in comfortable armchairs, one on each side of the fire. After a little conversation about old times and things in general, somebody asked "If he ever played now?" He said "No!" Mrs. Cooke said he was offered an engagement lately, but he would not take it — "they wanted him to play an

old man's part. But bless you, Tippy couldn't play an *old* man's part, no! He could not play an *old* man's part!"

Astley's was the theatre for children. It was a theatre and a circus. The arena occupied a great proportion of the pit, and was connected with the stage by sloping boards. The dramas were peculiar, and afforded frequent opportunities for horsemanship. Mazeppa was a favourite; he was bound on the wild horse in the arena, rushed up the slope on to the stage, was seen ascending the mountains by a zigzag course. Turpin also galloped round the ring, leaped five-barred gates, was pursued, but never caught. There were all the ordinary features of a circus — ladies in short skirts, the bold gentleman in tights who rode four horses abreast, clowns, ring-master, and so forth. But, after all, the delightful feature was the great number of children always to be seen amongst the audience.

Speaking generally, the theatres were very uncomfortable. The entrances were mostly bad, and there was a crush at the pay-place as the first rush was made for the pit. The custom of standing in a queue was not adopted till many years after. We should now consider the lighting poor, but as gas was a new invention, it was then considered brilliant. Even as late as 1812 Drury Lane would seem to have been lighted by candles, as the poet in the *Rejected Addresses* sings —

“'Tis sweet to view from half-past five to six,
Our long wax candles with short cotton wicks,
Touched by the lamplighter's Promethean art,
Start into light, and make the lighter start.”

Scenery was very poor, and changed in full view of the audience by carpenters, who did not even take the trouble to hide themselves. In some theatres a bit of the stage was in front of the curtain flanked on each side by the stage boxes. In the intervals between the acts, women pushed their way along the benches of the pit crying ginger beer, lemonade, apples and oranges. The performance began about seven, and after nine o'clock admission was half price. The ordinary arrangement was to play a serious piece, preferably in five acts, and when the spirits of the audience were thoroughly depressed, a rattling farce was put on to raise them again. There were no problem plays, everybody having a firm conviction — which no amount of talking would have altered — that he ought to live with his own

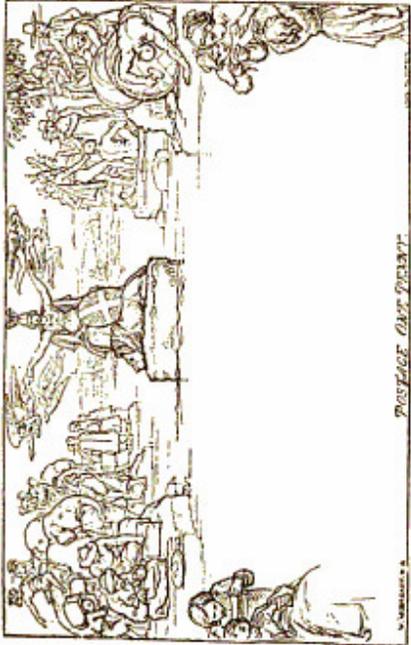
wife. The acting of the principal performers was fully as good as anything in the present day, though the supers were all badly dressed and badly drilled, and as the actors received but little assistance from their scenery or costume, they had to play so as to rivet the attention of the audience steadily throughout the play, and could not afford to relax their efforts during the display of a scenic dawn or sunset. On special occasions Royalty attended in state in certain theatres, where there was a Royal Box specially fenced off from the vulgar. Of course this was all stopped at the death of the Prince Consort.

Incidentally above, I have mentioned Mr. Rowland Hill, whom I occasionally saw when I was at his brother's school. Curiously enough he comes into connection with my father through the medium of his great practical reform. I am not sufficiently informed to be able to state what provisions, if any, formerly existed for the prepayment of letters, but the postage in a great number of cases was certainly defrayed by the recipient and not by the writer. But there existed a very curious custom by which certain great personages, including Members of Parliament, could send their correspondence through the post by the simple act of writing their signature on the outside of the letters. Such signatures were called franks, and were in great demand. Anyone having a friend in the House could get a number of letters "franked" in advance, and embark in a correspondence at the expense of the State. When Rowland Hill instituted his reform the privilege was abolished, but in order to continue the custom of indicating that a letter was free to pass through the post, it was determined to have a decoration printed on the envelope as a token of value received.

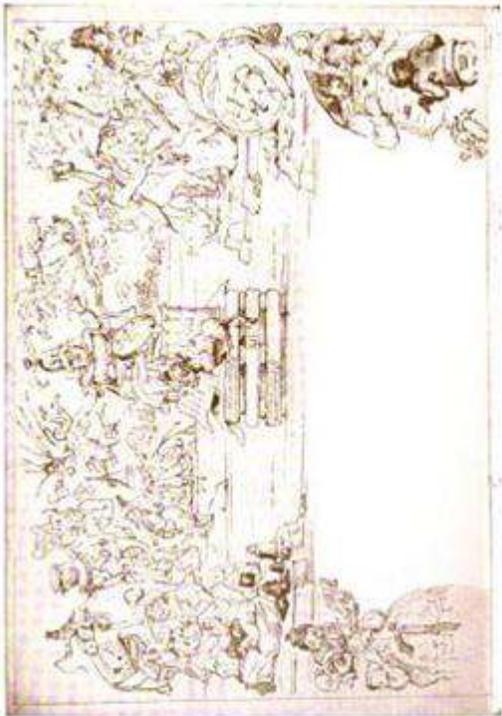
Artists were invited to send in designs, and one by Mulready was selected. It was allegorical and symbolical, and more than sufficient as a receipt for a penny, but it left very little room for the address. The opportunity for burlesque was too good to be missed, and Leech and Browne produced parodies which were as good as the original, but though effective as designs, were not recognised by the authorities as valid cash. The three envelopes were shown at the Liverpool Exhibition of H. K. Browne's works by Dr. John Newton.

Leech as usual was funny, but made no attempt to reproduce the decorative feeling of the original, while with Phiz the feeling for the pattern predominates, though on a close examination the satirical intention is easily

descried. The originals are now very difficult to meet with. Trifling in themselves, they mark a point in the progress of a great social change.



THE MULREADY ENVELOPE.



THE TITLE PARODY OF THE MULREADY ENVELOPE.

CHAPTER VIII

AMUSEMENTS OF THE POOR

There was very little abject poverty in Croydon. There always seemed to be an odd job for anyone who was on the look-out for one; machinery scarcely existed except in connection with the railway; but the community maintained an immense number of animals — horses, cows, pigs, sheep, poultry — which required constant supervision and unrelaxing care in feeding. At certain seasons at the farms there was a great demand for extra labour, and mobs of people, haymakers, ‘oppers, and the like, descended from distant parts on to the fields, and departed like flights of birds no one knew whither. It may be supposed that life was intolerably dull and there were no amusements, but the people found means of enjoying themselves at various stated seasons by the observance of customary ceremonies.

About Christmas time the Waits perambulated the neighbourhood, and played from dusk till some time after midnight. They were supposed to afford a very pleasant entertainment if the household were sitting up, and it was not etiquette to be ruffled, even if the trombone was a little blatant and one had been in the enjoyment of a beauty sleep. The only chance of mishap lay in the fact that hot drinks were offered and accepted, and occasionally in consequence the music became confused and discordant. Then there were carols sung by the younger people, generally of the poorer sort, but sometimes by those who were well off for a joke.

The mummers, too, performed according to ancient tradition at various seasons. They consisted of young people, who were dressed in home-made fancy costumes, of divers shapes and colours, but invariably decorated by strips of paper, like those used for making the tail of a kite, sewn on to garments to imitate streamers. Each performer in his turn would step forward from his ranks into the range of a light from a lanthorn held by a comrade. He would announce his name and qualities in doggerel before joining in the dialogue. I believe the plays were very old and traditional,

and the performers did not at all understand the meaning of what they were doing.

Good Friday was especially reserved for pedestrianism, and walking and running races in considerable number were run off in different districts. There was not much professionalism, but there were a great number of spectators, and voluntary subscription took the place of gate-money.

On May-day there was a good deal of fun going in the early part of the day. There were processions of "Jack in the Green," a kind of walking arbour with an opening in the leaves just sufficiently large for the bearer to see where he was going, accompanied by a troop of men dressed as sweeps, and girls in short petticoats as shepherdesses, many carrying ladles to collect coppers. There were also certain clowns who were masked, and had full license to play tricks on the audience. In the afternoon there was climbing a greasy pole for a leg of mutton and various sports, including, if my memory serves, a race for ladies, who ran in a garment which had not then lost its English name.

Living in a beautiful country, during the summer we scarcely needed entertainments, but on November the fifth there was the tremendous festival of Guy Fawkes. In those days Guys really were guys. They were built up, by earnest labour, of old clothes, or appropriate costumes made for the purpose, with masks, and, speaking generally, they presented the appearance of human beings paralytic from drink — or was it remorse for unrepented and unsuccessful crimes? They were seated in chairs, or borne in litters round the town, and after dark they were ignominiously burnt in bonfires, to the accompaniment of fireworks. The anniversary was considered by many good judges to be the brightest in the year.

The veritable Guy Fawkes was forgotten except in name, and any unpopular persons served as foundation for the effigy. I remember at one time the Pope was very unpopular, and he was represented, not only as ruling in the East and West, but in sufficient numbers to have boxed the whole compass. But no matter who might be the actual person whose effigy paraded the streets, he was accompanied by a traditional refrain, sung fortissimo, by a thousand throats, and if the festival were not so distinctly Protestant, I should say to a Gregorian chant.

"Remember, remember, the fifth of November,
Gunpowder treason and plot,

I see no reason why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot,”

followed by inarticulate shouting, beating of frying pans, drums, blowing of horns, and an altogether mingled uproar calculated to strike terror into the hearts of the boldest conspirator.

Many families had private Guys. Ours never left the premises, but for weeks caused us great anxiety lest his inflammability should suffer from rain. We swept the garden clean of fallen leaves, and pilfered stray bits of wood. We amassed kitchen grease, and begged turpentine, collected all the band-boxes we could find, and piled them up into an immense heap in the kitchen garden. An old suit of clothes, with a shocking bad hat, and a mask which we painted ourselves in colours which would have astonished Rubens, was suspended from the stake, and was duly burnt. We generally had a good supply of fireworks, which were let off with the aid of the Governor and the groom. On one occasion, by dint of economies, we had purchased a rocket of surpassing splendour, which happened to be sold us separate from its necessary stick. The Governor and his assistant tied on the rocket, stuck [the stick into the potato field, and applied the fuse. But they had placed the rocket upside down, and when it was fired, it seemed to utter a shriek, belched forth fire, broke the stick, and ran about the garden, pursuing us in all directions like a fiery fiend endowed with supernatural vitality.

But the real great festival was the Croydon Walnut Fair, held the first week in October, on a large piece of ground which was called from its occupation Fairfield. Fairs were very useful and amusing to country people before railways made communication between distant parts easy. There was a good deal of *bona fide* business transacted, but the main object was amusement.

There were enormous quantities of walnuts for sale, in sacks, baskets, and boxes. There was gingerbread with the gilt on, and gingerbread with the gilt off. There were targets of various kinds, and cocoa-nuts, three shies a penny, Aunt Sallys, swings, merry-go-rounds, and other delights, from fat ladies, learned pigs, wrestlers, single-stick players, soothsayers, to vanishing ladies, giants, dwarfs, and American Indians born and bred in Southwark, all to be seen for the modest sum of a penny a piece. In a sort of central square were situated the aristocratic entertainments. There was Richardson's show, which continued the Elizabethan tradition in having an

open-air stage outside, besides a modern stage with curtain and footlights in the interior. Performances took place free gratis on the outside to whet the appetite. The whole company, magnificently dressed for a bloody and dismal tragedy, gaily danced quadrilles. Then after much beating of the gong and shouting, everybody disappeared into the interior, leaving such an aching void by their absence, that a rush of the public at 6d. a head would take place to witness the performance.

Then there was a circus, which was like every other circus which has existed before or since. The same remarkable spotted horses with pink noses, spangled ladies, paper hoops to jump through, trained horses who dined with the clown, educated ponies who appealed to the feminine hearts, tumblers and acrobats, jugglers and performing dogs. These things have expanded and become more splendid, and edged their way into permanent hippodromes, but have not altered in their nature from that day to this.

There were the waxworks, either Mrs. Jarley's or some opponent's, containing models of the celebrities of both hemispheres and a small supplementary tent called the chamber of horrors, on account of containing the portraits of sundry brutal but popular murderers, who all had very nice pink complexions and neatly dressed hair, as if homicide were a healthy and refining occupation. Then there was Wombwell's menagerie, with a most gorgeous oriental facade, decorated with pictures of wild animals jumping about in a state of extreme liveliness. Inside, the unfortunate beasts were confined in cages far too small for them; the whole place was very dismal and smelly. The great attraction was the feeding of the animals and the occasional performance of the lion-tamer, who might be a lady. Interspersed were refreshment booths, where very solid meals could be procured, and were largely patronised; the special dish for the season was roast goose, which was eaten in enormous quantities. And to wind up, there were large booths which provided spacious floors and bands for dancing. We were ourselves forcibly removed from the fair at an early hour in the evening, but were given to understand that the dancing was kept up nearly all night. Though our stay was tyrannously curtailed, we were promised that when we were grown up we might dance till breakfast time. We were taken to the fair by the maidservants in the afternoon, and by the groom in the evening.

At the time we are describing there were many large and important fairs held all over the country, but for some reasons they have almost ceased to exist. A few shows and circuses may still be met with in the outskirts of

towns; swings and merry-go-rounds spring up mysteriously in vacant spaces, and as mysteriously vanish. Some of this kind are engaged for school feasts and club walks, and at the coronation of our present King the Corporation of Liverpool held a fair in Sefton Park, which was greatly enjoyed by everybody except by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. I myself in cycling about the country have become acquainted by sight with an enterprising person who drives a large yellow van, on which he announces that he attends “Feets and Gales on the shortest notice.”

CHAPTER IX

ENTERTAINMENTS, READINGS, AND EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF

In the early Victorian days a great number of people had strong scruples against entering a theatre. They entertained an inherited prejudice, which they did not care to disturb by an investigation of the actual facts, but they were not destitute of the natural appetite and love of the intellectual enjoyment afforded by dramatic performances, and would eagerly go to any place which gave them the same kind of thing without the objectionable name, so that when the nation began to recover from the effects of the great war, and money became more plentiful, and facilities of travel increased, the country cousin with his women-folk came to London for their amusements, and found entertainers ready with open doors to welcome them.

One of the most popular of these was Mr. Albert Smith's account of his ascent of Mont Blanc. He had begun life as a dentist, but he had literary and theatrical tastes, had written some amusing books in imitation, at a very respectful distance, of *Boz* and illustrated by Phiz. He connected himself with the theatre by marrying Miss Keeley, the daughter of two of the most popular comedians of the day. Furnished with a beautifully painted diorama and aided by a piano, he gave an account of his journey to Switzerland, and his ascent of Mont Blanc, which had not then become a pleasure trip. The entertainment of its kind was delightful, and in many ways original. At the end of the hall, in the position usually occupied by a proscenium, was an exact imitation of the front of a Swiss chalet, with a foreground of rock and trickling water. On the left hand was a bower of vegetation, which partially concealed the lecturer, and wholly hid the piano from view. A huge St. Bernard dog walked about among the audience, and was petted by the ladies in the stalls.

The lecturer himself appeared exactly as the clock was striking. He began with his start from London, gave an account of the people he had met on his

journey, the things and places he had seen, with correct imitation of the way his fellow travellers had spoken, eaten, drank, and smoked. As the English in those days considered themselves superior to foreigners, and knew nothing about them, the story of their ways was considered capital fun. Meanwhile a portion of the chalet front opened and exposed the diorama, which was moved slowly along, giving a continuous view, as if the country were seen from a steamer or a train. As travel was not so common, cheap, or comfortable as it is now, these views of places with Mr. Albert Smith's light and airy description were found very interesting. He interspersed his lecture with anecdotes, and, like Mr. Silas Wegg, occasionally dropped into verse and song, accompanying himself on the piano, and wound up with a long patter on the topics of the day, supposed to represent the contents of *Galignani's Messenger*, at that time the only English paper published in Paris. I am bound to say, I do not think anything so good of its kind exists to-day; it was far superior and better for the eyes than the cinematograph.

Mr. and Mrs. German Reed ventured very nearly into the danger-zone. They had a regular stage on a very small scale but exactly like the real thing, with footlights, a curtain, and costumes. They performed little plays, and above all, Mrs. German Reed had once been a popular actress under the name of Miss Priscilla Horton. They were assisted by Mr. John Parry, and subsequently by Mr. Corney Grain, as "entertainers," a name invented since their time, but signifying one who could play tricks on the piano and talk to the audience at the same time.



A FABLE BY J. C. M. BELLEW.
Illustrated by the artist of the book.

Both of them certainly were entertaining. And for those who thought a little clerical protection agreeable, the Rev. J. C. M. Bellew began to give readings of a dramatic type in prose and poetry. He was one of Hablot Browne's few clerical acquaintances. At a later date he gave up his orders and became a Roman Catholic, and adopted recitation as his profession. When I first knew him he was incumbent of a fashionable church in St. John's Wood. He was a handsome man, good features, and a fine mane of grey hair. He had his surplice cut with a kind of bulge, which suggested an embryonic state of an episcopal lawn sleeve. The sermon was an oration carefully prepared and carefully read, or rather declaimed, and any lack of thought was entirely concealed by a sonorous rhetoric. The last time I heard him was in St. George's Hall in Liverpool, where he recited several pieces to the accompaniment of the great organ, no easy task, but most successfully accomplished, apparently without any strain on the voice. His comic readings were not above the average, and he had neither a natural gift for humour, nor was his method adapted to comedy. But in declamation he was unsurpassed, and has had no successor.

Miss Fanny Kemble, the youngest member of a distinguished theatrical family, gave readings from Shakespeare. She read with enormous spirit and

go, and, as I thought, with an exaggerated display of facial expression, but I was very young when I attended her recitals in the little theatre at Croydon, and the fault may have arisen from the smallness of the auditorium rendering her actions too big for the size of the place. There is a great difference needed between the acting adapted for a large and small theatre, which she did not sufficiently regard. Anyway she made the meaning of the author clear.

Then there was Mr. Woodin, who was, what is now called, a “quick-change artist,” and imitated imaginary characters and celebrities as half-length portraits. He occupied a whole evening all by himself, popping down behind a kind of draped toilette table as Mr. Woodin, and reappearing as a rosy farmer from the Midlands, or the Emperor of the French, a young lady in full dress, and other equally surprising variations from his own normal personality. Many of his kind exist, and give turns more or less similar at the music halls. He had no assistant.

I have no doubt there were others that I did not happen to know about. These were examples that showed that a man could for an hour or two hold the attention of an audience and carry out an entertainment at a very small expense, and with less exertion than is involved in playing a long part in a regular drama.

Dickens had more than an ordinary hankering for the stage; he had a passion for the footlights; he also had a strongly ingrained desire to make large sums of money quickly. Profuse himself, he desired profuseness on the part of the public. He wanted their money, and he wanted that immediate applause which rewards the actor; to him the audience gives twice, for it gives quickly; to the author it may give as much, but it gives slowly, and the plaudits do not ring in the ears immediately as the reward for effort. From the examples around him he saw his way to indulge his propensities at an expense that, compared with engaging a theatre, was trivial. He needed no company, and his rental would be small. There would be no risk. I heard him in St. Martin’s Hall, a dismal place in Long Acre. There was no bustle, light, or brilliancy. We might have been attending a political meeting. The platform was converted into a small stage, such as might serve for amateur actors, by means of a little proscenium, which reflected top and side lights on to the reader, and kept the audience in a gloomy twilight.

Dickens himself came on the platform unaccompanied, and appeared a smaller man than he did under ordinary circumstances. He was very carefully dressed and made up for the occasion, and rather looked like a waxwork of himself, with the habitual fire and spirit smoothed out of his face. I felt — and I am not sure but what the rest of the audience also felt, and I feel more strongly now — that we did not want Dickens there ; he was beneath his right position — somebody else could have served the purpose of reading his works. Therefore there was a feeling that we were not there purely for the intellectual pleasure of hearing the reading, but partly to satisfy our curiosity with regard to the personality of the man. It was always “ Mr. Dickens and how he was doing it” that preoccupied us. Also his elaborate and conventional costume was a mistake. Like other men of a strong character, he did not look his best in evening dress, and it is quite unadaptable to various circumstances incident to the representation of tragic or comic actions on the part of different characters. It has a definite association with occupations of the most decorous and respectable character. When a man puts on his dress clothes, he announces that he is going to behave as conventionally as possible.

He would have done better if he had appeared in something like his ordinary costume, a dark blue loosely cut suit, which gave him rather the air of a sea-captain in mufti. It would have been perfectly neutral, and even if it took some of the conventional among the audience by surprise at first, it would have aided him in directing attention to his characters, instead of diverting it. It was impossible not to be reminded of balls and parties, or the opera, when the eye was caught by the flashing of diamond studs in an expanse of white shirt. It may have been but for a moment, but it certainly prevented the necessary concentration on Bill Sikes or Mrs. Gamp. A reader must above everything be neutral, and jar as little as possible with the characters he is portraying; if he does not, then the acting must be subdued and gesture restrained, so that the assumed character is presented to the audience rather in narrative form than in actual embodiment.

Taking the reading on its own merits, and putting aside the personality of the author, the performances were on the whole disappointing, clever though they were. Curiously, he made less of the comic characters and more of the serious than would have been expected.

His most conspicuous failure was Sam Weller in the trial from *Pickwick*, which as a piece is almost perfect as a reading. Sam Weller, “the immortal

Sam,” fell positively flat. His great success, greatest because imbued with passion and conviction, was the murder of Nancy. Here he threw the book away, gave himself up wholly to the enactment of the horrible scene. It must be remembered it is one of the finest bits of writing in his works, and produces a great effect if it is simply read by a moderately good reader, without any attempt at acting at all.

In London the readings were very well attended, but in the provinces they roused people to enthusiasm, and he was received with the popular applause which the early Victorians usually reserved for a *prima donna* of surpassing excellence. He was of course a friend of the people, and they came forth in their thousands to see him. In America these readings created a *furor*. They filled his pockets with money, and wore him out.

The book he read from was specially arranged as to matter, and seemed to me to have great black marks and indications to attract and guide his eye, and always enable him to catch his place when he changed, as he frequently did, from reciting to reading. Of course the man of genius shone through every difficulty, but I doubt whether elaborate acting can ever be wholly successful in a narrative that is read from a book, and several parts played by one man. What he did was as well done as it could be, but it was not worth the doing.



CHAPTER X

MUSIC — WHOLESALE AMATEUR SONGSTERS

Interest in music among the middle classes in my early days was not wide, nor was it very sincere. Well-trained amateur musicians such as abound in the present day in rivalry with the pianola and gramophone did not then exist. Teaching was not in great demand, and being esteemed a luxury, and savouring of ostentation, was expensive, besides being slow and second rate. It was mostly in the nature of private tuition, and though there were a few choral societies, the audiences were shy and sparse, so that their warblings could scarcely be described as public.

But a man arose who exercised a profound effect in arousing a taste which did exist, though only in a dormant condition.

Mr. John Hullah took Exeter Hall, an immense building, and therein taught enormous classes to sing part-songs and other choral music. He became very popular, and if everybody did not join his classes, they pretended to know all about them. Tom Hood celebrated him in a poem, of which the subjoined lines form the opening:

“MORE HULLAH-BALOO”

Amongst the great inventions of this age,
Which ev'ry other century surpasses,
Is one, — just now the rage —
Call'd 'Singing for all Classes — '
That is, for all the British millions,
And billions,
And quadrillions,
Not to name Quintilians,
That now, alas! have no more ear than asses,
To learn to warble like the birds in June,
In time and tune,
Correct as clocks, and musical as glasses!”

John Hullah was a genuine early Victorian, full of confidence, pluck, and resource. He undertook his enormous classes at a time when failure seemed inevitable, and scored a success. He was an enthusiast. He considered that a naturally bad ear was a natural curiosity, and though there were many people who appeared destitute of any appreciation of musical sounds, it was more by reason of want of familiarity or teaching than a natural deficiency. With all his vast experience he said that he had only met with two individuals upon whom he could make no impression. One was a person of no importance; the other was a High Church clergyman, who desired to learn sufficient music to enable him to intone the service. Everything failed. Nothing could teach him to hear the difference between two notes of music, much less utter them. His invincible ignorance, however, in one department did not extend to other branches, for he became a Dean and a celebrity, not only on account of his pulpit eloquence and organising powers, but for the value of his biographical works.

Mr. Hullah's son, my fellow-student at St. Thomas', posed as model to Mr. Holman Hunt for the young man who is seated on the box seat of an omnibus in the picture of London on the night of the marriage of the Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VII. The reader will remember that the picture is a representation under a strong gas-light illumination, and deals therefore with the general effect of objects and figures, thereby partially revealed without that over modelling and insistence upon unimportant details which constitute a defect in many of Mr. Holman Hunt's pictures.

Mr. Hullah was a friend of Dickens, who wrote for him the words of an operetta called *The Village Coquettes*. It was produced at the St. James' Theatre in 1836, with scenery painted from sketches by Browne.

I find a reference to this in a letter from Dickens to Mr. Home: —

“Pray tell that besotted – to let the opera sink into its native obscurity. I did it in a fit of

d–ble good nature long ago for Hullah, who wrote some very pretty music to it. I just put down for everybody what everybody at the St. James' Theatre wanted to say and do, and that they could say and do best, and I have been most sincerely repentant ever since. The farce I also did as a sort of practical joke for Harley, whom I have known a long time. It was funny — adapted from one of the published sketches called the *Great Winglebury*

Duel, and was published by Chapman & Hall. But I have no copy of it now, nor should I think they have. But both these things were done without the least consideration or regard to reputation.”

Compared with the present day, the early Victorians were short of music. True, during the season, the opera was even more splendid than it is at present. For years in succession the two great houses of Her Majesty’s and Covent Garden had a succession of great performers singing in a rivalry which was not so much friendly as strenuous, and there were of course the classical performances at the old established societies, but these were expensive and not for the people.

The first successful attempt to provide good music for the masses was made by Mr. Augustus Manns at the Crystal Palace. He was for a time not considered as a musician of high rank, but regarded much as a conductor of a seaside band. He was a curious-looking man, wore a costume something between that of a colonel and the hall porter of a modern hotel, and wore very long hair to betoken his occupation. By degrees he found himself surrounded in the afternoon by a small but attentive audience, which gradually increased until he worked himself into the position of a recognised authority and was taken seriously by competent judges. At the Crystal Palace we had vocal concerts of a very high quality on certain afternoons, and here we became acquainted with the leading singers of the time.

I remember upon one occasion, among others, we heard Piccolomini, who had taken the town by storm by her singing of florid Italian music and her vivacious acting. She was supposed to be a princess, and certainly bore the historic name. On this occasion she sang some Italian air from her repertoire, and then another, to the increasing delight of the audience, till in response to an irresistible encore she sang in broken English the well-known song by Balfe, “ I Dreamt that I Dwelt in Marble Halls,” and presently came to the part where she discovered that in the midst of all her splendours she was most delighted to find “ He loved her still the same.” As she sang these words she cast her eyes sideways towards an imaginary lover with a languishing amorousness which went straight to the sentimental heart of the vast audience. But as the applause somewhat subsided I heard a lady in front of me say to her daughters in a loud tone, “The manners of that young person are far from pleasing.”

One kind of entertainment which had survived from previous generations were the “gardens,” and thither the early Victorian bourgeois did much resort. The majority of them were respectable, but some were reputed to become rowdy after eleven o’clock at night. On the whole they rather resembled, on a small scale, the gardens attached to our Exhibitions at Earl’s Court. One of the most popular was on the Surrey side, not far from the Kennington Oval. It was a pleasant enough garden, containing a number of houses and cages for the accommodation of wild beasts, from elephants to white rats, and was called the Surrey Zoological Gardens. So far it was a humble imitation of the grounds in Regent’s Park, but it differed from them, as it gave during the afternoon and evening a series of entertainments. There was an orchestra and platform for the delight of dancers, and concerts used to be given in a huge hall holding some thousands. This building was subsequently converted into St. Thomas’ Hospital, while the present structure was being built opposite the Houses of Parliament. One side of the garden was bounded by a shallow lake, and on the far side was erected a scene representing a town which might be besieged, or a volcano which might suffer an eruption. It excited admiration as a landscape during daylight, and after dark served for a lavish display of fireworks. In the early part of the afternoon on certain occasions we were gratified by a balloon ascent, and the subsequent descent by a hardy person in a parachute. The balloon gave delight not only to the visitors in the garden who had paid, but to several square miles of street population who had not, who ran shouting “Balloon! balloon!” and often succeeded in getting within four or five miles of the spot where it descended.

In the course of the evening a concert was given in the hall by Julien, who was the great provider of popular music. He was undoubtedly a clever man, a Frenchman, a *poseur*, partly a charlatan — sufficiently so to render him attractive and impressive to the public — and partly a serious musician, though he was too prone by nature to lay an undue stress on effect. He had all sorts of odd ways of attracting public attention by means of queer instruments and previously unknown noises. At one time he produced an immense drum, which was hung at the top of the orchestra at the back, where it looked like the father of all drums surrounded by its family. It required two men to play it, and we watched with great interest how each drummer had to look sideways along the barrel of the drum to see how his colleague was getting on at the other end, and time his own thwacks

accordingly. But in spite of these oddities Julien was a protagonist in the arena of modern music. He was undoubtedly if not the first, at least one of the pioneers of programme-music, and not a slave to melody. All sorts of sounds were fish for his musical net. As the symphony was rather beyond the liking of the popular audience, his tone poems were frequently cast in the forms of quadrilles or dances. I remember one which was of a military nature, and something after the following fashion : —

We bowed to partners, crossed over and backed again to the distant step of a large army approaching us, the footsteps growing louder and louder as they came nearer. Then we did the ladies' chain, to the drums and fifes briskly playing "The Girls we left behind us," and then they came towards us and swept past, departing into silence, leaving nothing but sobs behind them. Then came the combat, ushered in by a booming sound on the kettledrums, punctuated by low booms produced by the big drum. Then there came on an indescribable din, shrieks of the wounded, on the woodwind. A staccato movement on the brass signifying a gallant charge of the Old Guard, and the time marked every three or four bars by the discharge of ordnance — real cannons! The foe fled before the trombones and the ordnance — the night seemed to close in to the distant melody of the evening hymn. I do not remember that the snores of the sleeping army were represented, but I should have mentioned that at one point the clock certainly struck midnight. Then, as day might be supposed to dawn, we might hear the church bells calling the villagers to church, cattle and goats and sheep all uttering their characteristic sounds in strict time to the music as they were driven to their pasture. Mingled with these pacific sounds from far, far away came the sound of a military band, which approached at the abnormal pace of people in a cinematograph, its tones growing louder and louder as it drew nearer the town, till at length the spirited air of the "British Grenadiers" flying about with the greatest impartiality from one set of instruments to another could plainly be distinguished.

This, as was only natural, would seem to have awakened the sleepers, and the hastily attired population poured into the streets to welcome the returning heroes with acclamation and the ringing of joy bells. Then the whole would conclude by the soldiers and inhabitants fraternising, and singing a hymn of thanksgiving with Methodist fervour, punctuated from time to time with a tremendous roar augmented by the rattle of the side drums, and as we bowed to partners and offered arms, the music abruptly

stopped, Julien would apparently lose the use of his legs, and like one stricken by a mortal weakness would sink back exhausted into a golden chair.

One never-to-be-forgotten night there was nearly a riot. The attraction was Alboni. The hall was not merely crowded, but the spectators were wedged in against one another like figs in a box. There were hundreds piled up against each doorway, and outside an angry and disappointed mob surrounded the building in loose order. There was also a number of people in the roads outside the grounds. Time after time did Julien attempt to begin a popular overture, but nothing could be heard but the tumultuous shouts of "Alboni." Those who were inside wanted their song at once, those who were jammed in the doors wanted to be released; at length Julien, after a hurried disappearance, came forward without his baton and tried to address the mob. After an indescribable tumult between those who wanted to hear what he had to say and those who were too indignant to hear anything, he was heard to say, "Gentlemen, I have been to the directors, and " — pointing his fingers to his ears — " they have shot their ears." The audience with the good nature of an English mob roared with laughter, and Julien seizing the happy moment rushed to the artists' door and led on Alboni.

My father enjoyed these entertainments, for with the exception of a short space of time in the concert hall we were in the open air all the time. We drove there and back in an open chaise, and picnicked in the grounds.

CHAPTER XI

EARLY VICTORIAN ILLUSTRATIONS

The methods of publishing were necessarily very different from those employed in the present day, and in the matter of mechanical reproduction inferior in the sense of economy, precision, and rapidity. Owing to the immense popularity of Dickens, my father's work became so universally known that he was besieged with clients. It must be kept in mind that his work belonged to his generation and exactly suited the taste of the time, so that without doubt he would have become a popular illustrator even if he had begun his career more quietly. But the excess of work certainly exercised a deleterious influence over his artistic development in other directions. His whole time was taken up with the attempt to keep pace with the demand, and leaving very little leisure for preparation, study, or even observation. The enormous success of *Pickwick* alone, its great publicity, gave him a reputation in a few months that could only have been acquired under ordinary circumstances in several years. At the time when he had attained little more than his majority, he was the most popular illustrator in the kingdom. There was, of course, no author who could be put into competition with Dickens for a single moment, but there were writers of merit who had a certain amount of popularity for whom he did similar work. There was scarcely anybody who had produced an ill-developed bantling of a book but who was desirous of the aid of at least one drawing from his hand. The reader will therefore understand that he had very little leisure, and his simple tastes did not tempt him to neglect the work immediately under his hand for any form of recreation. Each author (or his publisher) naturally considered his own work of the greatest importance, so there was always somebody in a state of fuss urging haste — though experience constantly showed that the world could well afford to wait patiently for many of the productions. A short account of the work itself may not be out of place.

It may be noted that a certain proportion of these books were issued in monthly numbers, while others were published as complete volumes. The former category generally contained two steel engravings for each number, the others as many as the publisher thought would be necessary to attract buyers. Moreover, a number of less important drawings were executed as woodcuts. Both methods of reproduction have been superseded almost, if not entirely, by mechanical processes, in which photography and chemistry play an important part, and it may be advisable here to briefly explain the methods then in vogue.

Those who have studied the works with any care will have noticed the different qualities of the etchings and woodcuts. They might almost be the work of two different men. The woodcuts are invariably inferior to the etchings. The process of etching was as follows: The plate after being heated was dabbed over with a special quality of wax, which was blackened by exposure to the fuliginous flame of a taper. The coating of wax was very thin, and was required to be tenacious, but not brittle. The design showing in a rough way the main lines, and distribution of light and shade, was made in chalk, pencil, or in Indian ink on a thin paper. Browne generally used ordinary straw letter paper; a sheet of tissue paper was rubbed with sanguine (red chalk) placed face downwards on the wax. On this was placed the design, which was firmly traced over by a blunt point. On removing the two sheets of paper the design could be seen more or less completely drawn in red on the dark surface of the wax. Then the etcher with a sharp-pointed needle would scratch the wax, very much as if drawing



THE ROCKERS.

with an ordinary lead pencil, so as to expose the metal surface beneath. He might or might not slightly scratch the surface of the plate, but to get the wax off was the one thing essential. It would then be noticed that the outlines and shading did not show as dark upon light, but as glittering shining lines, so that the design would appear light where it was intended to be dark, and vice versa. Over the surface so prepared was poured a mordant solution; in the case of Browne's steel plates it was diluted nitric acid. The whole plate would be exposed to the solution for a certain time; and when the background and parts that required to appear delicately etched were judged to be sufficiently bitten, they would be varnished so that the acid could not reach the metal, and the biting-in continued for some time longer over the darker parts. A skilful biter-in, such as Robert Young, could produce many degrees of gradation, but in such plates used in the ordinary illustrations not more than three or four distinctions are to be found, the backgrounds, faces, the costumes, and the foregrounds. It will be perceived that if an etcher and biter-in understood one another, the exact effect desired might be attained. The biting-in finished, the wax had to be cleared off the plate, which then appeared as a bright shining surface partly covered by scratches. It passed now into the hands of the printer, who proceeded to dab

it all over with printing ink, which was wiped off, first by means of a rag, and finally by the ball of his thumb. It will be perceived that the surface was again bright and shining, but that the grooves made by the needle and the acid were filled with the ink and appeared as black lines. The plate and a rather thick paper were then passed under a roller-press, not unlike the domestic mangle, and the drawing appeared for the first time in black and white. Considerable experience was required in carrying out the design, as the etcher never saw his work in its proper relations until after it had passed out of his hands. Modern etchings which are executed with a view to pictorial effects involve a rather more complicated technique, which however only differs in detail and not in principle. The steel etchings could not be printed at the same time as the letterpress, and either had to appear on separate paper, as they did in the Dickens' numbers, or if printed among the text, by two separate printings, as in the case of the beautiful Turner vignettes to Rogers' poems.

In the case of the Dickens books, with their enormous sale, the plate-printing being slower than the letterpress, one or two replicas were required, and were executed by Browne by hand. It is astonishing how close the copies were, but minute differences can be detected on a careful examination. The utility of the preliminary tracings becomes obvious.

As a mechanical aid Browne possessed a ruling machine, which was capable of producing parallel lines very close together, or with an appreciable distance between them, so that any plate could be covered by a tint ranging from grey almost to black by being subjected to this machine. Whilst the wax was on it the shades could be drawn in the usual manner by the etching needle, and the lights stopped out with the varnish, before the application of the mordant. In this manner very good effects could be produced with little labour; the machine could be used by an assistant, and required no more skill than a barrel-organ. It was used with great effect in *Bleak House*, to be referred to hereafter. A steel plate required incessant care and attention from the beginning to the end of its existence. A variation in the skill or carefulness of the printer would affect the result to an extraordinary degree. When much call was made upon a plate it was apt to be worn away unevenly, and required repairing. Allowance being made for these defects, it was an excellent means of illustrating, and though not an absolute facsimile of the artist's handling, it was to a great extent

autographic. Modern processes of course are absolutely faithful facsimiles, even down to faults in drawing material or paper.

A wood block was usually made of box-wood, cut across the grain with a beautifully level and polished surface. On to this, after a preparation by means of a coating of Chinese white, the design was traced in sanguine, in the same way as the first stage of an etching, showing red on white. The drawing was completed in the usual manner with a very hard black lead pencil, and it was the business of the draughtsman to vary the blackness of his line by its thickness, and never by any variation of his pressure on the pencil. The business of an engraver was to cut away all the white, leaving the black lines or shading of the pencil standing up as little ridges, exactly similar to the little ridges which constitute the letters in ordinary type. Moreover, if required, an engraver could produce a tint in the same manner as with the ruling machine above mentioned by means of parallel lines. When the draughtsman's pencil line was exactly reproduced the work was called "facsimile," and resembled the design, with only the amount of variation which would normally exist between a drawing in pencil and another in pen and ink, that is to say, with a little added stiffness.

In the engraving in "tint" the engraver exercised his individual skill as to his tint, and could represent the effect of a drawing executed in Indian ink by a series of close parallel lines, and Chinese white by cutting away the whole surface. So that wood cutting was capable of considerable variety, ranging from the effects of a coarse line engraving to those of a monochrome drawing. As the ink was conveyed by the upstanding ridges, the block could be set up and printed with the letterpress, as it was for many years in the pages of the *Illustrated News* and *Punch*. The difference between the two processes was that every groove made by the etcher printed as black, whereas every groove made by the wood cutter printed as white.

Browne was an accomplished etcher, but he was never at home with the technique of wood cutting. He never seemed able to realise what changes an engraver might make in the appearance of his drawing. As a rule, the tendency was to increase the amount of white shown, and thereby thin the line, and also in a free kind of drawing to substitute something more mechanical. He never cured himself of using a mixed method of drawing and leaving the engraver to find his way out of it, which he generally did by cutting away anything that offered a difficulty. It may seem strange that a

man should not have an equal skill in the two methods, but it was often the case that when men had been practised in drawing upon wood, they found great difficulty in etching, that is to say, without expending more care and attention on the work than it was worth.

Leech drew much better on wood than he could etch, but he was not free from mischances at the hands of the cutter. When a friend praised one of his drawings on a block he said, "Wait till it comes back from the engraver." The freer the line and the more vivacious the handling, the greater the damage done in the cutting. The draughtsman who desired a good facsimile had to keep clearly before his mind the difficulties of the engraver, who had to reverse the whole process and work at the white, leaving the black as a sort of basis. The really successful draughtsmen on wood were men who had begun as wood cutters, like William Harvey or, at an earlier date, Thomas Bewick, and in their work the effect of the white playing over the black is never lost sight of.

I hope I have made it clear that the production of a plate was not altogether a simple process. The plates were steel, with beautiful polished surfaces on the front. The first process was the application of the wax. A number were done at a time by Young,



MOULDER AND CHIEF
Engraving after the original in the collection of the British Museum.
Reproduced from page 13 of the book.

and sent to the Governor in a specially constructed box. When a plate was etched, it would be sent back to Young with the sketch. It would then be bitten. The lettering was done by an assistant. Any part where the acid had not satisfactorily taken was rectified by a touch from the engraver and the plate sent to the printer, who got as much work out of it as it would stand. By this division of labour Browne was able to etch a second plate while the first was being bitten in. Thus he was able to keep pace with the extraordinary demands made upon him. Robert Young, my father's friend and partner, attended to all these subsidiary processes. He came down to Croydon nearly every Sunday, and sometimes during the week. Consequently there was a continual consultation between the two men, and there was a frequent transmission by special messengers and carriers of the boxes that contained the plates.

CHAPTER XII

CHARLES LEVER, THE MAN AND HIS BOOKS

An author who occupied a great deal of Browne's attention as illustrator was Charles Lever. At any other time, and with any other competitor less powerful than Dickens, he would have been considered a very popular writer. Even with Dickens in the field before him, and the dazzling popularity of *Pickwick* to contend against, he achieved a remarkable success with his first book, and had not, like the majority of authors, to suffer from a number of preliminary failures. He and his publisher must have had plenty of confidence — or, as the moderns would put it, "cheek" — to start with a series of one shilling monthly numbers, with two illustrations etched by Phiz, at once an imitation and an assumption of equality with Dickens. The matter also discarded the old-fashioned romantic style, and followed *Pickwick's* lead in being broadly farcical. The audacity met with its reward. A year or two afterwards Thackeray, who for some time had been writing for magazines and *Punch*, tried his luck with *Vanity Fair* in shilling numbers and his own illustrations. Except for a difference in colour, the appearance of the three books was very similar. Dickens' cover was a dull green, Lever's a bright pink, and Thackeray's a brimstone yellow — all, like shows at a fair, decorated with designs indicating what was to be seen within.

Lever belonged to that great Anglo-Irish race which has contributed so much to the wit, wisdom, and efficiency of our nation. He himself had a slightly contemptuous opinion of the average homegrown Englishman as wanting in dash and go. He thought of us as Charles Lamb thought of the Scotchman, but admitted that we could manage a joke if we were given time. He possessed the most extraordinary animal spirits, loved adventures, dangers, and practical jokes. Though really a temperate man, he was pre-eminently social, and enjoyed feasting and all kinds of jollity, for which in after years the bill was sent in, and had to be paid in the torments of gout. He was a good-looking man, with a typical Irish face, small eyes, a large

powerful jaw, presenting no appearance of intellectuality when in repose, but easily lighting up, becoming genial and vivacious. His physique was correspondingly big, and he was remarkably active. The same type may still be seen by anyone who may happen to pass a few days in the neighbourhood of Trinity College, Dublin. He was a born conversationalist like many of his countrymen, and it required scarcely any provocation to make him talk to an almost unlimited extent; and there seemed no reason when he began, why he should ever leave off. There was a continual stream of wit, narrative, and quotation, all mingled, but forthcoming at call like the streams from a conjurer's miraculous bottle. His books were not literary efforts, but extracts from his habitual talk. Withal, he was modest, and never talked for display, but to amuse himself and friends in obedience to a natural instinct. He began life as a medical student, and his career probably resembled Mr. Bob Sawyer's, with perhaps a little added vivacity. When qualified he set up in practice in Ireland with a minimum of medical knowledge, but he had an abundance of common-sense and a taking manner, which go a long way in the making of a successful medical man. In the intervals of doctoring his genius for narration began to assert itself, and he scribbled sketches for the *Dublin University Magazine*, and in particular some chapters of a book, *Harry Lorrequer*, which gave him his fame and a sort of *nom de guerre*.

Considering his temperament, his marriage cannot be accepted as proof that he was successful in making an income, but marry he did, and very happily. Whether it was from the necessity of providing for new responsibilities, or from mere love of change, which was inherent in his nature, he contrived to secure an appointment at Brussels. In that gay little city he took a fine house near the Embassy, and doctored all sorts of swells who were passing through to the curative waters of the Spas. But *Lorrequer* was not forgotten, and the beginning was reprinted from the *University Magazine*, and the publication in monthly numbers seriously begun. From the beginning he leant upon Phiz; he was very easily satisfied with his illustrations, and so long as they agreed with the general drift of the text, he was not solicitous about details. He wanted something attractive and striking at first sight, corresponding with his own writing, which had the great charm of spontaneity and a happy irresponsibility. He liked both text and pictures to be so plain that he who ran could read, and great numbers did read.

Browne's acquaintance with Lever beginning on a purely business footing, quickly ripened into a durable friendship.

When considering the plan of the third book, *Jack Hinton*, he very sensibly invited Browne to stay with him in Brussels, to see the people and neighbourhood for himself, and confer over the drawings. Browne accordingly went with Samuel Lover, also a congenial spirit. What conferences took place we know not, but there were certainly high jinks. Lever, besides being a fashionable doctor and author, had constituted himself a leader of society, and entertained lavishly. His assemblies not only rivalled but surpassed those of the Embassy, and though ostentatious and splendid, were entirely free and easy. In between the large entertainments there was a continual run of dinners and suppers, which seem to have resembled students' entertainments in the matter of merriment and noise. The parties generally bore a strong resemblance to the carousals described by Lever in his books, and do to a large extent go to prove that he took what lay under his hand for his material, and that his books were not more boisterous than the company he kept.

He was accused by his critics of exaggeration, but it was neither possible nor necessary to enhance the circumstances as they stood. Samuel Lover wrote home a wonderful description of their "orgies" at Lever's house. "They laughed themselves sick over Monsoon, who dined there daily. They held an installation of the Knights of Alcantara, Lover, Lever, and 'Phiz' being made Grand Crosses of the Order, with music procession, and a grand ballet to conclude. They did nothing all day or, in some instances, all night, but eat, drink, and laugh." Lever in a reply to a letter from McGlashan says, "If I have a glass of champagne left (we finished nine dozen in sixteen days Lover and 'Phiz' spent here), I'll drink your health." For the first time he felt that Phiz and himself had become sworn allies, having arranged on an admirable footing all their future operations. Lever must have exercised a considerable fascination over Browne, and seems to have entirely overcome his natural shyness, for though we can scarcely imagine it, he seems to have fully entered into the spirit of the time and place, and presented all the features of an irresponsible roisterer.

I have the feeling of knowing Lever better than any of the authors, but in reality I saw very little of him, though I heard a great deal, owing to my father several times going away with him, and the visits being always of an unusual and hilarious nature, we had an abundance of amusing anecdotes in

the intervals. Gradually there grew up an acquaintance with the man's doings and sayings, not to mention the people he associated with. He did things droller than anything in his books, and his pranks were of precisely that dashing and impulsive character highly congenial to the boyish imagination. He amusingly posed as one who became entangled in the whirl of his festivities, and as being really a person of mild and decorous manner, and on one occasion, when the reviewers taxed him with uproarious and riotous living, he wrote a reply saying the character of his books for uproarious people and incidents were mainly due to the drawings of Master Phiz. I think this audacious statement became a sort of proverb in our house, and when Lever came out with one of his usual escapades, we used to say "Ah! ah! there is Master Phiz at his old tricks again," and we might have begun to believe there was something in it, had we not reflected that the etching was always the consequence of the story, and never the reverse.

I subjoin an extract from *Jack Hinton*, a description of a ball given by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rooney, people who were endeavouring to make their way in society in Dublin, from which it may be gathered that Lever did not need any assistance from Master Phiz in imagining a tumultuous festivity.

"An increased noise and tumult below stairs at the same moment informed me that the supper-party were at length about to separate. I started up at once, wishing to see Miss Bellew again ere I took my leave, when O'Grady seized me by the arm and hurried me away. 'Come along, Hinton: not a moment to lose; the duke is going.' 'Wait an instant,' said I, 'I wish to speak to' 'Another time, my dear fellow, another time. The duke is delighted with the Rooneys, and we are going to have Paul knighted!' With these words he dragged me along, dashing down the stairs like a madman. As we reached the door of the dining room we found his Grace, who, with one hand on Lord Dudley's shoulder, was endeavouring to steady himself by the other. 'I say, O'Grady, is that you? Very powerful burgundy, this . . . It's not possible it can be morning?' 'Yes, your Grace, half-past seven o'clock.' 'Indeed, upon my word, your friends are very charming people. What did you say about knighting someone? Oh, I remember! Mr. Rooney, wasn't it? Of course, nothing could be better!' 'Come, Hinton, have you got a sword?' said O'Grady, 'I've mislaid mine somehow. There, that'll do. Let us try and find Paul now.' Into the supper-room we rushed: but what a change was there! The brilliant tables, resplendent with gold plate, candelabras, and flowers, were now despoiled and dismantled. On the floor,

among broken glasses, cracked decanters, pyramids of jelly, and pagodas of blancmange, lay scattered in every attitude the sleeping figures of the late guests. Mrs. Rooney alone maintained her position, seated in a large chair, her eyes closed, a smile of Elysian happiness playing upon her lips. Her right arm hung gracefully over the side of the chair, where lately his Grace had kissed her hand at parting! Overcome, in all probability, by the more than human happiness of such a moment, she had sunk into slumber, and was murmuring in her dreams such short and broken phrases as the following: ‘Ah! happy day . . . What will Mrs. Tait say? . . . The Lord Mayor indeed! . . . Oh! my poor head: I hope it won’t be turned . . . Holy Agatha, pray for us! your Grace, pray for us! . . . Isn’t he a beautiful man? hasn’t he the darling white teeth?’ ‘Where’s Paul?’ said O’Grady. ‘Where’s Paul, Mrs. Rooney?’ as he jogged her rather rudely by the arm. ‘Ah! who cares for Paul?’ said she, still sleeping: ‘don’t be bothering about the like of him.’ ‘Egad! this is conjugal, at any rate,’ said Phil. ‘I have him,’ cried I, here he is!’ as I stumbled over a short thick figure who was propped up in a corner of the room. There he sat, his head sunk upon his bosom, his hands listlessly resting on the floor. A large jug stood beside him, in the concoction of whose contents he appeared to have spent the last moments of his waking state. We shook him, and called him by his name, but to no purpose; and as we lifted up his head, we burst out a-laughing at the droll expression on his face; for he had fallen asleep in the act of squeezing a lemon in his teeth, the half of which not only remained there still, but imparted to his features the twisted and contorted expression that act suggests. ‘Are you coming, O’Grady?’ cried the duke impatiently. ‘Yes, my lord,’ cried Phil, as he rushed towards the door ... ‘This is too bad, Hinton, that confounded fellow could not possibly be moved; I’ll try and carry him.’ As he spoke, he hurried back towards the sleeping figure of Mr. Rooney, while I made towards the duke. As Lord Dudley had gone to order up the carriages, his Grace was standing alone at the foot of the stairs, leaning his back against the banisters, his eyes opening and shutting alternately as his head nodded every now and then forward, overcome by sleep and the wine he had drunk. Exactly in front of him, but crouching in the attitude of an Indian monster, sat Corny Delany. To keep himself from the cold he had wrapped himself up in his master’s cloak, and the only part of his face perceptible was the little wrinkled forehead, and the malicious-looking fiery eyes beneath it, firmly fixed on the duke’s countenance. ‘Give me your

sword,' said his Grace, turning to me, in a tone half sleeping, half commanding; 'give me your sword, sir.' Drawing it from the scabbard, I presented it respectfully. 'Stand a little on one side, Hinton. Where is he? Ah! quite right. Kneel down, sir, kneel down, I say!' These words, addressed to Corny, produced no other movement in him than a slight change in his attitude, to enable him to extend his expanded hand above his eyes, and take a clearer view of the duke. 'Does he hear me, Hinton? . . . Do you hear me, sir?' 'Do you hear his Grace?' said I, endeavouring with a sharp kick of my foot to assist his perceptions. 'To be sure I hear him,' said Corny. 'Why wouldn't I hear him?' 'Kneel down then,' said I. 'Devil a bit of me'll kneel down. Don't I know what he's after well enough? Ach ma bocklish! Sorrow else he ever does nor make fun of people.' 'Kneel down, sir!' said his Grace, in an accent there was no refusing to obey. 'What is your name?' 'O murther! O heavenly Joseph!' cried Corny, as I hurled him down upon his knees,' that I'd ever lived to see the day!' 'What is his d-d name?' said the duke passionately. 'Corny, your Grace, Corny Delany.' 'There, that'll do,' as with a hearty slap of the sword, not on his shoulder, but on his bullet head, he cried out,' Rise, Sir Corny Delany!' 1 Och, the devil a one of me will ever get up out of this same spot. O wirra, wirra! how will I ever show myself again after the disgrace?' Leaving Corny to his lamentations, the duke walked towards the door. Here about a hundred people were now assembled, their curiosity excited in no small degree by a picket of light dragoons, who occupied the middle of the street, and were lying upon the ground, or leaning on their saddles, in all the wearied attitudes of a night-watch. In fact, the duke had forgotten to dismiss his guard of honour, who had accompanied him to the theatre, and thus had spent the dark hours of the night keeping watch and ward over the proud dwelling of the Rooneys. A dark frown settled on the duke's features as he perceived his mistake, and muttered between his teeth,' How they will talk of this in England!' The next moment, bursting into a hearty fit of laughter, he stepped into the carriage, and amid a loud cheer from the mob, by whom he was recognised, drove rapidly away."

The reader will probably join with the present writer in considering that this brief extract bears a considerable resemblance to the glimpse afforded of the real things by Lover's letter. Even the ceremonial of knighthood is not omitted.

On another occasion, when Browne was touring with Lever in Ireland, they were starting on a journey by one of Bianconi's cars, the proprietor asked if they were the identical gentlemen concerned in the novels, and hearing they were, he declined to take a fare, a pleasant instance of a prophet being honoured in his own country. As a result of the tours Browne acquired a considerable knowledge of the Irish people, and made a series of about thirty designs in chalk, with the intention of reproducing them by etching, but owing to difficulties of executing etchings of the necessarily large size, the project fell through. Unfortunately he did not consider the feasibility of employing lithography, which he found later on to be admirably suited to his style. The whole series was sold at Christie's and scattered, but a small number were included in the Liverpool Exhibition of his works in 1883, and excited great admiration.

The strongest bonds of union between the two men were a cheery optimism about life and the love of the horse. Both enjoyed rough riding across country. Though it was expedient for Lever to reside abroad, he always suffered from the nostalgia of the Irish hunting field; he made flying visits to the old country from time to time, but settled nowhere till he was appointed Vice-Consul at Spezzia in 1858.

All this time he continued to write by fits and starts,



and made sufficient money to cut a dashing appearance, and entertain on an extensive scale, which he declared to be a mode of economising, as it kept him fresh and supplied him with characters for his books, and there was some justice in the paradoxical contention, as, unlike Dickens, who modified his models, Lever lifted his characters and their doings bodily into his books, and he sometimes was with difficulty persuaded to alter their names. He took anybody who seemed to offer a chance of amusement, and it is reported that he had once the audacity to have intended laying hands on the Duke of Wellington, and it was only stopped by a serious remonstrance. This genial light-heartedness endeared him to his contemporary readers, who did not want studies of character, psychological analysis, or accurate typographical descriptions, but fun. Among his numerous excellences may be mentioned his power of writing verse, which he shared as a novelist with Thackeray and Harrison Ainsworth. He was peculiarly happy in imitating the kind of rhymes that might fit the mouth of an Irish ballad singer, but the line and sentiment of course were his own, and had oftener a deeper meaning than was apparent on the surface; for instance, the following might easily be expanded into dull prose, and remain an excellent description of the “finest peasantry in the world”: —

“Och, Dublin city, there is no doubtin’,
Bates every city upon the say;
‘Tis there you’d hear O’Connell spoutin’,
An’ Lady Morgan makin’ tay.

For ‘tis the capital o’ the finest nation,
Wid charming pisintry upon a fruitful sod,
Fightin’ like divils for conciliation,
An’ hatin’ each other for the love of God.”

He lived for some time at Florence, as usual cutting a dash, and I heard from an outside source that his daughters, who were thoroughly Irish, and resembled their father in high spirits and a genuine love of sport, had an immense reputation as horsewomen in the neighbourhood, and he himself told us that on one occasion at Spezzia he and the two girls were upset from a boat in the bay. I am not at all sure that the bay was not specially enlarged, but at all events he produced an impression of very great remoteness from

the shore. They set off to swim, he being behind, in some trepidation, but the girls were laughing and looked back, cheerfully inviting him to come on. We may judge from this they had inherited their father's activity and courage. I tell the tale as it was told to me, but there were several versions set in circulation in course of time. As Mr. Fitzpatrick says, "In describing adventures, Lever unconsciously embellished"; this was certainly undeniable. The truth of the story was as follows. Lever, *one* daughter, and a dog were upset into the sea about a mile out. As they were good swimmers and habitually wore swimming costumes they could afford to wait, and took the accident calmly, supported themselves and the dog by grasping oars, and waited till a boat was sent in aid from the shore. Mr. Fitzpatrick in confirmation of the embellishing habit quotes a letter from Mr. Hartpole Lecky, the historian: —

"I well remember how a large tableful of Italian naval officers were electrified by his conversation, and especially by the fire and vividness with which he told a story, which I afterwards found in one of his books, of how he, his daughter and his poodle dog were one day upset in the Gulf, and how they swam, Miss Lever carrying the dog on her back. When Lever left the table, I was greatly amused by the exclamation of one of the officers, who had known him of old. "What a wonderful man that is! I have heard that anecdote again and again, but it seems always fresh — there are always new incidents.""

When Lever was on Lake Constance, he wrote to Browne inviting him to come and join him in a tour through Switzerland and Tyrol, offering as a special attraction to drive him with his own nags. Browne replied, "I wish I could accept it, but alas! Heigho-ho, Harry! I can't. I have just taken a sort of holiday, and now must buckle on my harness again, and work! work! work! I will do the pretty for *O'Donoghue* title-page. I am in dreadful poor-law-union state of inanition regarding literary news. Of course you read or heard of Dickens' theatricals? Bulwer, for want of something else to do, is blowing the trumpet for the water doctors! 'To what strange uses,' &c. He must either have water on the brain or a cataract in his eye."

Later on, Lever was appointed Consul at Trieste. In spite of living in beautiful climates and taking an immense amount of exercise, all his life long he was a sufferer from gout, which ultimately attacked vital organs and caused his death. During the last years of his life he continued to make occasional visits to London and Dublin. It is related that one evening just

before dining at the club he was noticed to be depressed, and he remarked on the absence of many old friends. Some one said, pointing to a pile of his books behind him, "There are some old friends who will not pass away," and began to praise *Harry Lorrequer*. "Ah!" he said, with his usual modesty, "a poor thing, but how well Browne illustrated it!"

He died at Trieste in 1872, having survived Dickens by two years.

Lever's popularity as a writer in his own time was enormous, and was due to the amusing character of his works. Some of these were published anonymously, and were therefore taken on their own merit, and not on the faith of his name. That he did not equal the popularity of Dickens, and has not survived so well, is due to the fact that his books consist largely of scenes and incidents, and not of striking and amusing characters. We have scenes of revelry, amazing runs with the hounds, races, the jockeying of horses, and trickery, kidnapping and evading of bailiffs, incidents of war and battles, all mingled with a fine sense of the amusing side of love-making. But the characters are not so clearly drawn or so ingeniously compounded as to linger in the memory. Lever took very little pains in preparation. He seized the point of an incident, embellished and decorated it, but he would often put in the names of the actors and the locality without taking the trouble to make any alteration. All this was in striking contrast to the painstaking and elaborate preparation of Dickens, but from any of his books, in the midst of all the frolic and exaggeration, can be found an accurate and sympathetic picture of the Irish people, and there are several really eloquent passages pointing out the mode that should be followed in order to gain their affection and loyalty. In the present day he would be termed an anti Home Ruler, though he strongly disapproved of the methods of government adopted by the English.

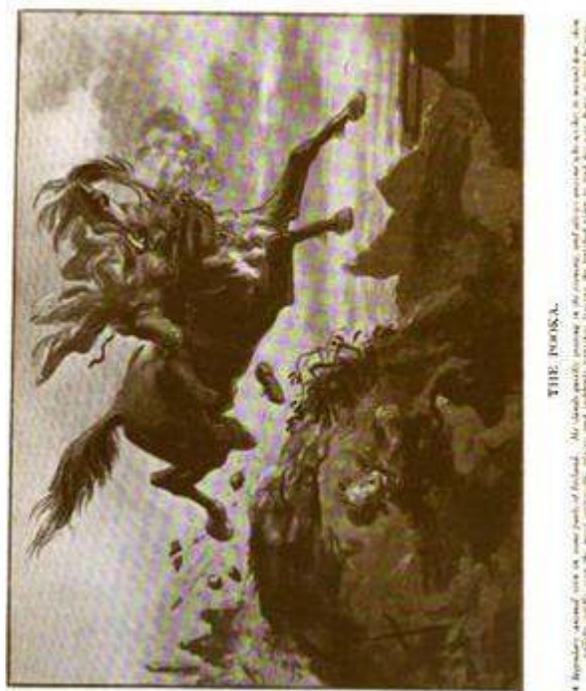
He believed that it was possible for the Union to be maintained and the Irish brought to loyalty by a sympathetic and intelligent treatment.

Two books, *The Knight of Gwynne* and *The Dodd Family Abroad*, may be read for mere amusement, but they may be also profitably studied for their pictures of the sources of Irish discontent and unrest. Kenny Dodd is probably the best example of an Irish absentee landlord in literature. He goes abroad to economise, spends more than he did at home, and gets deeper and deeper into debt, and continually pesters his agent to screw up the rents.

Lever never fell into the error frequently made by Dickens, of attempting to foist on to his books some fragments of a plot. There was no more coherence than there is in real life. There was no particular climax, which did not matter, as there was no particular beginning. The reader's attention was occupied by adventures and incidents, and not by endeavouring to remember their sequence or significance. He also differed from Dickens, who was wont to describe minutely common and familiar objects as if they were seen for the first time. Lever seldom indulged in any particular description. He dealt in generalities. Mountains might be rugged or fantastic. A house might be a cabin or a castle, but everything was general, and there was nothing sufficiently detailed to aid the reader in identification. His characters lost something of their individuality in the rush and breathlessness of their adventures. His manner resembles more closely that of Alexandre Dumas than of any other of his contemporaries. Both writers were adepts at getting the characters into scrapes and extricating them by plunging them into others, and both seized political plots and conspiracies as affording suitable atmosphere for such doings, and if the Frenchman be the better story-teller of the two, he lacked the saving grace of humour which played so great a part in our countryman's narrative.

Browne remarked more than once that Lever always had bad illustrations, which was not true, although not altogether without justification. The fact was that many were despatched unfinished on account of the author's dilatoriness in furnishing copy. Lever, although he wrote with considerable facility, and was not sedulous as regards style, jibbed and procrastinated at the beginning, delaying the start till the last moment; moreover, what he habitually wrote abroad was printed in Dublin, and Browne lived on the outskirts of London, and the punctuality of the post was by no means what it has since become, so that the drawings were undertaken and executed in a scramble. Hence whole portions of plates would be left almost blank, with mere suggestions of what ought to be there. On one occasion the *manuscript* was actually lost in transmission, having been mixed up in some Government papers, and the whole number had to be re-written. The illustrations to the first book, *Lorrequer*, were broad caricature (ill drawn, very spirited, and for the most part amusing). They are evidently executed purely from imagination, and the figures bear no resemblance to foreigners or Irishmen. Scarcely anything indicates the lines of Browne's future development, except some slight instances of landscape and architecture in

the background. *Charles O'Malley* is obviously a period of transition. In *Jack Hinton*, undertaken after the visit to Brussels, the illustrations show an abrupt change of style, a marked improvement in drawing, without any diminution, but with considerable restraint of the comic powers.



Here we see the beginning of numerous drawings of the horse in action, which both for author and artist is as much hero as man. The horses are invariably full of go, excellently drawn, and very finely etched. They bear marks of first-hand observation and idealisation. Their only fault is that they are too invariably high-bred.

From this time onwards there was a series, of level excellence, of Browne's characteristic work, culminating in the illustrations to the *Knight of Gwynne*, which have that curious felicity in fitting the book noticeable in many of the illustrations to Dickens. Even without making any allowance for the scramble in which they were executed, the average high quality of the invention and technical work is very remarkable. As an instance of the happy-go-lucky way in which the work was carried on, a letter from Browne to Lever may be quoted. Browne writes: "As to myself, when I saw it I was convulsed with laughter. I do not know whether to attribute the mistake to carelessness, stupidity, inebriety, or the practical joking peculiarities of the writing engraver. I think it is a compound. Orr sent to

me for a title to the plate; and as I was rather at a loss how to name the child, I wrote on a slip of paper thus: 1. 'Mark recognises an old acquaintance ' ; or simply 2. 'The Glen ' ; or (addressing Orr) 'anything else you like, my little dears ' — meaning that Orr might give a better if he could; and behold! the writing engraver makes a Chinese copy of the whole!"

Fortunately the illustration occurs at the very end of *The O'Donoghue*, and there it remains to be seen of all to the present day.

Samuel Lover, above mentioned as the companion of Lever and Phiz in the revels at Brussels, was a versatile man who earned considerable distinction in several directions. By profession he was a portrait painter, and practised his art in Dublin; he was also a prolific song writer, and I believe a composer. But his main reputation was founded on a very popular novel of Irish life called *Handy Andy*. For many years afterwards the name of the hero was applied to any peculiarly awkward person. In one edition he etched his own illustrations, but in an issue in a periodical I have seen some woodcuts by Phiz. They are, however, of no value.

CHAPTER XIII

HARRISON AINSWORTH — A MAN OF MANY PARTS

Harrison Ainsworth was senior to Dickens both in age and authorship, but a pleasant friendship existed between the two men. My father became acquainted with Ainsworth through Dickens some time about the completion of *Pickwick*. When Dickens, Forster, and Browne visited Manchester, Ainsworth gave them introductions to his family and friends. It may be useful to recall Dickens' stage of progress at the time. He began *Nicholas Nickleby* with an exposure of the Yorkshire schools, which was intended to make, and succeeded in making, a great sensation. This formed a good introduction to the book, but had no intimate connection with the story and led to nowhere, being, in fact, merely tacked on as an episode in the life of the hero, and though Dickens had prospered without a plot in *Pickwick*, it was not likely that he could hope to tempt fortune again with success. Even in *Pickwick* he had provided the conventional happy ending by the marriages of Mr. Winkle to Miss Allen and Sam Weller to Mary the housemaid. Practised readers are aware that though the plot may be obscured in the narrative, it was always present in Dickens' mind, and he considered himself a novelist, and bound to provide the ordinary wares. Therefore he had to look forward to the ultimate restoration of Nicholas to a good position in the world, and to give him the opportunities of a little lovemaking in a respectable sphere of life, and Dickens was, though appearances were against him, always provident in the matter of his story, and knew what he wanted. He liked to acquire material, even though he did not utilise it. Therefore early on he began to look about for some benevolent person who might extend a helping hand to Nicholas at the necessary moment, and as people of this sort are not abundant in real life, and as Dickens never liked to work without having a foundation of reality, it came about that Ainsworth gave him introductions for the especial purpose of letting him see the brothers Grant, before mentioned. By this means the

intended fairy godfather was increased to two, and everybody knows the happy use that was made of the Cheeryble brothers, by whom Nicholas was placed in such a position that he could, in the last number, marry Madeline Bray in the orthodox novel fashion, to the satisfaction of all parties.

Ainsworth was himself a typical dandy of the period. He exactly resembled one of Thackeray's heroes in voluminous and splendid garments and a great superfluity of hair. Whether he unconsciously stood as a model for Thackeray I do not know, but he can be seen in the illustrations to *Pendennis*. He was altogether a splendid person, very different from the ordinary dweller in Grub Street. He had the reputation of being a man of means, and, like his two great contemporaries, delighted to entertain on a lavish scale. In the present day he has no great reputation as an author, and many will be surprised to learn that his popularity, at all events from the point of view of sales, was at one time comparable even with that of Dickens himself, though of course he never possessed the personal magnetism of the other members of the trio.

My father had a very high opinion of his ability, and I at one time thought he overrated him; but I have since been able to understand the reasons for his estimate, for Ainsworth had certain qualities which marked him off from the general herd of authors. He was an educated man in the accepted meaning of the term, and possessed a whole quantity of out-of-the-way and interesting information about the times of the Renaissance, the customs of guilds, societies, and so forth. He knew the byways of history, and could move easily in the midst of historical personages from a long acquaintanceship, and not by dint of cram. He was familiar with low Latin and old French verses, which he could adapt to his purpose, and he was very careful to have all his details correct.

But the odd, out-of-the-way learning, his picturesqueness, poetasting, which attracted Browne, did not, as might be supposed, serve to make him the favourite of the general public. That was due to his familiarity with crime, acquired vicariously in early life, when he was intended for the law, and so when the fashion set in for criminal heroes, he was ready primed and beat all competitors. There was Dickens with *Oliver Twist*, Bulwer with *Paul Clifford*, and yet Ainsworth surpassed everybody with *Jack Sheppard*. This rascal seems to have been a criminal of the usual low, unscrupulous kind, who owed his celebrity to his unrivalled power of breaking from prison. In this occupation he showed extraordinary bravery, inventiveness,

manual dexterity, and perseverance, so that when his exploits were placed before the public in Ainsworth's picturesque manner, he easily became a popular hero.

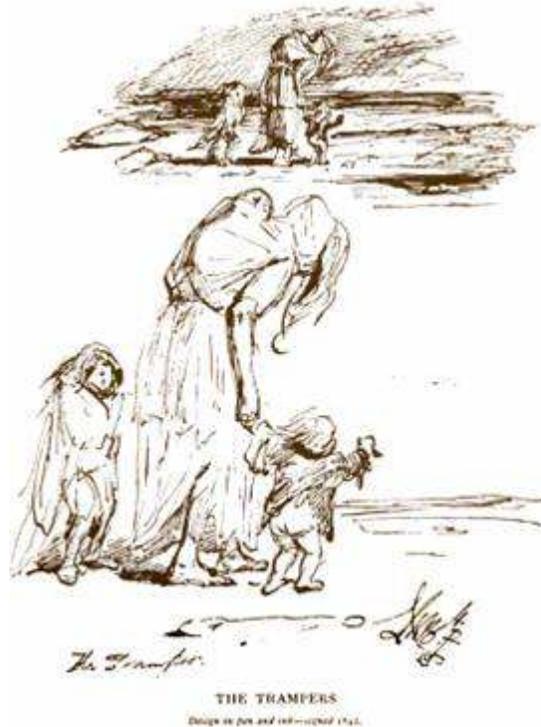
The conditions necessary for a popular success are a certain amount of ability in the author — it may be very great, though less might serve — and a public already primed, perhaps unconsciously, with the subject. Say what we like, mankind in the mass is profoundly interested in crime, but it is only occasionally that it will become enamoured of a low-class criminal. There was undoubtedly at the time of the publication of *Jack Sheppard* a widespread curiosity about the criminal classes. Ainsworth was able to supply the necessary information about these people, not from knowledge acquired to meet the present opportunity, but from a mind long stored with facts and incidents. He wrote as one of his own audience, better informed than the rest, but having precisely the same tastes. He had taught himself thieves' slang as he had taught himself old French, and used it naturally, and as he had a strong talent for versification, he simultaneously became the biographer of the burglar and the author of popular songs.

My father had a detestation of *Jack Sheppard*. I never read a line of it, but I was very familiar with some of the songs. Indeed, it was impossible to escape them, even twenty years after their publication. Rookwood we had on our own shelves, and it was always, as the circulating libraries say, "in request." We read it to ourselves, and we read it aloud. We did not regard its hero, Dick Turpin, as a criminal, but rather as a variety of the species of Knight Errant. I suppose we read the whole book, but remember only the celebrated ride to York.

Our elders must have shared our views, for we had full permission to read the story as often as we liked, and no word of its corrupting influence was ever breathed. Dick Turpin and his mare, Black Bess, were universally known, and if some stern moralists condemned the robber, they admired the horseman. The Ride to York became a stock piece at "Astley's," and even now may be seen in the travelling circus, and probably will be seen till the horse has become a legendary animal. Whether the ride to York was ever accomplished may be uncertain, but Ainsworth has converted it into history. He has achieved the remarkable feat of making fiction appear like truth, by keeping rigidly to the truth about all minor facts, so as to render the central fiction acceptable as truth, in the same manner as an accomplished liar will

often pass off a good thumping lie by the circumstantiality of his confirmatory details.

Ainsworth was a changeable creature. It was sometimes difficult to say what he was at a particular moment, and quite impossible to predict what he would become. He had as many mutations as a butterfly, which at certain periods he resembled. He was a lawyer, but anyone wishing to consult



him on a legal point might have found he was a publisher and bookseller. Then he was editor of a magazine, a dandy about town, rivalling Count D'Orsay, the supposed head of the species, and finally author. His books underwent curious changes like their writer, not only in composition, but in manner of publication. After triumphing with the *Newgate Calendar*, he ceased "faking away," dropped his old pals, and started a serious flirtation with the historic muse. He not only aspired to fill, but actually did seat himself upon the throne vacated by Sir Walter Scott. Henceforward we had a series of romances based on historical events, or celebrated personages skilfully woven with the doings of fictitious persons for the amusement of the ordinary novel reader. He was full of the modern taste for correct costume, ancient buildings, archaic dialect, and all the necessary furniture for Wardour Street history. The legal atmosphere of his home and early life having probably made accuracy in minutiae habitual and easy to him, every

detail was carefully described, and the description verified. He did not afford shallow critics the cheap pleasure of pointing out inaccuracies in his history and geography, as they do in Shakespeare. He honourably

1 “Nix my doll pals Take away,” refrain of highly popular song in *Jack Sheppard*.

satisfied the scholars, whilst he catered for the man in the street, with hairbreadth escapes, tales of gallantry, duels and street tumults, all naturally arising out of the circumstances of the times.

In quick succession he published *The Tower of London*, *Guy Fawkes*, *Windsor Castle*, *Old St. Paul's*. Strange to say, though they had not a trace of low life in them, these works rivalled their predecessors in popularity. They passed through edition after edition, and were continually reprinted, even to the beginning of the present century. The perplexing question is, Who are the readers? The cultured classes apparently care nothing for him. One never sees allusions to him in the papers, and only two of his criminal heroes are mentioned by name. Why this curious disappearance, and still more curious survival?

The original popularity of Ainsworth's historical novels was probably due to the taste which Scott originated and fostered not having subsided; and the books themselves were easier reading than Scott's for Londoners, owing to the absence of dialect. The unsophisticated reader did, and still does, like his history interwoven with domestic incidents. Although he may be moving through great historical events and mingling with the highest society, he is always ready to enjoy a little love-making and a happy marriage that reminds him of ordinary humanity. The earlier books, criminal and historical alike, had the advantage of Cruikshank's illustrations, and collectors who never read a line of the text still buy the books for the sake of the etchings. Cruikshank will always be considered the illustrator of Harrison Ainsworth, as Browne is of Charles Dickens. But he did not remain in permanent possession, as may be explained.

Nothing was permanent or on a settled plan with Ainsworth. His books were published in all sorts of different conditions. Several made their first appearance in his own magazine. Some ran as serials in a paper, and one at least was published without any illustrations, which were only added on the appearance of the third edition. One, a story of modern life, *Mervyn*

Clitheroe, appeared in the orthodox form in monthly numbers, with two illustrations by Phiz, but the issue ceased with the fourth number, and was, I believe, only continued after the lapse of many years. The stoppage was firmly impressed upon my memory, as the numbers were given to me as they came out, and I was seriously distressed at the loss of what would have been my swell possession. I was a very small boy, but the loss of a First Folio Shakespere could not have occasioned greater dismay to a bibliomaniac.

The first illustrator after Cruikshank was Franklin, who provided a set of plates very highly finished, but rather tame, for *Old St. Paul's*. The drawings were highly esteemed by Ainsworth, but even here the spirit of unrest prevailed, and for a later edition Browne executed as frontispiece and title-page two remarkable drawings, one "The Coffinmaker's Carouse," the other "The Passage of the Plague Cart" filled with dead bodies. Both are finely executed and fantastically horrible. One book, *Crichton*, stands in a category by itself, although it has an affinity with the historical group, but it deals, not with any important events, but with the doings and adventures of the admirable Scot in Paris, at the University, and the Court of Henry the Third of France. There is nothing from defending a thesis, fighting a duel, killing a bull, that Crichton cannot do better than anybody else. He does not even need to keep himself in training, for we find him in between times at all sorts of feasts and jollifications. The book contains a great number of verses, adapted or translated from old French and low Latin, of which I quote one as affording a good idea of his style — he describes them as imitated from a Trentaine Of Beaux Sis accorded in the *Dames Galantes*:

"THE THIRTY REQUISITES

"Thirty points of perfection each judge understands,
The standard of feminine beauty demands.
Three white: — and without further prelude we know
That the skin, hands, and teeth should be pearly as snow.
Three black: — and our standard departure forbids
From dark eyes, darksome tresses, and darkly-fringed lids.
Three red: — and the lover of comeliness seeks
For the hue of the rose in the lips, nails, and cheeks.

Three long: — and of this you no doubt are aware?
Long the body should be, long the hands, long the hair.
Three short! — and herein nicest beauty appears —
Feet short as a fairy's, short teeth, and short ears.
Three large: — and remember this rule as to size,
Embraces the shoulders, the forehead, the eyes.
Three narrow: — a maxim to every man's taste,
Circumference small in mouth, ankle, and waist.
Three round: — and in this I see infinite charms —
Rounded fulness apparent in leg, hip, and arms.
Three fine: — and can aught the enchantment eclipse,
Of fine tapering fingers, fine hair, and fine lips?
Three small: — and my thirty essentials are told —
Small head, nose and bosom, compact in its mould.
Now the dame who comprises attractions like these,
Will require not the cestus of Venus to please,
While he who has met with a union so rare,
Has had better luck than has fall'n to my share.”

More especially in this book are to be noted a complete set of illustrations by Browne. These show him at his best. His powers were at their full maturity ; the romantic subjects were entirely suited to his genius, and were much more to his taste than the comic. The compositions are very elaborate; many are crowded with figures, often in violent action, but the sense of beauty is never absent. There is scarcely a trace of the grotesque, and there is none of humour, but the work has been executed with consummate ease. It might well have been the sketches of an eyewitness instead of the figments of imagination. Browne afterwards illustrated some other works for Harrison Ainsworth, but I believe they have been engulfed in Ainsworth's magazine, which is not easy to come across, but might be well worth the attention of collectors. Anyhow, I have not seen them.

One remarkable circumstance may be noted. Ainsworth had no leaning for the stage, but his works were more frequently dramatised, and with success, than those of any other author.

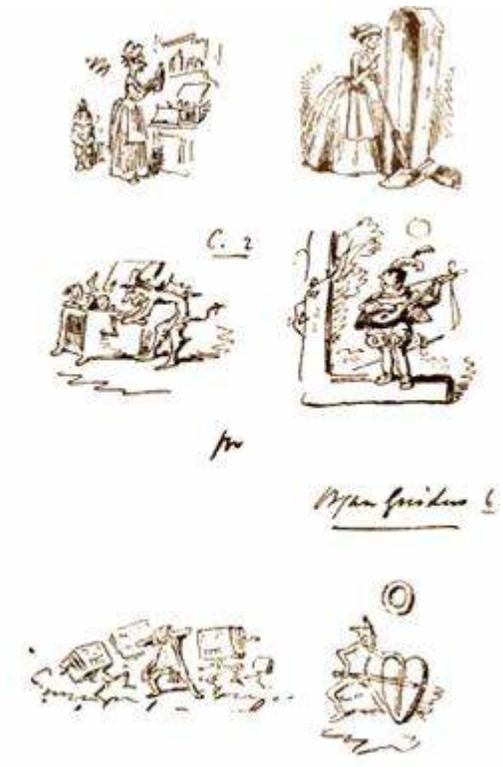
The three authors, Ainsworth, Lever, and Dickens, were products of their time, and in some ways resembled one another. They were all eminently social and gregarious, made large sums of money by their works, and

celebrated their successes by dinners. They can scarcely be described as opponents, as they do not seem to have interfered with one another, and all had remarkably good terms from their publishers. But liberal as the terms were, they were not above the real value of the works. Ainsworth was undoubtedly a man of talent, possessed of industry and erudition, but lacking the indescribable something which is rightly called genius. Throughout his books human nature plays a small part, and the characters do not dwell as living people in the memory of the reader. At one time the irrepressible Cruikshank popped up with a claim of being the author of some of the historical books, and a controversy even appeared in *The Times*. The matter was soon settled to the satisfaction of everybody except Cruikshank. Harrison Ainsworth was very short, and by no means polite.

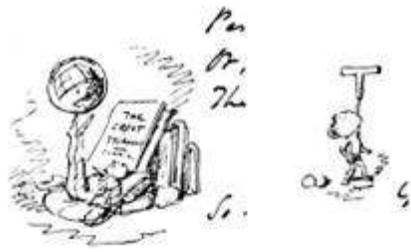
In describing Lever I have spoken of his facility in writing and his fertility. He was the antithesis of Ainsworth. He made little or no use of books, noted the humours of the day as they happened around him, using the full licence of the story-teller, improved, altered, and transformed his material with an inexhaustible invention, but the central part of his story was founded upon fact, and he wrote of men and manners such as they were and as he found them. He possessed the art, by no means an easy one, of conveying the impression of exuberantly high spirits on to the paper. But this kind of thing does not last, it loses its flavour and goes flat like yesterday's wine. As I have hinted, the historian of the future, desiring to write an account of the Irish people in the fashion of Macaulay's first chapter, will find scattered in the midst of the stories of revels and the escapades of soldiers, material for describing the thoughts and opinions of the Irish people at or about the time of the Repeal of the Union. His books viewed as novels are diffuse, but several of them by judicious editing and compression might probably acquire a new lease of life, and again be found amusing by ordinary novel readers of to-day.

Ainsworth at any time might experience a revival of a moderate popularity for his historical works, as they contain a number of facts carefully compiled and pleasantly stated. There are always to be found a number of people who read fiction with an uneasy feeling that they are wasting their time, but who enjoy themselves if they fancy they are acquiring information, and Ainsworth to this class of mind supplies a want. His criminal fictions are probably dead, as a better article is now supplied from real life in the daily papers with photographic illustrations.¹

1 Those desiring a full account of Ainsworth and his works should consult his Life in two vols, by Mr. Ellis.



JOTTINGS ON SCRAPS OF PAPER — ORGAN GRINDERS, STREET NOISES, &c.



POTTINGS ON SCRAPS OF PAPER—INITIAL LETTERS, &c.

CHAPTER XIV

CHARLES DICKENS — HIS HUMOUR AND PATHOS — "A TALE OF TWO CITIES" — A COINCIDENCE

He was the greatest and youngest of the three popular writers, and undoubtedly a man of commanding genius, who in virtue of his great qualities has maintained his popularity from the beginning to the present day. Nobody is as a writer so universally known, no one is held in such affectionate esteem by all classes. Even those who decry his methods, dislike his subjects, and deride his sentiments, are obliged to maintain a familiarity more intimate with him than any other author. His characters are constantly alluded to in conversation, and quoted by public speakers and newspapers; for any reference to his works can be made with the certainty that it will be understood, and, if made in the course of argument, accepted as explanatory and convincing. He is not regarded as a novelist, but as a feature of English life. He is met with wherever the English language is spoken.

A couple of years ago we were being shown round the ancient city of Santiago by an agreeable English-speaking Spanish gentleman. He showed us the interesting spots in that interesting city, where anything not more than four hundred years old is considered modern. He took us over the cathedral, and explained many things to us, and when we had got ourselves into a thoroughly mediaeval frame of mind, as we were going down the broad flight of steps which leads from the porch, he turned towards us, and in a perfectly natural manner said, "What would Pigue-wigue have said of Santiago?" What indeed!

A year later, travelling homewards in the Bordeaux steamer, we made the acquaintance of a pleasant little lady, wife of a missionary, who habitually lived in the near neighbourhood of the great African lakes, among the lions and blackamoors. She and her husband were four days' journey from any whites, and she confessed that though generally satisfied with her

occupations, there were times when she felt a feeling of depression and home-sickness. "And then," she added without the least suggestion, "I say to my husband, 'Go and fetch *Pickwick*, and let us have a little bit of Sammy Weller.'" "In neither case was there any idea that I was particularly interested in Dickens, nor did I, as the schoolboys say, let on. But a patent medicine could not have had a better advertisement.

Dickens, by his contemporaries, was as much esteemed for his pathos as his humour. But by the present generation his pathos is not found moving. The reason for this striking change is to be found in the difference between his management of his comic and pathetic matter. His humour still appeals to the multitude, and the reason for this remarkable permanence is to be found in his great success, already referred to, in building up and compounding the elements of his work from many sources. He would take the name from one man, the character from another, and the tricks of tongue from a third, and he would so hammer and weld all together, that he made a character individual and impressive enough to appear a reality. When these strange beings, Micawber, or Captain Cuttle, or Mrs. Gamp, began to talk and take part in the action of the book, they were so intimately known to the reader, that they became inexpressibly droll, and as the story progressed, innumerable minute details were added till an absurdity became a reality. His comic technique consisted chiefly of ample and precise descriptions of persons and their surroundings. We know Mr. Micawber's appearance and that of his house, we know Captain Cuttle and his rooms at Mrs. MacStinger's and at the little midshipman's, and we know Mrs. Gamp's toilet secrets, and the interior of her bedroom, as well as if we had lodged there ourselves. All this serves the purpose of focussing our attention in the required direction, and forcing us into a belief of the reality of his puppets. But when he desires to be pathetic, or even to tell a serious part of the story, he abruptly changes from this excellent method to one vastly inferior. He seems then to take a pleasure in being vague and general.

Well-favoured or beautiful people may not lend themselves so easily to description as oddities, though Sophia Western served pretty well in her time, but we cannot know them at all if they are not described. Mrs. Gamp is not the acknowledged titular heroine of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, but Mary Graham and Ruth Pinch share the position between them. We are given scarcely a word of description of these two young ladies, and we do not even know their general appearance, or their style of dress, or any of their

sayings and doings. We do indeed learn that Mary Graham rejects the slimy proposals of Pecksniff, and that Ruth Pinch can make a pudding, but as to taking any interest in their love affairs or marriages, it cannot be done.

Dickens was not insensible to female charms, far from it — but feeling that he was called upon to provide a love interest and a happy ending, and being desirous of treating the matter seriously and raising a pleasurable emotion in the mind of the reader, he aimed at being impressive, and became vague. Here, if anywhere, he should have entered into his minute details of costume and complexion, and charmed the female heart.

It was worse in the case of death. Dickens undoubtedly felt the pain of bereavement in every fibre of his being, and he went over, in his imagination, emotions he had suffered in reality, and transferred them to fictitious beings. We learn in his letters, that in approaching the death of little Nell and of little Dombey, his mind went back to the sorrows in his own family, till their memory became well-nigh insupportable. Undoubtedly the public for whom he wrote were profoundly moved by the accounts of the death of both these children, but of late years they have failed to arouse any emotion.

Something must be allowed for the mode of publication. With a story issued in numbers, the reader is held in expectation for a time, the mind dwells on the future, and an untoward incident tells with double force because it has been awaited, but in the case of a completed book the reader turns over a few pages, reaches the scene, turns over a few more, and it is left behind.

That is not all. We do not feel death unless we have known the person. We see half a column of deaths in the paper daily, and if we do not read the name of a friend, the catalogue leaves us indifferent, and the writer who could move us by a death must first arouse in us an interest in the living. It is the cessation of an intimate relationship that constitutes the essence of the sorrow of bereavement. Dickens unfortunately failed to realise this truth. We know scarcely anything of little Nell. We have followed her in her wanderings with her grandfather, and we gather that she is of an affectionate nature as many little girls are, but the outlines are blurred, and the presentation is indistinct. We are far better acquainted with Mrs. Jarley. And then when the end comes, instead of focussing our attention on the child, Dickens indulges in some dithyrambic writing in a sort of irregular blank verse, and produces an effect of artificiality, which is fatal.

Little Dombey's death was said to have plunged the whole nation into mourning, but we must remember the whole nation were reading the account at the same time, much as we read of a disaster in the paper. They talked of it and compared notes, and worked upon each other's feelings. The solitary reader is less easily moved; here again we find, where the scene should have been described in simple language, a repetition of the same sort of calculated



THE DEATH OF LITTLE NELL.

Extra illustration to "The Old Curiosity Shop," published by H. K. Browne and Robert Young.

eloquence which is intended to work upon our feelings, with the same unfortunate result. The very title of the chapter, "What the waves were always saying," strikes an artificial note, and conveys a feeling of insincerity that is intolerable. This is the more lamentable, that no one so well as Dickens could have recorded the little trifles that make the sum of a child's life. In both cases the writing is eloquent, but it is eloquence misplaced. The message is not "Behold, the child is dead!" but "Behold, how grieved I am." The attention is drawn from the sufferer to the recorder. The nation did not mourn because little Paul was dead, but because Mr. Dickens was so sorry.

Throughout his writings, when he changes his technique for the especial purpose of being impressive he becomes relatively dull, but where he keeps to his own natural manner he can venture on to the borders of the grotesque and yet remain human and pathetic. The death of Barkis with his friends around him, and the exhibition, up till the end, of his little mean, cunning,

but not dishonest traits, is undeniably moving; he is a grotesque and ugly little creature, but he is human, and we feel his humanity the more because his grotesqueness and ugliness remain with him till he goes out with the tide.

One instance of a death scene in a later book, *A Tale of Two Cities*, retains its full force to the present day, and it owes its enduring quality to the true method followed in the narrative. Our attention is strongly drawn to the actors, and the narrator is throughout kept in the background. In the early part of the book, at the Old Bailey, where Evremonde, otherwise Darnay, is tried for his life for treason, and is in imminent danger of condemnation from suborned evidence of his identity on certain suspicious occasions, he is saved by Sidney Carton drawing attention to the strong likeness between himself and the prisoner, thus the resemblance between the two men, which serves an important purpose at the end, is known from the beginning.

Both men are in love with Lucie, daughter of Dr. Manette, who had endured a long imprisonment in the Bastille, and is now quietly settled in London. Darnay marries Lucie, and joins the life of his wife's family, and becomes, to all intents and purposes, an Englishman. Sidney Carton remains as a friend, concealing, though always nursing, his own passion.

At the most disturbed period of the Revolution, Darnay, in answer to a piteous appeal of an old servant in grievous danger, makes his way to Paris. On arriving there he is recognised, thrown into prison, and condemned to death as an aristocrat. His father-in-law and wife, Sidney Carton, and Mr. Lorry, the trustee, all gather in Paris. Carton bribes a spy already known to him to take him into the prison, ostensibly to say farewell to Evremonde, otherwise Darnay. At the interview he makes a change of costume with Darnay, and sends him out in place of himself with the spy and assumes the place of the condemned man. The change is effected without discovery, and Darnay leaves the prison with the spy, and joins his family according to a prearranged plan. They all set forth in a coach, and get safely out of France.

The change of clothes was not detected, and Carton remains in prison as Evremonde. He listens for any sign that a discovery had been made, but for a long time there is silence. Sounds that he was not afraid of, for he divined their meaning, then began to be audible. Several doors were opened in succession, and finally his own. A gaoler, with a list in his hand, looked in, merely saying, "Follow me, Evremonde!" and he followed into a large dark room at a distance. It was a dark winter day, and what with the shadows

within, and what with the shadows without, he could but dimly discern the others who were brought there to have their arms bound. Some were standing, some seated. Some were lamenting and in restless emotion, but these were few. The great majority were silent and still, looking fixedly at the ground.

As he stood by the wall in a dim corner, while some of the fifty-two were brought in after him, one man stopped in passing to embrace him, as if having a knowledge of him. It thrilled him with a great dread of discovery, but the man went on. A very few moments after that a young woman, with a slight girlish form, a sweet spare face in which there was no vestige of colour and largely wide-opened patient eyes, rose from the seat where he had observed her sitting, and came to speak to him. "Citizen Evremonde," she said, touching him with her cold hand, "I am a poor little seamstress, who was with you in La Force." He murmured for answer "True; I forget what you were accused of?" "Plots. Though the just Heaven knows I am innocent of any. Is it likely? Who would think of plotting with a poor, little weak creature like me?" The forlorn smile with which she said it so touched him, that tears started from his eyes. "I am not afraid to die, Citizen Evremonde, but I have done nothing. I am not unwilling to die if the Republic which is to do so much good to us poor will profit by my death; but I do not know how that can be, Citizen Evremonde. Such a poor, weak little creature!" As the last thing on earth that his heart was to warm and soften to, it warmed and softened to this pitiable girl.

"I heard you were released, Citizen Evremonde. I hoped it was true?" "It was. But I was again taken and condemned." "If I may ride with you, Citizen Evremonde, will you let me hold your hand? I am not afraid, but I am little and weak, and it will give me more courage!" As the patient eyes were lifted to his face, he saw a sudden doubt in them, and then astonishment. He pressed the work-worn, hunger-worn young fingers, and touched his lips. "Are you dying for him?" she whispered. "And his wife and child." "Hush! Yes." "O, will you let me hold your brave hand, stranger?" "Hush! Yes, my poor sister; to the last."

Afterwards at the foot of the guillotine.

The second tumbril empties and moves on. The third comes up. Crash! And the knitting women, never faltering or pausing in their work, count

Two. The supposed Evremonde descends, and the seamstress is lifted out after him. He has not relinquished her patient hand in getting out, but still holds it as he promised. He gently places her with her back to the crashing engine that constantly whirrs up and falls, and she looks into his face and thanks him. "But for you, dear stranger, I should not be so composed, for I am naturally a poor little thing, faint of heart; nor should I have been able to raise my thoughts to Him who was put to death that we might have hope and comfort here to-day. I think you were sent to me by Heaven." "Or you to me," says Sidney Carton. "Keep your eyes upon me, dear child, and mind no other object." "I mind nothing while I hold your hand. I shall mind nothing when I let go, if they are rapid." "They will be rapid. Fear not!" The two stand in the fast thinning throng of victims, but they speak as if they were alone. Eye to eye, voice to voice, heart to heart, these two children of the Universal Mother, else so wide apart and differing, have come together on the dark highway, to repair home together and to rest in her bosom.

"Brave and generous friend, will you let me ask you one last question? I am very ignorant, and it troubles me — just a little." "Tell me what it is." "I have a cousin, an only relative, and an orphan like myself, whom I love very dearly. She is five years younger than I, and she lives in a farmer's house in the south country. Poverty parted us, and she knows nothing of my fate — for I cannot write — and if I could, how should I tell her? It is better as it is." "Yes, yes, better as it is." "What I have been thinking as we came along, and what I am still thinking now as I look into your kind strong face which gives me so much support, is this : If the Republic really does good to the poor, and they come to be less hungry, and in all ways suffer less, she may live a long time; she may even live to be old." "What then, my gentle sister?" "Do you think " — the uncomplaining eyes in which there is so much endurance fill with tears, and the lips part a little more and tremble — " that it will seem long to me while I wait for her in the better land, where I trust both you and I will be mercifully sheltered?" "It cannot be, my child; there is no time there, and no trouble there." "You comfort me so much! I am so ignorant. Am I to kiss you now? Is the moment come?" "Yes." She kisses his lips; he kisses hers; they solemnly bless each other. The spare hand does not tremble as he releases it; nothing worse than a sweet, bright constancy is in the patient face. She goes next before him — is gone; the knitting women count Twenty-two. "I am the Resurrection and the Life,

saith the Lord: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die.” The murmuring of many voices, the upturning of many faces, the pressing on of many footsteps in the outskirts of the crowd, so that it swells forward in a mass like one great heave of water, all flashes away. Twenty-three.”

No one can deny this is noble and profoundly touching writing. It is altogether free from the errors which weakened the effects in earlier instances. The mind of the reader was adequately prepared for the crisis, and the means of the prisoner’s escape on account of the likeness of the two men appear as a natural opportunity. The character of Carton has been described clearly and efficiently to prepare us for him acting impulsively and recklessly! He has been described as sharp-witted and fertile in expedients; he is disgusted with himself, tired of life, and thankful to atone for a wasted past by a good deed that will seal the happiness of the woman he loves. Our attention is not distracted by reference to inanimate nature. There is no attempt made to heighten the dramatic situation by the tolling of a bell, or the beating of waves on the shore. The trust of the poor little seamstress, whose innocent blood is to be shed at the same time as his own, provides Carton with that sympathy and approbation that are comforting to a man in his dire situation. He is still a protector to one weaker than himself, and his last moments are full of active goodness that robs death of its terrors.

A Tale of Two Cities differs in a remarkable degree from any of Dickens’ books, written either before or after it. It stands alone in the nature of its subject, and in the methods of treatment. It is the only book that smells of the lamp. I remember seeing the beginning in the rough proof, and taking exception to two phrases: in the exordium: “There were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a plain face on the throne of England; there were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a fair face on the throne of France,” which, though certainly English, came awkwardly off the tongue, a very unusual circumstance with Dickens, and I remember my father laughing at the description of Jerry Cruncher’s spikey hair, and saying that was, at all events, a genuine bit of Dickens.

“Except on the crown, which was raggedly bald, he had stiff black hair, standing jaggedly all over it, and growing downhill almost to his broad blunt nose. It was so like smith’s work, so much more like the top of a

strongly spiked wall than a head of hair, that the best of players at leap-frog might have declined him as the most dangerous man in the world to go over.”

The story is carried forward dramatically, partly in France and partly in England, and the characters are slowly revealed by hints and glimpses, which require to be pieced together like a puzzle. The end is very steadily pursued from the beginning, uninterrupted by any of those overwhelming episodes which interrupt the development of the plot and obscure the action of the serious characters in most of his other books. The dominant note is struck early on by Lucie Manette meeting with her father on his release from his long, long imprisonment in the Bastille. Nothing more natural, truthful, or delicate exists in the English language. It is remarkable in the whole book that there is scarcely any humour or comic writing of any kind. Instead of the crowd of unnecessary persons whom we generally find elbowing the principal serious characters from their places, we have only one, in the account of the resurrection man and his loathsome occupation on one night, and that has a shadowy connection with a mysterious phrase “recalled to life.” Jerry Cruncher and his little boy are genuine Dickens characters, but the rest are unusual, and, it must be confessed, do not exhibit any plain marks of the author’s genius. The book is also unusually short, being two hundred and fifty-four pages, as against six hundred and twenty-four both in *Copperfield* and *Bleak House*.

The mode of issue was also peculiar. In order to give a fillip to the circulation of *All the Year Round*, then a new publication, started after Dickens had changed from Bradbury & Evans, he published the story by weekly instalments in its pages, but he also issued it independently in the usual green-covered monthly parts, with two illustrations by Hablot K. Browne. The two issues ran concurrently.

And now a strange thing happened. *A Tale of Two Cities* was only just started in the monthly form, when there was presented at the Adelphi a drama called the *Dead Heart*, founded on the facts and fiction of the French Revolution. It consisted of a prologue and three acts, and dealt with the periods 1771, 1789, and 1794.

At the opening of the piece the hero, Robert Landry, is engaged to be married to Catherine Duval. They both belong to the people, but the Count de St. Valerie, an aristocrat, is violently in love with her, and under the promptings of the villain, the Abbe” Latour, St. Valerie, by means of a *lettre*

de cachet, sends Landry to the Bastille to get him out of the way. St. Valerie marries Catherine, and they have a son.

At the expiry of eighteen years the Bastille is stormed, and Robert Landry is brought forth into the midst of the Revolutionary crowd. Latour tells Catherine (the widowed Countess de St. Valerie) that Robert still lives. A meeting takes place, and Robert declares to her his project of revenging his wrongs upon her son Arthur de St. Valerie, who shortly afterwards is arrested and condemned to death. The Countess, maddened with grief, appeals to Landry, conjures him by his old love to save her son. Robert holds a position of authority in the prison of the *conciergerie*, and he causes the Abbe Latour to be brought in a prisoner. During a conversation a quarrel arises, and Robert kills Latour.

Very early on the morning of the execution Catherine makes a passionate appeal to Landry for mercy. She tells him that her husband had given Latour an order for his release, which was useless, as proof was brought back that Landry had been found dead upon his prison floor. Robert feels that his vengeance has lost its justification, and he sends a messenger to Robespierre for a passport. He delays the starting of the third tumbril, wherein Arthur is to ride. He ascertains that the prisoners are despatched by a new warder from Marseilles, who does not know any of them by sight. The numbers are called slowly one by one, and the prisoners despatched. Robert determines to restore the son to his mother, and when number 30 is called, he answers, "Here, and ready." He is taken off to execution. The Countess and her son looking through the window see the devoted man mounting the scaffold, and the curtain falls. Even in this bald outline the reader must perceive the extraordinary resemblance between the book and the drama.

The coincidence is one of the strangest in the history of literature. Two men, unknown to each other, sit down, without any hint in the circumstances of the times, to write of the French Revolution. It was a time of peace, social content, and England supposed her constitution was founded on a rock, and yet day by day they were each constructing a plot compounded of the fall of the Bastille, the movements of the Revolution, and its crisis in the horrors of the Terror, and finishing with the sacrifice of life by substitution in order to secure the happiness of a woman beloved.

Whether the authors evolved the plot entirely from their own imagination (which seems unlikely), or whether an idea was put into their heads by

some obscure *feuilleton* dealing with the central incident, and the preliminary stages reconstructed from the imagination to lead up to the climax, it is equally wonderful. Dickens, we know, had a morbid horror of his books being dramatised, for though the public did not care about his plots, and sometimes even did not recognise their existence, he took great pains to construct his stories, which with a good deal of make-believe could be disentangled from those episodes which are the genuine and unapproachable offspring of his genius. For example, not one reader in ten thousand cared whether Martin Chuzzlewit married Ruth Pinch or not, but when the last number appeared, a whole nation lamented that Sairy Gamp had gone into the silent land, and that the mystery of Mrs. Harris was left unsolved. So it seems likely that Dickens felt himself unable to continue to write towards a climax which was being forestalled night after night at the theatre. But even so, if he had reflected calmly, he would have remembered that only a certain number of people would see the play, and there would still remain thousands upon thousands ready to read anything he wrote, and there must have been many like myself who were able to enjoy both. The play was indeed a first-class melodrama, but on the stage it was full of telling situations. The scene of the attack on the Bastille and the release of the prisoners was full of storm, and the passions of the mob, and worked up the audience to an extraordinary degree of enthusiasm. The cast was strong, and included Benjamin Webster, Billington, Paul Bedford, Toole, Miss Woolgar, and others of less note. All played with earnestness and conviction, for all were fitted with parts that were full of strong points of the kind dear to actors, that were easily played, and were free from the embarrassment of superfluous words. It had no pretension to literary qualities at all.

Dickens was supposed by many to have shortened his story, and abruptly finished it at the eighth number. The end is certainly huddled up, instead of being spread out and elaborated in the usual Dickens manner.

The play was afterwards revived, and played at the Lyceum by Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, and a drama called *The Only Way*, dealing with the story of Sidney Carton, seems in the hands of Mr. Martin Harvey to be perennial, and yet *A Tale of Two Cities* is still read. As a matter of fact, a well written novel is seldom interfered with by a dramatic version, though a play does suffer by being derived from a widely known book. Judged impartially from a commercial point of view, one advertises the other.

Ainsworth had his books continually on the boards, and we never heard of his making any protestation. But whatever may be the decided truth of the origin and termination of the two works, the coincidence of the appearance of *A Tale of Two Cities* and the *Dead Heart* will always remain one more remarkable than the boldest writer of fiction would have ventured to have employed.

His strong point was his humour. It is not that he said funny things, or devised comical situations, or invented droll personages, though he did all these things, but that he invested everything with an atmosphere of gaiety. Cheerfulness was the keynote, which might be developed on the one hand into merriment, and on the other to tearfulness. He surveyed external nature and ordinary things and the common objects of daily life — mean streets, commonplace people and everyday occurrences — as if they had never been seen before, and therefore merited a minute and particular description. He was full of the *joie de vivre*. He bubbled over with enjoyment, and he called upon his readers to join him, and it is an extraordinary circumstance that they answered the call, and when he wanted them to look upon something they had seen a thousand times before, they approached it as a novelty and were delighted.

This curious quality was something new in literature, and though of course it has been imitated, it has not succeeded in the hands of anyone except the inventor. His marked originality of style was not slowly elaborated and perfected. It existed almost from the beginning, and scarcely altered till the end, except in trimming away a little exuberance. The keynote was struck in *Pickwick*, with the description of the entertainment at Mr. Wardle's, and it runs through the book, pervading the decorous atmosphere of the Court of Law and the dismal precincts of the Fleet Prison.

The temperamental quality of his style had a firm basis in a certain mental aptitude, which under other circumstances might have been employed in scholarship or science. As a foundation we see a marvellously rapid, minute, and particular observation of places and people which were so accurately remembered, that they could be reproduced at any moment they were wanted. There was none of the preliminary cramming of the modern realist.

For example, we know he was at Bath, and only for a short time, in his reporter stage, and then was fully occupied. But when it occurred to Mr.

Pickwick and his friends to go there, Dickens writes as if he and his readers intimately knew the place and the people. The visitors do not go here and there vaguely wandering through a vaguely described town. They go to Queen Square and to Park Street, which they consider “very much like the perpendicular streets a man sees in a dream, and which he cannot get up for the life of him.” Mr. Pickwick and his friends lodge in the upper portion of a house in the Royal Crescent. They visited the great Pump Room, and we learn that “it is a spacious saloon ornamented with Corinthian pillars, and a music gallery and a Tompion clock,¹ and a golden inscription to which all the water drinkers should attend, for it appeals to them in the cause of a deserving charity.” This is quite precise, and might serve for the pages of the Bath Guide, and not for the background of a small party of gentlemen out for a holiday. The Master of the Ceremonies makes our acquaintance, and besides his manners, we hear of every detail of his costume: —

“Dressed in a very bright blue coat with resplendent buttons, black trousers, and the thinnest possible pair of highly-polished boots. A gold eyeglass was suspended from his neck by a short, broad black ribbon; a gold snuff-box was lightly clasped in his left hand; gold rings innumerable glittered on his fingers; and a large diamond pin set in gold glistened in his shirt frill. He had a gold watch with a gold curb chain with large gold seals ; and he carried a pliant ebony cane with a heavy gold top. His linen was of the very whitest, finest, and stiffest; his wig of the glossiest, blackest, and curliest. His snuff was Prince’s mixture; his scent, *bouquet du rot*. His features were contracted with a perpetual smile; and his teeth were in such perfect order, that it was difficult at a little distance to tell the real from the false.”

1 Thomas Tompion, “the father of English watchmaking,” born 1639, died 1713

This is a woman’s eye for the details of costume. Hundreds of people have been in the room, and barely noticed there was a clock, and certainly not noticed who was the maker, but these piled up details produce an impression of truth for no other reason than that they are solid facts, and give the air of great credibility to the extravagant antics of some most respectable Cockneys. Nobody reads *Pickwick* as fiction; it is as truthful as

Robinson Crusoe, which is well known to be the most veracious book of travels ever published.

In no distant day a Dr. Birkbeck Hill will arise who will edit *Pickwick*, verifying all the localities and explaining all the allusions, and shed a lustre over his university.

It is certainly very remarkable that a young man should draw a detailed picture of this kind of a place where he was little more than a passer-by.

When he describes persons or things, he has an odd fanciful way of seeing or remembering a likeness to something else, which assists in giving a clear idea of his meaning, and being followed out often becomes decidedly droll. This habit of allowing his fancy to play about, preserves his descriptions from flatness and renders them interesting and amusing, so that his books are generally excellently adapted for reading aloud, but they are the worst that were ever written for the purpose of skipping. The comparisons often seem far-fetched and are always unexpected, but invariably elucidatory. For instance, he describes an unmarried lady of a certain age: "She was a little dilapidated — like a house — with having been so long to let, yet had an appearance of good looks."

Or Mr. Barkis in bed with the rheumatics. "As he lay in bed, face upwards, and so covered, with that exception, that he seemed to be nothing but a face — like a conventional cherubim — he looked the queerest object I ever beheld."

Or Mr. Spenlow's respectability. "His gold watch-chain was so massive, that a fancy came across me that he ought to have a sinewy golden arm to draw it out with, like those which are put up over the goldbeaters' shops."

The description of Doctors' Commons. "The languid stillness of the place was only broken by the chirping of the fire and the noise of one of the doctors who was wandering slowly through a perfect library of evidence, and stopping to put up from time to time at little roadside inns of argument on the journey."

Of an old-fashioned house. "A shy, blinking house, with a conical roof going up into a peak over its garret window of four small panes of glass, like the cocked hat on the head of an elderly gentleman with one eye."

Of a raven. "Grip fluttered to the floor, and went, not at a walk or run, but at a pace like that of a very particular gentleman with exceedingly tight boots on, trying to walk fast over loose pebbles."

Of Mr. Pecksniff, “ as generally keeping his hand on his waistcoat, as though he were ready, on the shortest notice, to produce his heart for Martin’s inspection.”

Again: “ It would be no description of Mr. Pecksniff’s gentleness of manner to adopt the common parlance, and say that he looked at this moment as if butter wouldn’t melt in his mouth. He rather looked as if any amount of butter might have been made out of him, by churning the milk of human kindness as it spirted upwards from his heart.”

Again when “Mr. Pecksniff, towering on tiptoe among the curtains as if he were literally rising above all worldly considerations, and were fain to hold on tight to keep himself from darting skywards like a rocket.”

“M. Todgers, the boarding-house keeper, was a lady — rather a bony and hard-featured lady — with a row of curls in front of her head, shaped like little barrels of beer, and on the top of it something made out of net — you couldn’t call it a cap exactly — which looked like a black cobweb.”

The doorway of a Georgian house at Canterbury: “There were two great aloes in tubs on the turf outside the windows, the broad hard leaves of which plant, looking as if they were made of painted tin, have ever since been symbolical to me of silence and retirement.”

Of Mr. Cruncher eating his breakfast: “Taking a bite out of his bread and butter, and seeming to help it down with a large invisible oyster out of his saucer.”

The above *obiter dicta* are quoted because they show that Dickens did not invent odd expressions and queer comparisons solely for the enhancement of the drollery of his characters, as exemplified in the conversation of Tony and Sam Weller and Mrs. Gamp, but they are found pervading the descriptive text, and are woven in the very warp and woof of it. They indicate that the characters are not gathered from the outside, but are projected from the very mind of Dickens himself. They serve two purposes; first, in creating an atmosphere which makes the characters seem natural, secondly, in rendering the descriptive passages sparkling and effective.

An Opinion On Poms And Vanities

By the kindness of Mr. H. P. Harrison, of Mossley Hill, Liverpool, I am able to print an unpublished letter written on the occasion of Dickens’ -last

public appearance in Liverpool. It is self-explanatory, and is an interesting statement of Dickens' views on such subjects.

“Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool,

“*Monday, Fifth April, 1869.*

“Sir, — In reply to your letter of enquiry, I beg to inform you that I have never used any other armorial bearings than my father's crest: — a lion couchant, bearing in his dexter paw a Maltese cross. I have never adopted any motto, being quite indifferent to such ceremonies.

“Faithfully yours,

“Charles Dickens.

“James Orr Marples, Esq.”

CHAPTER XV

HABLOT BROWNE: HIS PERSONALITY AND WORKS

In the preceding pages I have endeavoured to give the impressions left on the mind of a child by certain men and the circumstances of their times. I have related simply the chronicles of small-beer which may have been beneath the dignity of more ambitious writers, but which seem to me to have contributed the necessary elements in the picture unfolded before me by memory, aided of course owing to my tender years by family tradition and information derived from friends, of whom Uncle Bob was chief. Without some understanding of the surprising difference in social life, and the vast changes that have taken place in English modes of thought and the appearance of the country, I should fail in drawing any trustworthy portrait of the man in whom I am most interested. Human nature remains much the same in all ages, but the doings of human beings vary infinitely, although they are always strongly influenced by the doings of the mass. I propose now to gather up the



scattered threads, and picture Hablot Browne as a man of middle age, according to my accumulated experience of him during the most impressionable period of my life, and here I rest directly on my own observation.

My father was of medium height and of stalwart appearance, and though not tall, was a striking looking man as regards the head. He had, like all his family, a long body, with short limbs, a quantity of brown hair, very fine in quality, worn long according to the mode, for anyone wearing his hair cropped, according to the present fashion, would have been subjected to gibes and inquiries from street boys asking when he came out, meaning from the gaol.

Although like all engravers he was shortsighted, he had a particularly penetrating eye, and he seemed rather to look through than merely at you. He had a mobile and sensitive mouth, short whiskers, and at a later period he grew a beard and moustache which, by hiding the mouth, deprived his face of some of its expression. He was very careless about his dress, and had to be taken by force to the tailor, as he never knew when his suits were worn out. He generally affected dark grey, and disliked on the one hand the gloominess of black, on the other the gaiety of colour, though of course he

sported the orthodox black coat on occasions, and from time to time in the summer he followed the early Victorian custom of wearing white ducks, which were very popular, strange though it may seem to us. The custom was maintained partly under the delusion that the weather was hot, and partly as a sort of compliment to the Duke of Wellington. There was nothing flamboyant or suggestive of Bohemia about him, as we often see in artists nowadays. Indeed, I remember a tailor once saying to him at a fitting-on, "There, you look like a banker." If he did, the likeness was entirely superficial, and imposed upon nobody. He hunted for some years in a black coat and top-hat, but afterwards wore the scarlet coat and velvet cap of his Hunt.

He lived so entirely in his work and a world of imagination, that it is impossible to describe him in the ordinary terms. Politics he had none, though when questioned at election times he said he was a Liberal, more, I believe, because he liked the sound of the word, than from any clear idea of its political significance. He certainly had a holy horror of Radicals. Cobden and Bright he considered humbugs — why, I do not know. He took sufficient interest in the outer world to read *The Times* in the evening, but his interest lay in general events and not in politics.

He was ignorant of the ways of the world, and took far too favourable a view of his fellow-creatures. He lived under the delusion that people generally were disposed to befriend and serve him. He never realised that he was being exploited, as was often the case. That there was a struggle going on for place and profit, and that there were people fully disposed to give him a push downwards for objects of their own, never occurred to him. He neglected his own interests, as may be judged from the following letter from John Forster, who appears in a favourable light as compared with many others: —

No date or address.

"My Dear Browne, — They are getting a little anxious at White Friars. I enclose you a cheque — you charged too little for the design of the cover. I took the liberty of changing the five guineas into eight guineas, and you will find the cheque hereto corresponding.

"This liberty I am sure you will excuse, and believe me, my dear Browne, always sincerely yours, John Forster.

“Just received the plates. Send me word what you think the writing underneath should be.”

Between Browne and Forster a friendly feeling always existed, though it never ripened into a warm friendship. My father was wont to call him a “little Doctor Johnson,” from which may be inferred a certain amount of pomposity in literary style, but the great Doctor’s lucidity was wanting. Forster’s own style was involved and tortuous, and sometimes obscure. It was rather in the matter of laying down the law that the resemblance lay.

A cabman is supposed to have hit him off exactly on one occasion in the police court. The cabman explained that it was not only his parsimony, but his conduct that was objectionable. The magistrate asked where the offence lay, and what Mr. Forster had done to him. “Well,” he said, “ he’s such a harbitrary gent.”

He was entirely indifferent to public opinion, and lived his own life, but was very careful about annoying other people. He cared nothing for titles, and had no wish for what is known as social position. He had scarcely any ambition, and certainly regarded himself as a very ordinary person. He had no desire to make money beyond what was necessary for the immediate wants of the household. He disliked gambling, as he explained, if he won, he did not like taking the money, and if he lost, he was still more annoyed. This was the more remarkable as we lived for so many years within easy reach of Epsom, and it was his custom to ride over to many of the important meetings, but I never heard of him making a bet. We were driven over by the groom in the chaise to the Derby, but I never saw the Oaks run. Our custom was to drive to a certain knoll which commanded a view of the starting post, but when the horses got off we galloped at the top of our speed a few hundred yards to another place of vantage, where we had a view of Tattenham Corner. The Governor generally joined us, and we had a sort of picnic in the chaise. Thus we had a long day in the open air, full of a sense of rush and motion, crowds and festivity, and a feeling of taking part in an important national event, without being brought into contact with the blackguardism that abounded in the crowd.

He spent the greater part of his time in the studio, and when out of doors, he preferred being in the saddle. He would never walk fifty yards if he could throw his leg over a horse. I don’t think he regarded himself as quite complete if he was on foot. As we could not be all mounted, when he joined in the family rambles the pony-chaise was always taken, and walked over

the most extraordinary places where there was no road, over fields, bridle-paths, downs and heaths, the Governor leading the pony. The return journey was generally managed by the road. We broke a good many springs, but we enjoyed ourselves greatly.

He was in a remarkable degree the centre of the household. My mother adored him, and considered he could do no wrong. We boys regarded him as our best friend, and, except a little irritability on the score of noise, I never saw him in anything approaching a bad temper. When a hubbub became unbearable he would sometimes appear with a hunting crop and lay about him and so restore order, but though there was a great appearance of vigour, and great sounds of cracking the whip, there was little damage done. His appearance was generally cheerful and debonair. Indiscreet friends often gave us musical instruments in the shape of drums, trumpets, and so forth, which, after a short service, mysteriously disappeared in the night. On some occasion of a move, or special spring-clean, a huge cupboard was found filled with a whole orchestra of these things, and he was forced to confess that he had concealed them. Even that place of trial, the dinner table, found him unruffled, although he was by no means insensible to good cooking. He ate anything that was given him without a growl. But with all his gentleness, he was by no means a muff, although he was easily deceived by people in whom he believed. He was occasionally unexpectedly sharp, and though he was preserved by a curious kind of pride from taking any revenge or making any kind of fuss, he quietly dropped the offender. He was a brave man, and faced danger with calmness; physical pain he bore with amazing fortitude.

He had a keen sense of humour and of the ridiculous, but was very soon hurt, and strongly sentimental. He concealed this, and was very much ashamed of it. I believe that having to exploit his comic power professionally he had deceived himself, and rather thought he was a fellow of good commonsense with no nonsense about him. He was certainly surprised, and a little annoyed, when George Henry Lewes, after studying his face for some time, used the freedom of a professional critic to say he could not see any humour, but he saw a great deal of sentiment.

He was by nature shy and given to self-effacement, and when he became a busy man, and had consequently little time or opportunity for social amusements, these tendencies increased till his dread of strangers amounted to a detrimental feature in his character. It became very difficult to make

him go anywhere. At the beginning of his career he was certainly considered a cheerful companion, and took a part, if he found himself in congenial company, in any fun that was going. In his own house, even after he had given up visiting, if people could be brought to him, he was always a cheerful host. I remember on festivals, like Twelfth Night, he was by no means backward in promoting the general merriment, and enjoyed these friendly gatherings. But by living so much alone in his studio, having an innate dislike of push, and a sort of natural distrust of strangers, he gradually worked himself up till it was difficult to get him to see anybody except intimate friends. He did not realise that there must be a stage before intimacy.

He endeavoured to imbue us with his own failings. He took particular pains to impress upon us that we should not go where we were not wanted, and he drew a picture of a sort of bogey man in every house trying to resist our importunate clamouring for entry at his door. He would have had a great effect upon us — indeed he had more than was beneficial — and if it were not a law of nature that young people are gregarious, we should have had few friends. But by using our opportunities, we made a great many in other people's houses. Though we were hedged in and cautioned against intruding, he never said a word if we filled our own with pals. No objection was ever raised, even if his dinner was put off, or a few squares of the dining-room windows smashed. His good temper prevailed. Dinner was quite as pleasant in the breakfast room. Where there are boys and balls broken panes are a logical consequence, and a glazier was always ready to attend at the shortest possible notice. The only flaw in the reasoning was that other people might be as complacent as himself, and that we were no greater barbarians than our friends.

CHAPTER XVI

PHIZ THE ILLUSTRATOR

“Pickwick” And “Nickleby”

To leave the man and come to his work.

It has already been related how on the death of Seymour, Browne was engaged to illustrate *Pickwick*. He was very young, and with very little experience in illustrating, and to follow a popular favourite like Seymour was no easy task. Obviously the first thing to be done was to please the public, satisfy the author and the publishers, and not to exhibit any marked inferiority to his predecessor. He not only succeeded in equalling, but surpassing Seymour. It was soon recognised that the understudy possessed the excellences of his predecessor, and in addition some which were peculiar to himself.

The early plates as regards figures were evidently modelled on those of Seymour, with a little more refinement, but with about the same amount of caricature. The Pickwickians, of course, in order to preserve a continuity, were taken directly from Seymour's inventions. Then came up in rapid succession a number of new characters who were all original and excellent, but the illustrations are further distinguished by the finer quality of the backgrounds. There was always something bare and insufficient about the previous backgrounds, whereas Browne's became an integral part of the picture. Note, for example, the background of the galleried yard of the old inn, where Sam Weller is interviewed by Mr. Wardle and his friends who are in pursuit of Jingle, how it takes away from the grotesquery of the crowd, and lends an air of beauty to the whole composition. This is carried a step further in a smaller inn yard in *Nicholas Nickleby*, where Newman Noggs is saying good-bye to Nicholas. The sense of beauty is there intensified by the sketches of two comely chambermaids who are leaning over the balustrade talking to their friends below. This tendency to introduce a beautiful trifle in attenuation of a grotesque belongs to Browne, and is seen in no other caricaturist of his time.

In *The Fat Boy* awake, though the group tells the story vividly, it only forms part of a composition of which the architecture of the house is equally well delineated, and which prevents the drawing appearing wholly as a caricature. When Mr. Pickwick slides he has a background of a very pretty landscape. Whether the accessories be architectural, or landscape, or interiors which cannot be beautified, they invariably form part of the composition, and add to the comprehension of the story.

We note in his earlier books an evident belief in his duty to be comic at all costs, and it is noteworthy that when he indulges in anything graceful, he seems to do it on the sly, and rather as a concession to his own weakness than to open display. We shall be able to see instances of this by comparing some drawings done for his own pleasure with those which were actually published. He was a product of his times and of the immediate past, and we must remember that there was a traditional belief that ugliness was funny. Feelings were coarse, and coarsely expressed. A man with any deformity was openly laughed at, and might be jeered at or even hooted in the streets. Rowlandson (born 1756, died 1827), who was the ancestor of early Victorian caricature, and undoubtedly set the fashion for the succeeding comic draughtsmen, had a fine sense of beauty. There are even to be found in his pictures female figures which for gracefulness had never been surpassed, yet his drawings are crammed with people, obese, flabby-cheeked, broken-nosed, one-eyed, bandy-legged, crook - backed, bald-headed, knock-kneed, loathsome and deformed, who were supposed to be amusing, and who did indeed vastly amuse the public.

Browne came about the turn of the tide, to serve a public avid for comicality, and with a traditional taste for ugliness and distortion. As a young man he was anxious to please, and as it happened that the current literature was vitiated by similar errors in taste, his path was set out for him in the wrong direction from the first. And then for a young man, imperfectly trained in the art of drawing, it was easier to succeed in the grotesque than in the beautiful, for the one needs only approximate correctness, but the other depends entirely on good draughtsmanship for the realisation of an ideal. We therefore find him in the early Dickens books pushed on by circumstances into the position of caricaturist, and it is not surprising that the glimpses of beauty are so infrequent and modest, but rather that there were any at all. The public did not ask for them, but there seems reason to

suppose that they had an effect in insinuating a taste which for some time to come was latent and not acknowledged.

One thing is certain, whatever his faults or virtues Browne exactly fitted the situation, and was rapturously applauded by his contemporaries. We must remember, though it is difficult to realise the fact, that Dickens, in the earlier parts of *Pickwick*, was almost an unknown man. If he had been an ordinary writer, depending upon a continuous story, or even a series of adventures, he might not have overcome the clumsy machinery of the monthly parts, but he was entirely independent of his story, and relied consciously on an untried, but prodigious, capacity for the invention of eccentric characters. In one of his letters he says that he expects to make a success with a new character in the next part. The character was Jingle, who was in fact infinitely amusing. The ordinary writer introduced his few characters at the beginning of the book, and relied on them for the remainder of the story. But Dickens continually produced new and important characters, so that each monthly part was likely to contain, to his reader's great delight, a surprise and an improvement. One of the means adopted for giving publicity to this unsuspected wealth of ideas was by means of illustrations, which from month to month were exposed in booksellers' shop windows. It was therefore important that the illustrator should be himself of a ready wit, and capable of dealing with what Mr. Venus later on called "assorted wariou's."

Browne exactly filled the situation. If he had been an ordinary young artist with an insufficient training he would probably have made use of models, and improved the academical character of his figures with a corresponding destruction of their vivacity and eccentricity, but tameness was the unforgivable sin. He was not appalled by any difficulty in drawing, but he had a vivid imagination which enabled him to realise a scene or a character from a few hints. He drew after the fashion of a child who will draw you a picture of anything without even glancing at the reality. To this faculty of reproducing at will unconscious impressions he owed most of his excellences, together with most of his faults. Careful adherence to fact, and conscientious reproduction of the model and still life, would have resulted in drawing that might have had a great artistic value, but would not have represented Dickens in the slightest degree. The public did not want tame or beautiful pictures. For those they went to the Royal Academicians and line

engravings, which were to be had of excellent quality, but the demand for eccentric characters seems to have been insatiable.

Dickens fostered the taste, and produced an enormous number of novelties, and when he produced any fresh character, Browne seemed to have something suitable and ready up his sleeve.

One of his excellences was that he was never at a loss, and did not require time to think. He could act on the spur of the moment. He frequently had to exercise his invention, and it was better for the purpose to overstate than understate, and as a result there was visible embodiment of a succession of persons who became familiar friends. The illustrations were in fact the "cartes de visite" of the characters. Besides the Pickwickians and Jingle, who belonged to Seymour, we have Mr. Sam Weller, Job Trotter, Mr. Bob Sawyer, and Benjamin Allen, Mrs. Bardell and Mrs. Cluppins, The Shepherd, who is immortal as Stiggins, and Mr. Tony Weller, not forgetting the admirable group of stout stage coachmen drinking the health of Mr. Pell.

In *Nickleby* we have Squeers and John Browdie, Ralph Nickleby, Arthur Gride, Mr. Mantalini, Sir Mulberry Hawke, Lord Verisopht, the Cheeryble Brothers, Tim Linkinwater, Mrs. Nickleby, Miss Knag, Miss La Creevy, Newman Noggs, the Kenwigs family, Mr. Lillyvick and Miss Petowker, the Crummies family and Smike.

The illustrations in *Pickwick* and *Nickleby* exhibit the same features. In the latter there is scarcely any change, either in general conception or handling, the drawing does not improve much, and the comic power remains undiminished.

From the beginning there is shown a most remarkable sense of composition. It matters little whether there are a few figures or many, they are always well arranged, and though the disposition is more artificial than natural, they present the appearance of being entirely natural and not depending on art. The more crowded a composition, the more manageable it seems. Take, for example, Mr. Pickwick being carried before Mr. Nupkins the magistrate at Ipswich. The figures are all in a state of excited action, and have the characteristic appearance of a crowd having come together fortuitously, and not as if they had been arranged for the purpose by a good stage-manager. But the arrangement is actually very artificial. The eye is carried upward to Mr. Pickwick, who is addressing the mob from the open top of his sedan chair. It is then carried farther by the quaint gables of the

house in the background, so that the upper edge of the crowd does not abruptly cut the sky. We notice that the sedan chair is of very considerable proportions, in fact it assumes the dignity of a tower. It illustrates a characteristic that stuck to Browne throughout his life of making his accessories fit the picture, instead of treating them realistically.

As to the mob of the Eatanswill election, or rather two mobs, for the one is on the hustings, the other below on the ground. Both groups exhibit great excitement, and though the individual figures are easily made out, the whole masses together and joins with the fabric of the hustings to make a harmonious composition.

In *Nicholas Nickleby* we find very slight change in the style of work. The draughtsmanship and technique and comic power remain practically on the same level. The extraordinary power of composition is still fully displayed, though there are no great crowds, except in the three plates concerning Dotheboys Hall, first, where Mrs. Squeers is administering brimstone and treacle, secondly, the castigation of Squeers by Nicholas, and thirdly, the breaking up of Dotheboys Hall. In all these the crowds have the appearance of an artless and confused jumble of boys, but on examination the actions of particular boys can be made out, and the whole group is found to fit into its place to the best pictorial advantage. The other subjects only include a few figures, but they are invariably grouped, so that if taken in conjunction with the background they fill the space to the best advantage. As in the former book, there are glimpses of landscape and architecture, ancient churches, big rooms, decorations always harmonising with and adding to the value of the groups. When a place is squalid, like Mrs. Nickleby's lodging, its character is frankly accepted, and no attempt is made to give it a pictorial character. An unabated comic power is shown in dealing with the Mantalini, especially in one plate showing Mr. Mantalini, clad in flamboyant garments, chaffering with the broker's man in possession, in the midst of a number of dressmaker's stands, and in our last glimpse of him turning a mangle for an irate lady who has no pretence to fashion. In all the pictures he is as amusing as in the text.

We have also in this book the first example of a beautiful object being made the centre of the picture in the fainting figure of Madeline Bray, on the morning of her projected marriage to Arthur Gride.

It is worthy of remark that here, as in *Pickwick*, an improvement in academic draughtsmanship would have been of no value in the production

of these illustrations. They were the product of the artist's imagination, showing the author's intention as a whole, and not allowing any correction from the visible world to compete with or disturb the realised image. The resulting sketch was an effort to give prominence to these figments of the imagination, and the public seemed fully prepared to accept these suggestions. The absurdity of Mr. Mantalini seen in the shop window was accepted as a promise to pay in the text when it was read at home.

The realistic view of art, the record of visual impressions, did not exist, or, if it did, was confined to the select few who had trained themselves by the study of the old masters. What the man in the street wanted was a joke which he could understand in a drawing or a paragraph, and with Browne and Dickens in conjunction he got what he desired from both.

In these two books, if we except Dotheboys Hall, which has a social purpose, and is merely an episode, we have dealt entirely with caricature and eccentricity, and with these two books we come to the end of unadulterated jocosity.

“Master Humphrey's Clock”

The next venture was a weekly periodical concerning some old characters, Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Weller and Sam, and some new ones, Master Humphrey, Mr. Mills, and one who is only mentioned as the deaf gentleman. These arrange to meet one night every week as the clock strikes ten, and to separate when the clock strikes two. They meet to read manuscripts, which had been deposited at the bottom of Master Humphrey's clock case. The narratives, though published in weekly fragments, were intended to be complete novels, and two of these manuscripts were published as complete stories under the titles respectively of



THE MARCHIONESS, "OLD CURIOSITY SHOP"
HABLOT K. BROWNE.

The Old Curiosity Shop and *Barnaby Rudge*. The clumsy machinery for providing a link between a number of stories was found to be unpopular with readers and irksome to the author, and the publications were discontinued on the completion of *Barnaby Rudge*, the second story.

The illustrations were executed on wood, as was the common practice for cheap publications, on account of the convenience of being able to print the letterpress and drawings simultaneously at the same press. Cattermole, an excellent water-colour painter, was chosen as co-illustrator, and the name "Phiz" was dropped, and Hablot K. Browne for the first time appeared under his own name as an original illustrator. He was thought by some astute judges to be better than Phiz, though it was admitted by all that the style was somewhat similar.

I have mentioned in an earlier part of the book that Browne was never so successful on wood as on steel. He really drew better with a lead pencil than with any other material, but the charm of these drawings depended principally on the subtlety with which he modified a tone by varying his pressure from hard to soft, or in width, according as he varied from the use of the point to the side of his black lead. In drawing on wood he was obliged to use a very hard pencil, and to depend on the point alone, so that

his work resembled a coarse kind of etching, and very often had to suffer from translation at the hands of the engraver, who substituted for a lively line a mechanical one, and treated spaces of shade by cutting in tint. To the end his work on wood suffered from these drawbacks, and he lost greatly in translation, as Dickens himself does when translated into French. Dickens, I may here add, appears as an excellent writer in French, but differing exceedingly from the author with whom we are familiar.

Browne's style as an illustrator was not much altered. He still conceived it his duty or his pleasure to give the full value to the fantastic and grotesque elements. In the opening work, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, he fastened securely on the real hero, Quilp. He succeeded in producing a visible embodiment of the little brute. Quilp was a dwarf, and, according to popular superstition, was supposed to be endowed with malicious qualities. He was malignant, vicious, reckless, cruel; he had a selfish, alert mind, and great bodily activity and strength. The drawings are not caricatures, as might be supposed without reference to the text, but represented the monstrosity of the creature. The remarkable thing is that there has been no fumbling. He is represented exactly as he lived. His appalling



THE MARCHIONESS.

Engraving from "The Old Curiosity Shop," published by
H. K. Brown and Robert Young.

vitality where he is seated on his desk perplexed by a letter brought by little Nell; or squinting out of his hammock at his terrified little wife; or with undaunted courage infuriating a dog just outside of the limit of his chain; or torturing Sampson Brass; or looking out of the window bursting with malignant glee as Kit is taken to prison — he is always alive, full of exuberant energy, till at the end we see him lying, a hideous corpse, in the slimy ooze of the river, in the pallid twilight of the dawn.

All the other characters fade into insignificance beside the robust personality of Quilp. But Sampson and Sally Brass are caricatured with a harsh hand. Author and illustrator alike intended them to appear loathsome without any redeeming trait, and horror indeed prevails throughout the whole book. In Brass's office at Bevis Marks, at Quilp's wharf, Swiveller's lodging, all is dismal and dirty. Browne had no option but to make them appear so, contrary to his usual custom. The travelling showmen gave an opportunity for a little wholesome grotesque. The drawings of Codlin and Short mending their puppets in the churchyard, and Mrs. Jarley drinking tea, are wholesome and pleasant to look upon, and one or two opportunities of sketching pleasant little landscapes have been seized upon.

The second book to appear in the series of Master Humphrey's Clock was *Barnaby Rudge*, in which perhaps the reader may trace the influence of Ainsworth in the selection of crime for the human subject, and the influence of Scott combining it with a historical episode in which the characters could play their parts. In the beginning of the book we come upon a murder which in a very short time appears a mere peccadillo. There is hardly a decent character in the book. The most respectable are the Varden family. The head of the household is Gabriel Varden, an honest blacksmith, henpecked by his shrewish wife, egged on by her sycophantic ally, Miggs, and their daughter Dolly, a shallow, heartless coquette, and an apprentice, Simon Tappertit, a burlesque conspirator, who is of folly all compounded, and involved in crimes of which he cannot see the enormity.

At the far-famed country inn, The Maypole at Chigwell, the landlord, old John Willett, is a woodenheaded fool, his son John a booby, his ostler Hugh a ruffian. These are the people for whom our interest is claimed, for Mr. and Mrs. Harewood, who are honest, are creatures of straw. On the historical side we come upon Lord George Gordon, a fanatic who works on the bad passions of an ignorant mob by appealing to their fears and inherited hatred of



MEGGS.
As printed on the text of "Barnaby Rudge."

Popery to commit arson and deeds of violence; Gashford, an imitation fanatic; and Dennis, the common hangman; finally, we have the hero, Barnaby Rudge, a harmless lunatic; his weak-witted mother and her husband, a skulking murderer hiding from justice. That there are some amusing passages in the book cannot be denied, but they lack the spontaneity of the preceding books, and the prevailing impression is one of dismal and motiveless crime.

In the midst of this crowd the only creature who is really amusing is Barnaby's pet raven, Grip. Dickens' description of the riots are among the best of the kind that he or anyone else ever penned. Browne as usual managed his crowds with force and skill, notably on three occasions, one where the rioters have surged into a street, and are throwing furniture out of the windows, and are piling the fragments in heaps and burning everything, including ornaments pillaged from the churches. Another, where the mob in front of Newgate have brought Varden by force to pick the lock of the prison: though they threaten him, and he is within an ace of dying a violent death, the old man stands firm and defies them, a very noble and resolute figure. A third, where they have beaten in some barrels of wine, which is

flowing over the street and running down the kennel so that the mob drink to intoxication.

The reader will notice that Cattermole was hampered by the technique of wood engraving. As a water-colour artist his style was characterised by great breadth. In these books the architectural subjects for which he had been specially engaged though picturesque, are scratchy and colourless. A few drawings which have been carefully finished are without interest. His representations of Quilp have no life in them. They make him appear like a stuffed figure incapable of movement. Regarding the illustrations as material for observing the development of Browne, there is nothing giving any indication of progress except the interpolation of pleasant little rural landscapes.

Dickens brought Master Humphrey's Clock to a conclusion in November 1841, and in his address to the reader he wrote, "On the 1st November 1842 I purpose, if it please God, to commence my new book in monthly parts, under the old green cover and the old size and form, and at the old price," and in fulfilment of this promise *Martin Chuzzlewit* appeared accordingly. But apparently the first number was delayed till January 1843.



MIGGS AND MRS. YARDKN.

Extra illustration to "Barnaby Rudge," published by H. K. Browne and Robert Young.

"Martin Chuzzlewit"

Dickens had passed a considerable portion of the interval in America, and had taken a holiday from sustained literary composition for more than a year. He was therefore mentally very fresh and vigorous, and it is not surprising that the new book was one of the most brilliantly written of the whole series. For those of us who know it only as a completed work the book may be almost divided into three volumes, one of which is concerned with Pecksniff; another with America, where Martin is merely a spectator of the American, and a vehicle for many of Dickens' own opinions, formed during his own holiday in the United States; and a third is concerned with the sayings and doings of Mrs. Gamp. Even experienced readers of Dickens, accustomed to his extraordinary digressions, must be startled at the intrusion of the American piece between two such excellent morsels as the first and third parts. But we must remember that during its composition he never took the completed book sufficiently into consideration, but always worked with reference to the number immediately in hand. He regarded each part as being self-contained, and like a magazine, carrying sufficient interesting matter to be attractive to the buyer.

When it was discovered that the public were not rushing to buy with their former eagerness, Dickens introduced some of his American experiences to stimulate interest and curiosity. Possibly they succeeded in so doing, though I suspect that the increased sale which followed their introduction was more probably due to Pecksniff becoming more widely known, and, from a literary point of view, more highly esteemed. It is impossible to conceive a public already acquainted with Dickens' writing, and therefore fully possessed with a sense of humour, not to have been highly delighted with Pecksniff and M. Todgers. Dickens was always unduly captious about his crumpled rose-leaf, and unduly ambitious in regard to quick monetary returns. He doubtless expected the public would rush at him after his long absence, forgetting that enthusiasm requires some little time to be aroused.

Whatever may have been thought by contemporaries, the American portions are felt as unwelcome intrusion in the completed book, if for no

other reason than that they distract our attention, and delay our acquaintanceship with Mrs. Gamp.

Undoubtedly the American chapters gave great offence to the United States. The American, less versed than ourselves in Dickens' methods, did not understand that it was his ingrained custom to produce a literary effect by the description of oddities, monstrosities and scoundrels, and that he generally overstated his case. Added to this, his visit was so recent, that the observations put into the mouth of Martin were regarded as his own personal convictions. He must certainly have seen more of the shady side of America than might have been expected, and he was undeniably annoyed by some circumstances of his reception.

But he certainly cannot have intended to imply that America had a monopoly of scoundrelism. Without counting the disreputable personages in his last two books, *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*, we find side by side in the pages of *Martin Chuzzlewit* Mr. Scadder and Montague Tigg, not to mention Jonas — certainly America could not have produced anything worse — and the Anglo-Bengalee may be considered on the same plane as the City of Eden. But undoubtedly at the time much soreness was seriously felt, and journals professing to represent national opinion, bespattered Dickens with abuse, and indulged in stories and inventions — inventions with not the slightest foundation in fact — concerning what would be in any other country his private life. No garbage was too filthy to be handled, no scandal was too gross to be printed, if only there was a chance of wounding feelings or injuring reputation. Dickens had certainly not handled the gutter-press gently, and he had not exercised any discrimination or selection in his text. He had not even allowed the existence of one just man who might have saved the country. The gutter-press were out for revenge, and they pounced like wild beasts. The general tone of journalism is amusingly satirised by Bon Gaultier in a ballad professing to embody the American opinion of Dickens.

“The American's Apostrophe To 'Boz.'”

“We received thee warmly — kindly — though we knew thou wert a quiz,

Partly for thyself it may be, chiefly for the sake of Phiz,

Much we bore and much we suffered, listening to remorseless spells

Of that Smike's unceasing drivellings, and those everlasting Nells."

The temporary irritation soon subsided, and only the literary error is permanent. In the United States are to be found some of his most enthusiastic admirers, and on his second visit for the purpose of giving public readings, his reception was overwhelming. Truly indeed it may be said, it is a good thing to begin with a little aversion.

The change in the author's style from the extravagantly comic or melodramatic to one more subdued, though indeed eloquent in dealing with the



MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT IN BED AT THE BLUE DRAGON.

ordinary affairs of life, tempted Browne to appear in his true character. We find at once that a profound change has taken place in the illustrations; the drawing is immensely improved, and beauty, which had only been furtively shown, is now openly displayed. Humour is more delicate, and is only employed to impart the cheerful interest which is necessary to represent the author. The picturesque may be said to take the leading position, and in the midst of well-arranged objects forming a pictorial composition the characters take their natural place.

We find a tendency, which afterwards became habitual, to impart a certain dignified aspect to common objects. We note in the first picture of old Martin in bed at the Dragon that the curtains have a fulness and dignity more likely to be seen in the chambers of Louis XIV than in a country inn. The buxom form of Mrs. Lupin and the elegant figure of Mary Graham strike a new note. We start at once with style and dignity. We notice that the drawing is firm, the handling free; all signs of immaturity have vanished.

In the second picture we see the character who has become part of our national literature, and whose name has provided our language with adjectives and epithets in general use. We see the real hero of the book, the moral Pecksniff, in the bosom of his family. It might well have been doubted whether the character which rests so entirely on punctilious and hypocritical expressions and an affectation of unselfish piety could have been pictorially represented. He appealed to the ear — could he be made to appeal to the eye? Undoubtedly Browne's picture — grotesque, but not too grotesque — serves its purpose. As a portrait, it bears the impression of being a personal likeness to Dickens' character — it might have been sketched from life, if there had been anything to sketch from. Had he been too seriously considered he might have produced the impression of a solemnity and piety that were genuine and not spurious, a mistake that would have been fatal. But here, though treated with a gentle hand, with just a spice of exaggeration, he proclaims the humbug as effectually as if he wore a placard. Contrary to his usual custom, Dickens introduced Pecksniff without a full description of his outward appearance and costume. When we first hear of him he is knocked down by his own street door, and when the description is afterwards taken in hand, so much emphasis is laid on the moral significance of the different articles of his clothing, to the neglect of their texture, that it is by no means easy to form an idea of his appearance. Browne therefore had something of a free hand, and evolved from his imagination a personage of remarkable individuality, who once seen is never forgotten. He substituted a black cravat in place of the white, which is the most definitely described article of attire in the text. Barnard pointed out to me that this substitution was advantageous in the etching, as it enhanced the visibility of the open throat. Black was of course suitable for piety and for Pecksniff as a widower, and was really intended to mark the dress from the attire of the worldly, who were accustomed to swathe the throat in a satin stock, which fell in ample folds over the chest, and was secured by

pins of price. If the description had been carefully followed, the result would have been a mild-looking person with just a suspicion of clericalism in his attire, of an aspect of too little bodily exercise and the frequent indulgence in muffins, of too much speaking and too little doing. A close adherence to the specification might have pleased the costumier, but would not have corresponded with the general trend of the character as revealed in the body of the text. Pecksniff was not one of those laymen who hang about the vestry and ape the manners of some popular clergyman. He is not doleful or lugubrious. He is intellectually alert, of infinite resource, and unfailingly witty.

Nothing is more admirable than the delicacy with which Dickens has avoided the stock phrases of the profoundly pious, and avoided the introduction of sacred names and persons which must have figured in a realistic description. Pecksniff is not at all like a clergyman, and it was in the highest degree important that no reflection should seem to be cast upon the cloth. He is not to be taken too seriously, for he is a humorist, and many subtle phrases show that he passes his goods out with the air of a cheerful giver. He is a light-hearted humbug, and must be shown to have no connection with real piety and genuine morality, which might have seemed implied if he had resembled a clergyman in appearance. Therefore he is rightly represented and unmistakable. As it is he would have suited any profession; he might have been in any profession in which extreme respectability and super-probity might be desirable. He filled the position with his triple-peaked hair, his huge chops and open throat, and the middle-aged rotundity of his waistcoat.

No one looking at the drawing of Mr. Pecksniff, as he sits in front of the fire surrounded by his architectural designs, faced by his portrait, and supported by his two daughters, but is convinced that he beholds the pious Mr. Pecksniff and no other. There are no less than ten illustrations with Mr. Pecksniff playing the principal part. We see him in his



MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.
The moral of Pecksniff in the bosom of his family.

triumphs, and we see him in his ignominious defeat. The character in the whole series is admirably sustained.

Perhaps Mr. Pecksniff is seen at his very best when, a perfect emblem of gentle resignation, he goes to summon Mrs. Gamp. He is then surrounded by matrons, who press upon him with offers of assistance in the belief that he is an expectant father. The mean little fronts of Poll Sweedlepipe's and the mutton-pie shop form the background, and identify Mrs. Gamp's residence. In the midst of the slatterns we see one good-looking woman slightly redeeming the prevailing ugliness.

Browne evidently worked from his imagination, founded upon Dickens' description of which certain bits suited his purpose and were fitted in, and I feel certain he did not know who was the reputed original. Even if he did, he would not have taken any feature from him, as his dislike to personality was extreme; in fact he refused to join the staff of *Punch* because he believed the paper was to be personal.

Although Mr. Pecksniff's visit to Kingsgate Street was not on account of a birth (to the disgust of the assembled matrons), it did accomplish the introduction of his only rival in the book — Mrs. Gamp. She is probably the most universally popular character in the crowded groups of Dickens. Her

name has clung to the ladies of her profession, and has become the accepted and convenient synonym for an umbrella. Mrs. Gamp has a vocabulary of her own, and an extraordinary way of perverting the English language, but she has in addition a scheme of philosophy and proverbial wisdom suited to all occasions, such as is to be found in vulgar persons who are placed from time to time in positions of brief authority. Fully to comprehend the genius of Mrs. Gamp it will be found instructive to read her in French, when she becomes frankly a philosopher on life and does not even raise a smile, and though vastly instructive, is comparatively dull. Her sometime "pardner," Betsy Prig, is but a pale shadow of her personality, and if she had not been, when primed with liquor, capable of doubting the existence of Mrs. Harris, she might have escaped immortality. As it is, she provokes the quarrel, which is reckoned among the decisive battles of the world.

Mrs. Gamp is a great literary triumph and vindication of the Dickensian method. In reality she is a mean, grasping, drunken, cruel, detestable old woman, but by the tender treatment of her humorous aspects she becomes infinitely amusing, and almost succeeds in putting Pecksniff in the shade.

But between them they share the honours of the latter part of the book. It is quite incomprehensible how Dickens, with two such first-class performers on the stage, should have wasted time on the murder by Jonas. What time have we for trivial crime, when we might have had more imperishable remarks on the last moments of Gamp and the ultimate fate of his wooden leg, which in the nature of things could not have been dissected?

The illustrator has also dealt lightly with her. She is certainly no beauty, and if she looks a little bunched, she is nevertheless clean and tidy, and has an air of thinking herself welcome. She has an eye to the main chance, and was ready to welcome the newly married bride with her professional card, a smile and a leer, which though a little bit vulgar has no harm in it, and merely implies that she, being a person of great skill and remarkable penetration, is in possession of a little secret as yet unknown to the outer world. She has the aspect rather of a cheerful humorist who, having no sign of being a teetotaler, is not a drunkard. In the etching representing her entertaining Mrs. Prig to tea she is represented as a social and hospitable person, as no doubt she was on occasions. The two figures, in themselves admirably drawn and full of individual character, are as well composed with the background and accessories of Mrs. Gamp's furniture, as if they were

portraits of two great ladies in a palace. The women themselves and their surroundings are individually mean, but they are managed with the same artistic skill that would have served for a big picture. When a close examination is made of details the effect is very droll and laughable, and may be accounted as a splendid example of the highest kind of burlesque.

The illustrations throughout the book reach a high order of excellence, but a special word of commendation should be reserved for the charming frontispiece, representing Tom Pinch playing the organ and surrounded by a sort of dream of persons and incidents in the book. The figures are small but perfectly defined, and in number considerably over seventy; they are so grouped as to form an agreeable decorative pattern.

“Dombey”

Though the next book, *Dombey*, has already been referred to, it is necessary to give some description of its character in connection with the illustrations and Browne’s development. The book as a whole is dismal and is not a popular favourite, yet it has afforded opportunities for illustrations in abundance. The remarkable advance shown by Browne in



LITTLE PAUL.
From illustrations to "Dombey" and "Great Expectations".

Chuzzlewit might have been considered a definite stage in which he had shown his utmost capacity, but he was by no means as yet stationary.

Dickens' original design was excellent and ambitious, being nothing less than to draw a picture of a man inordinately proud and vain of his position abased and humbled by an unkind fate. When little Paul is born Dombey is greatly rejoiced, because in due time there will be a son in the firm, as there has been for three generations. That Mrs. Dombey dies is a matter of little moment. Dombey concentrates his whole mind on the upbringing of his son; because he is a delicate child, he is placed at Brighton with Mrs. Pipchin ; and as he is backward, he is put in the hands of Dr. Blimber in order to fit him for his right position. As we have said, the book as a whole is dismal, it is abruptly divided into two parts by the death of little Paul, which, according to the original intention, was to have formed the first great blow to Mr. Dombey's overweening pride. But unfortunately all our interest has been centred on the old-fashioned little boy, and Mr. Dombey and his pride could only have attracted our attention by a psychological portraiture which was quite outside the Dickens range. We read a good deal about Mr. Dombey's pride, but we only get evidence that he is stiff and unpleasant; he seems to be rather callous than suffering. Failing the central figure, the story is eked out with a number of oddities, who, however, seem to move uneasily in an uncongenial atmosphere. We have the Major, a curry-eating, wine-bibbing, bragging returned Indian and his native manservant; Captain Cuttle with his hook and his innocence of the ways of dry land, not to mention his friend Bunsby, or his landlady, Mrs. MacStinger, one of Dickens' notable and terrifying women, or Sol Gills, a muddle-headed old seller of nautical instruments. All these are definite characters, who lend themselves for illustration.

Dombey has no great central figure overpowering all the other characters, but, unlike the other books, there are an unusual number of female characters in it, which would not have suited most caricaturists, but were particularly suitable for Browne. As usual we have some ladies who lend themselves to caricature, notably Mrs. Chick, Miss Tox, and afterwards Mrs. Skewton. But Mrs. Toodles *alias* Richards, Miss Nipper, Florence herself as she grows up, Alice, and the second Mrs. Dombey, are all beautiful in different styles, and require to be represented by a draughtsman who could afford to sacrifice a good deal for the sake of grace.

In the former books we remember some grotesque



Alice.
*Reduced one of a series of extra Illustrations to "Dombey",
published by Hablot Browne and Robert Young.*

figures in prominent scenes which colour our recollections, but here the pictures which remain most firmly impressed on the memory are those imbued with a strong sense of beauty and owing nothing to the comic element. Especially we remember the meeting of Florence and Edith on the staircase, and that of Mrs. Dombey denouncing Carker. Here the woman is not in a position to show to the greatest advantage; she has been insulted, she is in a towering passion, full of contempt and loathing for her companion, and bitter with the bitterness of a proud woman who has been disrespectfully treated. Energetic action and bad feeling assert ill with beauty, but here they go together to make the most impressive picture.

The villain, Carker, though he is a very active schemer, is quite uninteresting in the letterpress and the etchings. A number of minor characters out of the inexhaustible Dickens' miscellany serve to fill up odd corners, and bustle on the stage in the final tableau.

Although Browne's appreciation of the book was evidently lessened by the absence of any striking central figure suitable for his purpose, he shows every sign of enjoyment by the general excellence and completeness of the drawings; in addition to those appearing in the monthly numbers, he produced a number of extra single portraits, which were engraved by

Robert Young. These all show a great sense of beauty, but none quite equal to the etching of Mrs. Dombey, already described.

“David Copperfield”

We now come to *David Copperfield*, the most popular of all the books, not only on account of its own merits, which are great, but because it is supposed to be autobiographical, though it actually is so only to a small extent. Indeed, a parallelism can only be drawn in one circumstance common to the two lives. Dickens in his boyhood was for a time actually employed in a blacking warehouse pasting labels on bottles, and David is described as beginning life in the same kind of occupation. Dickens confessedly felt the degradation acutely, so profoundly indeed that years afterwards he dare not pass the spot on the same side of the road; and David felt the misery of his position, and suffered acutely, with an inexpressible agony of soul from the thought of the hopelessness of his future life, and his detestation of his present associates. Otherwise there was little resemblance between the real and the counterfeit. As regards all other incidents the two lives diverge, though it is not improbable that Dickens derived help from the recollection of his own experiences in describing David's upgrowing, as we know he did in the story of little Paul Dombey. The autobiographical theory is strengthened by the avowal that Micawber's cheery optimism was modelled from traits in the character of Dickens' own father.

David was born and brought up in the country. At the beginning of the book his father is dead, and the young widow is living with her little son and Clara Peggotty at the Rookery, Blunderstone, Suffolk. All was going well, when Mr. Murdstone, a bold bad man with black whiskers, fell in love with the widow. Not only did he hang up his hat in her hall, but imported his sister, a hard dour woman. David is taken out of the way, and stays with Mr. Peggotty, Ham, little Emily, and Mrs. Gummidge. Mr. Peggotty lives in a house made out of a boat. Some little controversy has taken place whether the boat was propped up on its keel or turned right over. As it is represented in the latter position, and as Dickens was exceedingly particular at this time about the facts of his illustrations being correct, we may take it for granted it was so. I myself have seen on the south coast and other places houses contrived from boats in both ways, and smaller kinds of smacks sawn in half and set up on end as storerooms for nets and tackle.

We hear a good deal about the doings of these simple people, and make the acquaintance of one of the immortals, Mr. Barkis, the Blunderstone carrier, all described delightfully in Dickens' fully developed style.

This happy period ends, and is followed by a picture of a child uncomprehended and badly treated. His severe and narrow-minded stepfather' endeavours to flog virtue into him, and in a tussle David bites him. In reprisal he is sent off to a school in London kept by one Creakle, who is aided and abetted in his cruelties and floggings by a woodenlegged myrmidon. To add to the child's misery, he is made to wear a placard inscribed " Take care of him, he bites." Here David meets with his evil genius, Steerforth, a flashy, extravagant youth, who lords it over the whole establishment. After a short pretence of education he is sent to take up employment in the bottle warehouse. As it is necessary for him to have a lodging, a person is found who is willing to take him for a consideration. This gentleman is the real hero of the book, one of the greatest of Dickens' characters, and is known all over the civilised world as Mr. Micawber. He is a genuine grotesque, very theatrical, yet very human. In real

1 Dickens speaks of Murdstone as David's "father-in-law," thus falling into the same error as he did in describing Mrs. Tony Weller's relationship to Sam.

life we suspect Mr. Micawber would have disappeared into the debtors' prison at an early date and remained there, but in the novel David cannot go far without his friend turning up, from which we may gather, in spite of the unfavourable view taken by Mrs. Micawber of Mr. Micawber's family, they *did* come forward better than we were given to understand.

Overcome by the miserable sense of his degradation, David makes up his mind to run away and go down to Dover to see and appeal to his aunt, Miss Trotwood, on the capital of a half sovereign borrowed from Peggotty. He is robbed at the start, and had to travel without it. After a toilsome walk, wonderfully related, he finds his relation, who is one of the best described characters in any of the books. She is brusque and abrupt and very autocratic, but very tender-hearted. She holds in detestation mankind in general, and donkeys who trespass on her green in particular. She has living with her "Mr. Dick," a harmless lunatic, who is perpetually endeavouring,

without success, to complete a memorial without mentioning King Charles the First's head.

David is adopted by his aunt and put to school with Dr. Strong at Canterbury, where he becomes acquainted with his aunt's lawyer, Mr. Wickfield, his daughter Agnes, and his clerk, Uriah Heap, who wriggles his way up in life by professing to be 'umble. Afterwards David goes to London, and the story oscillates between London and Yarmouth. At the latter place things go badly. Emily is seduced by Steerforth, and she flees from her home to escape ignominy. Her uncle, who loves her deeply, sets forth in search of her.

David is married to Dora Spenlow, a childish little butterfly of a woman, who dies. David having to go to Yarmouth encounters a violent storm, which is magnificently described. Steerforth is wrecked close by the home he had wronged, and Ham loses his life in an attempt at rescue. The book ends by Mr. Micawber discovering a series of crimes committed by Uriah Heap, and denouncing him. In the ending, as usual, everybody is made more or less happy.

Early on in the book is one of those compositions of figures and architecture which were always characteristic of Browne's style, but now boldly and openly treated. The scene is in the interior of the parish church. The walls are crowded with monuments and memorial tablets, mingling the dead with the living. Among the congregation we easily distinguish Mr. Murdstone, who, forgetting the service, is staring fixedly at the widow. The architecture is not strictly according to the rules of any style in particular, but an excellent impression of a general view of Croydon Church. There is a very pretty picture when David returns home and finds his mother nursing a baby. The composition is altogether charming and human. The group of the mother and child could scarcely be excelled for the beauty of a pose which is quite natural and effectively harmonised with the lines of the background. This is a favourite subject with Browne. He drew it many hundreds of times in oils, watercolours, chalk, pencil, so that it was ready to be used as an illustration. There is no special description of it in the text.

Two illustrations connected with David's early life are noteworthy: one, where he is at table with the voracious waiter, who tricks him out of his meal by subterfuges; the other, where he gives his "magnificent order" at the public house. He is standing, a rather forlorn, but gentlemanly little figure, in a little white hat with a black hatband, at the bar of the public

house, from which all commonness and meanness has been omitted and transformed to a certain grandeur and dignity. Two enormous and princely puncheons and other splendid vessels containing liquor are scattered about. The landlord and landlady present the appearance of the greatest comfort and respectability. All this is as far from realism as it can be, but few can help feeling that it is more interesting and wholesome than an exact representation of a London public house. Throughout ugliness is kept in the background, and things are made perhaps a little better than they are. In the crowded schoolroom at Creakle's, for instance, the boys appear high-spirited and well dressed, and not at all depressed by Mr. Creakle and his wooden-legged myrmidon.

In the picture where Mr. Mell visits his toothless old mother and plays the flute there is no sign of squalor, and a pleasant composition is made out of most unpromising material.

At the end of his toilsome journey to Dover David presents himself to his aunt, who is engaged in gardening; and when he tells her who he is, she is so astonished, that she exclaims "Good God!" and forthwith sits down upon the path. This in a written description is expressive of amazement. But the picture of a respectable spinster lady sitting on a gravel path conveys no idea of astonishment and pictorially is ineffective, and Browne feeling this, made an alternative design of her standing bolt upright and looking thoroughly taken aback. This was the one actually etched, and is one of the best in the book.¹

Afterwards, in another drawing, David is shown bundled up in a suit of clothes belonging to Mr. Dick, at the time when the Murdstones come down to make terms, and is a sufficiently comical little figure.

Throughout the book there is not the slightest attempt to force the picturesque element into the front, or to step beyond the modesty of ordinary life. Even Mr. Micawber, extravagant as he is, is made to harmonise with his surroundings, and his variations of costume from the prevailing fashion does not seem greater than would be permissible in a man of eccentric taste and genius. It is only fair to him to remark that there was enormously greater latitude in male costume both as regards cut and colour than there is at the present day. Dickens was delighted with this portrait. He writes: "Browne has done a capital Micawber."

The figure is indeed a triumph. He embodies the author's idea. He is grotesque and yet human, and though an amusing caricature, is quite

credible

1 Excellent reproductions of the alternative designs in pencil, together with the etching actually published, which is considerably superior to both, are given by Mr. D. C. Thompson in his *Life of Hablot K. Browne*.

as the real author of his tremendous epistles and sententious maxims.

The drawing where Miss Mowcher is standing on a table doctoring Steerforth's hair and chattering to David might very probably be classed a caricature, but as I knew the lady, I am in a position to state that nothing is exaggerated, and the drawing taken from the description gives a very good general impression of her as she lived, though, as I have said, I do not think my father ever saw her in the flesh.

The illustrations of the happenings of common life, such as the first introduction to Dora, and the interview with the Misses Spenlow, who certainly resemble little birds, Littimer and Uriah Heap in prison, all fulfil their purpose of telling the story. The frontispiece representing Miss Betsy Trotwood peeping in at the window of the Rookery, and the vignette title-page representing little Emily sitting on the beach near Peggotty's boat-house, are delightful examples of Browne's skill and fancy in delineating landscape in relation to figures.

“Bleak House”

The next book, *Bleak House*, differs from its predecessors in being something of a detective story, and having as central figures, round whom the interest revolves, people of good social position.

From the beginning we are plunged into a legal atmosphere, or let us say a legal fog enveloping a Chancery suit, with its interminable delays, its devouring expenses, and its attendant crowd of legal persons, clients and witnesses; there is a continual rummage among every variety of documents, wills, judgments, affidavits and parchments of all sorts and descriptions, so that there is always the chance of some secret being brought unexpectedly to light. And a secret there is, which involves a person apparently unconnected with the suit, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Bart., a great landowner and Dickens' most successful portrait of a gentleman, of no particular brains, prejudiced, courteous, and soaked in the honourable traditions of his

caste. He has married a lady, beautiful, haughty, disdainful, and bored with the monotony of fashionable life.

The family solicitor, Mr. Tulkinghorn, and a ridiculous little lawyer's clerk named Guppy, discover that Lady Dedlock before her marriage to Sir Leicester Dedlock had a lover, Captain Hawdon, by whom she had a child, Esther Summerson, who is actually living as a member of the family of their neighbour, Mr. Jarndyce, one of the chief persons in the great suit. It is further discovered that Hawdon is identical with a law copyist, who has been eking out a miserable existence by writing documents for Mr. Snagsby, the law stationer. Hawdon dies by an overdose of opium. Mr. Tulkinghorn having discovered the secret of Hawdon's life uses his knowledge for the purpose of terrorising Lady Dedlock. Among witnesses called at the inquest — described in Dickens' usual cheerful manner in dealing with the backstreet incidents — is a miserable crossing-sweeper named Jo, to whom the deceased man had rendered occasional acts of kindness. About this time Lady Dedlock confesses to Esther Summerson that they are related as mother and daughter, and one evening, disguised in her servant's clothes (Sir Leicester being laid up with the gout), she employs Jo to guide her to places connected with Hawdon's miserable life, and to point out his grave. The secret might have been indefinitely preserved from other people if Mr. Tulkinghorn had not thought proper to put the screw on. Lady Dedlock flies her home, Chesney Wold, and after a search is found dead and cold at the gateway of the burial-ground.

Shortly before this Mr. Tulkinghorn was found shot in his own room, and the remainder of the story is chiefly occupied with the doings of Mr. Bucket, the detective who finally arrests Hortense, Lady Dedlock's French maid, for the murder.

Besides Skimpole and Mr. Guppy already mentioned, there is a whole crowd of miscellaneous characters good enough to have made the fortune of any other writer, who are only part of that inexhaustible stock Dickens always had on hand. Apart from those who conduct themselves as ordinary commonplace mortals, we have Miss Flite, a little mad woman who frequents the court, and a dirty old lunatic Krook, who keeps a marine store, and calls himself Lord Chancellor. Mr. Boythorn, a man outwardly ferocious, but inwardly kind-hearted, supposed to have been modelled on Walter Savage Landor (and fortunately without the addition of disagreeable traits). Two excellent portraits of philanthropic ladies: Mrs. Jellyby,

occupied with the affairs of Borrioboola Gha, and Mrs. Pardiggle, who made house to house visitation amongst the poor, and bullied them into cleanliness and godliness. Mr. Turveydrop, a survival of the dandies of the time of George IV; his son Prince, a dancing master, whose academy is most amusingly described. Mr. Bagnet, a retired trooper, with his wife, literally his better half, and children, Quebec and Malta; and the keeper of a shooting-gallery, also a retired trooper, Mr. George, who is mistakenly arrested by Mr. Bucket for the murder. Nor must we omit Mrs. Snagsby, a jealous woman who bullies her husband, and sits under Mr. Chadband, a preaching old humbug, perfectly distinct from his popular predecessor Stiggins. Finally there is a full-length portrait of the poor castaway "Jo," his miserable life and condition. His death has in it a true pathos, a little weakened by Dickens insisting upon drawing the attention of "My Lords and Gentlemen" to it.

As the greater part of the book consists of conversations, all letting the cat out of the bag by very slow degrees, there was an absence of incidents which would serve for illustration, or be helped by one. In the actual matter of composition and execution Browne was never better. The drawings of the female figures are especially graceful, two in particular. One representing Esther talking to Miss Jelly by, Peepy asleep in the mean bed, luggage and bandboxes, the neglected candles, all help in the composition. The other called "Nurse and Patient," equally beautiful. In the old familiar style are pictures which directly illustrate the story, such as the old marine store-dealer Krook, chalking up the name Jarndyce letter by letter. Another where Jo is pointing out to Lady Dedlock through the bars of the gateway the position of Hawdon's grave in the noisome little burial-place, the squalor and obscenity of the place being emphasized by a bestial shadow of a man drinking being thrown on the blind of a low down window.

The picture of Mr. Chadband improving a tough subject makes the old humbug a very distinct personality, and different from the arch-hypocrite forerunner Pecksniff, whom he might be supposed to resemble. Other illustrations there are of the usual character, including the one of Skimpole and Coavinses, which has already been dealt with. But about halfway through the book — to be precise, on the 360th page — the reader cannot fail to be struck by an illustration which possesses two characteristics not hitherto seen. First, it has been executed in tint, and the outline, instead of playing a great part, is barely visible; and secondly, it consists of

architecture and landscape, with an entire absence of the human figure — and thereby hangs a tale.

If the reader will compare an etching in *Martin Chuzzlewit* — for example, the celebrated scene where “Mrs. Gamp propoges a toast,” or any other group of figures in an interior — with the one in *Bleak House* of “Nurse and Patient,” or other similar composition, and look over the etchings bit by bit, he will be struck that in many places in the latter volume the lines are not clear and precise, and in others they have unexpectedly agglomerated so as to form blotches. Comparing the drawings, especially in the fine etching of such a passage as the objects which form a background to the group of figures which are generally treated by Browne by very delicate lines. In the *Chuzzlewit* drawings we shall notice that the figures are vividly relieved from the background, and the whole drawing errs, if in anything, by being too sharp, but the general effect in the *Bleak House* series is rather that of woolliness and flatness, and a uniformity of greyness, as if the backgrounds had been too strongly bitten in; though that is not the fault. If closely examined, the lines will be seen to be a little thicker than usual, and with a dull edge, as if they were printed on blotting-paper.

Browne was generally incurious about the result of his work, and the completed numbers when forwarded often remained unopened for some days. But he discovered these facts, and he recognised the engraver’s unforgivable sin — the rotten line. In every man, even the most careless, there remains some concealed point of pride which brooks no interference. There is generally something in every profession which stands for a point of honour, and is often entirely incomprehensible to outsiders. How he discovered the cause I do not know, but he was evidently much disturbed that he might be supposed to be concerned in the nefarious crime. His drawing might be attacked, he might be accused of caricature, his perspective might be wrong, his people might be ugly — but a rotten line, never!

The reason for these defective impressions was that, in order to deal rapidly with a large issue, the plates had been printed by means of some kind of lithographic process, which enabled half a dozen to be done at the same time. Now though such processes may be, by means of skill and attention, trusted to produce clean lines, so long as they are isolated, it cannot be trusted to reproduce luminously fine lines closely in juxtaposition. It was very characteristic of the man that he neither whined

nor stormed, but as a sort of joke sent up a plate wholly composed of fine parallel lines which were liable to blotch if transferred to stone, and therefore must be printed in a proper copperplate press. This was the Ghosts' Walk. So far from its being regarded as a joke or a reproof, it was received with acclamation, and considered by the publishers and the public as a novelty of a very attractive nature. The drawing in question taken on its own merits is interesting and impressive.

The accompanying two letters, now for the first time printed, fortunately escaped the bonfire, and relate to the terminal numbers of *Bleak House*. One is an ordinary business letter, the other is a specimen of Anglo-French, and characteristic of the writer:

“Chateau De Moulineux, Rue Beaurepaire,
Boulogne, 29th June 1853.

“My Dear Browne, — First, I beg to report myself, thank God, thoroughly well again.

“I was truly sensible of your last note, and of the right goodwill with which you fell to work on the plates, under those discouraging circumstances.

“Secondly, I send the subjects for the next number. Will you let me see the sketches here by post?

“Thirdly, I am now ready with all four subjects for the concluding double number, and will post them to you to-morrow or next day!!!!!!

“Fourthly, I wish you would so contrive your arrangements, if so disposed, as to come and pay us a visit here. I don't know whether you know Boulogne well ; but, well known, it is a very capital place, with quite as much that is quaint and picturesque among the fishing people and their quarter of the town as is to be found (if you will believe me in a whisper) at Naples.

“We purpose remaining here until the middle of October; have a queer doll's house of many rooms, and really beautiful gardens. I think you would like it and be amused, and would find much worthy of note, and afterwards of use, in these parts.

“Now I have it in contemplation, on Monday, 22nd of August, to do the best French dinner that can be done in this region, to celebrate the conclusion of *Bleak House*, to which festival Bradbury and Lemon stand pledged to come over. Can you not, on such good notice, arrange to come

with them, and to remain after them, taking for a good week or fortnight of fresh air and change. We shall be truly delighted to receive you.

“Consider, O Man of business, and at your leisure reply.

“Address as above. — Ever faithfully yours,

“Charles Dickens.

“Hablot K. Browne, Esq.”

“Boulogne, Mercreday, Juil-ly 6, 1853.

“Mon Cher Browne, — If I express myself not altogether in the perfect English of your country, pardon me for tout ce que je fait. J’ai si longtemps demeure — on the Continent — que j’ai presqu’oublie my native tongue.

“My French il me parait with the esquisses seront — admirable when they shall be finished according to your so wondrous pouce of art.

“I them return — ci enclos. That I am enchante — all the hope you give me — de vous recevoir chez moi a Boulogne!

“There is a great deal of wind here, almost all the days. Madame and Mademoiselle themselves remember of that Englishman Browne, and to him send a thousand friendships.

“Receive, my amiable Browne, the assurance of my distinguished consideration, votre tout devoue,

“Dickens.

“A Monsieur

Monsieur H. K. Browne.”

“Little Dorrit”

I am bound to confess I have never read *Little Dorrit* through. I have made one or two attempts, have started at different places, and just as I seemed to be getting along very well, something has happened, either an interruption from the outside, or a condition of somnolence, similar to such as attacks audiences at lectures or sermons.

The first chapter is an excellent bit of writing. Two men, Rigaud (otherwise Blandois), a murderer, and John Baptist, a cheerful smuggler, in prison at Marseilles, make a good opening; and even with Dickens’ inconsequence it is a little disappointing to lose sight of these people till the eleventh chapter, when they have had time to be released from prison and to walk from Marseilles to Chalon-sur-Saone. These two foreigners are seen

afterwards in London, where they add considerably to the confusion of the reader.

The story of Mr. Dorrit, whose acquaintance we make as a prisoner for debt, appears to be revealed, but is not; afterwards he comes into an immense fortune, and it seems evident that there was an intention of showing that a weak character may be equally injured by good fortune or by bad.

At another time it would appear that the movements of Mr. Pancks, a rent-collector, who in the course of his business unravels the mystery of Mr. Dorrit's heritage, is likely to be the real story, but Mr. Pancks hands over the money, and we never know what has happened.

Then our attention is again diverted from Mr. Dorrit and turned toward Mrs. Clennam, one of Dickens' most disagreeable old women, who appears to be possessed of a secret connected with her deceased husband, and so adds to the mystery of this mysterious book. Her son Arthur is probably the real hero, as he marries Little Dorrit at the end, and like many other heroes is a very uninteresting person. He returns from abroad, and he and his mother spar at one another through interminable dialogues, which are apparently written to teach us that words are given us to conceal our thoughts; but the secret is not revealed. Our old friend Blandois turns up with the modest demand of a thousand pounds for keeping his mouth shut, so it must really be rather a fine secret after all.

Every now and then we come upon excellent little bits of genuine Dickens writing, then we find ourselves plunged anew into incomprehensible dialogue. Nobody seems able to speak their mind clearly except Mr. F.'s aunt. She is the only concise speaker in the book, and a genuine Dickens character.

Things are brought to a comfortable ending by the house suddenly falling down and killing everybody who is not wanted.

The illustrations share the general depression. If we had not known the four great books they might seem good, but they suffer in the first place from a want of some distinguished character to take the lead. There's no Pecksniff, nor Captain Cuttle, nor Micawber, nor even a Sir Leicester Dedlock, or the grandiose architecture of Chesney Wold. There are no thrilling adventures; very little firsthand description; there is nothing central that can be used for artistic purposes, but Mr. F.'s aunt is represented as a resolute and pugnacious little figure, and the only individuality that counts.

The drawings have an air of being very sketchy — very little work is put in them; and this may be partly accounted for by the absence of any tangible person or pictorial incident essential to the story. People standing about talking do not afford much scope, and the sketchy appearance is due to large white spaces being left and lines not being put close together on account of the method of printing. There is a strong tendency evidently to keep an open line, that one may not blotch its neighbour.

There are a few tinted drawings, of which three are excellent, one the interior of the prison at Marseilles, another the old house with Blandois smoking in a top window shortly before the catastrophe, entitled “Damocles.” The third is “ Little Dorrit’s Party” — a starlight view of a mean street in the neighbourhood of the Marshalsea.

“A Tale Of Two Cities”

This book has already been sufficiently described, and a few words need only be added in regard to the illustrations, which show a considerable declension in power, and even a languid attention. His mind was not aroused; probably it had become somewhat insensitive, as it was the kind of work that some years ago would have delighted him.

He had not been in France for many years, and evidently made no attempt to refresh his early impressions. At this time he was living at Banstead, near Epsom, three miles from a railway station. He had lost his interest in illustrating. The drawings have evidently been hurriedly sketched in, and are left in a very unfinished state; and though there are some felicitous passages, they do not aid the descriptions in the book, as the illustrations had hitherto done.

He was in other directions doing very good work. The two drawings after referred to, “Death’s Revel” and “Death’s Banquet,” designed somewhere between ‘61 and ‘63, two years or so after *A Tale of Two Cities*, show one side of his artistic nature in full force.

We have taken the Dickens books as milestones on the road of Browne’s development. He is remembered as the illustrator of Charles Dickens, and nobody else counts for much.

In the eyes of his contemporaries, Dickens did not hold the pre-eminent place he does now. Although he was considered the most distinguished of the numerous authors for whom Browne worked, he was only one among

the many who have since died out, and are scarcely remembered even by name. It was the fashion to have Phiz as illustrator as a sort of guarantee of excellence. It is remarkable how many books he did illustrate by etchings on steel; even pamphlets and such-like ephemeral matter as would in the present day find a place in a magazine would have at least a frontispiece from his hand. If we take a Dickens book as a pattern, and compare it with a number of other books of the same date, we shall find in them all, plates exactly corresponding in style. The Dickens illustrations are generally the best, because he as a writer excited a greater interest and provided better material.

In Browne's early stage his plates show signs of immaturity in the draughtsmanship. Without exception, they present the appearance of spirited sketches done for the purpose of serving as memoranda for places and occurrences. There is no attempt made towards accuracy, or even probability, but they exactly hit the taste of a contemporary public who enjoyed farce, bustle, go, confusion and catastrophe, and were especially amused at that kind of horse-play which the police in our more decorous days would probably suppress. This was the demand that Phiz supplied.

Mr. James Grant, who wrote some excellent sketches of the seamy side of London life, containing a good deal of interesting and solid information about begging-letter impostors, debtors' prisons, courts of law, lunatic asylums, and so forth, thus speaks in his preface (dated 1838):

“With regard to the illustrations by ‘ Phiz ‘ which embellish this volume, the author can speak more unreservedly than he could do of the letterpress. They are among the happiest achievements of the genius of one who, yet young in years, is unquestionably in this particular style of engraving the first artist of the day.”

This clearly shows that there shone through the imperfection of the execution qualities which were original and satisfying. Browne began his work in the spirit of a schoolboy who draws to amuse his friends. No matter what was described, he made a shift to express it pictorially. When he began he had very small experience of life, and evidently no knowledge of the figure, and had not practised drawing from the model. He relied almost entirely upon his imagination, which is a very good servant, but a bad master to the artist.

A distinction must be made for practical purposes, though it might not be admitted by psychologists, between imagination and memory. By memory

we understand a mental act by which an artist recalls an object in such a manner as to enable him to reproduce it as exactly as possible. In this way features of particular persons, shapes of furniture and bits of architecture may be drawn more or less accurately without much difference in the method from drawing from the actual thing, except in the greater length of time that has elapsed between



the observation and the execution. But imagination is something different. In the case of memory, the drawing is made from a recollection of a visual impression made upon the eye by some definite object, and then conveyed to the brain. But in imagination by a voluntary effort, the mind is capable of producing a sensation of things as seen, without the use of the eye. Some men are capable of calling up scenes without consciousness of any definite observation having been made by the eye. They may call up mental pictures of magnificent architecture, pageants and people and scenes in far-off countries such as they have never seen except by the “inward eye.” These dreams are sometimes fragmentary, at other times so complete as to be serviceable for artistic purposes. A man so endowed does not strive to remember what he saw in a certain city or valley, or among a crowd of people in a place, but he has pictured before him a new world, not exactly

reproducing any one particular object, but typifying the things unconsciously observed and now brought into service.

Certain men have the power of exciting visual sensation in the brain and making the picture seem as clear as if it were really seen by the eye. In other words they can, whilst wide-awake and by a voluntary effort, project an image in the same way as things are seen in dreams. Others, and the great majority, require to have the visual sensation started primarily in the eye.

It is certain that Browne possessed this gift, and even abused it. He certainly saw those complicated designs of a quasi decorative character, such as the frontispieces to *Dombey* and *Chuzzlewit*, and the crowds in which he delighted as a whole, and did not build them up bit by bit. He sat down to his work without any preliminary design or tentative arrangement, made no measurements or trials, and drew straightforwardly as if he were copying something which he saw. He did this so effectually that he deprived himself of the aid that many artists find in surrounding themselves by objects, models, and studies. These only served to distract his mind. It will readily be perceived that a mental process of this kind does not tend toward realistic accuracy, but to the production of the fantastic. It may be better than the actuality, or it may be worse. Whichever it is, it is set down. Browne's architecture and furniture were generally better than the real thing, but in dealing with objects which had not impressed his mind, he often varied curiously from the reality. Anything in the shape of a boat or scientific apparatus or machinery was always grotesquely unlike the real thing. They probably did very well for the



THE FOXHUNTER'S DREAM.
From "The Foxhunter's Dream" by J. P. Knowles.

picture, but they offered insoluble difficulties for the professional spectator.

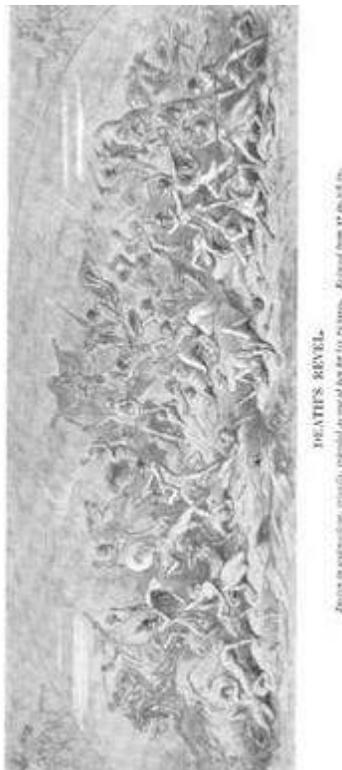
About the time he went back to live in London etching as a means of illustration was nearly dead, but he found himself greatly in demand for his sporting pictures. He contributed a number of drawings to various papers, executed in sundry new processes which irritated him exceedingly. He also composed original books of sporting, hunting, and racing bits, generally of about a dozen plates in each. One set was published by Chapman & Hall, other sets by Fores, Piccadilly. They were very original, and good lithographs, and as they were drawn by his own hand on the stone, they were as nearly orthographic as could be. Unfortunately the tinting was reproduced by chromo-lithography, then a rather primitive process, and not painted in the old-fashioned manner by hand, so that the general effect is coarse and crude.

It is interesting to note, when he was actually hunting, he scarcely drew any such scenes on his own account, but at this time executed a great number. In point of fact, when living in the country, he had unconsciously stored up an enormous amount of impressions, which he was now able to use, whereas his observations of ordinary people in social life had not been refreshed, and therefore he had less foundation to work on, and his

imagination, unfed from the outside, did not serve him with material which had hitherto been so bountifully supplied. His invention faded away for want of material, and his drawing lost its character and distinction. If he had been an artist who drew from the model, the drawing could have been refreshed, and the old standard maintained. As it was, the hand was allowed to work from the feeble promptings of a starved eye. It is interesting to observe that though the brain in one department was seriously fatigued, in another it was vigorous — for the sporting bits were full of dash and go.

Apart from all this he continued to make designs and paint pictures, in obedience to a personal impulse which had no relation to his public work. It is very remarkable that though he passed his life in producing jocose pictures, he never composed one except for the direct purpose of sale. Out of hundreds of scraps, jottings of ideas, and important designs that he made from time to time, there was nothing of the sort. All were either subjects of a decorative character or didactic.

The two designs herewith reproduced, “Death’s Banquet” and “Death’s Revel,” indicate an artistic detestation of the futility of war. The actual drawings were designs intended for big pictures, dedicated





to our American cousins, and exhibited in the Royal Academy. As mere compositions they have considerable merit, and might be executed in high relief in silver, but in the opinion of the present writer they would only lose by being magnified beyond their original size.

Understanding of the foregoing is necessary for the comprehension of how the comparatively tame drawings for *A Tale of Two Cities* was succeeded by very spirited work in other directions. There was evidently no failure of the whole mind, but merely the fatigue of an overused portion of it.

CHAPTER XVII

FINAL YEARS

After he returned to London Browne saw more of his fellow-creatures, and though he could scarcely be persuaded to go into society, yet he welcomed people who came to the house. One of the most frequent visitors was Fred Barnard, a remarkable young man, who was discovered at Heatherley's, where he was ostensibly undergoing the ordinary course of art teaching, but was really devoting himself heart and soul to caricature, for which he had a genius. He could take anybody, friend or foe, keep the likeness, and then exaggerate the points so as to make it ridiculous.

He was also a rhymester, and he often supplemented his cartoons by fitting old tunes with original verses which helped to point his moral. He was an adept in dressing up, and would present himself at one time as a mediaeval Italian and at another as a London costermonger or "bookie." He was an excellent amateur actor, and took part in the performances which were frequent at Heatherley's. But his most remarkable quality, which he retained throughout his



HARRIET BROWNE.
From an earlier engraving.

life, was his capacity on any social occasion of giving an entertainment all by himself. Apparently joining naturally in the conversation, he would begin to relate anecdotes, recite, give imitations from actors and people whom he had met, and all so delightfully that he held the audience as long as he pleased. Mr. Toole was the only other man whom I have met who could take upon himself the burden of entertaining a whole company.

Barnard came to Notting Hill as an admirer, and he was a never-failing source of amusement to Browne. Indeed, between the two men there existed from the first a temperamental bond of sympathy which strengthened with time and endured to the end. Barnard entered into all sorts of schemes, and egged Browne on, who always had an enormous number of irons in the fire wherewith to burn his fingers.

A favourite occupation at this time was to design big pictures, and Barnard was always eager to produce costumes, assume attitudes, or give any necessary assistance, anything, in fact, so long as he could take a part. One subject in particular for a time progressed favourably. "The Drunken Helot" was intended to be a large picture of a Spartan crowd, chiefly women and children assembled near a drinking fountain and watching an unfortunate slave slouching along a wall, pointing out to their children the

disgusting condition of the poor wretch, who had been expressly intoxicated for an object lesson. Barnard solemnly covenanted to pose as the model, and I remember him one night demonstrating his qualifications by an extemporaneous rehearsal of great length. He lurched about against the wall, giving correct imitations of various kinds of people in the different stages of drunkenness, many excessively funny, others merely helpless and loathsome, but none of them classical.

The design was never carried out, but it was very good, and would have pointed its moral, but as it would have required, even with Browne's rough-and-ready method of oil painting, some weeks to complete, the leisure time never came, and it dropped through.

Moreover Barnard was not available, as about this time he went to Paris with one of my brothers to study painting in Bonnat's studio. The effect of this instruction on Barnard was curious. Bonnat was an uncompromising realist, as those who have seen his picture of "Job" in the Luxembourg will remember. Like many others of the French school of the period, he absolutely forbade drawing from *chic*, and insisted on a rigid adherence to the model. He left the mark of his method on his pupils. Barnard did not stay sufficiently long to acquire a thoroughly good style of painting, but he did learn to mistrust his own conceptions and to lean on the model, and afterwards he never attempted to work without it.

If he had intended to paint subject pictures in the ordinary manner all would have been well, but he never relinquished his idea of becoming a humorous draughtsman, and occupying himself with the observation of people around him, and allowing his fancy free play. He hoped to take a front place as humorous illustrator, and produce works containing at the same time character and draughtsmanship. He actually did a great deal of work of the kind, but the result of his teaching was to hamper him. He was fond of subjects involving a good deal of action, such as a Christmas party interrupted by the appearance of a supposed ghost. He imagined people dispersing in great excitement, fat gentlemen hiding beneath chairs, underneath tables, behind sofas, curtains, in all sorts of undignified and mirth-provoking attitudes. He would conceive all these things in his mind, but he would not draw from his own imagination, and he insisted upon posing his models according to his conception, so that there was always some evaporation of the original idea, and a certain amount of stiffness due to faithful rendering of the model. It is obvious that no model, however

clever, can be posed in an attitude as vivacious as a person would naturally assume in real life, and his drawings therefore lost a great deal of the spontaneity and originality that his early works possessed.

From time to time he painted pictures from real life, such as the “ Guards marching to St. James’ Palace,” “Clare Market by Night,” but they were more interesting as subjects than paintings. Two of his most successful pictures, according to my recollection, were, a very funny one of Sir Walter Raleigh, beautifully dressed in white satin, smoking his first pipe, utterly bewildered when the early effects of the weed began to be felt; the other, serious and impressive, of Sidney Carton mounting the scaffold in the grey mist of the dawn. So far as my memory serves me, this was a picture which would stand on its own merits, besides being an excellent presentment of the subject.

He was very interesting and amusing in his domestic arrangements. During the daytime he was a great deal away from home, observing queer people, making strange acquaintances. He asked me once if I was interested in bus drivers, and told me he had driven for hours on the box seat of a certain bus in order to become acquainted with the driver’s manner of thought and speech. He was much dreaded as an employer by models, partly because he put them into attitudes difficult to maintain, and partly because he had an inveterate habit of working at night. He thought nothing of beginning at eleven or twelve, and continuing till morning. Like many artists of the time, when he began to be successful he built a house for himself, which involved him in many troubles, as houses frequently do. His troubles began early. He wrote to me in his own peculiar fashion, saying that his children had got the snuffles. This was eventually found to be diphtheria — a great trial, though fortunately he escaped bereavement. He had the house examined, and immediately under the dining-room a drain was discovered, of which the joints had not even been cemented. The wonder was that nothing worse had occurred.

He brought an action against the builder, who promptly went bankrupt. He lived there for some time, and as his income of course varied, though the expenses did not, the balance was not always on the right side. This is very common among artists. But he prepared for emergencies, and had a big board painted “House to Let,” &c, which in prosperous times was kept behind the front door, but when money was tight was conspicuously displayed to attract the public.

He was always open to take advantage of an opportunity for a little fun. One of his immediate neighbours, a distinguished painter of a good social position, was giving a special “ at home “ to view his pictures. Barnard, hearing of this, said he did not see why Teddy should have all the fun, and he betook himself to Nathan, who would provide a costume from that of the fallen Adam to the latest Parisian freak, and Clarkson, who had wigs of all kinds to suit every head, and on the afternoon of the party, as the first carriages drew up, Barnard had disappeared, and there was seen at his gate a gorgeous flunkey clothed in a blue coat with gold braid, canary coloured smalls, silk stockings, shoes with buckles, cocked hat and powdered hair, and furnished with a gold-headed staff. The coachmen perceiving this splendid vision naturally pulled up at Barnard’s house. The gorgeous flunkey made himself very busy opening the gate, knocking at the door, and escorting dowagers, to the great astonishment of the little maid, who was not prepared for any one grander than the milkman. The more carriages there came, the more it seemed certain that Barnard’s was the house of the reception, and the more stopped, and the more footmen there



were bustling about helping ladies out of carriages and putting them back. Of course the inevitable crowd made the little lane at the gate to view

the costumes, and everybody was very much bewildered except the flunkey in the canary coloured smalls, who had half an hour's intense enjoyment and then disappeared.

To return to Browne.

Somewhere in the late 'sixties he had a severe illness, in which he lost the use of his right thumb, and part use of his right leg. In his usual optimistic fashion he considered his feebleness as rheumatism, and though he could not close his thumb over his pencil, he continued to draw, holding his pencil between his fingers alone. He also adopted a new material, housemaid's black-lead, with which he made many designs; the solid he used for his outlines, and he rubbed the powder on with his finger as shade. The two drawings "Deluge" and "The Schoolmaster" belong to this late period.

At the beginning of his convalescence he endeavoured to fulfil a commission to furnish illustrations on wood for a cheap edition of Dickens' works, and though he produced a number for Pickwick, he was quite unable to continue his task, and the work passed into the hands of other artists, of whom his friend Barnard was the chief.

Browne lived for fifteen years after this illness, and, with the exception of the partial paralysis, he enjoyed very good health till within a short time of his death in 1882. During most of the time he lived at Brighton, and though he did no public work worth mentioning, he continued to draw and paint to the end.

His career as a whole undoubtedly disappointed the expectations of his friends, who without exception looked for great things, and many competent judges up to a late period believed that he only needed to exert himself to achieve something remarkable. Neither he nor they thought he had attained his ideal. So many evidences were continually given of reserve power that hope died out but slowly, and by some was cherished till his illness put an end to any reasonable expectation, and his career was definitely closed.

His early great success was in itself regarded as an indication of power — which it was — and though he had turned away from the romantic art in which he had originally shown promise, it was supposed that after a time he would resume his original purpose, and put the illustrating on one side. Some confirmation of this view was afforded by the fact already referred to, that though he was professionally engaged in works adapted for the public taste, he



THE SCHOOLMASTER'S DILEMMA.
Engraved for the author from a cartoon by John Tenniel.

was continually, in private, pushing forward towards achievements in romance and beauty. He lived artistically a double life, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; Mr. Hyde being kept for the public, and Dr. Jekyll scarcely suspected by the outside world. Those who knew Dr. Jekyll were rather surprised at Mr. Hyde's long-continued vitality, and did not take him very seriously, though he undoubtedly exercised a sinister influence in continually following an occupation that appeared to be analogous to painting, but was really antagonistic, as by continually practising upon steel he lowered his power of painting.

One of the qualities most clearly to be seen in him, and which was not stifled by his periodical work, was his sense of linear composition and beauty of form, his power of transforming common objects into things of grace, and his noble disdain of the ugliness with which we live surrounded. Neither he nor his friends realised that recovery from the incessant strain of periodical work was only possible with some interval for rest and contemplation. By dint of long persistence in a wrong direction he had lost the power of choosing the right road, and having passed his time in drawing too much, he became quite unhappy if he was not still further exhausting his energies by continually having his pencil or etching needle in his hand.

Abundant evidence exists that although the illustrations were supposed by his admirers to be below the level of his power, they were highly esteemed by the public at large.

When recovering from his illness, he went to consult a physician of celebrity personally unknown to him. At the end of the consultation he offered the usual fee, but the good doctor refused it, saying, "I have for many years derived so much amusement and enjoyment from your works, that I am glad to have the opportunity of making you a small return."

Others of a later generation have appreciated the qualities of his work ; to cite one instance: —

During some years while I was President of the Liverpool Art Club I had the good fortune to be closely associated with R. A. M. Stevenson, who was at the time Professor of Art at the University College, Liverpool. He was a remarkable man, and a very able and illuminating critic, full of admiration for the modern French school, and having a lively contempt for anecdotal art. He had little to say in favour of the Italian or other old masters (though he appreciated their technique), till after a visit to Madrid he took Velasquez to his bosom, saying, "He was as good as a modern French realist." Such a man did not seem likely to appreciate early Victorian art. But one night when we were alone something prompted me to show him the illustrations, which he had never seen. I expected something curious, but not what happened. To my surprise he was greatly interested, looked at them for a long time attentively, sometimes turning back to refresh his memory, occasionally asking a question. At last he placed his hand palm downward on one of them, and said, with the air of a man pronouncing a final judgment, " This is a lost art."

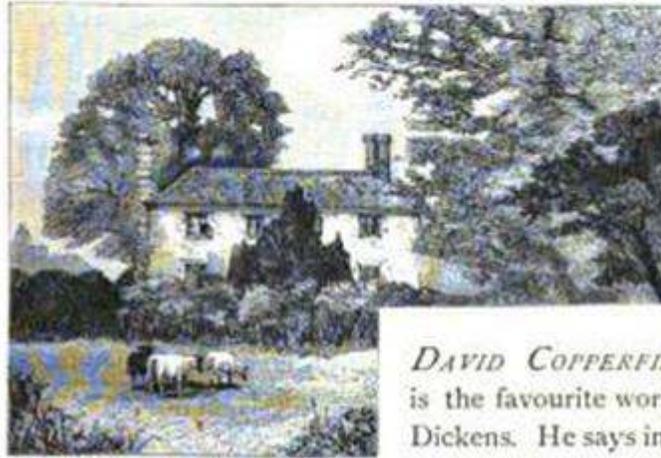
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ABOUT ENGLAND WITH DICKENS.

CHAPTER I.

DAVID COPPERFIELD.



DAVID COPPERFIELD
is the favourite work of
Dickens. He says in the

THE ROOKERY, BLUNDERSTONE, SUFFOLK

CHAPTER I.

DAVID COPPERFIELD

David Copperfield is the favourite work of Dickens. He says in the preface: "It would concern the reader little, perhaps, to know how sorrowfully the pen is laid down at the close of a two years' imaginative task, or how an author feels as if he were dismissing some portion of himself into the shadowy world when a crowd of the creatures of his brain are going from him for ever. Yet I had nothing else to tell, unless, indeed, I were to confess (which might be of less moment still) that no one can ever believe this narrative in the reading more than I believed it in the writing. Of all my books I like this the best. It will be easily believed that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can love that family as dearly as I love them. But like many fond parents I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child, and his name is David Copperfield." This work has sometimes been called an autobiography of the author, and in a certain sense this is correct, for, though the incidents may differ from those which

actually befell him, they have something in common with his history, and the feelings of childhood are painted evidently from his own recollection. For Yarmouth and its neighbourhood, where the first scenes are laid, Dickens always had a great fondness. He says, speaking of Yarmouth, that if any one had a grudge against any particular insurance company, the best way to gratify it would be to purchase a heavy life annuity and then retire to Yarmouth, drawing the dividends regularly; and he says that finally the insurance would conclude that “they had got either Old Parr or Methuselah in their books.”

Blunderstone is situated about seven or eight miles from Yarmouth, but there is a station at Lowestoft, which is only about half that distance. The living is a rectory, and that a wealthy one. It combines Flixton with it, and the united population of the two parishes, which cover a vast district, is less than a thousand, according to the clerical directory.

Blunderstone is pronounced Blundstone or “Blunston” by the inhabitants, and it is just one of those pleasant quiet country villages that Dickens would have been likely to select for a tale so full of homely recollections as *David Copperfield*. The cottages in it are detached, and if they are not of large dimensions they are charming to look at. Red brick is the material that has commonly been used in their construction, and this is often covered over with green creepers and ivy. Sometimes a whitewashed or yellow-washed house breaks in and adds a little variety to the small village street. The cottages are shut off from the road by high thorn and holly hedges, and are often only seen through the white wicket-gate. Importers of wine and spirits have apparently found many customers for their empty pipes and hogsheads, as one of these vessels generally figures at the corner of a dwelling. But there are a goodly number of pumps, and wells with quaint old winches, or even more primitive cans fixed on long poles. Beehives flourish here; and I saw on the walls between Yarmouth and Blunderstone many placards announcing that prizes of £ 1 00 were to be given away to the most successful of bee-keepers. As we pass through the village towards the church which Dickens has made immortal, we hear at intervals the hum of bees, and it seems in sweet harmony with the scene. And then Blunderstone is a perfect show-ground for roses; there are standard roses including most of the varieties from the Duke of Edinburgh to “China Tea” roses, and another class, which some might consider equally as charming as either — the old-fashioned cabbage rose that seems to thrive in a half-neglected

garden, and sheds almost bushels of sweet-scented leaves while the younger buds are coming to maturity. The counterpart to Mr. Barkis might easily be found at Blunderstone, and the wish to sit up all night is natural in David Copperfield when he obtained his mother's permission to go and see old Mr. Peggotty and the memorable house on the sands. "The day soon came for our going. It was such an early day that it came soon, even to me, who was in a fever of expectation, and half afraid that an earthquake, or a fiery mountain, or some other great convulsion of nature, might interpose to stop the expedition. We were to go in a carrier's cart that started in the morning, after breakfast. I would have given any money to have been allowed to wrap myself up over night and sleep in my hat and boots." This is exceedingly natural; the writer can well remember, when he was about the same age as David, stopping in a farm-house in a remote part of Lancashire, and it was decided that he should return to Liverpool, about fifteen miles away, in the Saturday's market-cart, which left at two o'clock in the morning. The romance of such a conveyance was enchanting. To get up at one, and have breakfast, and then to climb into the covered vehicle, and see the sun rise, as the strong heavy horse tramped slowly through the lanes, was perfect bliss.

Little did Copperfield suppose that he was leaving his happy home for ever behind him, and that when he returned all would be completely changed. "I am glad to recollect," he says, "that when the carrier's cart was at the gate, and my mother stood there kissing me, a grateful fondness for her and for the old place I had never turned my back upon before made me cry." Necessity knows no law, even in house property. When Queen Elizabeth wanted the Bishop of Ely's mansion in Holborn for her chancellor, the prelate had to yield. He may have protested; indeed, he does seem to have derived what consolation he could in that direction, but his protest was not far from costing him very dearly. As for the house that is represented here as Copperfield's birthplace and early home, I should almost doubt if the family who lived there did very closely resemble the Copperfield household, but as it is the only house visible from the churchyard on any side, it must be appropriated, and one has the less hesitation in doing this from the circumstance that it corresponds with what we require. "On the ground floor is Peggotty's kitchen, opening into a back yard, with a pigeon-house on a pole in the centre without any pigeons in it,

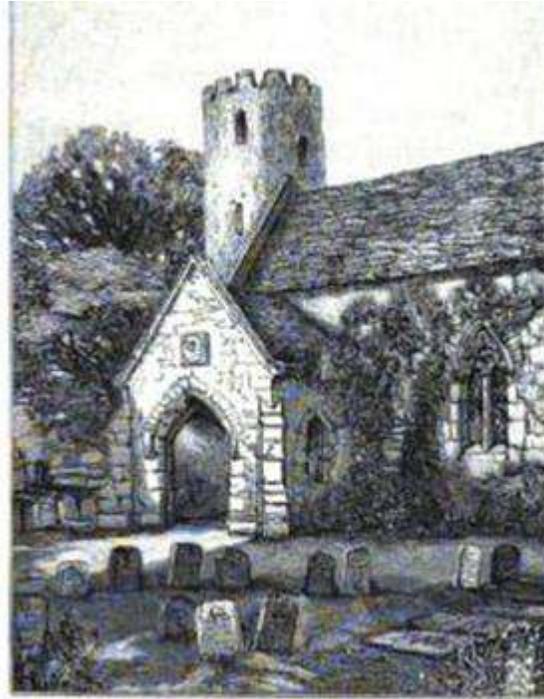
a great dog kennel in a corner without any dog, and a quantity of fowls that looked terribly at me, walking about in a menacing, ferocious manner.”

When I visited Blunderstone it was on a glorious summer day in the third week of August; the cottages were closed and the street deserted. A country waggon with garden produce had stopped before a little public-house, and the driver was probably sheltering inside for a short time from the rays of the sun, while his horse was slaking his thirst from a trough of clear well-water on the outside of the hostelry. This was almost the only sign of life that was apparent to the eye. Harvest had begun and everybody was at work in the fields, and the summer air that carried the sweet scent from the meadows, brought with it the hum of labourers, and the distant sound of the reaping machines. It was just a day to delight in, and I thought that it was such a one as poor Mrs. Copperfield and David would have spent from morning to night out of doors. A loud and most bellicose crowing roused me from my reverie, and, on turning round, there was a huge barn-door cock standing on the top of a gate. He most certainly wanted to see who I was, and appeared to think I should be in the fields working. I remembered a passage in *Copperfield*, which I referred to after arriving home, “There is one cock who gets on a post to crow, and seems to take particular notice of me as I look at him through the kitchen window, who makes me shiver, he is so fierce;” and I fancy this must certainly be a descendant. The geese were at the edges of the stubbles; there were only one or two in the village, and they would seem unhappily to have followed the example of the waggoner in their tastes. Instead of joining their fellows on the stubbles, so as to make a respectable show on Michaelmas day at Yarmouth market, they affected the neighbourhood of pumps, and when water had been drawn they made small drinking parties round the pools that had collected on the pavement. Their ancestors seem to have surely troubled Copperfield in his youthful days — “Of the geese outside the side-gate who come waddling after me, with their long necks outstretched, when I go that way I dream at night, as a man environed by wild beasts might dream of lions.”

The interior of the house is graphically described: “Here is a long passage — what an enormous perspective I make of it! — leading from Peggotty’s kitchen to the front-door. A dark store-room opens out of it, and that is a place to be run past at night; for I don’t know what may be among those tubs and jars and old tea-chests, when there is nobody in there with a dimly-burning light, letting a mouldy air come out at the door, in which there is a

smell of soap, pickles, pepper, candles, and coffee, all at one whiff.” Then Dickens speaks of the two parlours. The dimensions of the house are enlarged since *Copperfield* was written, but doubtless these could be traced yet. The parlour they sit in of an evening has most charms for David. They use the best one on Sundays, but Peggotty, his nurse, has told him something about his father’s funeral, when they all assembled in it in black, and put on mourning, and this has given him an antipathy to the room; and when his mother one night read about Lazarus and the raising of the dead, Copperfield was so frightened when he went to his room that, as he says, “they are afterwards obliged to take me out of bed and show me the quiet churchyard out of the bedroom window, with the dead all lying in their graves at rest, below the solemn moon.”

Blunderstone church is small, but it is an exceedingly interesting building. It seems to have been principally built in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and the tracery in the windows has a French appearance, not at all unlike some we may see in Normandy. There is a very peculiar round tower which is ancient, and quite unlike any other I remember to have seen in England. It seems unproportionably small, and it is not in the middle of the gable, but stands on one side. The grass in the yard is certainly very green and healthy, and the white and red gravestones are all in excellent preservation. One or two sheep had found their way into the consecrated ground, and were calmly enjoying the rich pasturage. This is almost *verbatim* with the text — “There is nothing half so green that I know of anywhere as the grass of that churchyard; nothing half so shady as its trees; nothing half so quiet as its tombstones. The sheep are feeding there when I kneel up, early in the morning, in my little bed in a closet within my mother’s room, to look out at it, and I see the red light shining on the sundial, and think within myself, ‘Is the sun-dial glad, I wonder, that it can tell the time again?’“ Unfortunately the old oak Hanoverian and Queen Anne pews, which used to form such a charm in country churches, have



BLUNDERSTONE CHURCH, SUFFOLK.

fared no better than their fellows in other parishes, and plain ugly open benches have taken their place, but when *Copperfield* was written they were there. “Here is our pew in the church. What a high-backed pew! with a window near it, out of which the house can be seen, and is seen many times during the morning service by Peggotty, who likes to make herself as sure as she can that it’s not being robbed or is not in flames.”

The childish feelings and sympathies of *Copperfield* are among the best of Dickens’s writings. When his eye wanders and his old nurse catches sight of it, and frowns that he must look at the clergyman, he is afraid almost that he will stop and inquire what induces him to stare so; then he looks at his mother, who pretends not to see him; and then at a boy in the aisle, who makes faces; and finally, overcome by the heat of the day and the monotony of the pastor’s voice, he succumbs to drowsiness, and falls off his seat.

One thing struck me as curious; there seem to have been stray sheep coming in and out of the yard, and one of these almost made up its mind to enter the church. Now, exactly between the church and the house there is a pound for stray sheep. Did this suggest the idea?

The Suffolk lanes about here are dry and hardly leave traces of a shower; hence there are great numbers of butterflies. Red admirals and peacock butterflies and many others chase each other past the hedgerows. We read in

Copperfield, “Now I am in the garden at the back, a very preserve of butterflies, as I remember it.” There is a small lane near Blunderstone, that leads to a stile-road across some fields, that is very curious. It is not more than six feet wide. The path in the middle of it has become evenly lowered, and forms a segment. The thorns on each side of the narrow road are planted very closely together, and meet in a perfect curve of dense foliage overhead, forming with the roadway a perfect circle, and as the little lane is straight, it conveys the idea of a long tube through which the light is shining at the other end. So completely do the leaves over-canopy it that thrushes, or mavishes as they are called there, and wood-pigeons do not stir till the pedestrian is under their perch, and then they fly with a flutter and loud chirpings, quite unseen from below.

This lane is on the road to Yarmouth, or at least on one of the roads, for there are several, and they are all of nearly equal length. To revert to the memorable journey. The horse — the carrier’s horse — was the “laziest in the world,” and Barkis dropped sleepily forward, leaving his steed to find the way, — the route that his cart took is clearly the highway through Hopton, and by Hopland Hall. On this road we see just such bylanes as he speaks of, and the surface undulates in the manner he describes. Then Yarmouth is seen a long way off, and looks flat and oozy for a long time before it is reached, and on the other roads we see very little of the flat lands. “As we drew nearer, and saw the whole adjacent prospect lying in a straight low line under the sky, I hinted to Peggotty that a mound or so might have improved it; also that if the land had been more separated from the sea, and the town and the tide had not been quite so mixed up together, like toast and water, it would have been nicer — sentiments in which the dame who said she was proud to call herself a ‘Yarmouth Bloater’ did not concur.” “Here’s my Am ! grewed out of knowledge,” she at last exclaimed, as they reached Yarmouth. Ham was waiting for them at the public-house, where the Blunderstone carrier put up. He asked David how he found himself, and David imagined he must have known him much better than he knew Ham; and the visitor to Yarmouth who arrives there for the first time will be surprised to see how many Peggottys and how many Hams there are in the streets, especially when the boats have returned from fishing, though at any state of the tide there is no lack of them. Ham, who was now six feet high and robust in proportion, took Copperfield on his shoulders to the boat-house of world-wide fame. It no longer exists, but there was such a

building at the time when *Copperfield* was written, and the inhabitants remember it well. It stood right away on the open beach below Yarmouth, and a short description of its locality might throw some light upon the most popular work of Dickens.

Just where Norfolk and Suffolk join stands the ancient town whose name is almost synonymous in most parts of England with bloaters. The Waveny divides these counties, and joins the Yare, which is a Norfolk river, and flows through the old capital of Norwich. These streams join, on their way to the German Ocean, through a broad pool called Breyden Water; and this again contracts at Yarmouth, and flows through a contracted channel to the sea. It is with this channel we have to deal now.

From the bridge, which is called Southtown Bridge, and which joins the counties, the united streams have a course of three miles from Yarmouth to the sea. A tongue of land which averages about half a mile in width, and which is formed of silt and deposit, has gradually risen along the German Ocean, and on this tongue was situated the home of the Peggottys. The notes which I made as I went to this strip of land show how Dickens wrote everything down as he saw it. There were many timber yards, — some filled with square timber, and others with the knotted trunks of elm for ships' knees, — and between these were cottages with tiled roofs. The tiles were nearly always of the continental type that are set picturesquely in gutters, and overlap each other. Nearly all of these cottages had gardens, and they were well filled with flowers and vegetables, all of which were the pictures of health. Then there were shipbuilders' yards, with pots of boiling tar, and neat, trim cutters on the stocks that seemed fit to ride over any seas. There has been a great improvement in cutters since Copperfield's time, and some I saw on the stocks might very well compete for cups at the Harwich regatta. This description well corresponds with that we find in Dickens. "Ham carrying me on his back, and a small box of ours under his arm, and Peggotty carrying another small box of ours, we turned down lanes bestrewn with bits of chips, and little hillocks of sand, and went past gasworks, rope-walks, boat-builders' yards, ship-wrights' yards, ship-breakers' yards, caulkers' yards, riggers' lofts, smiths' forges, and a great litter of such places, until we came out upon the dull waste I had already seen at a distance."

There is another road from Blunderstone to Yarmouth which the country carrier often takes, and it is more beautiful than the one through which

Barkis and Copperfield went on the morning which was the precursor of such trouble in after years; and if any one meditates a pilgrimage to these parts, it may be well to describe it, for I found some slight difficulty in procuring correct information. Partly this was owing to the circumstance that about four out of five people one met were strangers^ and a large proportion of the others were seafarers or fishermen. Supposing that we are staying in Yarmouth we cross over a bridge which is called South-town, and we see an announcement that trams run <to Half-way House and Gorleston every fifteen minutes. It was through Gorleston that the journey described was made, and this is two miles from the starting-point of the tramway. If, however, we desire to take the other way, we must disembark at Half-way House, and there we pass through a place called Browston Green, and over a very picturesque rustic bridge, below which is a very sluggish stream or canal, that is lost on each side of the bridge in high flags and bulrushes; but we really are in the middle of a large duck decoy, which is so carefully concealed that there is no wonder that immense numbers of ducks are annually taken. This is called Fritton decoy, and the lake must be nearly two miles in length, of which the cutting we pass forms a small part. The lanes in this part are well shaded, and they would have delighted Gainsborough or Creswick. The distances along each road are about equal. Dickens was well acquainted with both of them, and spent many pleasant days in wandering under the branches that overhang them.

So many scenes in *Copperfield* are laid at Yarmouth, that a short description of the town may not be quite out of place. It is very ancient, and it was formerly surrounded with walls. Changes have continually passed over it, and many of the old features have left it. Still there is abundant employment both for the antiquary and the artist in the compact old town. The principal industry is of course the herring-fishery, and this would naturally be what occupied the principal part of Peggotty's and Ham's time during the season, which commences in September. But they dealt also in other inhabitants of the deep. Copperfield told his nurse in confidence that the house smelt so strongly of fish that if he took out his handkerchief, it smelt exactly as if it had wrapped up a lobster; and then he learned that Peggotty caught them for sale in Yarmouth, and he afterwards found a large number of lobsters and crabs and cray-fish, in an outhouse in a wonderful state of conglomeration, and always pinching whatever they could get hold of. Saturday is the great day for Yarmouth; and in the busy season, when the

environs of the town are well filled, and the lodging-houses are reaping their harvest, it is a day to be remembered. Yarmouth market-place is open, and it is probably the largest in England; the "market-square" it is called, though it is most irregular in shape and very much longer than it is broad. On one side, near the great church, which looks out on the square, is a boulevard of lime and elm trees. They have not attained any great growth, and at first would seem to be hardly more than half a century old. I asked an old verger if he could remember their being planted, but he said that they were as they are at present as far back as his memory could reach. "And how far is that, friend?" I asked. "Seventy-seven years come Michaelmas," he replied; and I could not help recalling the eulogium that Dickens passed upon Yarmouth as a place that was conducive to longevity, for the verger certainly did not appear to be more than sixty or sixty-five years old.

The vast market square is surrounded with a very quaint assemblage of houses that would almost seem to have been designed with no other aim than irregularity; no two adjoining are of the same height, and if there is a yellow-washed one, its neighbour is sure to be white or gray or dark-red brick. Some of them have a bow-window their whole width which runs up to the roof, and a few have old-fashioned wrought-iron balconies, from where there is an excellent view over the great square. Gable lights appear in the steep roofs here and there, and there are many stacks of great brick chimneys that must have caused much anxiety during the storm which forms almost the closing scene of *Copperfield*, and which is a graphic and vivid description of a terrible storm that actually occurred during a visit of Dickens to his favourite resort.

Any one who has been accustomed to see a covered market like those in London and Liverpool and Manchester will be rather surprised at the readiness with which a vacant space of two or three acres is literally roofed in, and all this has happened between Friday night and Saturday morning. There are seven rows of booths, each of which is protected from the weather, and different trades seem to cluster together — the butchers and vegetable dealers keeping as separate as possible from each other's quarters; and on the lower side of the market there is a long row of stalls for shell-fish, and dried herrings, and Finnan haddies. At the extreme end of the market-place is a dining-room, two stories high, that has a great bow-window overlooking the square, and generally is very busy on Saturdays and Wednesdays from twelve o'clock till three. Genuine Yarmouth bloaters

may be had in this market, as indeed they may in the principal fish shops of the town; and it would seem as if some natural taste of the inhabitants lay in curing herrings, and as though this natural taste had developed in many generations into an exquisite talent. ,

The fishing grounds of Yarmouth are of very great extent. They reach for fifty to sixty miles along the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, and extend for nearly forty miles to seaward. The depth of water varies from ten to twenty fathoms.

On the tongue of land where Peggotty's house is situated is a lofty column erected in honour of Lord Nelson, who was born not far from here.

When Copperfield in early youth came to Yarmouth on his road to London to continue his education at Mr. Creakle's academy he went in the carrier's cart across South-town bridge, and to stay at an inn that was so new to him that he says: "I at once abandoned a latent hope I had had of meeting with some of Mr. Peggotty's family there, perhaps even little Em'ly herself.

"The coach was in the yard, shining very much all over, but without any horses to it as yet; and it looked in that state as if nothing was more unlikely than its ever going to London." The inn where this occurred was the Crown and Anchor, the place where Dickens used to stay; but it is much altered now, and though the actual inn remains as it was, a long bar-room has been projected in front towards the street.

When the coach left for London it travelled back over the same road, or nearly the same road, that Copperfield had just traversed in the journey from Blunderstone, which village it left a mile on the right hand, while it pursued its course towards London through Lowestoft, Saxmundham, and Ipswich. The town of Yarmouth, that Dickens so delighted in, was only just entered, and it would have required a walk of ten minutes or more to reach the market-place and to make an exploration of even a few of the wynds or "rows," as they are called down there. These are the very narrowest of passages that remain in England, and they connect the four principal streets of the old town. Guide-books say that there are a hundred and fifty of them; but whether this number is accurate or not I cannot exactly say; at any rate it is very great. Some of them are so narrow that it seems unaccountable why they should ever have been built. Dickens is said to have enumerated some three or four where two friends he would undertake to select could not possibly pass each other, but, if they did happen by ill fate to meet, one

would have to turn round or back-out and shelter in the first yard with an open door till his friend had left the row clear. There are certainly not a few where a boy of ten or twelve years of age could, without the least difficulty, put a hand on each wall of the row; and yet the buildings are not squalid or particularly small. They are of stone and brick, and among them are shops with various kinds of provisions or wearing apparel, and with the inevitable Yarmouth bloaters strung up in rows. Sometimes there are yard walls, and in these may occasionally be seen the tarred fishing-nets for deep-sea fisheries, and boat-hooks, and lobster-pots, and many baskets, showing at once the calling of the occupant; and in one or two dwellings, where a door was open, there was a fireplace and groups of fishermen or their friends round a fire, and the whole scene looked so like a Dutch kitchen of the most picturesque type that Ostade or Teniers would have found it abundantly worthy of their pencil.

The new part of Yarmouth that faces the sea is like Brighton or St. Leonards, or any other watering-place. There are terraces of excellent houses, with bow-windows, glazed with plate glass, and thrown back from the roadway by small gardens, in which, as a general rule, every colour of the rainbow, and some colours that were never seen in it, are abundantly represented. It would not be doing even scanty justice to dismiss Yarmouth without some further reference to the bloater, and the fisheries that occupied Ham and Peggotty. The class of boats they used to employ has nearly disappeared from the scene, though some of them may be found high and dry on the Suffolk coast, and even yet, inland, parts of them are utilised as outhouses or stores. We cannot walk very far outside Yarmouth without coming across many such relics, and some of them are so convenient that they look as if they had almost been fashioned, instead of merely adapted for their use.

The boats, when they are on the trawling-ground, are under the command of an admiral or some experienced fisherman, who directs them in their trawling operations and receives some extra pay for his labour. Fast cutters go out to meet them and bring the take to Yarmouth. A steamer is always in readiness to tow these cutters in, and as all those belonging to one owner carry the same flag, they are not difficult to distinguish and collect together. The herring has more enemies than any other created being in the universe. If we look at a map of Suffolk we shall see the immense sand-banks that lie outside the coast covering hundreds of miles. All these are vast spawning-

grounds for herrings, and they attract nearly all the fish of the ocean. The dog-fish, the hake, the cod, and nearly every other that swims through the water, preys upon the herring at some state of its existence, and yet the powers of reproduction are so great that no diminution is or can be made in the supply. It has been computed that the nets used by the Scotch and Yarmouth fishermen are ten thousand miles in length, yet the quantity captured by the hand of man is literally as dust in the balance if compared with those which are consumed by other fishes, and in some stages of their existence even by their own species; and it is well it is so, otherwise the herring would probably disappear from the earth. When we consider that the roe of a single herring, if allowed to arrive at maturity, would produce fish that weighed between four and five tons, we can easily understand that some parasitical growth or some law of nature would step in, and the herring would become a thing of the past.

When Peggotty told Copperfield — who wanted a few hills about to improve the landscape, and suggested several physical alterations — that “we must take things as we find them, and that for her part she was proud to call herself a Yarmouth Bloater, she not only used a word that is commonly applied to inhabitants or natives of the great fishing town, but she actually was making allusion to the coat of arms of the town. Formerly these were three bloaters, one over the other, but in consequence of the services which the inhabitants rendered to Edward III. during the French wars, he conferred upon them the inestimable privilege of dividing the bloater in two, and fitting on the latter half to the head and shoulders of the British lion, powers being also granted to the herald to represent the moiety of bloater in what is called by sculptors “heroic size.”

The visitor to Yarmouth will notice many red-brick buildings something like the stunted hop towers in Kent, and these are the drying-houses for Yarmouth bloaters. When the herrings have really come to Yarmouth, which may be calculated on in September or the end of August, the great harvest begins, and boats that have been out cruising for seven or eight weeks at a time close into the old town, and are only away from the herring wharf for about two or three tides. A dark night suits their purpose best, because the fish cannot then see the nets, for even with herrings the net may be set in vain in their sight. Early in the morning it is exceedingly interesting to watch the boats moored alongside the wharf and discharging their silvery freight. The herrings lie in the rays of the rising sun brighter than any silver

plate, however well burnished, and the heaps are enormous. If a very benevolent moralist begins to think that all these shoals were cleaving the tides of the German Ocean but yesterday, he may console himself with the reflection that their end was quite momentary, and a surprise, possibly a pleasant one, or, at any rate, we do not know anything to the contrary — they were free from pain and forecasting of their fate.

“The sense of death is most in apprehension;
And the poor beetle, that we tread upon,
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies.”

The Yarmouth bloater can only be known in perfection in its native town. « The so-called bloaters that can be purchased anywhere in England, and will keep in the same condition as they are when we purchase them for many days, bear no comparison to the genuine Yarmouth bloater. This blooms only for a very brief period, and it almost involves a journey to the great seat of the industry to taste it in perfection. The very finest and primest fish are selected from the baskets, and these are strung together along a stick through the gills. These sticks are placed in rows, one above another, to a considerable height. Plenty of hands are employed, so that the salt water fragrance hardly has time to leave the fish, and an oak log is lighted below, and left to smoulder. The curing lasts some eighteen or twenty-four hours, and then the fish, which are as carefully watched by skilled hands as is the fermentation at a Burton brewery, are sent into consumption. The finest of course must remain on the spot, or else be shipped to some neighbouring town like Lowestoft, and the shipments for London or Birmingham or Liverpool have to be salted in some degree, and dried a little more than those required for home consumption. It is not at all an impossibility that any one with friends, or friends' friends, in Yarmouth might be able to secure the shipment of a box which would cost in Yarmouth about 3s. 6d. for some fifty fish, I think that is the number, and if he waited the arrival of the train, and allowed no time to elapse, he might partly know what a bloater is; but the glory of it is evanescent, and the natives look on it as

“The snow-fall on the river,

One moment white, and passed for ever.”

Omer and Joram’s place at Yarmouth, where poor Copperfield went on his road from the school at Blackheath to attend his mother’s funeral, is easily identified.

There is an old-fashioned shop at the corner of a row, miscalled Broad Row, that precisely corresponds with the description, and singularly enough it is used as a clothing establishment, and in silver letters on a black board inside the shop is the announcement, “Funerals furnished.” Here the cheerful family of Omer passed their days, and, if we cannot say that their occupation was conducive to merriment, it seems to have no effect in damping their spirits; nor does this necessarily imply any want of feeling, perhaps in some measure it might argue the reverse.

“Well, how do you get on, Minnie?” Mr. Omer asked his daughter.

“We shall be ready by the trying-on time,” she said, without looking up, ‘Don’t you be afraid, father.’

“Mr. Omer took off his broad-brimmed hat, and sat down and panted. He was so fat that he was obliged to pant some time before he could say:

“That’s right.’

“Father!’ said Minnie, playfully, ‘what a porpoise you do grow!’

“Well, I don’t know how it is, my dear,’ he replied, considering. ‘I *am* rather so.’

“You are such a comfortable man; you take things so easy,’ Minnie rejoined.

“And Mr. Omer added, ‘No use taking ‘em otherwise, my dear.’

“And when Minnie added, ‘We’re all pretty gay here,’” Copperfield was sorely puzzled. Yet Minnie was the kindest hearted of girls, and when poor Copperfield lay down on the sofa, not able to touch his breakfast, “she put away his hair from his forehead with a kind soft touch;” and when Mr. Omer subsequently said, “Would you like to see your ,” Minnie quickly stopped him with “No, father.” It was of course the coffin they spoke of. When they drove to Blunderstone, and at the funeral, Copperfield was shocked out of all propriety at the seeming happiness of Minnie and her lover, Mr. Joram, and though it was not hilarious by any means, he wondered that a judgment did not overtake them.

The common expression,” as solemn as an undertaker,” must be considered as applying only to the professional look which it becomes one

to assume when he is on duty. In one of Dickens's works he speaks of one of these gentlemen who had made a felicitous remark on the uncertainty of life in some ante-room where preliminaries were being arranged, and he caught sight of his face in a glass opposite, but was shocked to see a broad smile upon it. And would their work be better done if they carried on their features the melancholy nature of their calling? The gloomy Hamlet says, "Has this fellow no feeling of his business, he sings at grave-making;" but Horatio reminds him that "Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness."

The drive from Yarmouth to Blunderstone and the scene in the churchyard are among the best descriptions in all Dickens's writings. "I do not think," poor David says, "I ever experienced so strange a feeling in my life as that of being with them, remembering how they had been employed, and seeing them enjoy the ride." The old man drove, and Minnie and her admirer sat behind. They stopped to bait the horse on the way, and this would be at Hopton, which lies nearly in the middle of the journey. There is a very pleasant country inn here that stands away back from the road, and before it is a long low trough full of clear water for horses and cattle. The old church, which was thatched, stands some way above it; and when *Copperfield* was written it was in perfect order, and an extremely interesting example of a country church; but they tell us at the inn how the clerk overheated a flue, and the thatch caught fire, and soon the whole church was in a blaze, which left behind it only the tower and some portions of the walls; but David could not touch anything, though they kindly enough offered whatever the inn could afford; and when they arrived at the house he dropped out of the vehicle from behind, that he might get out of their company as soon as possible, and then he saw "those solemn windows, looking blindly on me like closed eyes once bright." Then the sabbath-like stillness of the day, the awe in the little village, the dreamy way in which he heard the clergyman beginning "I am the Resurrection and the Life," and the feeling of utter loneliness, are inimitably pictured.*

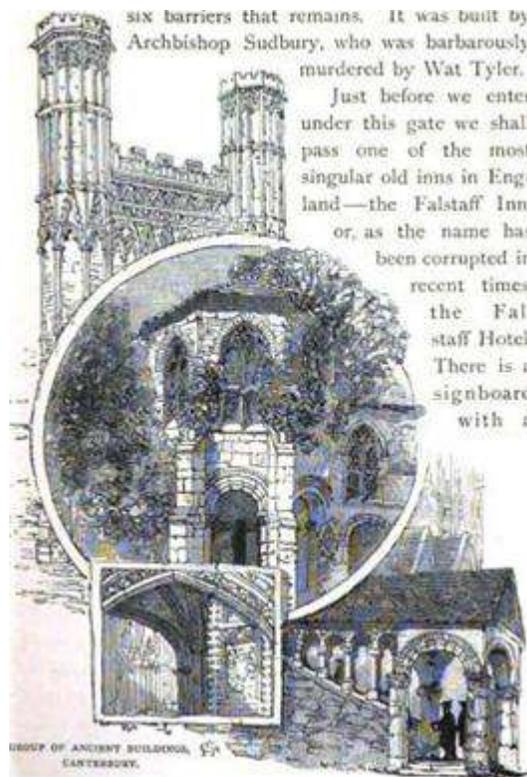
"It is over, and the earth is filled in, and we turn to come away. Before us stands our house, so pretty and unchanged, so linked in my mind with the young idea of what is gone, that all my sorrow has been nothing to the sorrow it calls forth." And then he adds with inimitable pathos, "All this, I say, is yesterday's event. Events of later date have floated from me to the shore where all things forgotten will reappear, but this stands like a high

rock in the ocean.” After the funeral David becomes neglected; Peggotty receives a month’s warning; and he says, “Happy would they have been, I dare say, if they could have dismissed me at a month’s warning too.”

The next phase in Copperfield’s life is his sojourn in London at Murdstone and Grinby’s, and it would require a very old resident in London to remember the place as it was then. “It was down in Blackfriars. Modern improvements have altered the place; but it was the last house at the bottom of a narrow street, curving down hill to the river, with some stairs at the end, where people took boat.” All this region has been so completely altered that it is almost impossible to select any place remotely like Murdstone and Grinby’s. The Thames Embankment has made sweeping changes, though still there are several winding passages that lead down from Upper Thames Street, and which look very like the description of the narrow lane that Copperfield speaks of. “It was a crazy old house with a wharf of its own abutting on the water when the tide was in, and on the mud when the tide was out, and literally overrun with rats. Its panelled rooms, discoloured with the dirt and smoke of a hundred years, I dare say, its decaying floors and staircase, the squeaking and scuffling of old gray rats down in the cellars, and the dirt and rottenness of the place, are things, not many years ago, in my mind, but of the present instant.” The shameful of putting poor Copperfield to such a place, where his occupation was simply to wash bottles for the supply of ships going to India and America, was something shocking. His treatment here was no better than if he had been an outcast, as indeed he was; but still he made the acquaintance of the immortal Micawber. There is little to represent pictorially in this part of *Copperfield*. The old warehouse has disappeared, and Windsor Terrace, the home of Micawber, is as commonplace and unpleasant to look at as can well be imagined. Micawber the mercurial could no more be sunk than a cork. “I have known him come home to supper with a flood of tears, and a declaration that nothing was now left but a jail; and go to bed making a calculation of the expense of putting bow-windows to the house, ‘in case anything turned up,’ which was his favourite expression.” At last his troubles came to a crisis, as they were in the habit of doing periodically, and he went to the King’s Bench Prison, Borough. All Copperfield’s life is very sad here, until he decided to run away from Murdstone’s employ, if such it can, by any straining of language, be so called. Being robbed by a youth in London, he had to make the best of his way on foot to Dover, to his aunt’s,

the resolute Betsey Trotwood, and he was compelled to part with his wearing apparel on the road. The distance is about seventy miles from London, and his road lay through Blackheath, where he sought his old school, Salem House, and secured one night's shelter under a haystack that was found in the old spot where he had before remembered one to be. Many of his old friends would be there then, but he got away in good time, and found the road which he had heard called the Dover Road before Traddles or any of his old associates were stirring, and he pursued his weary footsore journey through Rochester to Chatham, where he slept near a gun and heard the sentry pacing backwards and forwards, and even felt that this was some kind of protection. Then he pursued his way through Milton and Faversham till he came to Canterbury, and finally arrived at Dover, where, with some difficulty, he succeeded in tracing out Betsey Trotwood's cottage. The district where this was situated is now entirely altered, and costly lodging-houses are to be seen instead. Miss Trotwood's house was not far from Dover Castle, which rises magnificently towards the sea at an abrupt elevation of between three and four hundred feet above the level of the water. The French coast is clearly visible at times from here, and whenever it is seen, rainy weather is not far off. Donkeys will always be found, and no doubt they trespass as much as the donkeys of Miss Trotwood's time did.

But the chief interest of Dover in *Copperfield* is its proximity to Canterbury. It was here that Copperfield went to complete his education, and find his partner for life. When it was settled that David must go to school in Canterbury, very little time was lost in preparation. David had become accustomed to his aunt's sudden ways, and said that he should like to go very much. The road lay past Broompath, the seat of the ancient family of Oxenden, and through a delightful country, entering the cathedral city by the west gate, which is the only one of the six barriers that remains. It was built by Archbishop Sudbury, who was barbarously murdered by Wat Tyler.

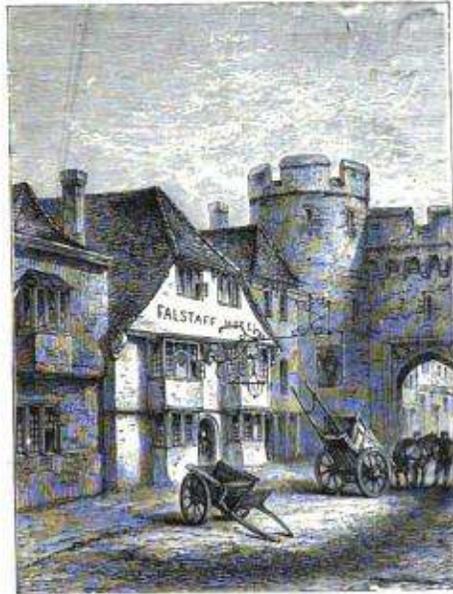


Just before we enter under this gate we shall pass one of the most singular old inns in England — the Falstaff Inn, or, as the name has been corrupted in recent times, the Falstaff Hotel. There is a signboard with a picture of Sir John on it; and this extends for an enormous distance into the street, supported by cast-iron rods turned into beautiful designs, such as we so often see in the ironwork of old towns, and even in some parts of London itself. Indeed, it would be well worth any one's time who may happen to visit some country town, after he has exhausted the sights — the church, or as much of interest as the Vandals of the present day have left after “restoring” it — the grammar school, the black-and-white market, and the curved gables or any other object that is a relic of past days — to walk through the streets and look at the wealth of wrought-iron designs he will find at street corners, or supporting signs or unused lamp brackets, or even railings. These just want a little looking out, and they are to be found nearly everywhere.

The Canterbury gateway has yet the grooves for a portcullis, and the two great towers remain with their battlements to guard the bridge over the left branch of the Stour, in whose waters the foundations are laid. When

Copperfield was written there were some quaint old houses with gables and bow-windows, which are illustrated in Britton's *Picturesque Antiquities*.

When they arrived at Canterbury it was market-day, and it is not to be wondered at that the vehicle met with much obstruction in the narrow streets of that grand old cathedral city. Copperfield had endeavoured to obtain some information about Mr. Wickfield, to whose office his



FALSTAFF INN.

aunt was driving, but he only was able to learn that he was a lawyer, and not a schoolmaster at all; and further inquiry was stopped by the arrival of David and his aunt at one of the quaintest and grandest cities in Europe. The Cathedral Close, with all the ancient piles that surround it, the Norman staircase of singular picturesqueness, the baptistery, the cloisters, and the venerable gateways, form a hundred groups of beauty that can never be forgotten, and an attempt has been made to incorporate these in a picture that would present itself to Copperfield. The chaise with the gray pony would seem to have fallen on rather evil days, as Miss Trotwood drove through the crowded streets of the city on a market-day. "My aunt had a great opportunity of insinuating the gray pony among carts, baskets, vegetables, and hucksters' goods. The hair-breadth turns and twists we made drew down upon us a variety of speeches from the people standing about, which were not always complimentary; but my aunt drove on with

perfect indifference, and I dare say would have taken her own way with as much coolness through an enemy's country;" indeed to some extent this may have been converted into an enemy's country by the circumstances of the case.

When they finally arrived at Mr. Wickfield's house Copperfield had an opportunity to look about him. There is no such house now. I went again and again over the city to identify it, and even made a sketch of one house that seemed to approach the descriptions most nearly; but this would not answer the requirements, and so it was suppressed from the present series of sketches. But inhabitants tell me that such a house did exist, and that the description is accurate enough, but that it has been pulled down to make room for the premises of a bank. Another disappointment in this part of the work was that no trace could be found of the academy presided over by Dr. Strong, where Copperfield went to renew his long-neglected studies. This was "a grave building in a courtyard, with a learned air about it that seemed very well suited to the stray rooks and jackdaws who came down from the cathedral towers to walk with a clerkly bearing on the grass-plot." Then we read of "tall iron rails and gates outside the house;" and almost at the top of the red-brick wall, at regular distances, were the well-known great stone urns "like sublimated skittles for time to play at."

There is a school in the Cathedral Close called King's school, and it was doubtless to this that Copperfield went, but the buildings are entirely different. The influence of Dr. Strong, the Principal of the school, is admirably told by Dickens; and it must have been a grateful task, after describing such academies as Squeers' and Creakle's, to turn to this happy seminary, and to tell how well the Doctor's system of kindness worked!" The Doctor himself was the idol of the whole school: and it must have been a badly-composed school if he had been anything else, for he was the kindest of men; with a simple faith in him that might have touched the stone hearts of the very urns upon the wall."

In going with Dickens through England we must remember that he was a pioneer, and, just as the Yorkshire school system disappeared, many an abuse vanished after he had exposed it. *Copperfield* has been said in a literary review to be one of the most instructive books in the English language; and if there are critics who think that Mr. Dick and Miss Mowcher might have been left out with advantage, there are none who can deny the brightness he gives to ways of virtue, and the gloom that he shows

must follow deeds of cruelty and vice. "Adams, our head boy," who seems to have been of an arithmetical turn, did indeed calculate that the dictionary Dr. Strong was writing would take one thousand six hundred and forty-nine years, counting from his last birthday; but Adams and his audience loved him none the less. Then there was a scandal that some beggar woman on a frosty day in winter did actually receive the gaiters of the benevolent Doctor to wrap up a baby she was carrying, and that appeared very cold, and that the gaiters were seen afterwards outside a second-hand shop of no very good repute, where they were readily identified by every one except the Doctor himself, who was seen to stop at the door and handle them approvingly "as if admiring some curious novelty in pattern, and considering them an improvement on his own." Of course this is only a very clever fiction, just such as boys would be apt to make, and even the manufacturers of the story might be among his most devoted admirers. How sincerely attached the boys were to him is beautifully told in the same page. When he walked up and down the quadrangle that joined to the house, stray rooks and jackdaws would regard him "with their heads cocked slyly, as if they knew how much more knowing they were in worldly affairs than he;" and "if any sort of vagabond could only get near enough to his creaking shoes to attract his attention to one sentence of a tale of distress, that vagabond was made for the next two days." Yet nothing can show the devotion of the boys more clearly than their watchful care to protect him against such marauders. They "took pains to cut them off at angles, and to get out at windows and turn them out of the courtyard, before they could make the Doctor aware of their presence; which was sometimes happily effected within a few yards of him without his knowing anything of the matter as he jogged to and fro." This is true to the life; and when boys are treated as he treated them, good boys and indifferent ones too, would fly to save such a master from harm or annoyance, even if it were never to be known they had done so. Indeed, any one who took advantage of his simpleness to wrong him in any way would be scorned by nearly every schoolboy I ever knew.

Yet how many would stir to help such worthies as Creakle or Squeers? or how many would regret if an accident, say for example a broken limb, had befallen them? Let any one suppose himself a schoolboy once more and answer the question fairly. That some gentle natures, perhaps Smike himself, might, is just possible. That all *should* do so I know — but that

such abundant charity will ever prevail I much doubt, until the whole race of Squeerses and Creakles is gone. Dickens had a high motive in *Copperfield*, and two examples of this will close the notice of the book.

When David's mother died her annuity of a hundred guineas a year ceased, and Mr. Murdstone did not send him back to Creakle's, so that he was allowed to wander about the lanes and the house pretty much as he desired, until he was sent away to the bottling store of Murdstone and Grinby, to herd with common boys little better — perhaps no better — than street arabs, but he says in Chapter XL: "I know enough of the world now to have almost lost the capacity of being much surprised by anything; but it is a matter of some surprise to me, even now, that I can have been so easily thrown away at such an age. A child of excellent abilities, and with strong powers of observation, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt bodily or mentally, it seems wonderful to me that nobody should have made any sign in my behalf. But none was made, and I became at ten years old a little labouring hind in the service of Murdstone and Grinby." How easily he might have slid off into the criminal class anyone may see, and there is a terrible reflection that if we could only know the true history of many a convict, perhaps of a much larger number than we suppose, we should find circumstances to extenuate his misdeeds that would almost make us wish to see him free.

The other example is Steerforth; his temptations were in every way different, he had every advantage of person and ability, and had the singular faculty of attracting any one towards him. He was in circumstances of abundant affluence, and had, so to say, no cloud in his summer's sky. He was not altogether bad — far from it. When Copperfield went to Creakle's, and was brought, as it were, in judgment before the winning youth, he declared that the label "he bites" on his back was a "jolly shame;" and though his selfishness soon cropped out when he found that David had seven shillings in pocket money, he treated the orphan boy kindly, and even to the last was honestly fond of him, and loved his company. Across the channel that separates Norfolk from Suffolk there is a ferry which Copperfield used sometimes to take in order to reach Peggotty's boat, and the ferry is there yet, and once when he crossed and suddenly laid his hand on Steerforth's shoulder, the latter said, almost angrily, "You come upon me like a reproachful ghost." And in this, almost his last interview with Copperfield, he said, "David, I wish to God I had had a judicious father

these last twenty years.” The terrible ruin he meditated upon the poor fisherman’s house was causing him these many pangs when Copperfield said —

“My dear Steerforth, what’s the matter.”

“I wish with all my soul I had been better guided,” he exclaimed, “I wish with all my soul I could guide myself better!”

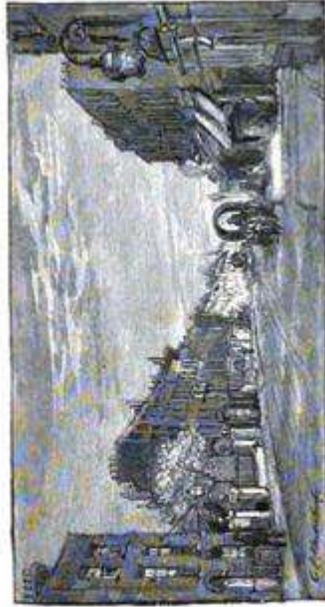
CHAPTER II.

PICKWICK PAPERS.

The “argument,” as old books used to term it, of Pickwick is this. There was a club called the Pickwick Club, and its members at one of their meetings received a proposal from Messrs. Pickwick, Tracy Tupman, Snodgrass, and Winkle to form a corresponding branch of the club, and to travel through England at their own expense, and forward, from time to time, parcels and letters to the central stem. But soon after they had commenced their researches adventure after adventure came upon them, and they devoted their time, apparently, to enjoying these, without, indeed, adding much to scientific knowledge. Some of the antiquarian and topographical societies do now make annual excursions to places of interest in England, and good service is done in this manner; but we want, in addition to these, an humbler and more searching investigation of the byeways and less trodden parts of our grand island.

Pickwick rose up early in the morning from his slumbers on the 13th of May, as we are told, in the year 1827, “and threw open his chamber window and looked out upon the world beneath. Goswell Street was at his feet, Goswell Street was at his right hand — as far as the eye could reach, Goswell Street extended to his left, and the opposite side of Goswell Street was over the way.” “Such,” thought Mr. Pickwick, “are the narrow views of the philosophers who, content with examining the things that lie before them, look not to the truths that are hidden beyond. As well might I be content to gaze at Goswell Street for ever without one effort to penetrate the hidden countries which on every side surround it.” These were his reflections when he packed up his portmanteau and met his confreres on their road to Rochester. Goswell Street, it has been said in some reviews of Dickens, is hardly the place which such a philosopher as Pickwick would

have chosen for his lodgings. But though it is much altered now, it seems by no means ill-adapted for the residence of a quiet bachelor; indeed, it was the writer's good fortune to know a resident lodger who lived at one of the houses shown on the left hand side of the illustration, and who was one of the rare class we meet with that are always ready for a "good long country walk." His occupation did not detain him in town, any more than Mr. Pickwick's. His landlady was a more or less comely widow, and we had just finished examining an ordnance map, and looking out the best road to Uxbridge across the country, intending to return in the evening to dine at his lodgings, when a message came from the landlady to know what he would please to order for his dinner; and on being appealed to, I said I made a point of always ordering anything for which a locality was celebrated, such as bloaters at Yarmouth, or smoked bacon in Wiltshire, etc. etc.; and he rather shuddered when I reminded him that his neighbourhood was celebrated for "chops and tomatoe sauce." He found, he afterwards said, that the locality was extremely comfortable, and just such a one as Mr. Pickwick might have selected. It has altered since he resided there, and many of the old houses have been converted into shops, where a quiet trade is carried on in rather out of the way manufactures. The shops are generally extended into the street, to the edge of the property, reaching over what was formerly the area, and the old front of the house stands back. The North Metropolitan tramways now run through Goswell Road almost continually, and are a great convenience to the residents, as the width of the road prevents their being in the way. They go to Archway Tavern, Dalston Junction, and Leabridge Road. Taverns with many gin-palaces have made their appearance in the street; and Combe, Delafield and Co., Meux, and the London Breweries Co. may be read in gilt letters on many signboards. When Pickwick went on his memorable Rochester trip, he walked down the street as far as St. Martin's-le-Grand, and called a cab, which he ordered to drive to "Golden Cross," and he heard the cabman say sulkily to his friend, the



waterman, that the fare was “only a bob’s worth.” It was the post office at St. Martin’s - le - Grand that so astonished John Browdie when he came to London with his wife on their wedding trip. And I found in the Harleian MS. a counterpart to the Yorkshire corn factor, who with his wife had come to London for the first time. Browdie said, when he saw the cathedral, “see there, lass! there be Paul’s Church. Ecod he be a soizable one he be.”

“Goodness, John! I shouldn’t have thought it could be half the size — what a monster,” his wife replied; and then he pointed out the post-office which Mr. Pickwick had referred to in his journey, and said that if his wife guessed at it she would come near within “twelve month.” “Its na-but a post-office, they need to charge for double letters.” In the Harleian MS. the rustic closely resembles John Browdie.

“When I came first to London Towne
I was a novice, as most men are;
Methought ye king dwelt at ye sign of ye Crown,
And the way to heaven was through the Starr.

“I set up my horse, and walkt to St. Pauls’s;

‘Lord,’ thought I, ‘what a church is here!’
And then I swore by all Christian soules
‘Twas a mile long, or very neere.”

This, however, referred to the old St. Paul’s, which was destroyed at the fire, but which must certainly have ranked among the finest buildings in the world.

The destination of Pickwick and his followers was the Bull Inn, which is still the principal one in Rochester. It has, since his time, taken the more euphonious title of Victoria Hotel. The character which Jingle gave of it is certainly not deserved now : — ” Dear, very dear; half a crown in the bill if you look at a waiter; charge you more if you dine at a friend’s than they would if you dined in the coffee-room — rum fellows very.” The room where the celebrated ball was held is of course shown, and Mr. Winkle’s remarks will at once occur before he victimised Tupman for the tickets. “Mess on the staircase, waiter — forms going up, carpenters coming down; lamps, glasses, harps. What’s going forward?” and when the susceptible Mr. Tupman had heard that Kent was celebrated for apples, cherries, hops, and women, and the waiter said that tickets were “to be had at the bar — half a guinea each, sir,” the temptation proved too strong for him to resist. The long room where the musicians were securely confined in “an elevated den” is pointed out yet. On the archway that leads into the house is the inscription, “nice house, good beds,” *vide* Pickwick. The ball-room sees only few guests now, but the encounter between Dr. Slammon and Alfred Jingle will immortalise it. Though only a small part of Mr. Pickwick’s observations concerning Rochester are narrated — ” the principal productions of these towns appear to be soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers, and dock-yard men,” — there is much in Rochester that would be of especial interest to a scholar



and antiquarian such as we might fairly suppose him to have been. There is the Temple farm, Strood, with its Norman apartment and great long narrow windows; the George and the Crown; these contain some early English vaulting, and in the George are some quaint old bosses and corbels that were cut when Strongbow invaded Ireland. The Crown has a basement and ground-floor that were built when John signed the Magna Charta, and the entrance gateway was erected at about the same time that Henry VIII. came to it and met Anne of Cleves; while near the cloth house, which was built by Sir Cloudesley Shovel, is the house from which James II. escaped in 1688, and the Cathedral would be a mine of wealth to the genial antiquary.

Rochester Castle was of course in itself a charm to Mr. Pickwick, and though he may have seen it a hundred times before, it would always present itself again with the force of novelty. “Magnificent ruin!” said Mr. Augustus Snodgrass, with all the poetic fervour that distinguished him when they came in sight of the fine old castle. “What a study for an antiquarian!” were the very words which fell from Mr. Pickwick’s mouth, as he applied the telescope to his eye; and Mr. Jingle’s interpolation — “Glorious pile — frowning walls — tottering arches — dark nooks — crumbling staircases. Old cathedral too, earthy smell “The castle now is just as it was when

Pickwick saw it. It was built more than seven hundred years ago by Archbishop Wm. de Corbeyl, and was only inferior in size to Dover. But in grandeur and elegance it was very superior to any castle of its age. There were great state apartments, of which there are yet remains, and the walls of Kentish rag and Caen stone are twelve feet in thickness.

Dickens, it is said, used to be intensely interested in all that related to the history of the castle, and often told visitors of its latest days when one Walker Welldone, who was the heir of Sir Anthony Welldone, “ sold the timbers to one Gimmit, and the stone stairs and other squared and wrought stone of the windows and arches to different masons in London; he would likewise have sold the whole materials of the castle to a paviour, but on an essay being made in the east side, near the postern leading to Bully Hill, the effects of which are seen in a large chasm, the mortar was found so hard, that the expense of separating the stones amounted to more than their value, by which the noble pile escaped a total demolition.” Dickens very naturally remarked upon the inaptness of the name of the man who has become famous through his connection with Rochester Castle. The castle contains a deep well which is two feet nine inches in diameter, and Welby Pugin, the architect, when he was exploring the castle nearly lost his life in it.

The fifth chapter of Pickwick introduces us to Rochester bridge. “Bright and pleasant was the sky, balmy the air, and beautiful the appearance of every object around, as Mr. Pickwick leant over the balustrades of Rochester bridge, contemplating nature, and waiting for breakfast. The scene was indeed one which might well have charmed a far less reflective mind, than that to which it was presented. On the left of the spectator lay the ruined wall, broken in many places, and in some, overhanging the narrow beach below in rude and heavy masses. Huge knots of seaweed hung upon the jagged and pointed stones, trembling in every breath of wind; and the green ivy clung -mournfully round the dark and ruined battlements. Behind it rose the ancient castle, its towers roofless, and its massive walls crumbling away, but telling us proudly of its old might and strength, as when, seven hundred years ago, it rang with the clash of arms, or resounded with the noise of feasting and revelry. On either side the banks of the Medway, covered with corn-fields and pastures, with here and there a distant church or a windmill stretched away as far as the eye could see, presenting a rich and varied landscape, rendered more beautiful by the changing shadows which passed swiftly across it.”

Kit's Coty house was a favourite resort of Dickens, and it might naturally be supposed to have great attractions for Mr. Pickwick. Wonderful and exhausting debates have been raised upon the origin of its name. Even in Elizabeth's reign a painstaking antiquary said that this relic was the "tomb of Categern." "Categern, honoured with a stately solemn funeral, is thought to have been interred near unto Aylesford, where, under the side of a hill, I saw four huge rude hard stones, erected, two for the sides, one transversal in the midst between them, and the hugest of all piled and laid over them in manner of the British monument which is called Stonehenge, but not so artificially with mortice and tenants." Grose, Lambard, and Holland, and many other antiquarians, have sorely puzzled themselves about the origin of the name Kit's Coty house. Kit, according to Grose, is an abbreviation of Categern the British general, and coty is coity, coit being the name for a large flat stone. It would be useless to extend the remarks upon various theories that have been propounded about the origin of the name, but it is clear that they suggested the idea of the celebrated stone that Pickwick found. "In a county known to abound in remains of the early ages, in a village in which there still existed some memorials of the olden time — he — he — the chairman of the Pickwick Club, had discovered a strange and curious inscription of unquestionable antiquity, which had wholly escaped the observation of the many learned men who had preceded him," and this quite determined his return to town the following day, in order that the "treasure" might be deposited where it would be appreciated and properly understood; and though Mr. Blotton made a journey to Cobham and found Mr. Stumps, who believed the stone to be old, but positively declared that he was the author of the inscription, his statement only procured his ejection from the club.

The bridge at Rochester, which so often appears in the pages of Dickens, is not the one which now spans the

HULL HOTEL, ROCHESTER.



ROCHESTER OLD BRIDGE.

Medway, but a noble old structure that boasted of ten fine arches, and was built in the reign of Edward III. Sir R. Knowles was the builder, and it is estimated that the sum it cost would be equal to about £70,000 sterling. When the old bridge was demolished the contractors made Dickens a present of one of the balusters as a memorial. He set it upon his back lawn, and placed a sundial upon it. A favourite walk of our author's was from Gadshill to Rochester, and on a market-day, when the country carts came lumbering along the road, and the rustics with smocks and old-fashioned costumes formed picturesque groups in the city streets, he was in his glory. He was especially fond, on a hot summer day, of going into the cool shades of the cathedral, and its legends never tired him; he would describe to his visitors how it had been twice converted into huge stabling, once by Simon de Montfort, and once by the army of Cromwell, who made a great saw-pit in the nave. The tomb of St. William had great charms for Dickens. In the year 1201, William of Perth, a wealthy baker, paid a visit to Rochester on his way to Jerusalem. His liberality was well known, as he made it a point to bestow every tenth loaf he baked upon the poor. He was a guest at the priory, and delighted the Benedictines with his pleasant manners and his generosity. When he left Rochester to continue his pilgrimage to the east, his servant was tempted by the large amount of money he carried with him, and murdered him outside the city walls. His fate excited the deep sympathy of the good monks of Rochester, and he was buried in the cathedral. Miracles were soon performed at his shrine, and about fifty years after his death he was canonised. His tomb is on the north aisle of the choir, and so many pilgrims used to visit his shrine that in the thirteenth century

the offerings they brought enabled the monks to build a great part of the present cathedral.

Not only in Pickwick does Dickens introduce memorials of Rochester, but under the name of Cloisterham he introduces us again to the city. “An ancient city Cloisterham, and no meet dwelling-place for any one with hankerings after the noisy world. A monotonous, silent city, deriving throughout an earthy flavour from its cathedral crypt. A drowsy city Cloisterham, whose inhabitants seem to suppose, with an inconstancy more strange than rare, that all its changes lie behind it, and that there are no more to come. A queer moral to derive from antiquity, yet older than any traceable antiquity.

So silent are the streets of Cloisterham (though prone to echo on the smallest provocation) that of a summer’s day the sun-blinds of the shops scarce dare to flap in the south wind, while the sun-browned tramps who pass along and stare quicken their limp a little that they may the sooner get beyond the confines of its oppressive respectability. This is a feat not difficult of achievement, seeing that the streets of Cloisterham city are little more than one narrow street, by which you get into and get out of it, the rest being mostly disappointing yards with pumps in them, and no thoroughfare — exception made of the Cathedral Close, and a paved Quaker settlement, in colour and general conformation very like a Quaker bonnet, up in a shady corner. In a word, the city of another and a bygone time is Cloisterham, with its hoarse cathedral bell, its hoarse rooks hovering about its cathedral tower, its hoarser and less distinct rooks in the stalls far beneath.

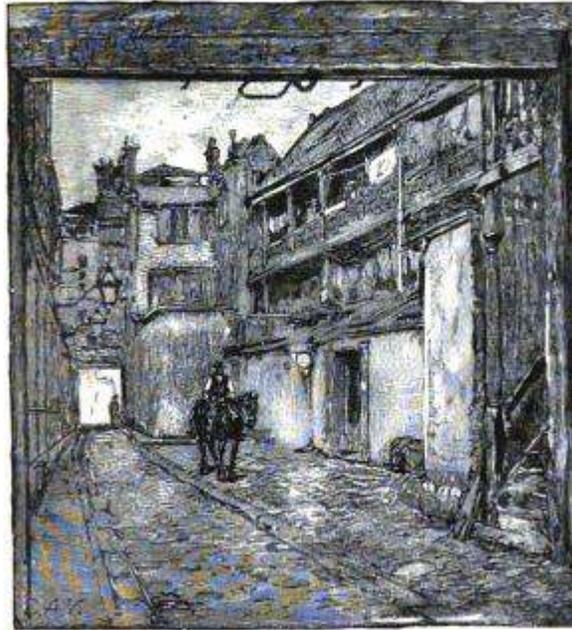
Dingley Dell and Muggleton are generally considered to be mythical places, though the hospitable residence of Mr. Wardle may be seen in every county in England. In Kent he would be called a yeoman, for the yeoman of that county are proverbial for their affluence; in other counties he would be called a squire. There are three towns within the radius from Rochester that Dickens gives as the locality of Muggleton, namely Faversham, Tunbridge, and Seven-Oaks, but these have no feature in common with the enterprising borough that had “presented at divers times no fewer than one thousand four hundred petitions against the continuance of negro-slavery abroad, and an equal number against any interference with the factory system at home; sixty-eight for permitting the sale of benefices in the church, and eighty-six for abolishing Sunday trading in the streets.” There is a corporate town that

is once mentioned by Dickens in another of his works that lies in the York Road which does answer the description of Muggleton, but it is a hundred and fifty miles away, so we must be content to suppose that the latter is imaginary, or has been transported from Nottinghamshire. “Mr. Pickwick stood in a principal street of this illustrious town and gazed with an air of curiosity not unmixed with interest on the objects around him. There was an open square for the market-place, and in the centre of it a large inn with a sign-post in front displaying an object very common in art, but rarely met with in nature — to wit, a blue lion with three bow legs in the air, balancing himself on the extreme centre claw of the fourth foot. There were within sight an auctioneer’s and fire agency office, a corn factor’s, a linen-draper’s, a saddler’s, a distiller’s, a grocer’s, and a shoe shop — the last mentioned warehouse being also appropriated to the diffusion of hats, bonnets, wearing apparel, cotton umbrellas, and useful knowledge. There was a red-brick house, with a small paved courtyard in front, which anybody might have known belonged to the attorney. There was, moreover, another red-brick house with Venetian blinds and a large brass door-plate, with a very legible announcement that it belonged to the surgeon.”

The slight description of Dingley Dell is very charming. Mr. Pickwick had risen soon after the sun, and thrown open the latticed casement. “The rich sweet smell of the hay-ricks rose to his chamber window; the hundred perfumes of the little flower garden beneath scented the air around; the deep green meadow shone in the morning dew that glistened on every leaf as it trembled in the gentle air; and the birds sang as if every sparkling drop were to them a fountain of inspiration.”

But the pleasant days at Dingley Dell were destined to be rudely cut short, by the outrageous conduct of Mr.

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WHITE HART INN.

Jingle, who eloped with Mr. Wardle's sister. He was pursued by Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Wardle, and finally hunted down at the White Hart, which yet stands, and is situated in High Street, Borough. Two storeys of the gallery are not shown in the illustration, for they are overhead, and the beam on the foreground supports the ballustrated fronts of the landings as we see in the right hand side of the picture. The courtyard of the Saracen's Head, opposite page 38 in *Nicholas Nickleby* (original edition), gives a very good idea of one of these quadrangles in full working order, with the coach loading up, preparatory to its journey. The White Hart singularly resembles some of the inns in old German towns, such as we may always see in the towns along the Rhine, or Moselle, or at Strasburg, and the likeness is increased by the red Dutch tiles that cover the roof — they are hollow in form, overlapping each other, and are always eminently picturesque. The left hand side of the picture shows a restaurant that has been added in recent times, and projects into the court, for formerly the curb-stone was in the middle of the enclosure and the galleries travelled round the three sides. The square entrance opens into High Street and through it the Rochester and Canterbury coaches used to roll in Pickwick's time. It was in this yard that Sam Weller was first encountered by Wardle and Pickwick as he was "engaged in burnishing a pair of painted tops, the personal property of a

farmer, who was refreshing himself with a slight lunch of two or three pounds of cold beef, and a pot or two of porter after the fatigues of the Borough market.”

The reflections of the “boots” at the White Hart are quite worthy of his fame, when Mr. Perker advanced and blandly addressed him as “My friend.” “You’re one of the advice gratis order or you would not be so werry fond of me all at once.” But he only said — ” Well, sir,” and then the subtle inquiries of Mr. Perker, who was acting in strict conformity with legal precedent, were cut short by the rough and ready method of Messrs. Wardle and Pickwick, who offered Weller a half guinea if he would only answer a few questions regarding the inmates. In vain Mr. Perker protested in polite language against such an unprecedented intrusion, and anxiously addressing each of them as “ Now, my dear sir — now, my dear sir,” begged them to place implicit trust in him, and assured them that he would willingly receive any suggestions, but they must be to him as coming from an “amicus curia;,” and he was beginning to show from Barnwell that his view was unassailable, when Weller, as it were, entered an appearance upon the scene, and confirmed the justice of the calculations of Mr. Pickwick regarding the power of the half-guinea, and gave a professional *resume* of the sojourners at the inn. “There’s a wooden leg in number six; there’s a pair of Hessians in thirteen; there’s two pair of halves in the commercial; there’s these here painted tops in the snugery inside the bar; and five more tops in the coffee-room,” — ”Nothing more?” inquired Perker, when Sam recollected that there was “ a pair of Vellingtons a good deal worn, and a pair of lady’s shoes, in number five,” which shoes were identified by him as having been made in Muggleton. The apartment where this colloquy occurred was in the room in the right hand of the yard that leads through the square-headed door. There is a somewhat curious iron crane which is shown here, and which was designed to lift heavy weights or carcasses of oxen from trucks to remove them to the cellarage of the inn. The old traveller’s room is entered through this door, and there is a fireplace several centuries old, and a groined apartment that certainly dates back to the time when Canterbury pilgrims used to rest here: a great part of the lower rooms are occupied by a “ bacon drier,” whose carts are often seen in the streets of London.

Perhaps a still more picturesque view of this hostelry might be had from the modern restaurant, where two double rows of galleries are seen, and

from this point of view we have a more adequate idea of its former importance. At one time travellers of the highest distinction stayed here, before railways landed any one at their destination at almost any time that was required. In its galleries Waterloo and Trafalgar have been talked over when the news of the victories were fresh. Walpole and Pitt were living powers, and even the tidings of Oudenarde or Blenheim had not reached the tavern precincts until it had acquired a venerable age. Now cottagers of humble means live in its apartments, and along the galleries clothes are hung out to dry, and shoeless children play at games. But in an afternoon's sun the appearance of the quadrangle is very striking and picturesque. There are quaint deep effects of light and shade, and some few scarlet-runners and creepers climb up the supports and seem to flourish. Even in Pickwick's time the White Hart was on the declining side of life. "The yard presented some of that bustle and activity which are the usual characteristics of a large coach inn. Three or four lumbering waggons, each with a pile of goods beneath its ample canopy about the height of the second-floor window of an ordinary house, were stowed beneath a lofty roof which extended over one end of the yard, and another, which was probably to commence its journey that morning, was drawn out into the open space. A double tier of bedroom galleries with old clumsy balustrades ran round the two sides of the straggling area, and a double row of bells to correspond, sheltered from the weather by a sloping roof hung over the door leading to the bar and coffee-room. Two or three gigs and chaise-carts were wheeled up under different little sheds and pent-houses; and the occasional heavy tread of a cart horse, or rattling of a chain at the farther end of the yard, announced to anybody who cared about the matter that the stable was in that direction. When we add that a few boys in smock frocks were lying asleep on heavy packages, woolpacks, and other articles that were scattered about on heaps of straw, we have described as fully as need be the general appearance of the White Hart Inn, High Street, Borough, on that particular morning in question."

The restaurant that runs along one side of the first quadrangle (for it must be remembered that there are two) though it is *in* the White Hart, is not of *it*, and it' is the only trace of the hospitality which once made the inn famous. But even in this flicker of its former life it is pleasing to be able to add that its traditions are not quite forgotten. The steaks and chops are of the very best, and when I was there at the latter part of August a variety to

these was offered in the shape of a dinner of half a grouse with bread sauce, for eighteenpence, including the vegetables that were in season.

Beyond the quadrangle that has been described there is another which has lost still further any traces of its former greatness. Whatever is left of the stablings and buildings which surrounded it in its palmy days is now a ruin, and no use at all is made of the roomy space. There is a lamp in the middle that doubtless has been lighted at some time, but now it presents a most dissolute tumble-down appearance, and round it are high dust-heaps. Several flocks of fowls frequent the yard, and seem to find some mysterious subsistence in its close, but if they could be identified by any owner involves a question that might admit of doubt. They would appear to have reversed the general order of nature in adopting a London life, and, so far from showing the bright plumage of a farmyard with all its varieties of colour, to have reverted back to some original type, and all have become self-coloured under the garb of a smoky gray. It was impossible to avoid a desire to take them to a village green, and, from motives of curiosity only, to see how they would have comported themselves under their changed condition. In this second yard there was a most wonderful collection of waggons of many ages and periods — some had certainly long been out of use when Mr. Pickwick interviewed Weller. The square was a perfect Greenwich hospital for them, and there were some so much out of any known fashion that I could hardly imagine what use they were ever intended for.

While I was wondering at the collection of vehicles, a dapper man, who belonged apparently to some part of the decaying establishment, and who must have been a descendant of Sam Weller's, asked me, respectfully enough, if I wanted to buy any of the articles, and on learning that I had at any rate no present intentions of making such a venture, he told me confidentially that there was "money in them." "Then," I said, "it must be under the floor, or what is left of one, for some have certainly not earned much, I should think, since Cromwell's time." This speech seemed to make him friendly, and he suggested that if any city firm had an article to advertise they might announce that there would be a procession of the White Horse yard waggons at some certain date, and these would contain the article, whether it were medicine or washing soap, for the convenience of customers. On my remarking that the waggons would hardly hold

together till they had reached Waterloo Bridge, he quickly said, "Well, then, repair them, and do the provinces after on the strength of the new bolts."

Some idea may be gathered of the altered times since Pickwick was written, and the present. Railway trains did not originally run on Sundays, and I remember that some adverse remarks were made when the wife of a cabinet minister was summoned to her father's deathbed, but she could not find a Sunday train. She said that no post-horses could by any offer be procured, because the inn-keepers told her they were not "on the road now." But in Pickwick's time any one seems to have been able to go into a coaching house and ask for a carriage and pair with the most perfect confidence that their order could be complied with. "Chaise and four directly! out with them, put up the gig afterwards; now boys!" cries the landlord, "chaise and four out, look alive there;" and then the bustle that might be expected to occur followed in the inn-yard, as the lantern glimmered and the horses' hoofs clattered on the pavement of the yard, and the chaise rumbled as it was drawn out of the coach-house. Then they seem to have had no difficulty in procuring another chaise with post-boys at some inn on the road. At the present time there are few of the largest hotels in the kingdom that would not be taken a little aback at such an order.

The "White Hart" comprises more than one freehold, and the properties are singularly interwoven, but its days are numbered, and at the expiration of a lease the whole of the property is to be pulled down. But there are other old hostelries besides this one not far off. In the same chapter that introduces us to the White Hart it is said that "There are in London several old inns, once the headquarters of celebrated coaches in the days when coaches performed their journeys in a graver and more solemn manner than they do in these times, but which have now degenerated into little more than the booking-places of country waggons. The reader would look in vain for any of these ancient hostelries among the Golden Crosses, and Bull and Mouth, which rear their stately fronts in the improved streets of London. If he would light upon any of these old places he must direct his steps to the obscurer quarters of the town, and there, in some secluded nooks, he will find several still standing, with a kind of gloomy sturdiness, amidst the modern innovations which surround them. In the Borough especially there still remain some half-dozen old inns which have preserved their external features unchanged, and which have escaped alike the rage for public improvement, and the encroachments of private speculation. Great

rambling, queer old places they arc, with galleries, and passages, and staircases, wide enough and antiquated enough to furnish materials for a hundred ghost stories, supposing we should ever be reduced to the lamentable necessity of inventing any, and that the world should exist long enough to exhaust the innumerable veracious legends connected with Old London Bridge and its adjacent neighbourhood on the Surrey side.”

Directly below the White Hart is the George Inn, also an old coaching house, built round a quadrangle. Unlike its neighbour it is a very good house, and all its appliances are in thorough working order, indeed, for any one who wished to study the economy of an ancient English inn, it would offer an excellent opportunity. The present hostelry is at least three hundred years old, though many of the parts which meet the eye date from a more recent period than the walls. The quadrangle which it contains is scrupulously clean and always white-washed; creepers run up the shafts that support the galleries, and on a summer day it is difficult to believe that you are not in a pleasant roomy country inn in Kent or Hampshire. In the courtyard is the booking-office for parcels of the Great Northern Railway; and when a covered van lumbers through the archway, and the ancient hostelry can just be seen in glimpses from High Street, the view is intensely picturesque.

Next to the George Inn is the Queen’s Head, which I was assured by the landlord dated back as far as 1432 for a tavern, and I have no difficulty in supposing that his information was perfectly correct. This inn is not so much used by travellers as the George, it is more of a tavern, but it has many objects of interest, such as an old smoke-jack, and a fireplace that dates back either to Elizabeth or James I. There are, as Dickens says, some three more such inns in the Borough, and perhaps, indeed, there are traces of more than this, but the three described, which are perhaps only partially known even to Londoners, are abundantly worth a visit.

The fine old church of St. Saviour, or St. Mary Overy, stands hard by on the opposite side of the street, the name of which for some cause has been altered from High Street to Wellington Street, and it was a source of perpetual delight to Dickens; he especially used to pore over the epitaphs, some of which are very amusing and quaint, and their name is legion. I remember the last lines of one upon a grocer —

“Weep not for him since he is gone before

To Heaven, where grocers there are many more.”

The railway buildings and the high level road dwarf the ancient fabric, but it is one of the architectural gems of England.

Eatonswill is, of course, entirely a fictitious place, quite as much so as Muggleton. It was situated on the Norwich road, and Pickwick, accompanied by his three faithful followers, and this time by Sam Weller, booked places on the Norwich coach, and went there to pursue their investigations and researches. At Eatonswill they met Mr. Leo Hunter. “We have all heard of your fame, sir,” said Mr. Leo Hunter, as he made a very polite call upon Mr. Pickwick, to ask him to pay a visit to his residence, which was perhaps not inaptly called “The Den.” While seated round the festive board at Mr. Hunter’s it was that Mr. Charles Fitzmarshall was announced as a guest, and Mr. Pickwick and his friends were amazed beyond measure to find on his appearance at the hospitable entertainment, that Mr. Charles Fitzmarshall was Mr. Alfred Jingle disguised in a bran-new suit of naval uniform. Mr. Leo Hunter told the astonished Pickwick that he was a gentleman of fortune, and was then staying at Bury St. Edmunds, at the Angel. No persuasion would induce Mr. Pickwick to remain any longer, so he at once made a speedy exit towards Bury accompanied by the faithful Sam Weller, who, however, was destined this time to find his match in Job Trotter, the accomplice and *ci-devant* -footman of Alfred Jingle.

The delight that Dickens has in country scenes breaks out here again, as Pickwick and Weller, “perched on the outside of a stage-coach, were every succeeding minute placing a less and less distance between themselves and the good old town of Bury St. Edmunds.” We might possibly consider that Eatonswill was Sudbury, though this is more from its locality than any other connecting circumstance. The country through which they drove is delightful. On the south and south-west the enclosed country is a picture of fertility, and there are many noble trees along the lanes. Bury is charmingly situated on the river Lark, and it commands such extensive views that it has often been called the Montpelier of England. The halls, where yarns were deposited, yet stand, but they are empty, and only the name of Bury as a great centre of industry remains. Still it is a very delightful old town, and the abbey gateway might well have entranced even a less enthusiastic antiquary than Mr. Pickwick on the gate.” And here was the somewhat absurd scene at the boarding-school, where Sam’s informant, Job Trotter,

had persuaded him to induce Mr. Pickwick to go to stop the elopement of Captain Fitzmarshall with the great heiress. Bury St. Edmunds was always a favourite place with Dickens. He speaks of it as a “handsome little town of thriving and cleanly appearance* over the “well paved streets of which the coach rattled and stopped before a large inn situated in a wide open street, nearly facing the old abbey.” Suffolk was the county of all England which, next to Kent, Dickens delighted in. His reminiscences of Blunderstone, Yarmouth, which lies partly in the county and Ipswich, are always charming in his descriptions, and these show how well he liked them.

“There is no month in the whole year,” Dickens proceeds, “in which nature wears a more beautiful appearance than in the month of August. Spring has many beauties, and May is a fresh and blooming month, but the charms of this time of the year are enhanced by their contrast with the winter season. August has no such advantage. It comes when we remember nothing but clear skies, green fields, and sweet-smelling flowers — when the recollection of snow, and ice, and bleak winds, has faded from our mind as completely as if they had disappeared from the earth, and yet what a pleasant time it is; orchards and corn-fields ring with the hum of labour, trees bend beneath the thick clusters of rich fruit which bow their branches to the ground, and the corn piled in graceful sheaves, or waving in every slight breath as it sweeps above it as if moved by the sickle, tinges the landscape with a golden hue. A mellow softness appears to hang over the whole earth; the influence of the season seems to extend itself to the very waggon whose slow motion across the well-reaped field is perceptible only to the eye, but strikes with no harsh sound upon the ear.” And then is described the sleepy interest which the coach excites as it rolls along the Suffolk high-road. The reaper stops his work and stands with folded arms looking at the vehicle as it whirls past; and the rough cart-horses bestow a sleepy glance upon the smart coach team, which says as plainly as a horse’s glance can, “ It’s all very fine to look at, but slow going over a heavy field is better than warm work like that, upon a dusty road after all.” At last they arrived at the Angel in Bury.

This Angel is a most excellent inn on a somewhat extensive scale, and formerly it was a long-wished goal with mail-coach travellers, who were sure of a hospitable reception from the landlord. A private room was soon engaged for Mr. Pickwick, and dinner ordered by Weller. Mr. Fitzmarshall

was among the guests, as the faithful Sam soon discovered and in half-an-hour Mr. Pickwick was seated to an excellent dinner.

It was at Bury that Sam Weller found for once his match in Job Trotter when he directed the way to Westgate house. "You turn a little to the right when you get to the end of the town; it stands by itself, some little distance off the high road, with the name on a brass plate on the gate."



ABBEY GATE, BURY.

Sam soon discovered, and in half-an-hour Mr. Pickwick was seated to an excellent dinner.

It was at Bury that Sam Weller found for once his match in Job Trotter when he directed the way to Westgate house. "You turn a little to the

And here was the somewhat absurd scene at the boarding-school where Sam's informant, Job Trotter, had persuaded him to induce Mr. Pickwick to go to stop the elopement of Captain Fitzmarshall with the great heiress. Bury St. Edmunds was always a favourite place with Dickens. He speaks of it as a "handsome little town of thriving and cleanly appearance," over the "well-paved streets of which the coach rattled and stopped before a large inn situated in a wide open street, nearly facing the old abbey." Suffolk was the county of all England which, next to Kent, Dickens delighted in. His reminiscences of Blunderstone, Yarmouth, which lies partly in the county and Ipswich, are always charming in his descriptions, and these show how well he liked them.

The abbey of Bury St. Edmunds was only second in importance to Glastonbury, and the remains that yet are left show on what a grand scale it was built. Here were fields of research for all the members of the Pickwick Club, and it is here, in all probability, that their steps were at first to be directed from Eatonswill. Through the gateway we pass along an avenue of limes beyond the churchyard, where we come across the churches of St. James and St. Mary, and the shire hall, erected on the site of St. Margaret's. Lydgate lived at Bury, and his abode is yet pointed out in the abbey precincts. He was one among the many instances of the haven which monasteries afforded to men of culture and research, and which enabled

them to pursue their studies. He was versed far beyond his day in the walks of science and art, and the powerful abbot even allowed him to open a school in the liberties of the monastery for the instruction of the sons of noblemen. Mr. Pickwick would also, as an enthusiastic reader at the British Museum, where, after retiring from business, he almost daily directed his steps through Clerkenwell Green and Hatton Wall, be familiar with the name of Lydgate. The magnificent MS. which contains the life of St. Edmund was his gift to Henry VI., and that studious and refined but ill-starred monarch conferred a life pension upon him of a sum which would now equal about £ 150 of our money. But Bury would possess the greatest interest to Mr. Pickwick from its connection with the baronial struggle for the great charter. In October 1214 John arrived in England full of rage and mortification at his defeats and humiliation at Tournay, and with characteristic wickedness he resolved to repay himself for his losses by increased and cruel exactions from his subjects. Fitz-Peter, the justiciary, had died during his absence, and John, who always held him in dread, said that "Now he was King of England," and he added characteristically that "In hell he may shake hands with our late Primate, for he is sure to find him there." But the barons were quite prepared for him, and they said the time was most opportune, for the feast of St. Edmund was approaching, and they would make a pilgrimage to his shrine at Bury, and, according to their seniority, they advanced to the high altar, and one after another laid his hand upon it and swore that unless the king granted their requests, they would at once withdraw their fealty and wage war upon him. Of course the sequel is too well known to require reference, and Runnymede was the result of the meeting of the barons at Bury.

The Abbot's Bridge here is extremely beautiful, and is one of the most charming sights we can see in an old country town. It is approached by a steep narrow lane, which is pleasantly shaded with trees, and has rows of gabled cottages all along one side. There are as many picturesque views in it as would suffice to fill half a room of the Water Colour Society, and at the foot of the street the Abbot's Bridge stretches across a clear stream of such modest dimensions that one is almost surprised to find that it can support a rope ferry, which it does, a little way below the ancient bridge. Many parliaments were held in the abbey that Dickens was so fond of exploring, and no one better than he knew that at one of these, held in the first part of the fifteenth century, the undoing of "Good Duke Humphrey" was decided

on by Margaret, the Queen of Henry VI., and her favourite, Suffolk, though it is needless to say that the scholar-like King had no part in the plot, but chided the crafty, cruel court that surrounded him —

“But shall I speak my conscience?
Our kinsman Gloster is as innocent
From meaning treason to our royal person
As is the sucking lamb or harmless dove:
The duke is virtuous, mild, and too well given
To dream on evil or to work my downfall.”

Business, however, connected with the Bardell suit brought Mr. Pickwick to town, and after he had given vent to his virtuous indignation he asked his faithful servant where he could procure a glass of brandy and water to soothe his ruffled nerves, and received for answer in a moment: “Second court on the right hand side, last house but vun on the same side the vay; take the box as stands in the first fireplace, ‘cos there aint no leg in the middle o’ the table, vich all the others has, and its very inconvenient.” “The room was of very homely description, and was apparently under the especial patronage of stage-coachmen, for several gentlemen who had the appearance of belonging to that learned profession were drinking and smoking in the different boxes.” Here Sam Weller encountered his father after two years’ absence from that portly parent, and informed him how he had been duped by Job Trotter, much to the astonishment and sorrow of his sire. “I’m werry sorry, Sammy, to hear from your own lips as you let yourself be gammoned by that ere mulberry man. I always thought that the names of Veller and gammon never came into contract.” Mr. Weller, senior, however, was able to recognise both Job Trotter and Alfred Jingle from the description that was given of them, and had himself happened to overhear them on the top of the Ipswich coach laughing and saying how they had done “Old Fireworks.” Mr. Weller said that he actually heard this on the top of the coach. “I work an Ipswich coach now and again for a friend of mine. I worked down the wery day after the night as you caught the rheumatiz, and at the Black Boy at Chelmsford, the wery place they’d come to, I took ‘em right through to Ipswich, where the man servant, him in the mulberries, told me they was agoing to put up for a long time.”

Chelmsford is directly on the London and Ipswich road, and is situated in a beautiful valley between the Chelmer and the Cann. The High Street is exceedingly well built, and the Black Boy is still the principal inn in the town. This town is less than half the size of Colchester, which lies directly on the Ipswich road, and is rather more than half way to that old-fashioned town.

Ipswich is well worthy of a visit, if only for the sake of its antiquities, though the county all round it is extremely beautiful. "In the main street of Ipswich, on the left hand side of the way, a short distance after you have passed through the open space fronting the Town Hall, stands an inn known far and wide as 'the Great White Horse,' rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart-horse which is elevated above the principal door. The Great White Horse is famous in the neighbourhood in the same degree as a prize ox or county paper, chronicled turnip or unwieldy pig, for its enormous size. Never were such labyrinths of uncarpeted passages, such clusters of mouldy, badly-lighted rooms, such large numbers of small dens for eating and sleeping in, beneath any one roof, as are collected between the four walls of the Great White Horse



"GREAT WHITE HORSE" INN, IPSWICH

at Ipswich.” In Key Street there are a number of old Dutch-looking houses, and the “Ram” Inn is a very old hostelry. It is said to have been the birthplace of Henry Tooley, who left by will, dated 1550, the sum of money which built and endowed the extensive almshouses in Foundation Street, and in the steeple of the church we see there is a large key, showing that the church is dedicated to St. Peter. The old house, called Sparrowes House, is one of the most interesting town-houses in England. Now it is occupied as a very excellent bookstore, but it has been preserved in its entirety, and it is not so very long since that it was the residence of the last of the Sparrowe family — a family that had occupied it for many generations. Tavern Street leads from the front of the Town-Hall, and in this the celebrated White Horse is situated. It takes its name from this hostelry, which was formerly called the “White Horse Tavern.” The front of the “Hotel” has been altered, but in the quadrangle within we may still see traces of its antiquity. “It was at the door of this overgrown tavern that the London coach stopped at the same hour every evening; and it was from this same London coach that Mr. Pickwick, Sam Weller, and Mr. Peter Magnus dismounted on the particular evening to which this chapter of our history bears reference.”

It would almost seem as if Dickens had some recollections of the “White Horse” that were not pleasant ones. Thus we read that a corpulent man, with a “fortnight’s napkin” under his arm, and “coeval stockings,” inspected Mr. Pickwick, and finally condescended to call the porter to take his luggage; and then we read that after the lapse of an hour “a bit of fish and a steak were served to the travellers,” and when the dinner was cleared away Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Magnus drew their chairs to the fire, and having ordered a bottle of the worst possible port wine at the highest possible price, for the good of the house, drank brandy and water for their own.” This must refer to some previous condition of the “Hotel,” as it is called now, a name which has superseded the older ones of Tavern and Inn. The traveller now, as far as my slight experience is of value, may expect a more hospitable reception. Mr. Pickwick’s awkward mistake of the bed-room, and his subsequent discovery of his own, assisted by Sam Weller, are among the best known events in Dickens.

On the morning when Mr. Weller left for London, and rallied Sam so much upon his being taken in by Job Trotter that the former for once *meekly* acknowledged his error, and said he “ought to ha’ knowed better;” but added, “it’s no use talking about it now; it’s over, and can’t be helped, and

that's one consolation, as they always says in Turkey ven they cuts the wrong man's head off. It's my innings now, governor, and as soon as I catches hold of this here Trotter I'll have a good un;" and the senior having consulted a large double-cased silver watch, and saying it was time to go to the office to get the "vaybill, and see the coach loaded," took a really affectionate farewell of his son, to whom he was quite as much attached as Sam was to him. "Here's your health, Sammy," he said, "and may you speedily vipe off the disgrace as you've inflicted upon the family name." How long the return match was coming the same chapter tells.

Among the many charms of Ipswich are its ancient churches. There are not less than twelve of these, and through many alterations some trace of ancient beauty has been preserved in each. St. Clement's Church is among the most interesting, and would seem to have been built about the time of the dissolution of monasteries, though some parts are of earlier date. There is much in its noble appearance that would attract even Sam Weller, though indeed archaeological studies were more in his master's way than his. The



THE GREEN GATE, ST. CLEMENT'S, IPSWICH.

clerestory is twelve windows in length. The emblem of the anchor appears continually in its old work, for St. Clement was the father of sea-faring men, and there are brasses and monuments of great interest. Possibly Sam's comprehensive knowledge might also have told him that the remains of Thomas Eldred, who sailed round the world with Cavendish, had found a resting-place here when his voyages were over.

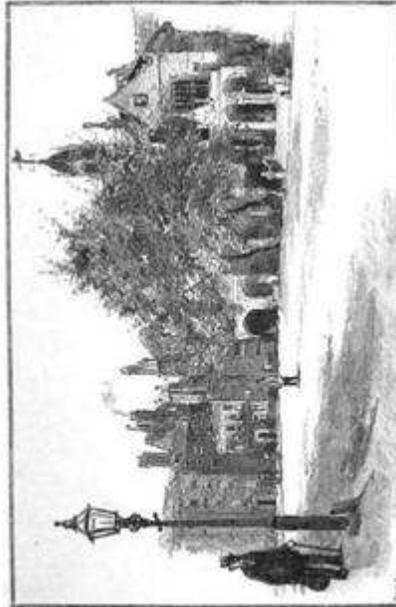
This church stands just outside the old town wall, and its graveyard is both extensive and picturesque. In St. Clement's fore street are many traces of the domestic architecture which were characteristic of the later Tudor and the earlier Stuart period, and gables and bow windows, and carved beams are yet to be found in its quaint limits. The parting words of Mr. Weller to

his son affected him when he said how much depended on him. “The family name depends very much upon you, Samuel, and I hope you’ll do what’s right by it. Upon all little pints o’ breeding I know I may trust you as well as if it was my own self.”

It was in the contemplative mood that his father’s last words had awakened that the younger Mr. Weller “bent his steps towards Saint Clement’s Church, and endeavoured to dissipate his melancholy by strolling among its ancient precincts. He had loitered about for some time when he found himself in a retired spot — a kind of courtyard of venerable appearance — which he discovered had no other outlet than the turning by which he had entered. He was about retracing his steps when he was suddenly transfixed to the spot by a sudden appearance, and the mode and manner of this appearance we now proceed to relate.” And then the celebrated return match came with a vengeance, and though, by having Pickwick and Tupman summoned for a projected duel, Trotter and Jingle managed to raise a side issue, they were cleverly tracked and captured by Sam Weller. The next part of Pickwick introduces us to the devious and uncertain bye-ways of the law. The brief respite was nearly over that intervened between Pickwick’s summons from Mrs. Bardell and the time when his cause was to be heard in open court. At last he came to London, and there, “scattered about in various holes and crevices of the Temple, are certain dark and dirty chambers, in and out of which all the morning in vacation, and half the evening too, in term time, there may be seen constantly hurrying with bundles of papers under their arms and protruding from their pockets an almost uninterrupted succession of lawyers’ clerks. There are several grades of lawyers’ clerks — there is the articulated clerk, who is a lawyer in perspective, who runs a tailor’s bill, receives invitations to parties, knows a family in Gower Street, another in Tavistock Square, goes out of town every long vacation to see his father, and is, in short, the very aristocrat of clerks.” But it was not one of these that Mr. Pickwick had to meet when he encountered Mr. Jackson of the house of Dodson and Fogg, Freeman’s Court Cornhill. Then “there is the salaried clerk — out of door or in door, as the case may be — who devotes the major part of his thirty shillings a-week to his personal pleasure and adornment, repairs half price to the Adelphi at least three times a week, dissipates majestically at the cider cellars afterwards, and is a dirty caricature of the fashion that expired six months ago.”

Then Dickens goes on to describe the copying clerk, who has a large family, and is often drunk; and again we see the office lads in their first surtouts, who feel a befitting contempt for boys at day-schools, and who club together as they go home for saveloys and porter, and think there is nothing like life. Then there are sequestered nooks, “where writs are issued, judgments signed, declarations filed, and numerous other ingenious little machines put in motion for the torture and torment of His Majesty’s liege subjects, and the comfort and emolument of the practitioners of the law.” And it was into one of these that Mrs. Jackson went and procured the requisite documents to summon Mr. Pickwick and his adherents to the Guildhall. They were found at the George and Vulture, George Yard, Lombard Street. “Call Mr. Pickwick’s servant, Tom,” said the barmaid of the George and Vulture, – “Don’t trouble yourself,” said Mrs. Jackson, “I’ve come on business. If you’ll show me Mr. Pickwick’s room I’ll step up myself.” This George and Vulture is spoken of as “good, old-fashioned, and comfortable quarters,” but now it is transformed into a chop-house of great excellence, and is specially noted for its steaks and stout. There is a long dining-room, with civil waiters, and the most unblameable linen and crockery, and judges of stout say that the quality there is “supreme.” Mr. Perker, who conducted the case for Mr. Pickwick, had offices in Gray’s Inn, and thither he wended his way to consult the lawyer, and suggest an

interview with the great Sergeant Snubbin, who sends for Mr. Plumkey of



Holborn Court, Gray's Inn, which is now called South Square, but Gray's Inn appears in other works of Dickens, and will have a fuller notice.

Dickens had real characters for most of his magistrates. The worshipful Justice Fang who presided at Clerkenwell differed very little even in name from his prototype, and the good Mr. Brownlow who appeared in *Oliver Twist's* case only received treatment similar to other witnesses. The Ipswich justice had also his counterpart, and Dickens himself was present on an occasion where some one was called to answer a charge, but the prosecutor failed to appear. The presiding magistrate inquired with some dignity what he had to say for himself, and the defendant not unnaturally replied, "I don't see that I have any call to say anything, when there's nothing sworn to agen' me," to which his worship remarked, "Hullo! what have we here — a lawyer, eh? come, fellow, there are lawyers enough in court outside the dock — we don't want one in. Though," he said suddenly, brightening at the prospect of making a joke, an accomplishment that he thought he excelled at, "some of them are on the wrong side of the dock too, I daresay;" and looked towards where the representatives of the legal profession sat for the common expressions of hilarity that usually followed his jokes, but they were so obtuse than none of them saw it, and then it

devolved upon the inspector to support the bench by allowing a saturnine smile to play over his features, though as it were under protest for the loss of dignity. How his worship would have disposed of the case is not very certain, but fortunately the clerk came in and had a few words with him, after which he cleared his throat, and after making a short speech to the defendant he told him that “under all circumstances he would be *acquitted*.” The original, also, of Mr. Justice Starleigh (who sat in the absence of the Chief Justice, occasioned by indisposition) was well known at the time, and though he has long ceased to be, his memory is fresh at the law courts. Guildhall, the scene of the celebrated Pickwick and Bardell trial, is a place of great historical associations that would quite fill a volume, and then pass many by. Perhaps it is not always known in the provinces why the Bardell trial should occur in a place that is celebrated over the whole world for the magnificence of its entertainments. A classic ground where at every banquet some fourteen tons of coal are consumed, and forty turtles are gathered to their ancestors, and every item is on the same stupendous scale. But the Lord Mayor’s court is held at Guildhall, and it has jurisdiction over all actions without any limitations as to the amount, if the amount exceeds £50 sterling, and if the cause of the action took place within the city limits. In cases where the amount claimed is under that sum the plaintiff may still obtain a hearing if he dwells or carries on business in the city. The court sits every month, and the presiding judge is either the recorder or the common sergeant, or else a deputy appointed by them. There is one thing that might almost be asked. Such a case as Pickwick’s was appealable from this court, and why did Mr. Perker not advise him of this? Still that is a small matter, and perhaps hypercritical. Some of the old city customs yet prevail here; one of the most curious is that of foreign attachment, which enables the plaintiff, if the defendant does not enter an appearance, or if he is not within the jurisdiction of the city, to attach any goods or any debts owing to defendant if they are within the jurisdiction of the city.

It can hardly have been consolatory to Mr. Pickwick to hear Mr. Perker say, “Ten minutes past nine; time we were off, my dear sir: breach of promise trial; court is generally very full in such cases. You’d better ring for a coach, my dear sir, or we shall be rather late.” There is no denying the fact that a breach of promise case is the most attractive that ever comes before a court. From the constable to the judge every one in court seems to regard such a thing as a comedy that has been produced entirely for public

amusement. The defendant need not fear that his odes will suffer the fate of many other minor poems of perhaps equal merit. They are quite safe in the bundle of papers that lie before the Q.C. who is conducting the plaintiff's case. And before long he will have the pleasure of hearing them read before a delighted audience. No attempt will even be made to interrupt their demonstrations of satisfaction — demonstrations in which the journals commonly record that "his Lordship joined heartily." Then there is no danger of the verses being spoiled in the reading. The Q.C. may fairly be trusted to for that, and he will be sure to bring out each point to its greatest advantage, and then the result of the action is quite a certainty. I can at present only remember one instance where the plaintiff was nonsuited, though doubtless an ardent reader of these cases could tell of some more. In a number of suits it is clear that the action is brought by the cupidity of friends or through jealousy, and there is the frailest evidence to support anything like a genuine claim. Indeed, the cases that would really excite our sympathy are those we never hear of and are unknown beyond the family or the immediate friends of the sufferer. But there are instances, and those not isolated ones, where a young life is blighted through broken promises, and where the forsaken one would rather die than parade her grief in public, or even think of bringing her former admirer to account for his false professions. The case alluded to, where a verdict was given for the defendant, was curious, and at least it shows that there is nothing like "trying it on." A damsel would seem to have possessed such attractions that she had two admirers; the second one appeared on the scene some time after the first was accepted, but his worldly circumstances were superior to those of the less fortunate suitor. To the latter she wrote a letter full of sympathy and much high-toned moral advice; she reminded him how often our brightest and best prospects were delusive, and even took the trouble to suggest some chapters and texts that suited his lot, and she said circumstances beyond her control forced her to impose upon him. She would always look upon him as a dear, good friend, and even hoped he might not be long before he found some one more worthy of him than she was, and who would make him as happy as he deserved to be. Like a very sensible man he took the advice which the missive contained, and every one will hope that he has never had cause to regret it.

The heroine of the trial was now thoroughly off with the old love, and had no let or hindrance to take on with the new. This was, however, not

quite such an easy matter. She had reckoned without her host; she found it was only some passing fancy, and without having ever declared himself, or possibly even thought of doing so, he became engaged to quite a different lady. This was rather getting serious, and the enterprising belle had to consider the next best thing. An action was accordingly brought against admirer No. I on the very general principle that plaintiffs in breach of promise cases are sure to win. A thousand pounds, which he could perhaps have paid, was estimated as a fair equivalent for her blighted hopes, and the case proceeded with all due solemnity, till the letter was read on behalf of the defendant. This was rather too much, and the jury stopped the case just at the same time that the counsel sat down on his own account and returned his brief to the lady's solicitors, who would seem to be worthy successors of Dodson and Fogg.

From some of the technical points of law, such as the neglect on the part of Dodson and Fogg to attach his property, which was easy of identification, we may dissent. "I have no objection to admit," said Sergeant Snubbin, "if it will save the examination of another witness, that Mr. Pickwick has retired from business, and is a gentleman of considerable independent property." But though this has been a difficulty with many admirers of Dickens, who are too matter-of-fact, the truth of the trial is beyond a question, and the writer knows of damages that were obtained against a tradesman in a quiet cathedral city, by a claimant whose pretences to recompense rested on no stronger rights than those of Mrs. Bardell on Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick was led by Mr. Perker to the low seat just beneath the desks for the King's counsel, who from that spot can whisper into the ear of the leading counsel in the case any instructions that may be necessary during the progress of the trial. The occupants of this seat are invisible to the great body of spectators, inasmuch as they sit on a much lower level than either the barristers or the audience, whose seats are raised above the floor.

But the Guildhall is memorable in English history. Here it was that Garnet the Jesuit was tried for his connection with the Gunpowder Plot, and, after a defence of wonderful ability and forensic skill, condemned; and here the noble Anne Askew was doomed. In the Guildhall also the crafty hypocritical Duke of Gloucester was proclaimed king by Buckingham. His appeal on behalf of Richard was not listened to, and he felt "marvellously abashed;" and he asked the Mayor, "What mean the people by this?" and

the Mayor replied, "Sir, perchance they perceive you not well;" and then Buckingham; "somewhat louder rehearsed the same matter again, in other order and other words so well and so ornately, and nevertheless so evidently and plain, with nice gesture and countenance so comely and so convenient, that every man much marvelled that heard him, and thought they never heard in their lives so evil a tale so well told." Shakespeare has dramatised the Guildhall scene in Richard III. very grandly, Buckingham says: —

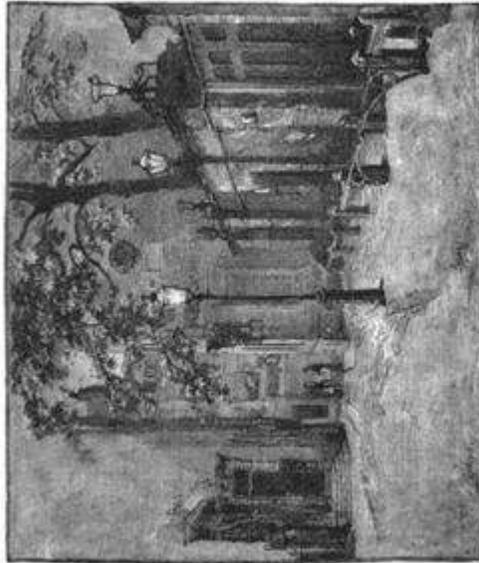
“And when my oratory grew to an end
I bade them that did love their country’s good
Cry — God save King Richard, England’s royal King!
Glo. — And did they so?
Buckingham. — No, so God help me, they spake not a word,
But, like dumb statues or breathless stones,
Stared on each other and looked deadly pale.”

Among other celebrated characters Richard Whittington was associated with Guildhall, and his executors gave a sum equal to £500 of our money to have the hall paved with Purbeck marble; so great is the strength of its walls that it withstood the great fire of 1666, and towered above the flames, “in a bright and shining coat, as if it had been a palace of gold or a great building of burnished brass.” The hideous structure we see is one of Dance’s, who designed several public buildings in London, but the old crypt (1411) is a splendid piece of architecture.

When the trial was over and Mr. Pickwick’s heroic resolve not to pay a shilling of costs was made, and when he decided to make a journey to Bath, he sent Weller to take places on the Bath coach at the White Horse cellar. This still remains in Piccadilly, but under very changed exterior, and we should hardly recognise the description of the traveller’s room, which was, “of course, uncomfortable; it would be no traveller’s room if it were not. It is the right-hand parlour, into which an aspiring kitchen fireplace appears to have walked, accompanied by a rebellious poker, tongs, and shovel. It is divided into boxes for the solitary confinement of travellers, and is furnished with a clock, a looking-glass, a live waiter, which latter article is kept in a small kennel for washing glasses in a corner of the apartment.”

Deans Court was happily described by Weller. “Paul’s Churchyard, low archway on the carriage side, bookseller’s at one corner, hotel on the other,

and two porters in the middle as touts for licenses.” And here David Copperfield resolved to follow the profession of the law as a proctor. He asks Steerforth what a proctor is, and receives for reply that he is a “sort of monkish attorney. He is to some faded courts held in Doctors’ Commons what solicitors are to the courts of law and equity. He is a functionary whose existence in the natural course of things would



have terminated about two hundred years ago.” The courts consisted of ecclesiastical lawyers who in 1567 purchased a site near St. Paul’s, and erected houses for the residence of judge and advocates. In 1768, however, a Royal Charter was obtained, which enabled the members to exercise ecclesiastical and admiralty claims. The president was called the Dean of Arches, and the proctors were Doctors of Law who had passed at Cambridge and Oxford. It has, since the time when Dickens wrote, been dissolved, and all its practice is open to the bar. Mr. Spenslaw considered it the perfection of human jurisprudence, and told Copperfield that “there was nothing like a disputed will when there was a neat little estate of thirty or forty thousand pounds. In such a case not only were there neat little pickings in the way of arguments at every stage of the proceedings, and mountains upon mountains of evidence upon interrogatory and counter-interrogatory (to say nothing of an appeal lying first to the delegates and

then to the Lords); but the costs being pretty sure to come out of the estate at last, both parties went at it in a lively and spirited manner, and expense was no consideration." A lawyer of much ability who used to practise in this court summed up the constituent parts of a case very concisely when he said there were three phases of a suit. "The first was the costs, the next was the custom of the court, and the third was the merits of the case;" and to such a luminous exposition of the privileges that are conferred, I would not add one single word.

CHAPTER III.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.

In *Nicholas Nickleby*, though the plot and the narrative are very sad, the spirits of Dickens rise gaily at times. He finds himself among his beloved coaches and quaint hotels, and luxuriates in a coach journey to Yorkshire. The inns that Dickens described and chronicled so well have disappeared from London, at least in the form that they were known to him, but on the Surrey side of the river we may yet find traces of genuine ancient hostelries which he delighted in. The Saracen's Head, Snow Hill, has for long been a thing of the past — the Holborn Viaduct and its approaches have swept it away — but when *Nickleby* was written there were some very quaint houses here. There are still, however, many bits of old London left in the neighbourhood, such as the quaint row of overhanging gables that we see in the houses a little farther west opposite Furnival's Inn, and in Shoe Lane and Fetter Lane. All these places had a fascination for Dickens, even from his early days. "To be taken out," Foster says, "for a walk into the real town, especially if it were anywhere about Covent Garden or the Strand, perfectly entranced him with pleasure. But most of all he had a profound attraction of repulsion to St. Giles. If he could only induce whomsoever took him out to take him through Seven Dials he was supremely happy. "Good heavens!" he would exclaim, "what wild visions of prodigies of wickedness, want, and beggary arose in my mind out of that place!" Let any one see Snow Hill now and he will hardly believe that the picture of it which Dickens gives could have described it as it appeared almost at the middle of the present century. "The pavement of Snow Hill had been baking and frying all day in the heat, and the twain Saracen's heads guarding the

entrance to the hostelry, of whose name and sign they are the duplicate presentments, looked — or seemed in the eyes of jaded and footsore passers-by to look — more vicious than usual, after blistering and scorching in the sun, when, in one of the inn's smallest sitting-rooms, through whose open window there rose, in a palpable steam, wholesome exhalations from reeking coach-horses; the usual furniture of a tea-table was displayed in neat and inviting order, flanked by large joints of roast and boiled, a tongue, a pigeon-pie, a cold fowl, a tankard of ale, and other little matters of like kind which are generally understood to belong more particularly to solid lunches, stage-coach dinners, or unusually substantial breakfasts." This was the same inn that introduces us to Squeers in the fourth chapter of the book, and the descriptions in each case are minute and graphic.

One great value of Dickens's writings is that he gives little details of passing things which will always illustrate the days in which he lived and the condition of the people, and that by pen as clearly as Hogarth has recorded his own age by pencil. The coach which left the Saracen's Head for the north country passed through the quiet towns that studded Bedford, Northampton, and Nottingham, and that had never been startled by a railway whistle. Few of the inhabitants had ever been to London, at least few if compared with those that now are quite familiar with it, and Dickens speaks of the vague ideas they had about Snow Hill, and how often they must wonder what sort of a place it was. They see the name on the coach as it passes by, and the "words emblazoned in all the legibility of gilt letters and dark shading," but they have some "shadowy and undefined notion of a place whose name is frequently before their eyes or often in their ears; and what a vast number of random ideas there must be perpetually floating about regarding this same Snow Hill. The name is such a good one. Snow Hill too, coupled with a Saracen's head: picturing to us something stern and rugged." He thinks that people in the more northern towns must have imagined that it was a bleak moor, open to piercing storms, a dark and gloomy heath, "lonely by day and scarcely to be thought of by honest people at night." This, he says, was probably the impression of the rustic population "through which the Saracen's Head rushes each day and night with mysterious and ghost-like punctuality, holding its swift and headlong course in all weathers, and seeming to bid defiance to the very elements themselves." But the "reality is rather different," though, as he adds, "it is by no means to be despised notwithstanding."

It was situated “just on that particular part of Snow Hill where omnibus horses going eastwards seriously think of falling down on purpose, and where horses in hackney cabriolets going westwards not unfrequently fall by accident.” Two Saracens’ heads and shoulders guarded the portal, and it was formerly the pride and delight of the Toms and Jerries of the day to remove these to other and less suitable quarters.

There was, of course, a quadrangle, as was customary with all inns of any pretensions, and on each side of this were ranged the galleries and bedrooms. The etching that appears opposite page 38 in the edition of 1839 conveys a good idea of the old inn as it appeared in those days, and the accessories are very complete.

The journey from the Saracen’s Head to the north is told with all the power of Dickens in his best moments. Very little is said in the way of actual description, but he has evidently written the account of *Nickleby*’s departure as he stood in the yard of an inn. “A minute’s bustle, a banging of coach-doors, a swaying of the vehicle as the heavy coachman and still heavier guard climbed into their seats; a cry of all right, a few notes from the horn, and the coach was gone, rattling over the stones of Smithfield.” Now in this graphic account, which only occupies a few lines, and would hardly tell us more if even it were much longer, we see the daily departure of the intercourse between London and York and the north. Of course there was the Liverpool coach, and the Western and Eastern coaches, but we can gather from the short extract how isolated different parts of England were. The “swaying” of the vehicle is very suggestive; it tells us of a high chariot coach on springs, such as we see on page 38 of the first edition of *Nicholas Nickleby*. One is reminded of the celebrated picture in Hogarth’s *Country Inn-yard*, where the coach is almost like one of the bathing-machines we see at the watering-places.

The coach owners of Dickens’s time might indeed look back with astonishment at their predecessors. In 1673, a writer, who styles himself “The Lover of his Country,” asks, “What advantage can it be to a man’s health to be called out of bed into these coaches an hour or two before day in the morning?” and then he describes the shortcomings of the service, in which the passengers are not only crippled with boxes and bundles, but, “laid fast in foul ways, and forced to wade up to the knees in mire, till teams of horses can be sent to pull the coach out.” Even in 1725 a journey by stagecoach from London to Exeter was thought worth publishing in book

form. It occupied four days, and was beset with trouble and difficulty and danger. Hogarth's coach, which is small in accommodation, is hung on immense springs back and front, to accommodate its movements to the inequalities of the road, and Dickens's coach in *Nicholas Nickleby* was indeed perfection itself if it is compared with any of the vehicles of a preceding age. It too was perched high on springs, though the necessity for such contrivances was greatly diminished, owing to the even macadamised roads that then intersected the country. So level were the roads when *Nickleby* was written, and so perfect was the service of the coaches, that unless the weather was very much against them indeed their arrivals might be calculated upon with, as much certainty almost as those of railway trains. The coaches may indeed have been very inferior in convenience and accommodation to modern omnibuses, but the horses and the drivers and the stable helps were in the highest state of efficiency, and the one in which Nicholas was seated no doubt deserved the high "approval of all judges of coach-horses congregated at the Peacock, but more especially of the helpers who stood with the cloths over their arms watching the coach till it disappeared, and then lounged admiringly stablewards, bestowing various gruff encomiums on the beauty of the turn-out." So perfect was the service in the year when *Nickleby* was written that the writer can remember an amazing feat being the subject of general conversation; It occurred, if he remembers well, on the London and Liverpool road, and was completely successful. The four horses of a coach were changed without the wheels ever actually stopping for two or three stages of the journey. This was performed by having in readiness an extra number of grooms — some very handy private ones had been secured — and the men ran by the horses, which had slackened their speed, unbuckled the harness, new horses were attached, the traces drawn before the wheels had actually come to a standstill, and the men running alongside the horses, which were kept on slow time, completed the toilet.

At Eaton Socon, which the coach reached in those days at one o'clock, there was all ready a "good coach dinner," which the passengers were quite ready to partake of. Either by accident or design this place is called Eton Slowcombe in Dickens. Coaching dinners were very different from anything we see now at railway stations. The writer can just remember one or two, and they formed the most agreeable episode in the day's journey. There was hot steak or chops, and a good supply of poultry, with a cold

boiled ham and generally a round of beef. The charge was moderate, and there was time, too, allowed quite sufficient to appreciate the good fare. The coachman was in his proper place at the table, and however rampant the steeds might be, it was certain they could not start without him. All was peace and quiet — no frightful steam whistles within a few yards, and no bells or shoutings. With railways now what is in grim pleasantry termed refreshment is only an allowance of four or five minutes and the chance of securing what a crowded counter can afford. In old coaching days there were no sandwiches of problematical age under glass beehives, or any of the other substitutes for lunch with which modern travellers are so familiar; but the mid-day meal was cheery and genial. Now, at the railway buffet, the exigencies are so great and the time so little to spare that it must be remembered, in behalf of the employes, they are, by the force of circumstances, almost compelled to assume a semi-hostile attitude to the travellers. Indeed the sojourners themselves do not as a rule look particularly amiable. Railway travelling is not very exhilarating, and the occupants of the various compartments when they meet, let us say at Rugby, from their various carriages, and probably in strange attire, are apt to assume the expression of “who in the world are you ?” as plainly as if they expressed the inquiry in as many words.

The coach dinner, however, was over at Eaton Socon, and the coach resumed its journey; “a stage or two further on the lamps were lighted.” This is quite in keeping with the time of day, and confirms the tale that Dickens in this journey is narrating one of the passages of his own life. The snow-storm had begun to set fairly in upon them. The easterly winds from the “wash” as they pass over the vast fens of Crowland and Spalding make this in winter one of the most desolate and dreary parts of England. “The weather was intensely and bitterly cold, a great deal of snow had fallen from time to time, and the wind was intolerably keen.”

But one of the most graphic descriptions in all Dickens’s writings is the entry of the coach into Stamford. The time they were due at this quaint old town would be about eight or nine o’clock, for they were much impeded by the snow-drift. “The night and the snow came on together, and dismal enough they were. There was no sound to be heard but the howling of the wind; for the noise of the wheels, and the tread of the horses’ feet, were rendered inaudible by the thick coating of snow which covered the earth, and was fast increasing every moment.”

Probably the coach would just pull up at the George and then proceed to change horses at the Stamford. The George is on the south side of the Welland, and one of the curious sign-boards that are now so uncommon stretches across the road with the name of the hostelry painted on it. After leaving the George an ancient bridge spans the Welland, and on the right hand side, not far from the water's edge, rises the beautiful spire of St. Mary's, a spire which was built in the earliest part of the reign of Edward I., and has been more frequently used as an example for modern masonry than any other in England. The later spire of St. Martin's appears almost at once on the left, but farther on in the town, and it is full of interest as containing the monuments of so many of the Cecil family, whose chief, the great Lord Burghley, lies buried here; and though these churches have not escaped the cruel hand of the "restorer," there is plenty of interest left untouched in them.

Stamford contains five churches in all, though at one time it could boast of nine more, and those parish ones.

The Welland runs through ancient buildings that remind one of the Loire or the Rhone; but when Nickleby passed through, all its charms were sealed. The town was ill lighted, and the inhabitants were in-doors. "The streets of Stamford were deserted as they passed through the town, and its old churches rose dark and frowning from the whitened ground."

The road from Stamford to Grantham is pleasant enough in summer time, but in the winter everything was exceedingly dreary. About eight miles of it lie in the woody county of Rutland, and at the 99th milestone from London it again enters Lincolnshire, and proceeds to Grantham. A vivid picture of the comforts that awaited coach travellers who had time on hand is conveyed. Twenty miles farther on two of the front outside passengers, wisely availing themselves of their arrival at one of the best inns in England, turned in for the night at the George at Grantham.

What a picture the next sentence conveys of the condition of those who were left behind!" The remainder wrapped themselves more closely in their coats and cloaks, and leaving the light and warmth of the town behind them, pillowed themselves against the luggage, and prepared, with many half-suppressed moans, to again encounter the sweeping blast that swept across the open country."

If we continue the coach road towards Newark we shall reach Long Bemington and Bemington Common, and this precisely answers the

description of the spot where the vehicle was upset, and the travellers, not much the worse, exchanged their quarters for the much greater comforts of a country public-house, with its sanded floor and blazing fire. It was not till nearly morning that the new coach which had been sent for to Grantham arrived, and the passengers once more resumed their dreary journey.

Little is said about the rest of the route, but the passengers arrived by six o'clock in the evening at Greta Bridge, having thus been thirty-four hours on the road from London.

The little boys, Nicholas, and Squeers, were put down with their united luggage at the George Inn. It is now a large granary and flour store, and the part which was the inn has been converted into a comfortable, roomy dwelling-house. The bridge which is shown crosses over a branch of the Tees, and the house on the opposite side from the arch which is shown seems almost to rise out of the beautiful stream.

There appears to be some little confusion about the inns here. Dickens says that Squeers and his party were put down at the George and New Inn. Now these were two separate houses of call, and were about half a mile from each other. It may have been that Dickens did not desire the identification to be quite too easy and close. New Inn is less picturesque than the George, though it will be seen that it is a roomy and comfortable dwelling-place. But the beauty which fringes the valley of the Tees has gone, and it looks out towards the moors.



THE GEORGE INN.

Dickens does not exactly say in as many words where the village is situated that holds the Dotheboys Hall of world-wide fame; but if we take a map of Yorkshire we shall have no difficulty at all in identifying the village of Bowes as the place of such shocking memory.

Greta Bridge was the destination of the party, and the coach rolled on to Barnard Castle. There are two roads besides the one the coach took — one to the right, which leads to Old Richmond and Wycliff and Orrington; and the other to the left, which leads past Rokeby Castle to Bowes. Had they been bound for any of the places mentioned as the destinations of the former road they would have dismounted at a place called Newsham, some two miles before they came to Greta Bridge, and there they would have been considerably nearer their destination. There is therefore only one road left where Dotheboys Hall could be found, and that is to the left.

Squeers and Nicholas went first in the pony-chaise and left the cart in which the boys were to follow at their leisure. “Are you cold, Nickleby?” inquired Squeers, after they had travelled some distance in silence,” and receiving an affirmative reply, was asked how far it was to Dotheboys, and was told that it was “about three mile from here.” Now in a general way of conversation or description this might be fairly considered in all to amount to five or six miles, and this exactly lands us in Bowes.

At the top of Bowes is the long house which is shown here, and is even sometimes called Dotheboys Hall in their humorous moments by the older inhabitants. The village is steep and picturesque, and about the middle of

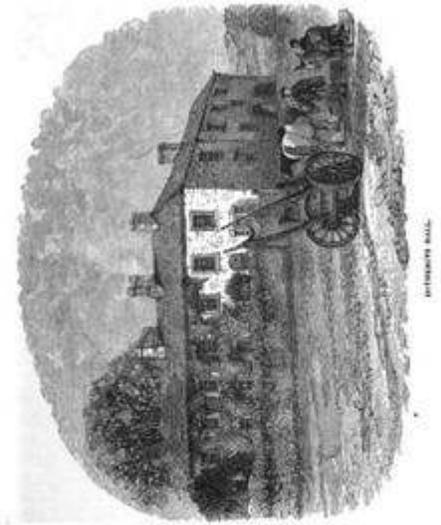


NEW INN, GUYA BRIDGE.

it is the Unicorn Inn, where Dickens stayed for a considerable time when he wrote the book. It is a comfortable little place, and the wainscoted room which he occupied was pointed out to me. Now it may be a somewhat congenial task to remove some of the obloquy that attaches to the memory of this house, though in doing so I would carefully avoid imputing any but the most praiseworthy motives to Dickens.

The fact is that school did actually require reform, but so did others, and those which were destined for the use of scholars who possessed many more advantages than the students at Dotheboys. Some schools where the sons of the wealthy were sent, but which were presided over by bilious or dyspeptic tyrants, were flourishing when *Nicholas Nickleby* was written, and they are yet very fresh indeed in the memory of men not advanced beyond the middle stage of life. There are the memories, at any rate, of one Exeter College man, who was an undoubted scholar, and who conducted a private school at a great maritime port in England with abundant financial success, for no sum was grudged to get a boy placed with him; yet, though the pupils for the most part resided within a radius of ten miles, and could

either walk or drive to some home of comfort, there are few that would not have preferred Dotheboys Hall with all its shortcomings to four or five years under this learned but irresponsible tyrant. There is an excellent article in *Belgravia* of July 1881, entitled the “Unrepresented Majority,” in which the early life of



some of the upper classes is told with great power and feeling. It would be a very grateful task to make some extracts from it, but it ought to be read at length (for it is only nine pages long) by every one.

Mr. Squeers was the representative of a great number of Yorkshire schoolmasters, who undertook to educate and board pupils at £20 or 20 guineas per annum. His actual name began with the same initial letter as the fictitious schoolmaster of Dickens, and ended with w, and was only one syllable in length, but it was one we frequently meet with in every part of England. He was not an ignorant man, but he had acquired even some knowledge of Latin, if not Greek indeed, at a public school, though I do not know if he went to any university. He had an enormous school, and rented rooms at the houses in the village or the farm-steads in the neighbourhood, to accommodate his numerous scholars. His gross takings were, it is said, from £3000 to £4000 per annum. Oatmeal porridge formed a decided staple

of diet, and the pupils were employed for part of each day in tilling the land that belonged to the house, and which was of considerable extent. When Squeers and Nickleby arrived at Dotheboys, the first inquiry seems to have been, "How are the cows?" and the next, "How are the pigs?" and when he received satisfactory replies to these queries he appeared satisfied. The fact is, that he kept a fair head of live stock, and one was slaughtered each week for the use of the school. A connection of the schoolmaster who is in independent circumstances lives now at the house, and some of his immediate descendants yet live, and, it is said, enjoy the good regards of their neighbours.



YARD AND PUMP AT DOTHEBOYS.

It was not, as before stated, Squeers's school that ought alone to be gibbeted, but others of that period in high station, whose evil influences have descended to the present day. One sentence in the eighth chapter of *Nickleby* accurately represents the way in which pupils were regarded in many private schools of all degrees. "The fact was, both Mr. and Mrs. Squeers viewed the boys in the light of their natural and proper enemies."

Smike appeared when Squeers arrived at the house on the first night; and Nicholas had time to observe that the school was a long, cold-looking

building, one storey high, with a few straggling outbuildings behind, and a barn and stable adjoining. This is the view looking through the gate at which Smike appeared, and through which Squeers entered and directed Nicholas to go to the front door, while he went round to let him in. The pump is visible from the road, and it suggested the pleasant remark Nicholas heard from Mr. Squeers the first morning he came. "Here's a pretty go, the pump's froze . . . You can't wash yourself this morning."

The weary days passed by as Nicholas saw the cruelty and wickedness of the schoolmaster; and only one slight interlude, when Miss Squeers invited her friend "Tilda" to come, with her accepted admirer, John Browdie, and be introduced to the unsuspecting Nicholas, whom she believed that she had smitten deeply. The scene is an admirable one, because it only dawned upon Nicholas during the evening what the gathering was for, and his amazement knew no bounds. Mrs. Squeers had some business that took her two days away from home, and got up outside the coach when it changed horses at Greta Bridge. On occasions such as these, when Mrs. Squeers was away, it was the custom of her husband "to drive over to the market town every evening on pretence of urgent business, and stop till ten or eleven o'clock at a tavern he much affected," so that his acquiescence in the proposed gathering was very readily granted, offering indeed as it did "a sort of compromise with Miss Squeers."

The town he drove to was Barnard Castle, about four miles away, on the borders of Durham, and the inn was the King's Head. The people there recollect Dickens well, and show the room in the hostelry where he used to write. The same King's Head remains, though it has recently been much enlarged, but the old part has not been touched at all. It is to this inn that Newman Noggs alludes in his letter to Nicholas, when the latter left the Saracen's Head yard in the north country coach: "When porters were screwing the last reluctant sixpences, itinerant newsmen making the last offer of a morning paper, and the horses giving the last impatient rattle in their harness, Nicholas felt some one softly pull him by the leg. He looked down, and there stood Newman Noggs, who pushed a dirty letter into his hand." This letter Nicholas only thought of when it fell from his pocket the first night of his introduction to the school, and then he opened it. Newman Noggs was a borrower at his uncle Ralph Nickleby's at one time, having spent a patrimony in horses and hounds and general extravagance. He is a real character, and was known at Barnard Castle and the neighbourhood.

When Ralph Nickleby had quite exhausted his means he took him on as a clerk at a low weekly stipend; and there is a thread of truth even in this part of his history. The letter said that he knew the world, which Nicholas did not, or he would not be bound on such a journey as he was going; and he invited him to his lodging in London if ever he had the necessity to go there, which he described as the “corner of Silver Street and James Street, with a bar door both ways;” and this may easily be identified now. He adds in a postscript, “If you should go near Barnard Castle, there is good ale at the King’s Head. Say you know me, and I am sure they will not charge you for it. You may say Mr. Noggs there, for I was a gentleman then — I was indeed.” The inn still draws ale which those who are qualified to judge declare is excellent. And not only Dickens, but the prototype of Newmann Noggs are yet remembered. Opposite the King’s Arms, and a little lower down the street, is a watch and clock maker’s establishment, which was plainly in view of Dickens’s sitting-room at the hotel. The proprietor of this establishment is called Humphreys; and it was from this that Dickens took the name of one of his most beautiful works, *Master Humphreys’ Clock*. He sent the proprietor of the shop a letter that still exists and is valued beyond price.

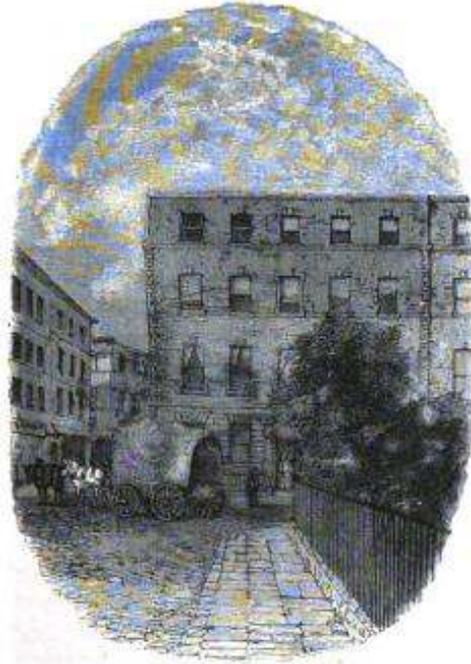
Little is told of Nickleby’s tramp to London after he had left Dotheboys Hall, followed by poor Smike. The first night he lay at a cottage where beds were cheaply let, and the next he arrived at Boroughbridge, which rate of journey would average about 20 miles a day. Boroughbridge is a pleasant town on the Ouse, a few miles below Ripon, and is remembered in history as the place where Edward II. defeated the Earl of Lancaster and sent him to his castle at Pontefract for execution.

While Nickleby was away, however, the peace of his sister Kate was disturbed by the machinations of Ralph Nickleby, who perhaps in this instance went farther than he intended.

The house shown as Ralph Nickleby’s mansion in Golden Square is a large double one, and there is no other which at all would suit the requirements of the case. It is, indeed, the only double one in the Square. The one which was occupied by Cardinal Wiseman has been pointed out, but in every way this one which is shown appears to have superior claims. It is the only double house in the Square; and the splendour which Kate saw, and the spacious rooms both upstairs and downstairs, could not possibly be contained in any other. This the more especially as “Ralph Nickleby was

not what you would strictly speaking call a merchant, neither was he a banker, nor an attorney, nor a special pleader, nor a notary.” But in addition to’ the spacious rooms he had so splendidly furnished, his own business premises were under the same roof, so that there must have been two frontages. His business was simply that of a quiet usurer — one who has abundant resources, and advances on a reversionary interest, or discounts paper that may be secure enough in time, but which

paper that may be secure enough in time, but which



RALPH NICKLEBY'S MANSION.

the timid borrower has some reason for keeping quiet and out of the knowledge of his friends. There is no inconsistency whatever in Ralph Nickleby being a grasping usurer, and coveting every shilling he had even a remote chance of securing, and being also most lavish in his private expenditure. That we see every day in life, and among no class perhaps more conspicuously than the Jew money-lenders. They have their pound of flesh, and haggle over sixpence; but when they go to Brighton or Folkestone they are the very best customers to the hotels. Their wives and daughters quite eclipse all other citizens in purple and fine linen; and not only do their lords fare sumptuously every day, but no vintage of *Chateau Margaux* or *Clos de Vougeot* is too costly for their tables. Here Dickens is quite consistent, and the grandeur that Kate saw is not at all inconsistent with the class that Ralph Nickleby belonged to. Kate, when she expected to

see at the most Newman Noggs, in a clean white shirt front, and rather got up for the occasion, was surprised to find the door opened before the cabman's knock had ceased, and "to see that the opener was a man in handsome livery, and that there were two or three others in the hall. There was no doubt about its being the right house, s however, for there was the name upon the door; and she accepted the laced coat-sleeve which was tendered to her, and entering the house was ushered upstairs into a back drawing-room, where she was left alone."

There seems to be a little obscurity about this part of the work; but it would appear as if in reality Ralph Nickleby's intentions towards his niece were of no exactly unworthy kind. He seems to have been as fond of her as he was capable of being of anything in human shape, and would certainly have shielded her from wrong; and it is not improbable that the idea to be conveyed is that he wished her to become the wife of Lord Verisopht, though indeed such a fate would have been far from a desirable climax. Still he could have secured her in her own right an ample revenue; and though such a scheme is not set forth very fully in the narrative, it is the only possible explanation of his conduct, and furthermore it is very much such a view of life as the usurer would be apt to take.

The eventful journey from London to Portsmouth is told with all the enthusiasm that Dickens has for the country in every phase of its appearance, either in summer, or spring, or winter.

Nicholas and Smike had made up their minds to leave London and push their way in the world, or rather Nicholas had made up his mind to do so for them both, and they left London before sunrise in the morning of an early spring day to journey on towards Portsmouth, where Nicholas had some vague idea that he could ship on board a sea-going vessel and learn his work on the voyage, and that Smike would be able to do the same.

The manager of the troupe that he met on the way, Mr. Crummles, when Nicholas had communicated his intention to him, showed him the futility of his expectations. "There's not a skipper or a mate that would think you worth your salt when he could get a practised hand, and they are as plentiful there as the oysters in the streets."

"What do you mean?" asked Nicholas, alarmed at this prediction, and the confident tone in which it was uttered. "Men are not born able seamen, they must be reared, I suppose?"

Happy, indeed, it would be, if Mr. Crummles' estimate of the abundance of seamen were true now, but the fact is that since his *resume* of the supply of British seamen, British ships are manned by such hands as Nicholas and Smike to an extent that is not generally known, always excepting that the unskilled hands are hardly likely to bring with them such good characters as the heroes of Dickens.

All the means that Nicholas possessed amounted to little over a pound, and so it behoved him to make the best of his time and his money.

The way from London to Guildford lies through Kingston-on-Thames. There is, indeed, another Kingston, called Kingston-on-Rail, which has sprung up into existence since *Nickleby* was written, and happily this has left the old Kingston untouched. Here Nicholas would tell Smike that the Saxon monarchs were crowned, and here they resided, and he would point out the stone on which they sat for their coronation, but poor Smike's thoughts were far away, and as they passed through the town Nicholas endeavoured to draw from him some sort of history of his early life, little suspecting that he was his first cousin. All this conversation seems to have occurred as they passed on their road through Wandsworth and by Richmond Park.

"It was a cold, dry, foggy morning in early spring. A few meagre shadows flitted to and fro in the misty streets, and occasionally there loomed through the dull vapour the heavy outline of some hackney-coach wending homewards, which, drawing slowly nearer, rolled jangling by, scattering the thin crust of frost from its whitened roof, and soon was lost again in the cloud." This is even yet an exact description of the east end of London in early spring. Public-houses are not open, the earliest of shopmen are in bed, and will be for an hour or two, and those people we meet with are either hardly bent on an honest errand, or else some very exceptional occurrence has called them out of doors so soon.

"At intervals were heard the tread of slipshod feet; the chilly cry of the poor sweep as he crept out shivering to his early toil; the heavy footfall of the official watcher of the night pacing slowly up and down, and cursing the tardy hours that still intervened between him and sleep; the rumbling of ponderous carts and waggons; the roll of the lighter vehicles which carried buyers and sellers to the different markets; the sound of ineffectual knocking at the doors of heavy sleepers ; — all these noises fell on the ear from time to time;" and this vivid description is true to the present day, even

though the whole face of England has changed through railways. Still, let any one walk not only through London, but through any considerable English town; supposing, for example, he wishes to catch a train at four or five o'clock in the morning, and he will find just such interjectional noises as those which fell with a dull echo on the ear of Nicholas.

No mention is made of Guildford, through which the travellers passed, and which was very familiar to Dickens. This is rather singular, as its steep street and quaint old town hall, with the well-known clock projecting far over the road on ornamental iron scroll-work, would have been a happy subject for the author's pen; but at any rate they passed through the old place, and, after a walk of about six miles farther, they arrived at Godalming where they rested their weary limbs for the night, and slept soundly in two humble beds they had bargained for.

An early spring day is wonderfully well described in this part of *Nickleby*. It was of course raw and foggy when they left London, but as they emerged from the fog the sky grew bright, and Nicholas and his charge walked on in the hopefulness of youth, and in the most buoyant of spirits. The city, when they turned round to look at it, was still enveloped in a dense vapour, which reminded them almost of the exhalations of those who had left London for the country, but whose souls remained behind to pore over their schemes of gain, "as if they found greater profit and attraction there than in the quiet region above." "It was clear and fair in the open air, but occasionally in some low spots they came upon patches of mist which the sun had not yet driven from their strongholds; but these were soon passed, and as they laboured up the hills beyond, it was pleasant to look back and see how the sluggish mass rolled heavily off before the cheering influence of day. A broad, fine, honest sun lighted up the green pastures, and dimpled water with the semblance of summer, while it left the travellers all the invigorating freshness of that early time of year. The ground seemed elastic under their feet; the sheep-bells were music to their ears; and exhilarated by exercise, and stimulated by hope, they pushed onward with the strength of lions." Sheep-bells may sound strangely to those who are not accustomed to downs or great expanses of country where sheep are pastured, but their utility is obvious; the strayer from the fold can be heard and tracked out and recovered.

"The day wore on, and all these bright colours subsided, and assumed a quieter tint, like young hopes softened down by time, or youthful features

by degrees resolving into the calm and serenity of age. But they were scarcely less beautiful in their slow decline than they had been in their prime; for nature gives to every time and season beauties of its own; from morning to night, as from the cradle to the grave, is but a succession of changes so gentle and easy that we can scarcely mark their progress. To Godalming they came at last, where they bargained for two humble beds, and slept soundly. In the morning they were astir, though not quite so early as the sun, and again afoot, if not with all the freshness of yesterday, still with enough of hope and spirit to bear them cheerily on.”

The taste for natural scenery is conspicuous in all the account of this journey, and the description of a walk through Surrey will remind any one of the natural features of this beautiful county, a county that has much to show us just as nature left it, and that can boast of at any rate one stretch of country that covers two hundred square miles and never has heard the railway’s whistle.

Dickens brings us to the region of the Downs — the North Downs and South Downs — that are so dear to the artist and the holiday-seeker. The district we call the North Downs had been passed over by Nicholas and Smike long before they had the good luck to fall in with Mr. Crummles and his gifted family, and this district is vividly pictured in the twenty-second chapter of the book. There is a system of chalk ranges south of the Thames which would seem to have their centre in Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire. The North Downs run in an easterly direction through Surrey and Kent, and terminate in the familiar cliffs of Dover. The South Downs run through Sussex, and terminate in Beechy Head; and it is the scenery of the Downs that is so graphically described in the twenty-second chapter of Nicholas, which is one of the most popular and beautiful in the book.

“It was a harder day’s journey than they had already performed, for there were long and weary hills to climb, and in journeys, as in life, it is a great deal easier to go down hill than up. However, they kept on with unabated perseverance, and the hill has not yet lifted its face to heaven that perseverance will not gain the summit of at last. They walked upon the rim of the Devil’s Punch Bowl, and Smike listened with greedy interest as Nicholas read the inscription upon the stone which, reared upon the wild spot, tells of a foul and treacherous murder committed there by night. The grass on which they stood had once been dyed with gore, and blood of the murdered man had run down, drop by drop, into the hollow which gives the

place its name. 'The Devil's Punch Bowl,' thought Nicholas, as he looked into the void, 'never held fitter liquor than that' Onward they kept with steady purpose, and entered at length upon a wide and spacious tract of downs with every variety of little hill and plain to change their verdant surface. Here there shot up almost perpendicularly into the sky a height so steep as to be hardly accessible to any but sheep and goats that fed upon its sides, and there stood a huge mound of green, sloping and tapering off so delicately, and merging so gently into the level ground, that you could scarce define its limits. Hills swelling above each other, and undulations, shapely, uncouth, smooth, and rugged, graceful, and grotesque, thrown negligently side by side, bounded the views in each direction, while frequently, with unexpected noise, there uprose from the ground a flight of crows, who, cawing and wheeling around the nearest hills, as if uncertain of their course, suddenly poised themselves upon the wing, and skimmed down the long vista of some opening valley with the speed of very light itself."

The tale of the murder does not appear in any of the reviews of Dickens's works; but it is one of exceeding wickedness and barbarity. Near Esher in Surrey, where Cardinal Wolsley was banished by Henry VIII., three sailors, Edward Lonagan, Michael Casey, and James Marshall, fell in with some one whose name is unknown, but who is said also to have followed the sea. They were impecunious, and he showed them hospitality, and not only so, but he promised to bear their expenses to Portsmouth, where they were going to ship. At the Red Lion Inn in Road Lane, beyond Godalming, they stopped for refreshment, and there, as it came out in evidence at the trial, two labouring men met with them, and soon after on returning homewards they fell upon their track, and when they came to the " Devil's Punch Bowl," they thought they saw a sheep that had fallen down, but not being quite certain about their conjecture they descended, and found the body of the murdered man. His companions, as it appeared by the evidence, and as one of them afterwards confessed, had murdered him under circumstances of great atrocity too great indeed even to record, and robbed him of the money he proposed to share with them. They stripped him afterwards of his apparel, and were in the act of selling it at Sheet, near Petersfield, when they were apprehended, for the labouring men at once raised an alarm, and the atrocious murderers were captured. They were tried at the ensuing Spring Assizes, and on the 7th of April they were hanged and gibbeted at

Hind Head Common, near the scene of their shocking crime. There are persons yet living who remember to have seen the gibbet on which they were exposed; and in some of Turner's early pictures of this part of Surrey this gibbet is shown. Now, of course, it is down, but Sir William Erle has erected a granite cross upon the spot where it stood. The stone that commemorates the foul deed yet stands as it did when Nicholas read the history to the wondering ears of poor Smike. It stands on the edge of the deep amphitheatre called the Devil's Punch Bowl: —

Erected
In detestation of a barbarous
murder
committed here on an unknown sailor
on September 24th 1786
by Edward Lonagan, Michael Casey,
and James Marshall,
who were all taken the same day
and hung in chains
near this place

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man
shall his blood be shed. — Gen. chap, ix., verse 6.

and on the other side of the stone is inscribed —

This stone
was erected
by order, and at
the cost of
James Stibwell, Esq.
of
Cosford, 1786.
cursed be the man who injureth
or removeth this stone.

The murdered man was buried in Thursley Churchyard, and there is a headstone with a curious sculpture in bas-relief, representing three ruffians

killing a sailor. It was erected by subscription, and has the following singular epitaph: —

In memory of a generous but unfortunate sailor, who was barbarously murdered on Hind-head on Sep. 24 1786 by three villains after he had liberally treated them and promised them his further assistance on the road to Portsmouth.

When pitying eyes to see my grave shall come,
And with a generous tear bedew my tomb,
Here shall they read my melancholy fate,
With murder and barbarity complete:
In perfect health and in the flower of age
I fell a victim to Three Ruffians' rage.

1 On bended knees I mercy strove t'obtain,
Their thirst for blood made all entreaties vain,

1 This would seem from the confession alluded to not to have been a figure of speech, but a literal record of fact.

No dear relation or still dearer friend
Weeps my sad lot or miserable end;
Yet o'er my sad remains — my name unknown
A generous Public have inscribed this stone.

Portsmouth, the resting-place of Nicholas and Smike for a brief period of comparative quiet, has retained all the features that they saw nearly unaltered.



PORTSMOUTH THEATRE.

The carriage that had conveyed the party stopped at Portsmouth Bridge, and there they disembarked. “We’ll set down here,” said the manager, “and the boys will take him round to the stable, and call at my lodgings for the luggage. You had better let yours be taken there for the present;” and then they accompanied the manager to the theatre.

“They passed a great many bills pasted against the walls and displayed in windows, wherein the names of Mr. Vincent Crummles, Mrs. Vincent Crummles, Master Crummles, Master P. Crummles, and Miss Crummles, were printed in very large letters, and everything else in very small ones. And turning at length into an entry, in which was a strong smell of orange-peel and lamp-oil, with an under-current of sawdust, groped their way through a dark passage, and, descending a step or two, threaded a little maze of canvas screens and paint-pots, and emerged upon the stage of the Portsmouth Theatre.” The description of a theatre in daylight is graphically told. There was the reassuring voice of Mr. Crummles. “Here we are;” and all to him seemed most proper and fitting. He was, as it were, on his native heath, and whether all was lit up, or whether the nakedness of the land was apparent in the daylight, it was one to him. It was a matter of business, and Crummles was honestly and sincerely a believer in himself, his art, and his family. “It was not very light, but Nicholas found himself close to the first

entrance on the prompter's side, among bare walls, dusty scenes, mildewed clouds, heavily daubed draperies, and dirty floors. He looked about him; ceiling, pit, boxes, gallery, orchestra, fittings, and decorations of every kind — all looked coarse, cold, gloomy, and wretched.

“‘Is this a theatre?’ whispered Smike, in amazement, ‘I thought it was a blaze of light and finery.’

“‘Why, so it is,’ replied Nicholas, hardly less surprised; ‘but not by day, Smike.’”

Troupes of travelling actors seem to have disappeared, or at any rate to have altered entirely, since the days when Dickens wrote *Nickleby*. Then they seem to have travelled from town to town carrying scenery and adjuncts to the various stages they proposed to visit, and they contained within their company every constituent part for acting a play of Shakespeare, of Congreve, or Sheridan. Of course celebrated actors travel now, and they are supported by a few notables of local celebrity, who take some secondary part with more or less ability, and prevent the great principal from being swamped by very bad acting. In the Crummles' troupe they seem to have enjoyed the privilege of conveying even supernumeraries about, so that there could be no chance of any accident through a member of the company being unequal to the occasion. The house where Mr. Crummles lived might almost be pointed out with certainty yet. It was in St. Thomas Street, at the abode of “one Bulph, a pilot, who sported a boat-green door, with window-frames of the same colour, and had the little finger of a drowned man on his parlour mantel-shelf, with other maritime and natural curiosities. He displayed also a brass knocker, a brass plate, and a brass bell-handle, all very bright and shining; and had a mast, with a vane on the top of it, in his back yard.”

The lodgings that Nicholas secured for himself and Smike were on the Common Hard, which seems to be the name pertaining to a part of Portsmouth where the wharves are. What its origin may be I could not discover; but the people there point out, in a narrow lane leading to the wharf, the house where Nicholas is supposed to have sojourned. It certainly is a modest dwelling, and somewhat dreary, but from the narrow street it is easy to see great forests of masts and yards that are harboured below. When Mr. Lenville and his friend Mr. Folair made an early call on Nicholas, they contrived, as he was not up, much to the astonishment of their new recruit, to beguile the time with a fencing bout on the small landing-place with their

walking-sticks; and they made use of many theatrical expressions, “ to the unspeakable discomposure of all other lodgers downstairs.”

One thing is noticeable in this work, and it illustrates a period in the age of copyright. When Nicholas joined the company, he was asked by the manager if he could write a play, or at any rate adapt a French play to his stage, and Nicholas replied affirmatively, and then worked away at the piece, which was speedily put into rehearsal; and then worked away at his own part, which he studied with great perseverance, and acted, as the whole company * said, to perfection. Then, as the story records, the bellman went round, and posters appeared on all the walls, and play-bills were distributed broadcast, etc. etc., as though to secure a rapid return for the modest outlay the play had cost. Perhaps it might be well here to remark that about two years before *Nickleby* was written the property in the copyright of a play was not secured. Our principal Encyclopaedia says that in Shakespeare’s time some of his audience used to take note-books and write down what they heard, which in some measure accounts for the doubtful and different readings we have. But at any rate the play Nicholas adapted was not safe for a single hour. All the security he had was in keeping the MS. in his trunk; and at that time all the remuneration that playwrights could claim was the sum that the original employer gave, and any small amount that booksellers 1 gave for copyright, together with any sum that London managers might be disposed to give till the play was issued and the copyright secured. But Sir E. Bulwer brought in an Act in 1833 that secured twenty-eight years’ copyright for a playwright, and this greatly delighted Dickens, who all through his life had a sincere admiration for the author of *Eugene Aram*.

The Brothers Cheeryble have often been identified with a London firm; but however this may be, it is hardly likely that any firm would have risen to great wealth and prosperity who had such an easy routine of business as to let a youth like Nicholas, who never was in a merchant’s

1 In a bookseller or publisher’s hands, of course, anything became copyright if he desired.

or banker’s office before (and the Brothers Cheeryble seem to have combined both callings) suddenly see the great ledgers before him, and then without any hesitation “dip his pen into the inkstand before him, and plunge into the books of Cheeryble Brothers!” This has always seemed a great

drawback to the work, and unhappily Dickens was illustrated by an artist who is not at all times worthy of the prominent position he was destined to fill as the illustrator of one to whom in all probability every Englishman is now in some degree indebted; and if we turn to page 356 of the first issue of *Nicholas Nickleby* we are introduced to the Brothers Cheeryble, who are linking arm in arm in their own office, and looking at Nicholas as he is trying his hand at book-keeping. They are grotesquely dressed in this drawing, and apparently inebriated. I write this to defend, as far as I can, the memory of Dickens from his illustrator, though indeed the latter has done good work, if somewhat grotesque, as the pages of 404, 500, and 518, in *Nicholas*, and many — very many others in other works can testify. A great responsibility lies at the door of an artist who illustrates an author. If his figures are vapid or inane, or, on the other hand, if they are vulgar, it tends to give a tone to all they say. Thackeray had the advantage of being very well illustrated. Sometimes, as in the *Virginians* and *Pendennis*, he was his own artist, and has left us pictures which have in them as much latent humour as the text itself, and sometimes he was well seconded by Doyle, as in the *Newcomes*.

The London scenes of Dickens are very able and suggestive. Mr. Forster says; “There seemed to be not much to add to our knowledge of London until his books came upon us, but each, in this respect, outstripped the other in its marvels. In *Nickleby* the old city reappears under every aspect; and whether warmth and light are playing over what is good and cheerful in it, or the veil is uplifted from its darker scenes, it is at all times our privilege to see and feel it as it absolutely is. Its interior hidden life becomes familiar as its commonest outward forms, and we discover that we hardly knew anything of the places we supposed that we knew the best.”

Golden Square has already been alluded to. The “Crown Inn,” which was the abode of Newman Noggs, still stands, though it has a new front. When Nicholas first arrived at Dotheboys Hall he found a letter he had forgotten, which Newman had put in his hand at the Saracen’s Head, and there he found the invitation from Newman Noggs. “If ever you want a shelter in London (don’t be angry at this, I once thought I never should), they know where I live, at the sign of the Crown in Silver Street, Golden Square. It is at the corner of Silver Street and James Street, with a bar door both ways. Once nobody was ashamed — never mind that. It’s all over.” In a *P.S.* he admits that days were different once with him. “If you should go near

Barnard Castle, there is good ale at the King's Head." Say you know me, and I am sure they will not charge you for it. You may say *Mr. Noggs* there, for I was a gentleman then. I was indeed." Newman Noggs was an old client of Ralph Nickleby's, who had spent his patrimony in excessive living, and at one time, as Ralph said, he kept his horses and hounds. Degraded he may have become, but in some way he always had the feelings of a gentleman. When Sydney Smith invited Dickens, whose merits he was slow at first to perceive, to meet some friends at his house, he assured him that he might delineate their characters, and give them a place in any future number of his works; and he said, "Lady Charlotte in particular you may marry to Newman Noggs."

The office of the Cheeryble Brothers is not easily identified. "The City Square has no enclosure save the lamp-post in the middle, and no grass but the weeds that spring up around its base. It is a quiet, little-frequented, retired spot, favourable to melancholy and contemplation, and appointments of long waiting. In winter-time the snow lingers there long after it has melted from the busy streets and highways. The summer's sun holds it in some respect, and, while he darts his cheerful rays sparingly into the square, he keeps his fiery heat and glare for noisier and less-imposing precincts. It is so quiet that you can almost hear the ticking of your own watch when you stop to cool in its refreshing atmosphere." But how has London altered since this was written; the same page in *Nicholas* describes the London squares before railways had invaded the city precincts. "And let not those whose eyes have been accustomed to the aristocratic gravity of Grosvenor Square and Hanover Square, the dowager barrenness and frigidity of Fitzroy Square, or the gravel walks of Russell or Euston, suppose that the affections of Tim Linkinwater had been kept alive by any association of leaves, however dingy, or grass, however bare and thin."

This was written before Euston had ever heard a railway whistle, and long before the most enthusiastic prophet could have predicted that the quiet square would become the busiest centre for passenger traffic in the world.

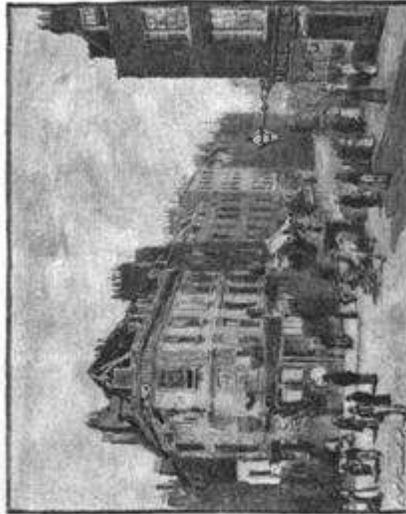
The house where Madame Mantalini lived was near Cavendish Square, and we have no difficulty in identifying it with Wigmore Street, which crosses Welbeck Street and Duke Street at right angles, and connects Cavendish with Portman Square; and in this street we may now see such establishments as Mantalini's with a "liveried footman and spacious hall."

The shop to the house where the Mantalini dwelt was let off to an importer of otto of roses. "Madame Mantalini's show-rooms were on the first floor; a fact that was notified to the nobility and gentry by the casual exhibition, near the handsomely curtained windows, of two or three elegant bonnets of the newest fashion, and some costly garments in the most approved taste." And then Dickens, whose eye seems to have missed nothing either indoors or out-of-doors, gives a wonderful description of first-class show-rooms, when the modiste led Kate and Ralph Nickleby into the saloon, "which comprised two spacious drawing - rooms, and exhibited an immense variety of superb dresses and materials for dresses; some arranged in stands, others laid carelessly on sofas, and others, again, scattered over the carpet, hanging upon the cheval glasses, or mingling in some other way with the rich furniture of various descriptions which was profusely displayed." Ralph was well known to at any rate Mr. Mantalini if not to his wife, for he had not unfrequently discounted long-dated paper of customers to the establishment, whose names were good enough but whose promise to pay lay at such a distance of time that the ordinary banking world were debarred by their rules from advancing money upon it. Mantalini is drawn from the life, and, indeed, if we refer to the records of one London Court, that deals especially with domestic trouble, we shall have no difficulty in soon finding his counterpart. His name was originally "Muntle," but it had easily been converted into Mantalini, as his wife, to whom he had only been married six months when Kate Nickleby first made her appearance at the establishment, thought that an English-sounding name would injure the establishment. He was not, by any means, *all* bad; there are men who marry for money that are a hundred times worse, and he was amusing and fantastic. In some respects he may remind us of Lucio, in *Measure for Measure*; and indeed he is Lucio treated according to the formulas of what is termed the aesthetic school. "He had married on his whiskers, upon which property he had previously subsisted in a genteel manner for some years, and which he had recently improved, after patient cultivation, by the addition of a moustache, which promised to secure him an easy independence; his share in the labours of the business being at present confined to spending the money, and occasionally, when that ran short, of driving to Mr. Ralph Nickleby to procure discount, at a percentage, for customers' bills."

Kate lived with her mother in a miserable house in Thames Street, of which the description that is given is so vivid, and it so exactly describes an

enormous number of London houses, that it must be reproduced. The house had been benevolently placed at the disposal of Mrs. Nickleby and her daughter by Ralph Nickleby, into whose possession it had obviously come as some collateral security for a loan. The distance which Kate had to traverse each day to her work, from Wigmore Street to Thames Street was two miles and a half; and the description of the house as it was when Newman Noggs first took her and her mother to it in a cab, is in the eleventh chapter. "They went into the City, turning down by the river side; and after a long and very slow drive, the streets being crowded at that hour with vehicles of every kind, stopped in front of a large old dingy house in Thames Street, the door and windows of which were so bespattered with mud that it would have appeared to have been uninhabited for years. The door of this deserted mansion Newman opened with a key which he took from his hat, in which, by - the - by, in consequence of the dilapidated state of his pockets, he deposited everything, and would most likely have carried his money if he had had any — and the coach being discharged, he led the way into the interior of the mansion. Old and black and gloomy in truth it was, and sullen and dark were the rooms, once so bustling with life and enterprise. There was a wharf behind, opening on the Thames; an empty dog-kennel, some bones of animals, fragments of iron hoops, and staves of old casks, lay strewn about, but no life was stirring there. It was a picture of cold silent decay." Newman Noggs had thoughtfully, and who knows by what possible means! succeeded in procuring some furniture for Mrs. Nickleby and her daughter, and he appears in this part of the book to his best advantage. Newman Noggs belonged to a type that was much more common half a century ago than it is at present. He was born with advantages, and lived the life of a country gentleman; but the habits of

Englishmen were commonly more lax than they are now, and he expended



his patrimony in excesses.
CHAPTER IV.

OLIVER TWIST.

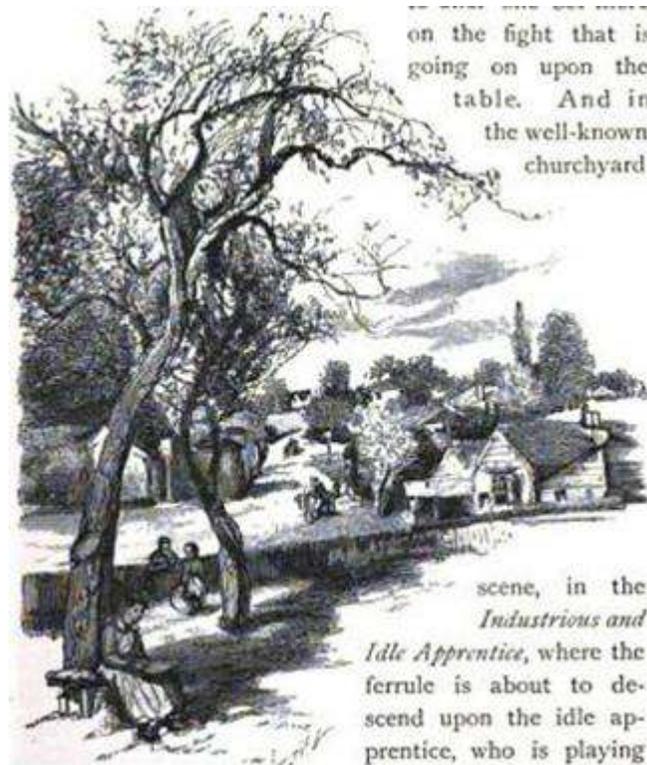
When Dickens wrote *Oliver Twist* he desired, as he says, to paint vice in its true characters, without the fascinations of highway adventure, or snug robbers' caves, or anything approaching the attractions that too often pervaded the literature of profligacy. He wished to answer those who

Proved, by cool discriminating sight,
Black's not so black, nor white so very white.

The dens and stews of London are painted from life, and the picture is not inviting. In the character of Nancy there is some redeeming quality — she might have been different under different circumstances; in the characters of Fagin or Bill Sikes there is none; they are simply bad, as bad as they can be, without one silver thread lining the edge of the cloud. Unfortunately for the artist, but fortunately for the rest of the world, the haunts of vice that were standing when this work was written are demolished; and whatever remains of the Bill Sikes or the Fagin element is left in the cold; but if we read the police summaries we are sadly reminded that they are hardly

extinct. “Whether every gentler feeling is dead within such bosoms, or the proper chord to strike has rusted and is hard to find, I cannot say; but there are such men as Sikes who, being closely followed through the same space of time, and through the same current of circumstances, would not give, by one look or action of a moment, the faintest indication of a better nature.” Dickens further asks, “What manner of life is it that is described in these pages as the every-day existence of a thief? what charms has it for the young and ill-disposed? what allurements for the most jolter-headed of juveniles?”

In *Oliver Twist*, in fact, vice is treated as Hogarth treated it; “in whose works,” Dickens says, “the times in which he lived, and the characters of every time, will never cease to be reflected with a power and depth of thought which belonged to few men before him, and will probably appertain to fewer still in time to come.” “Cervantes laughed Spain’s chivalry away by showing Spain its impossible and wild absurdity. It was my attempt, in my humble and far-distant sphere, to dim the false glitter surrounding something which really did exist, by showing it in its unattractive and repulsive truth.” Much more like Hogarth than Cervantes, Dickens has left a name that will probably endure as long as either of theirs. The shadow of the man in the “cockpit,” by Hogarth, who is suspended from the ceiling, according to the etiquette of such places, for not paying his bets, is represented as holding out his watch, desperately resolved to offer one bet more



BARNET.

on the fight that is going on upon the table. And in the well-known churchyard scene, in the *Industrious and Idle Apprentice*, who is playing pitch and toss on a gravestone, the hand of the beadle is arrested by the interest he takes in the result of the toss. Touches of humor like these, which sparkle all through the pictures of Hogarth, enliven even his grim scenes, and are much in the vein of Dickens.

As for the exact locality of the town where Oliver first saw the light, and Bumble immortalised beadledom, there is some little difficulty in the way. In the eighth chapter we read that after Oliver had fled from the tyranny of his oppressors he found himself, after the seventh morning, "limping slowly into the little town of Barnet." It is, as Mr. Dickens says in his admirable *Guide to London*, "a pretty and still tolerably rural suburb, but on the north side of London, and on the clay. Perhaps the best situation on that side, and standing high, its full name being, in fact, High Barnet. Locally it is considered the highest ground between York and London." It is hardly necessary to add that Mr. Charles Dickens, who wrote it, is the son of the great novelist; and here I may venture to clear up, what is sometimes alluded to as an inconsistency, namely, why Mr. Dawkins, the "artful

dodger,” had gone so far as the Barnet road to meet Oliver, for whom he was not supposed to have been looking. But the plot is cut rather abruptly short in several parts, or else it is certain that the “This is him, Fagin,” from the artful dodger, “ my friend, Oliver Twist,” would have been shown to point out that Oliver had been looked for by Monks, and he had taken Fagin into his schemes. Monks was, indeed, not exactly known as a regular frequenter of the den. “He goes by some other name among us then,” said Nancy to Miss Maylie. But to return to Oliver.

After he had left his native town for some five miles he saw a milestone on the road-side “which bore in large characters an intimation that it was just seventy miles from that spot to London.” By that showing we should find ourselves, if we continued the road, in the quiet ancient city of Peterborough, and though Market Harborough might be reached at the end of the same mileage, the description of the town or city where the immortal Bumble reigned coincides more particularly with Peterborough.

One is disposed to be a little surprised in the first part of *Oliver Twist* being taken up with such a subject; but it was the humour of Dickens to indicate some notable being or character, that had in their turn filled a place in Bumbledom, and that, in fact, coincides with all who ever in any station in life spoke the English language, or perhaps, if we could know it, any other. There are Bumbles in Royalty, and there are Bumbles in the footmen at Brighton who asked Weller to the “swarry” and at first treated him very superciliously, but soon found they had reckoned without their host.

It may be well to remark here that the cause of Oliver’s going away was the cruelty of the master he was bound to as an apprentice from the work-house. The magistrate’s room would accord well with that in the town indicated at that time, and the picture of the chimneysweeper who saw a premium of five pounds for an apprentice is all in keeping with the time in which *Oliver Twist* was written. Mr. Gamfield, chimney-sweeper, jumped at the idea of having to handle such a sum, and only the magistrate’s veto, the magistrate before whom Oliver was taken to sign the indenture, prevented his being handed over to the chimney-sweeper.

It may be necessary to remind the present generation that very small slim boys were apprenticed in early life to sweep the great broad chimney flues which prevailed before the glazed socket pipes carried away the heat and smoke; and here again Dickens appears as a reformer.

It used to be the custom in England. — I cannot say how far it was on the Continent — to send these boys up chimneys with a sweeping-brush, and they were enlisted for the service as best they could be. Their duties were to climb up by the projecting bricks, and their heads were covered with a loosely woven cloth, to prevent them from being choked, and when a chimney flue diverged, and the soot had accumulated, the place was not only narrow, but uncertain, black, and cavernous. In this service Mr. Gamfield wanted Oliver; but he was disappointed. A tale used to be told, and was generally believed, of a young boy being kidnapped in Liverpool by some chimney sweeps, and compelled to serve under threats. For five years he was lost, and proved to be the heir to a property at the north end of the town, which had increased enormously in value.

Those who may wish to revisit the haunts of Fagin and his promising school of apprentices at Snow Hill and Field Lane will be doomed to disappointment, as the Holborn Viaduct has cleared them away; but in a word they may be described as nests for stolen goods; there were plenty of shops, and those shops were what would be called in America “open stores.” There was not a window, glass was rather too costly, but there was a fall shutter, and though in summer this was perhaps even an advantage, in winter the inhabitants were to be seen in the back part of the shop with their hands in their pockets conversing over a charcoal stove. But it is really a fact that in the most open form pocket-handkerchiefs were exposed for sale, and that when gentlemen used nothing but bandanas which cost from 7s. 6d. to 1 0s. each. This will at once explain to modern readers the singular scenes of “sorting the wipes,” etc., that occur in the first part of *Oliver Twist*, and hanging them to dry on a “clothes-horse,” after the stitches that marked them had been picked out.

Oliver and “the artful” “crossed from Angel to St. John’s Road, struck down the small street that leads to Sadler’s Wells Theatre, through Exmouth Street and Coppice Row, down the little court by the side of the Workhouse, across the classic ground which once bore the name of Hockley-in-the-Hole, then into Little Saffron-Hill, and so into Saffron-Hill the Great, along which the Dodger scudded at a rapid pace.” He had, it would seem, some coquettish objections to showing himself in London before night, and so it was nearly eleven before they commenced their town journey. The Angel still stands, and is the stopping-place of the “Favourite” omnibuses, and St. John’s Road, but is somewhat altered, and Sadler’s Wells Theatre yet

remains. This was called originally after a man named Sadler, who discovered a chalybeate spring in the seventeenth century, which spring was remarkable as possessing the same qualities as Tunbridge Wells. Royalty resorted there; a theatre, which often is mentioned by Dickens, was built, and which has numbered among its managers, Howard Payne, Dibdin the poet, Phelps the tragedian, and the well-known Grimaldi the clown, and was afterwards under the conduct of less notable directors.

Sadler's Wells Theatre was reopened long after Dickens's time; indeed, within the last two years, a London paper, commenting on the event, says — "The Duchess of Sutherland will be present at the opening of the old theatre at Sadler's Wells, and literary London will be there, not so much for the sake of the musical play 'Rob Roy' which is a little old-fashioned, but because it is an event of the highest interest in theatrical annals." The locality, as it then presented itself, is well described by Dickens. "The streets were narrow and muddy, and the air was impregnated with filthy odours. There were a good many small shops, but their only stock in trade appeared to be the heaps of children who, even at that time of night, were crawling in and out of the doors, or screaming from the inside.

"The sole places that seemed to prosper amid the general blight of the place were the public-houses, and in them the lowest orders of Irish were wrangling with might and main. Covered ways and yards, which here and there diverged from the main street, disclosed little knots of houses where drunken men and women were positively wallowing in filth, and from several of these doorways great ill-looking fellows were cautiously emerging, bound, to all appearance, upon no well-disposed or harmless errand." Before Oliver could escape from scenes of such horror, his companion pushed him into the house they had been journeying to, and after some pass-word they mounted rickety stairs to the room of the now world-renowned Fagin. Why Dickens should have made him a Jew is not apparent, for Jews are, as a rule, among the most law-abiding of subjects in any land; but it is said that he was a real portrait — still he is not a representative character. Men bred and born in London, or Birmingham, or Liverpool — Gentiles, let us say, of no very defined creed, could much more easily be found to fill the character — but* that is a small matter: the abode is no "robbers' cave," but a den of thieves. Fagin was before a fire, and "in a frying-pan which was on the fire, and which was secured to the mantelpiece by a string, some sausages were cooking." A toasting-fork was

in his hand; he was a “very old shrivelled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair.” To poor Oliver the prospect of something like a savoury supper, and a warm room to sleep in after his weary bruised feet had brought him so far, one might think there was a sense of relief, but even here no avenue is left for looking at his so far improved prospects with anything but aversion. “The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with dirt and age. There was a deal table before the fire, upon which was a candle stuck in a ginger-beer bottle; two or three pewter-pots, a loaf and butter and a plate; several rough beds made of old sacks were huddled side by side on the floor; and seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than the Dodger, smoking long clay pipes, and drinking spirits with all the air of middle-aged men.” When Oliver, in the “height or the depth of his simplicity, accompanied the ‘Dodger’ and Charley Bates on one of their pilfering expeditions for the first time, he noticed with surprise that the Dodger had a propensity for pulling off the caps of small boys and throwing them in areas, and Charley Bates, with even less respect for property and its rights, used to purloin onions and apples nimbly from stalls, and drop them in his capacious pockets.”

But the Dodger’s appearance became suddenly altered and more business-like “as they emerged from a narrow square in Clerkenwell, which is called, by some strange perversion of terms, ‘the Green’” — this is a short way to the north of Farringdon Street Station, and remains very much as it was when Dickens saw it. Clerkenwell has not altered to any great extent. In this part of London there used at one time to be a great number of wells fed by springs. One of these was marked by an inscription on a pump at the corner of Ray Street, and was interesting as the Clerks’ Well, “Fons clericorum,” that gave the name to Clerkenwell, which Stow says “took its name from the parish clerks of London, who of old were accustomed then yearly to assemble, and to play some large history of Holy Scripture.” This partly corresponds with the Chester mystery plays that took place in that city every Easter, and were grotesque representations of sacred scenes.

The Sessions House at Clerkenwell yet stands, and charges are heard in it from 10 to 5 every day. It was to this building that Bumble was bound when he said to Mrs. Mann that a “legal action was coming on about a settlement, and the Board has appointed me — me, Mrs. Mann — to depose to the matter before the Quarter Sessions; and I very much question whether the

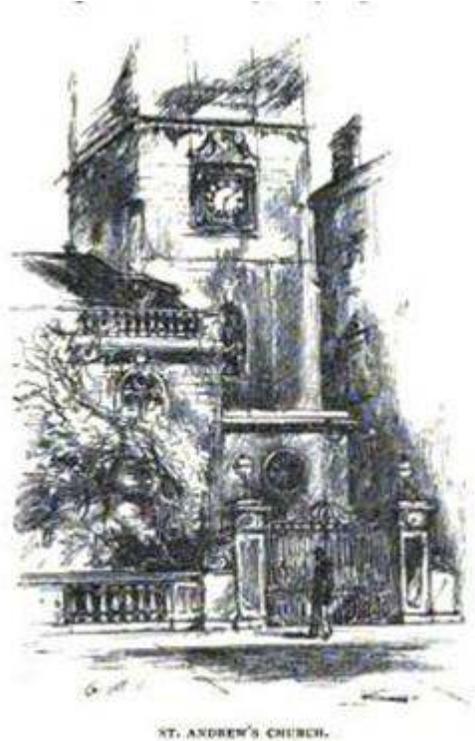
Clerkenwell Sessions will not find themselves in the wrong box before they have done with me.”

The house where the Jew lived was like other houses in some of the lower parts of London; and when Oliver was permitted to wander about in it he saw panelled rooms with high mantel-pieces and ornamental ceilings, and he concluded that before the Jew was born it had belonged to better people, and been quite gay and handsome. The loneliness of the boy in the dark deserted mansion is well told, and he did not leave it till he was taken away to assist Sikes in the ill-starred expedition to Chertsey, which led to Oliver’s final escape from his cruel captivity.

The local descriptions here are literally crowded together, from the clock of St. Andrew’s to the final destination at Chertsey. One of the most accurate descriptions of Smithfield Old Market is to be found in *Oliver Twist*. It was abolished in 1852, and I can well remember as a boy being taken to see it at the early hour in the morning when Dickens described it, and the barbarous scene it presented is in no way overdrawn. “It was on a market morning. The ground was covered nearly ankle-deep with filth and mire;” and as for a Bill Sikes in the crowd, there was not one but a hundred; nay, in some parts of the market square, where the lights were burning inside a corner public-house, the crowd appeared to consist of little else, and it seemed to me at one time that the only living creatures with any pretension to respectability of character were the cattle. In the twenty-first chapter of Book I. this is admirably described, and evidently the account was written on the spot.

In singular contrast to this scene is the house-breaking expedition to Chertsey, where the robber took Oliver to assist in the burglary by putting him through a pane in the window to open the front door, and a house is still pointed out as being the scene of the attempted theft.

The church of St. Andrew’s is here, and Sikes remarked to Oliver as they passed the clock, “ Now, then, young ‘un, it’s hard upon seven! You must step out. Come, don’t lag behind already, lazy-legs.



They went past Hyde Park corner, and through Kensington to the Hammersmith and Brentford road; but as Mr. Sikes saw “Hounslow” painted on a cart he asked the driver, with such civility as he could assume, if he would give them a lift as far as Isleworth; and here all the road brings up to the recollection scenes of beauty and delight, though it is but little of these that poor Oliver could enjoy.

Isleworth, through which they went, is one of the places from which Covent Garden, so often mentioned in Dickens, draws its supplies. The county is perfectly charming round here, and Sion House, built by the “Lord Protector Somerset,” and now a residence of the Duke of Northumberland, is remembered with pleasure by every one who has sailed up the Thames. Hammersmith almost joins Kensington, and Chiswick, through which Oliver passed, is nearly now swallowed up in the advancing tide of city extension. Still there are some few rural features left, and here lies buried Hogarth, who in pencil did precisely what Dickens did by pen. Nay, the epitaph on his tomb might, with little alteration, be used on that of Dickens: —

“Farewell, great painter of mankind,
Who reached the noblest point of art;

Whose pictured morals charm the mind,
And through the eye correct the heart.
If genius fire thee, reader, stay:
If nature touch thee, drop a tear:
If neither move thee, turn away,
Tis Hogarth's honoured dust lies here."

"Kew Bridge was passed," the narrative adds, "and yet they kept on as steadily as if they had only begun their journey." The bridge is accurately enough shown



on the wood-cut, and the precision of Dickens's descriptions in all this expedition are very remarkable. This Kew Bridge was built by Robert Tunstall in the year 1789, and it replaced one that was built by his father in 1759. The earlier bridge was entirely of wood. There is a pleasant rustic air about it, and, as may be seen, London improvements have not as yet swept away its sunny surroundings.

Brentford was reached at last, and, though it is not a town that offers many attractions to a traveller, it doubtless was classic ground to Sikes as the seat of the great distilleries of Sir Felix Booth, where the celebrated "Old Tom" is made. Beyond Brentford Sikes and Oliver, who little knew

the fell purpose for which he was required, went into a public-house, of which more than one would answer the description, and had some dinner among a rather rough lot of farmers, one of whom was going in his cart to Lower Halliford. This is on the left bank of the Thames between Walton and Shepperton, and it is a perfect paradise for roach anglers. Oatlands Park and the Surrey hills are charmingly seen from here, but they would not interest the felon and his victim even if there had been light or time to see them.

The description of the ride in the cart is finely told. The night was dark and dreary, and the man had grown sleepy, while Sikes was in no mood for conversation, and Oliver sat huddled in the corner of the cart in fear and apprehension. "As they passed Sunbury Church the clock struck seven. There was a light in the puny house opposite that streamed across the road, and threw into more sombre shadow a dark yew-tree with graves beneath it. There was a dull sound of falling water not far off, and the leaves of the old tree stirred gently in the night wind." The church of Sunbury, when this was written, was not the Byzantine chapel that we see now, but an edifice built in George II.'s time. The rendezvous was finally reached, and the burglary attempted. The house where this took place stands in a lonely situation near Penton Hook, and is pointed out by any of the inhabitants. It is quite worth a visit, and it is most suggestive of such a midnight excursion as that which took Sikes there.

In a very popular work on Dickens that has been published and written in America a tale is told that is not exactly an accurate account of the way in which *Oliver Twist* first suggested itself to Dickens. It is said that Dickens called on George Cruickshanks and waited while he finished an etching — that he turned over a book of etchings and found Fagin in the condemned cell, and then assured Cruickshanks that he was disposed to alter the plan of his work from the original. He had intended to bring *Oliver Twist* through adventures in the country, but seeing the life of a thief so strikingly illustrated Cruickshank consented to let him use the designs as he best thought fit, and hence Fagin, Sikes, and Nancy were created. But Dickens, as has been said, conceived the idea from an antagonistic feeling to the Poor Law Act of 1834, in which he differed so seriously from Miss Martineau. The more ancient Poor Laws of England, if indeed they can be called Poor Laws at all, we read with astonishment now; they were more savage than any in Europe, and, in fact, by them any person seeking for employment out of his own parish was to be whipped on the first offence, sold as a slave for the second, and hanged for the third. This was the feudal system with a vengeance. Of course it was not to last; but a very able writer in the *Edinburgh Review* says that “When a man was paid eight shillings by the overseer for standing six days in the pound — when he was put up to auction and received threepence a-day from his employer, and one shilling and ninepence a-day from his parish — when he was billeted on a farmer, who was required to pay him two shillings and sixpence a-week if single, four shillings if married without children, and eighteenpence more a-head if he had children — these payments were not wages. Such, however, in the beginning of 1834, was the condition of the labouring population in many thousand English parishes.”

Now it is true that much which Dickens speaks of has passed away, but Bumble will never pass away; and the scene between him and Mrs. Bumble — Mrs. Corney that was — is a perfect example of a character sketch. He would have been in youth one of those cowardly boys that torment lesser ones and are abject towards their superiors, and it takes even Dickens to light up the character with humour. Mrs. Mann, who farms the children, fully appreciated him when she “officiously deposited his cocked hat and cane on the table before him,” at which he “glanced complacently.” •

But almost the finest scene in Dickens’s writings is in the fourteenth chapter of the second book. Bumble was master of the workhouse, and the

gorgeous paraphernalia had descended to another beadle; and, what was of more importance, he had made Mrs. Corney Mrs. Bumble. His social position was improved as master of the workhouse, and even his pecuniary position, but “the laced coat and the cocked hat, where were they?” He was in plain dress, and the “mighty cocked hat was replaced by a modest round one.” Nothing could replace that loss.

““ And to-morrow two months it was done,’ sighed Bumble, ‘it seems an age.’

““I sold myself for six teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a milk-pot, with a small quantity of secondhand furniter, and twenty pound in ready money — I went wery reasonable cheap.’

““Cheap!’ cried a shrill voice in Mr. Bumble’s ear, ‘you would have been dear at any price, and dear enough I paid for you, the Lord above knows that.’“

Then the scene changes with quite dramatic swiftness. The “eye “ which Bumble invited her to look at, and which had so often cowed a pauper, was lost upon the widow of Mr. Corney, and the matron “even raised a laugh that sounded as though it were genuine.”

How she afterwards tried tears, at which Bumble was

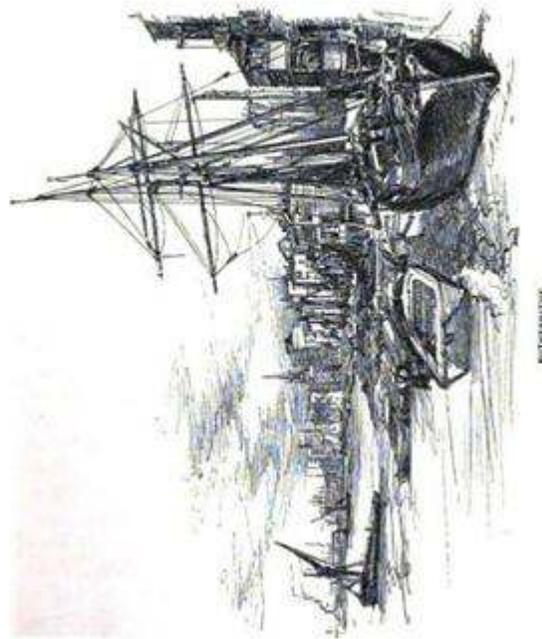


LONDON BRIDGE.

delighted, as being accustomed to them and showing his own power; and how when he got up to leave the room in a jaunty way and in triumph, but how so skilful a general as the late Mrs. Corney was not to be defeated so easily; how he heard a hollow sound, that betokened his hat being suddenly knocked off, and, after the slightest of skirmishes, the late Mrs. Corney was not only matron but master of the “Union,” are matters of history.

After the girl Nancy had captured Oliver in his flight, and brought him back to his cruel bondage, she seems to have been struck with some remorse, and in the end, after he had finally escaped, she met Mr. Brownlow and Miss Maylie on London Bridge, which is picturesquely described in Dickens. She asked Rose Maylie to go to the steps at the farther end of the bridge that she might speak to her alone. “The steps to which the girl pointed were those which are on the Surrey bank and on the same side of the bridge as St. Saviour’s Church form a landing-stair from the river,” and here she told the tale of Monks that enabled Oliver to regain his rights. Here also, on these steps, the miserable Claypole waylaid her, and listened to the conversation that he afterwards reported to Fagin and Sikes, which led to the murder of poor Nancy, and, as is said, was the worst of all the bad deeds that “had been committed in London’s bounds since night hung over it.” And here we may notice how a murderer, as described by Shakspeare, corresponds with one drawn by our author. Macbeth was, in many respects, even more despicable than Sikes, for he was a coward, and had all the ills that go with one. “Infirm of purpose,” “to let I dare not wait upon I would,” give us a glimpse of the character of Macbeth. Sikes had at any rate nothing of this — better it would have been if he had, but after their crimes the same uncertainty took hold of both. Sikes went up Islington to Highgate, and arrived finally at Hendon, where he stopped to get meat and drink, sometimes loitering, sometimes running, wandering miles, and retracing his steps, till he reached Hatfield, where the noble old palace stands that once sheltered Elizabeth. Here he went to another public-house, and left it abruptly, and so on. In this we notice the irresolution of Macbeth at the last, — putting on his armour and taking it off again, speaking in half sentences to every one, knowing he is more than suspected, and only consecutive when he communes with himself. “My way of life is worn into the sear and yellow leaf.” But Sikes reaches Rotherhithe at last, a dreary locality down the Thames. The church which is here shown contains a monument to Prince Lee Boo, the amiable son of the King of Pelew Islands,

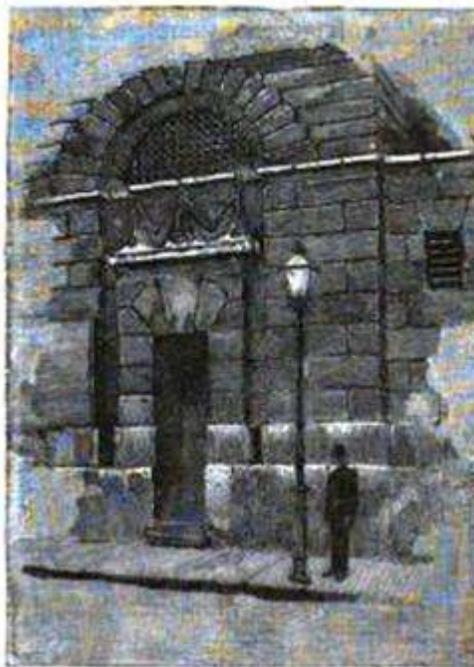
who treated the shipwrecked crew of the Antelope with great kindness after they were wrecked in 1783. It is a wretched locality; we can always see filthy unemployed labourers here, and men, too, who do not look as if they wished to be employed either; dismantled walls, chimneys that seem as if they were hesitating whether to fall or not, and in wet weather so much mud that an American Indian could take his canoe



along the streets without difficulty, at least if not poisoned in the attempt. It was to this locality that Sikes betook himself finally; some old friends were here, but they were shy of him, and he presented only a ghost of his former appearance as he entered the tumble-down old mansion they had occupied, and the cry of, ‘ In the King’s name,” showed that justice had reached him at last, until he made a desperate effort to escape, and in doing so terminated his own evil existence.

The death of Fagin by the hand of the law finished the book, for the episode of Rose Fleming and Harry Maylie is only introduced to liven the gloomy tale. The last night of the Jew introduces us to the interior of the Old Bailey prison, of which the entrance is shown. The architect was George Dance, who also designed other public buildings in London, such as the Mansion House and the Guildhall, and may be said *not* to have left a name known to fame. The gate shown here, however, is fairly good for a

prison gate. The fetters, Dickens says in one of his works, he used to believe were real ones, ready to be taken down at a moment's notice to manacle some new prisoner; and in his childish days he almost expected to see a brass plate on a door with "Mr. Ketch" on it. The most powerful pictures he has ever drawn are in *Oliver Twist*, where the Jew, taken from his haunts, and having his evil actions brought to light, seemed to be surrounded by a firmament all bright with gleaming eyes, and as his eye wandered to the gallery of the court he could see people rising above each other to get a sight of his face; in the same way he turned his eyes towards the Judge, and wondered at the fashion of his dress, and



OLD BAILEY PRISON.

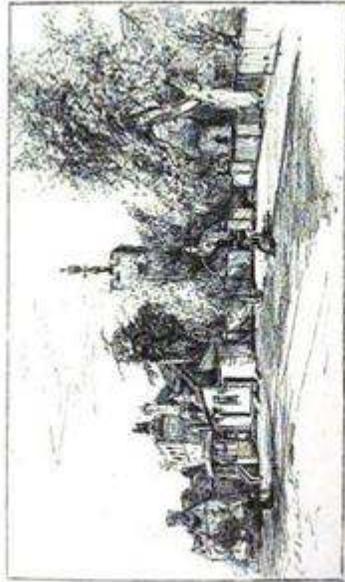
saw a stout old gentleman on the bench who returned after a half-hour's absence, and wondered if he had been for his dinner, and where he had been for it, and so pursued some train of idle thought until a fresh object caught his eye. There can be no doubt that this is a true description of what a man generally feels when being tried on a capital charge. It has fallen to my lot to see several such trials, and, as far as the expression of countenance was an indication, the prisoner was in a state of abstraction, all was turning out so differently from what he had expected, and the slightest irrelevant incident was noticed as a relief.

Dickens has left a description of internal economy of the Newgate of that time in another of his works, and an allusion to it may serve to explain some of his scenes, for it differs entirely from anything we see now. Formerly criminals were taken from Newgate to Tyburn for execution, and a nosegay was presented to every prisoner on his way there. Publicans, it is said, used almost to emulate each other for the honour of presenting them with the parting cup. They were considered heroes by the crowd who followed, and hoped they would, in the horrible language of the day, “die game.” Yet even here we can see some ray of better things. Perhaps this was in some way a protest against the criminal laws of England, that even in the present century were the most cruel and senseless in Europe. We can scarcely believe that Dickens’s one is of our own generation, and a man whom most of us may have seen, when we read the following in *Sketches by Boz*, “where he describes the press-room, day-room, and cells at Newgate, and the apartments about them, in one of which were five and twenty or thirty prisoners, all under sentence of death, awaiting the Recorder’s report, men of all ages and appearances, from a hardened old offender with swarthy face and grizzly beard of three days’ growth, to a handsome boy not fourteen years old, and of singularly youthful appearance even for that age, who had been condemned for burglary.” May this have suggested Oliver’s expedition with Sikes? for he was liable to death, and if the Chertsey people were of what was called “consideration,” and the old lady had been laid up in consequence of the attack on the house, the “Recorder’s report,” might fairly have been looked to with apprehension. One is sadly reminded of Burns’ pathetic lines —

“Mankind is unco’ weak,
And little to be trusted,
If self the wavering balance shake
It’s rarely right adjusted.”

In another room Dickens saw three men, of whom the fate of two was sealed, as the turnkey whispered to him, “they are dead men,” but the third, entertaining some hope of escape, lounged by a window as far away from the others as possible, who were not very visible, one, with his head on his arm, covered over the fire, and the other was “leaning on the sill of the farthest window.”

Opposite Newgate is St. Sepulchre's Church, where the tolling bell announces the last dread act of the law; and here at one time the ringer of St. Sepulchre's used to ring a hand bell under Newgate, and admonish those who in the condemned cells could readily hear him reciting some verses at midnight, of which the last two lines ran —



“And when St. Sepulchre's bell to-morrow tolls,
The Lord above have mercy on your souls.”

After the terrible murder of Nancy, Bill Sikes fled into the country, but all his efforts to escape from himself were in vain. Horace's apothegm is as true now as it was when he wrote it, and it will be true for ever: —

“Patriae quis exul, se quoque fugit.”

After he had wandered without any apparent purpose, in the first roads that he hit upon, unsteady of purpose and all uncertain where to go, he skirted Lord Mansfield's Park at Caen Wood, and came out on Hampstead Heath, and at last lay down to sleep under some bushes on the Heath, and slept. But slumber did not hold him long. “Where could he go to that was

near and not too public to get some meat and drink? Hendon. That was a good place, not far off” and out of most people’s way. Thither he directed his steps — running sometimes, and sometimes with a strange perversity loitering at a snail’s pace, or stopping altogether and idly breaking the hedges with his stick.” He turned back from Hendon without having the courage to purchase any refreshment at all, and still the phantom of his crime pursued him, as Duncan’s image did Macbeth. He fancied all the children knew him even, and at last he shaped his course towards Hatfield, frightened now even with inanimate things.

“Stones have been known to move and trees to speak,” and at “nine o’clock at night, quite tired out, and the dog limping and lame from the unaccustomed exercise, he turned down the hill by the church of the quiet village,” and crept with his dog into the sitting-room of a quiet tavern, and entered the tap-room, and some countrymen drinking before it, who made way for the new comer, but he sat as far away as possible, and ate and drank alone. The scene is terribly dramatic as the pedlar came in and produced some rustrum that was to cure anything, and take out any kind of stain. “Wine stains, fruit stains, beer stains, water stains, paint stains, pitch stains, mud stains, blood stains,” and then he took up Sikes’s hat, on which, as *fie* said, he saw a stain “not wider than a shilling, but thicker than half-a-crown,” and this he said he would do before the “ gentleman “ had time to order him a pint of ale, when Sikes snatched it away with an oath and left. Hatfield has been well shown here by Mr. Vanderhoof, and this is its most picturesque aspect.

The tavern where Sikes and his dog entered for the much-needed refreshment may be identified with at least three or four in the little town, and the visitor cannot but be struck with the dilapidated condition of a place that skirts the walls of a great palace like Hatfield House. The pedlar, who seemed to be well known to the audience, was proceeding to take Sikes’s hat, which lay on the table, and to remove the stain, running over a list of stains that his certain remedy was a specific for, and when he came to blood stains Sikes, with a hideous imprecation, overthrew the table, and tearing the hat from him burst out of the house. Then, when he was out of the house he began to think that his conduct might excite suspicion, and with



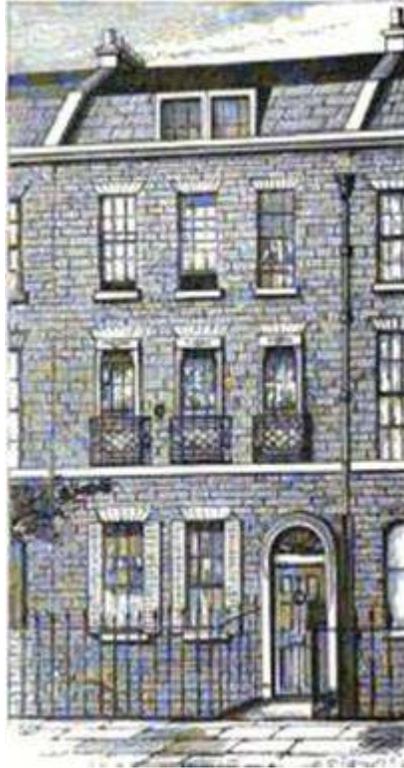
HATFIELD.

strange perverseness he sought the old-fashioned little town again.

There is one dramatic incident recorded here that is incomparably told. The murderer, in doubt, solitude, and darkness, felt a dread coming over him, and reached Hatfield once more, where he stopped at the post-office just as the mail-coach arrived.

A gamekeeper had come from the Marquis of Salisbury's or some other residence near, and he took up a parcel he had been expecting. While Sikes watched the proceedings vacantly he heard the murder discussed, and shrunk again away.

Oliver Twist was written at 48 Doughty Street, Mecklenburg Square. Dickens removed here from his apartments in Furnival's Inn, after he was married, and here also he wrote the concluding numbers of *Pickwick*, and commenced *Nicholas Nickleby*.



48 DOUGHTY STREET.

CHAPTER V.

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.

In the beginning of *Martin Chuzzlewit* Dickens shows his delight in the charms of nature. He describes the country town where Pecksniff resided and carried on his occupation of land-agent and architect and receiver of pupils who contributed a round sum for learning the profession, and paid him handsomely to be boarders in his house. "It was pretty late in the autumn of the year, when the declining sun, struggling through the mist that had obscured it all day, looked brightly down upon a little Wiltshire village within an easy journey of the fair old town of Salisbury;" and though very little indication is given of the village to which allusion is made, there is only one small country town that corresponds at all with the locality or the requirements, and that is the little town of Amesbury, which lies about seven or eight miles to the north of Salisbury, on the river Avon, and is hardly more than two miles from Stonehenge.

“Like a sudden flash of memory or spirit kindling up the mind of an old man, the sun shed a glory upon the hedges — where a few green twigs yet stood together, bravely resisting to the last the tyranny of nipping winds and early frosts — took heart and brightened up; the stream, which had been dull and sullen all day long, broke out into a cheerful smile; the birds began to chirp and twitter on the naked boughs, as though the hopeful creatures half believed the winter had gone by, and spring had come already. The vane upon the tapering spire of the old church glistened from its lofty station in sympathy with the general gladness; and from the ivy-shaded windows such gleams of light shone back upon the glowing sky that it seemed as if the quiet buildings were the hoarding-place of twenty summers, and all their ruddiness and warmth were stored within.”

If there is any discrepancy about the architecture of the church it is not more than the slight license that Dickens sometimes takes to idealise his subject. There might be those who almost think he carries his license too far, as, for example, when he says in the twelfth chapter, “the towers of Salisbury Cathedral rise before them.” Nobody knew better than Dickens that Salisbury has no towers, but only a single spire. Still all this in no way mars the beauty of his descriptions of nature. I would not have a line altered, and only mention this to answer any possible objection to the identification of his localities; and if he speaks in *Copperfield* of the spire of Blunderstone Church instead of a squat, round tower, this in no way mars his exquisite and truthful description of the place, but simply supplies what every one must feel is a want to the church.

Amesbury, where Mr. Pecksniff and his family lived, was once the seat of an abbey, and it was well endowed, but it came to the ear of King Henry that the abbess and her nuns had not quite renounced the vanities of this wicked world, and in 1177 it was dissolved. Indeed, according to Dugdale (whose history of the monasteries will always rank among the most complete works in the world), the abbess herself, while instilling high moral maxims, as was her duty, into the minds of the novices, hardly enforced her teachings by that which is said to be “better than precept.”

When the monastery was dissolved it was made a cell, as it was called, of the Abbey of Fontevault in Anjou, and Eleanor, daughter of Geoffrey, was buried here. After this it became the retreat for ladies of high rank, and so well was it endowed from time to time by its inmates and their friends that its revenues, when the dissolution of monasteries transferred half the

property of England to other's hands, amounted to a sum equal to .£9500 per annum of our present money.

The church where Tom Pinch played the organ was at one time a part of this great foundation; and though Amesbury may not boast of a hostelry called the Dragon it does of the George, which is only a humorous play on the name, just as when, in the sixteenth chapter, Martin Chuzzlewit is introduced to a professor in America by Mr. Jefferson Brick, who was said to have written some powerful pamphlets under the signature of "Suturb," or Brutus" reversed.

At Amesbury there is a house of great beauty that stands in a well-wooded park; and as this and the estates that surround it have changed hands several times, it is not impossible that Mr. Pecksniff may have found many opportunities of turning a more or less honest penny in transfers of leases or holdings. The house stands back in a picturesque park, and the river Avon separates the grounds from the village. It was built by Inigo Jones, and belonged at one time to the Duke of Queensberry. Gay the poet lived there at one time, and now it is the seat of the Antrobus family.

But the house where Mr. Pecksniff practised and lived is in the middle of the country town, and in the road before it the signs of coming winter are beautifully pictured by Dickens. "The fallen leaves with which the ground was strewn gave forth a pleasant fragrance, and, subduing all harsh sounds of distant feet and wheels, created a repose in gentle unison with the light scattering of seed hither and thither by the distant husbandmen, and with the noiseless passage of the plough as it turned up the rich brown earth and wrought a graceful pattern in the stubbled fields. On the motionless branches of some trees autumn berries hung like clusters of coral beads, as in those fabled orchards where the fruits were jewels; others, stripped of all their garniture, stood each the centre of its little heap of bright red leaves, watching their slow decay; others again, still wearing theirs, had them all crunched and crackled up as though they had been burnt; about the stems of some were piled in ruddy mounds the apples they had borne that year; while others (hardly evergreens this class) showed somewhat stern and gloomy in their vigour, as charged by nature with the admonition that it is not to her more sensitive and joyous favourites she grants the longest term of life. Still athwart their darker boughs the sunbeams struck out paths of deeper gold; and the red light, mantling in among their swarthy branches, used them as foils to set its brightness off and aid the lustre of the dying day.

“A moment and its glory was no more. The sun went down beneath the long dark lines of hill and cloud which piled up in the west an airy city — wall heaped on wall, battlement on battlement. The light was all withdrawn, the shining church turned cold and dark, the stream forgot to smile, the birds were silent, and the gloom of winter dwelt on everything.

“An evening wind uprose, too, and the slighter branches cracked and rattled as they moved in skeleton dances to its moaning music. The withered leaves, no longer quiet, hurried to and fro in search of shelter from its chill pursuit; the labourer unyoked his horses, and, with head bent down, trudged briskly home beside them; and from the cottage windows lights began to glance and wink upon the darkening fields.”

This extract has been made at some length because often in the more exciting personal adventures that Dickens introduces us to his charming descriptions of country scenes are passed over. In *David Copperfield*, notwithstanding the earnest purpose he has in delineating the gloomy characters of the Murdstones, the cruelty of Creakle, or the selfishness of Steerforth, his whole soul is in Yarmouth, with its quaint seamen and fishing-boats, and its wonderful streets and passages, and the memorable drive to Blunderstone in the carrier’s cart, with all the country beauties that surrounded the church and the old homestead. In *Nickleby* the picturesque features of the drive to Dotheboys Hall are not lost sight of, even though the destination was so dismal; and when the somewhat fortunate acquaintance of Mr. Crummles was made on the journey to Portsmouth, the soul of Dickens seems to linger on the picturesque beauties of the Surrey Downs that shed a ray, if even a feeble one, on Nicholas and Smike. If the many graphic descriptions of country scenes were collected from the works of Dickens and made into a volume by themselves, and if they could have been illustrated by such pencils as Creswick’s or Foster’s, Dickens would live in memory for long, even if he never depicted a human character. When Verisopht and Hawk went out to fight the fatal duel all the sympathy of Dickens was with the country lanes they passed through as the morning was only dawning on the night, and hardly had chased away the darkness. “It was already daybreak. Fields, trees, gardens, hedges, — everything looked very beautiful; the young man scarcely seemed to have noticed them before, though he had passed the same objects a thousand times.”

Napoleon used to say, and he said well, that he would live by his contributions to the arts of peace more than to those of war; and if Jena and

Austerlitz had never been, the *Code Napoleon*, at which he was almost as assiduous a reviser as Mr. Tronchin himself, was the work that he felt more pride and more pleasure in than all his conquests.

Not only does his delight for scenery break out in the country, but he sees even in town, and in the most repulsive parts even of town, there is something picturesque to cheer him. In a storm of rain in any town or city all we desire is to get out of the way, and find some shelter in a porch or gallery, and we not unnaturally think it a great nuisance; but Turner, or Prout, or Copley Fielding can see beauty in it, and depict the indigo sky with a break of light beyond, and the waggoners covering their horses or hurrying to a covered passage.

There is another very beautiful description of an early winter's morning in the fifth chapter. Tom Pinch had to go to Salisbury in a "hooded vehicle" that looked "like a gig with a tumour" to bring the new pupil, Martin Chuzzlewit, to Mr. Pecksniff's. "This was the glad commencement of a bracing day in early winter, such as may put the languid summer season (speaking of it when it can't be had) to the blush, and shame the spring by being sometimes cold by halves. The sheep bells rang as clearly in the vigorous air as if they felt its wholesome influence like living creatures. The trees, in lieu of leaves or blossoms, shed upon the ground a frosty rime that sparkled as it fell, and might have been the dust of diamonds; so it was to Tom. From cottage chimneys smoke went streaming up high — high, as if the earth had lost its grossness, being so fair, and must not be oppressed by heavy vapour. The crust of ice on the else rippling brook was so transparent and so thin in texture, that the lively water might, of its own free will, have stopped — in Tom's glad mind it had — to look upon the lovely morning."

If this village at which Pecksniff lived was really Amesbury, Tom Pinch might probably drive along the river side through Great-Durnford; and the description exactly corresponds with the scene that would present itself. The picture of an early, exhilarating winter's morning is not excelled by anything in Sir Walter Scott. "And now the morning grew so fair, and all things were so wide awake and gay, that the sun seeming to say — Tom had no doubt he said : — ' I can't stand it any longer; I must have a look;' streamed out in radiant majesty. The mist, too shy and gentle for such lusty company, fled off, quite scared, before it; and as it swept away, the hills and mounds and distant pasture lands, teeming with placid sheep and noisy crows, came out as bright as though they were unrolled bran new for the

occasion. In compliment to which discovery the brook stood still no longer, but ran briskly off to bear the tidings to the water-mill three miles away.”

At last the spire of Salisbury arose before Tom through the mist, and he was soon in the ancient city which is one of the most interesting and venerable in all England. The spire was built as a guide in the flat lands that surround it, and it is marvellous at what great distances it can be seen on a clear day from remote parts of Salisbury Plain. Dubious roads intersect this plain, sometimes lost in the scanty growth that is only a bare pasture for sheep, and sometimes their direction is so uncertain that a great landmark is necessary to direct the steps of the wayfarer. There are those who think that from a distance the spire looks thin and weak, and who would compare it somewhat unfavourably with the proportions of Norwich, or St. Mary's, Stamford, which is perhaps coeval with it, though on a much smaller scale; but at any rate it shows itself clearly and incisively in the sky, and has for six centuries been a landmark to the tillers of the scanty soil who have sought the old city with their produce of poultry and butter.

The market-place is a perfect picture of a light and graceful building of the fifteenth century. The buttresses, the arches, and the graceful canopy, may be copied by modern architects, but they cannot be improved.



MARKET-PLACE SALISBURY.

Salisbury is a thoroughly English city, without any trace of Roman or Norman work about it. Indeed there are not even the remains of a baronial fortress. Clear, bright water runs through its streets, and if we look over a parapet of a bridge we sometimes see a trout of fair dimensions dart away like a shadow.

The market that Tom Pinch saw was the successor of one granted by Henry III.; and even now Salisbury market day presents us with a scene of unusual life and vigour. There are two market days in each week — Tuesday and Saturday — and it was, as is apparent from the history, on the Tuesday's market that Pinch went to Salisbury to meet the new pupil.

The house at which Tom Pinch put up his trap and horse, though it is not mentioned by name, can easily be identified. It is in High Street, near the quaint Dutch-like houses with overlapping tiled walls and red roofs, and the quaintest of oriel windows, and it is near the gateway that spans over the street and is yet called the city gate, with its battlements, and its coats of arms, and carved spandrils, that yet remain in entirety.

But Tom Pinch had some notion that Salisbury was a desperate, harum-scarum sort of place, and in general terms a most dissipated city; and having consigned his horse to the ostler, with a promise that he would in an hour or so return and see him take his corn, he set out for a stroll among the streets, "with a vague and not unpleasant idea" that he was doing a very dissipated sort of thing.

Salisbury is certainly a charming city for a stroll, and to one of Tom's quiet, habits a world of life seemed to be going on in its confines, "the thoroughfares about the market-place being filled with carts, horses, donkeys, baskets, waggons, garden stuff, meat," etc. etc. The farmers also that we meet at Salisbury market seem almost to be of a different type from any other we meet in England. It was the writer's fortune to dine at a farmers' ordinary in the city, and though, when he happened to ask a question, he received an intelligible answer, the farmers, when they spoke among themselves, used a *patois* that was literally quite as if it had been the language one might expect to hear on market day in Dalmatia or Herzegovina. Somerset dialect, or Yorkshire, or even Lancashire, one may in an hour or two become familiar with, or at any rate it is possible to know what the conversation is about even if one could not exactly join in it with credit; but I endeavoured to listen to the farmers, who spoke quite audibly, and in one hour I did not recognise a single word they spoke — literally not

one single word, whether it was yes or no. Yet, when they addressed me, whatever they said was clear enough, and in good English.

Tom Pinch might or might not have found the same difficulty, but he saw just the same scenes that any one now may witness if their business or their pleasure leads them to Salisbury on a Tuesday or a Saturday. "There were young farmers and old farmers, with smock frocks, brown great-coats, drab great-coats, red worsted comforters, leather leggings, wonderful-shaped hats, hunting whips, and rough sticks, standing about in groups or talking noisily together on tavern steps, or paying and receiving huge amounts of greasy wealth with the assistance of such bulky pocket-books, that when they were in their pockets it was apoplexy to get them out, and when they were out spasms to get them in again. Also there were farmers' wives in beaver bonnets and red cloaks, riding shaggy horses purged of all earthly passions, who went soberly into all manner of places without desiring to know why, and who, if required, would have stood stock-still in a china shop with a complete dinner service at each hoof. Also a great many dogs that were strongly interested in the state of the market and the bargains of their masters; and a great confusion of tongues, both brute and human."

Then we have Pinch's journey among the booths, and his wonder at the cutlery and all the tempting wares of the itinerant vendors, and his purchase of a seven-bladed knife, of which none of the blades would cut. Then he wandered along High Street and the market square, looking in at the shop windows, after taking a long and wondering look at the bank, which must be the Wilts and Dorset banking house, and wondering in which direction the caverns ran that contained the bullion. There were book-shops, with *Quarll and his Host of Imitators*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Arabian Nights*; and this poor Tom found to be the most trying shop of all. Then he surveyed the theatre with awe, which was not diminished when a sallow man with long hair came out and told a boy to run home and fetch his broadsword.

There is a beautiful little episode here on Salisbury Cathedral. Tom Pinch was of a musical turn, and used, indeed, to play the organ on Sundays at the church in the small country town where, as Pecksniff said to old Martin Chuzzlewit, he "took the liberty of dwelling." Whenever he performed Mr. Pecksniff used from his square pew to look quite benevolently at the congregation, for poor Tom was so entirely like a piece of property belonging to himself that he somehow gradually came to believe that it was he who played upon the organ, and, as the performance was gratuitous, he

fancied that he was conferring a great boon upon the congregation, and felt very benevolent. The organist's assistant at Salisbury was a friend of Pinch's, and when he went to the cathedral it was his great delight to listen to his performances, and join in the matins or vespers, as the case might be. "He had been, like Tom, an old fashioned boy at school, though well liked by the noisy fellows too;" and on the afternoon when Tom went it so happened that the assistant was on duty all alone, and there was no one in the dusty organ-loft but Tom and his friend.

The organ was the gift of George III., and it greatly interfered with the perspective of the cathedral in Pinch's time. The organ screen was there then, and it was not in good taste, but Wyatt, who designed it, was better versed in classical architecture than Gothic. "Tom helped him with the stops; and finally, the service being over, Tom took the organ himself. It was then turning dark, and the yellow light that streamed in through the ancient windows in the choir was mingled with a murky red. As the grand tones resounded through the church they seemed to Tom to find an echo in the depth of every ancient tomb." The farmers had jogged homewards, and left Salisbury quiet, when Tom repaired to the inn in High Street and sat down to his dinner, "a well-cooked steak and smoking hot potatoes," and this was flanked by cheese and celery, and a jug of mighty Wiltshire ale, till the new pupil, Martin Chuzzlewit, arrived, and they took their journey home across the southern part of Salisbury plain to Pecksniff's residence. Once more the road they traversed is brought up again in the narrative, and that with equal interest. There is something always fascinating about Salisbury Plain. The great remains at Stonehenge were of venerable antiquity even a thousand years before William the Conqueror set his foot upon English soil, and the great stretches of unenclosed waste make one wonder why pains are not taken to bring so many almost wasted miles into cultivation. Then again Salisbury plain is connected in our reading with extinct fauna; the bustard used to roam at will over it, and indeed it was the author's good fortune to see two of the splendid birds in 1871, perhaps good fortune is hardly, under the circumstances, the right word, for they had been shot by a gamekeeper, and were sent in to Salisbury. Surely one thinks the benefit of the law should be extended to these almost extinct birds, and the few specimens that are left might be rigidly protected.

Before Salisbury was again visited is narrated the journey to London which Pecksniff took to see his relative, Martin Chuzzlewit. The old miser

had sent for him, and pretended that he wished to remember him and his daughters in his will, and even paid his expenses, while Pecksniff was an easy bait, and arranged that he should live at his house in Wiltshire. The Pecksniff family went by the heavy coach to Salisbury through Andover, Leverstock, Basingstoke, and Bagshot. Delightful enough the road was in summer weather, but on a winter's night the inside of the coach was inferior in comfort to the inside of a railway carriage, — even an ordinary third-class one, such as we see now in the principal lines in England; and Dickens has left records of the travelling by coaches in nearly all of his works. “The night wore away in the usual manner . . . the coach stopped and went on, and went on and stopped times out of number. Passengers got up and passengers got down, and fresh horses came and went, and came and went again with scarcely any interval between each team as it seemed to those who were broad awake.” On this road the horses were often changed after a run of seven miles; but all journeys came to an end, and at last Pecksniff, looking out of the window, said, in language that any one would be apt to use without the fear of Lindley Murray before his eyes, “Now it is tomorrow morning, and we are there.” Soon after the coach stopped at the office, where Pecksniff had the luggage left, and, taking a daughter under each arm, he managed, with much more dexterity than we should have given him credit for, to dive “across the street, and then across other streets, and so up the queerest courts, and down the strangest alleys, and under the blindest archways, in a kind of frenzy — now thinking he had lost his way, now thinking he had found it — until at length they stopped at a kind of paved yard near the monument before a very dingy house “ — and this house was Todgers' boarding-house. Todgers' seems to have been in a kind of labyrinth that nobody could be certain about finding, and some guests who had occasionally been asked to dine at Todgers' are said to have wandered round and round the boarding-house and become so lost in the maze of streets that they have finally discovered their bearings by some steeple or distant object, and struck some highway they knew, and with relieved feelings recovered their homes. There is a district between Trinity Square, the Minories, and Crutched Friars that possibly corresponds in some measure with the district that is alluded to as Todgers', but it is doubtful if Dickens had any precise spot in his mind; the description is simply a very good one of many parts which lie between St. Katherine's Docks and Whitechapel. There was the staircase window which tradition

said had not been opened for a century, and the cellar which had no connection with the house, “and which was reported to be full of wealth, though in what shape — whether in silver, brass, or gold, or butts of wine, or casks of gunpowder — was matter of profound uncertainty and supreme indifference to Todgers and all its inmates.”

But the “observatory on the top of the house was not the least characteristic part of the establishment. It contained posts and fragments of rotten lines once intended to dry clothes upon; and there were two or three tea-chests out there with forgotten plants in them like old walking-sticks. Whoever climbed to this observatory was stunned at first from having knocked his head against the little door in coming out, and, after that, was for the moment choked from having looked perforce straight down the kitchen chimney.” But, as Dickens says, when once the summit was reached the sight was a very remarkable one. There were miles of housetops to gaze at if the day were bright, and the great monument which Wren put up, and steeples, towers, and belfries rose above the smoky atmosphere with shining vanes, and a whole forest of ships’ masts.

It was while staying at Todgers that Pecksniff received the memorable rebuff from the wealthy brassfounder, at whose house Tom Pinch’s sister was a governess. He had consented, in the height of his benevolence, to take some little parcel from her brother to her, and his daughters, under protest, as it were, consented to accompany their philanthropic father. A one-horse fly was hired, and, crossing London Bridge, they passed all the old inns that Dickens delighted in, and, driving through Newington and Walworth Road, they finally arrived, after a drive of a little more than two miles, at Camberwell. The description of the great brassfounder’s residence is so well told that it must be quoted. It was “so big and fierce that its mere outside, like the outside of a giant’s castle, struck terror into the vulgar minds, and made bold persons quail. There was a great front gate with a great bell, whose handle was in itself a note of admiration; and a great lodge, which, being rather close to the house, rather spoilt the look-out, certainly, but made the look-in tremendous. At this entry a great porter kept constant watch and ward, and when he gave the visitor high leave to pass, he rang a second bell, responsive to whose note a great footman appeared in due time at the great hall door.” The precise tone of a London footman is well hit off here. Miss Pinch, as may be supposed, had but few visitors, and this caused a momentary difficulty with the official who had to announce

the Pecksniffs. If it had been visitors for the family they would have been announced with cold respect, or if for the cook they would have been ushered in with a warm, personal interest. But, rising to the occasion, the skilful adherent just hit off the happy medium, and finally introduced the members of the Pecksniff family into a small room in the mansion. Miss Pinch's pupil made her appearance, and though not perhaps a very engaging young lady, she was, on account of her great expectations, embraced and flattered by all the visitors.

"A sweet face, my dears," said Mr. Pecksniff, turning to his daughters; "a charming manner!" and then, producing a professional card, he begged of the young lady to assure her "distinguished parents" that, so far from intruding, he merely called to take some notice of Miss Pinch, whose brother was in his employ; but at the same time he could not leave the chaste and elegant mansion without adding his testimony as an architect, however humble, to the correctness and elegance of the owner's taste, etc. etc. Then, as they left, Mr. Pecksniff in loud terms expatiated upon the beauty of all the interior arrangements and furniture of the hall and passages; and, indeed, by the time he had reached the front door he had delivered quite a compendious lecture upon internal house decoration. He was proceeding in the same strain to canvass the exterior of the building, and how the fluted Ionic well matched the console cornice and the window pediments with their dentils, when a window was thrown up, and the great apostle of art, with his well-trained daughters, thought the climax had now come, and the wealthy proprietor would arrest his exit by the lodge until he could come down to welcome the great man. But, alas for the vanity of human expectations! All that Pecksniff heard was a peremptory order to "keep off the grass!" Not hearing the first command, Mr. Pecksniff merely took off his hat, saying —

"Your servant, sir; I am proud to make your acquaintance."

"Come off the grass, will you!" roared the gentleman.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Mr. Pecksniff, doubtful of his having heard aright; 'did you?'

"Come off the grass" repeated the gentleman warmly.

"We are unwilling to intrude, sir," Mr. Pecksniff smilingly began.

"But you are intruding, — unwarrantably intruding, — trespassing. You see a gravel walk, don't you? What do you think it's meant for? Open the gate. Show that party out."

This is really a charming scene, but it is probable that the brassfounder knew a little more of Mr. Pecksniff than the latter supposed.

The young ladies were more apt to fit themselves to London life than might have been expected from such recruits from a remote Wiltshire town, and were soon the life and soul of Todgers' boarding-house, even though it seemed to have numbered among its guests young gentlemen who believed they were, and perhaps really were, fit to be trusted alone in London.

The old-established firm of Anthony Chuzzlewit and Son, Manchester warehousemen, "had its place of business in a very narrow street somewhere behind the post-office," and in this street every house was gloomy, even on the brightest June morning; and in the hot dog-days each light porter watered the pavement before his master's premises with fantastic patterns from a water-can. We can yet see, in other parts of London, in nearly all the streets that run up from the river-side, some such other premises; and, what may seem almost out of place, we also see "spruce gentlemen, with their hands in the pockets of symmetrical trousers, contemplating their undeniable boots, in dusty warehouse doorways, which appeared to be the hardest work they did, except now and then carrying pens behind their ears." And indeed it may seem singular to many visitors to London how frequently great industries are represented with hardly a sign of life. The smallest cutlery establishment in Sheffield or Birmingham, and the most unpretending of mills in either Manchester or Oldham or Rochdale, makes twenty times as much show and bustle as some of the greatest financial centres in London.

"A dim, dirty, smoky, tumble-down, rotten old house it was as anybody would desire to see, but the firm of Anthony Chuzzlewit and Son transacted all their business and their pleasure, too, such as it was; for neither the young man nor the old had any other residence, or any other care or thought beyond its narrow limits."

There was a grim humour in old Martin Chuzzlewit, who inveigled Pecksniff into being his host under the idea that he really believed him to be quite a single-minded relative, and had no designs at all upon his accumulated wealth.

All the scenes in London are life-like, and speak of a very different city from that we now know. But the time came at last when the Pecksniffs must part from their friends and the lodgers at the boarding-house whom the ladies had captivated. Mrs. Todgers took a regretful farewell of them, and

even a more tender leave of the great architect, who, as it would seem, had been more than gracious to her. But the coach knew of no delay, and as the horn sounded the young ladies lay back in their respective corners with melancholy reflections upon the close of their holiday. Their worthy parent, however, had fallen into old Martin Chuzzlewit's easy snare, and was reflecting upon the most summary way of dislodging his grandson as the coach rolled along through the pleasant lanes of Berkshire and Hampshire to their dwelling-place.

The two young men in Pecksniff's office little knew the storm that was brewing as the great and good man was approaching the Wiltshire village, and in happy ignorance they received Mr. Westlock's invitation to dine with him at Salisbury. He, too, had been a pupil of Mr. Pecksniff's, and found out the manner of man he was, but his time of service was over, and he had inherited a competence, and most naturally asked his well-tryed friend, Tom Pinch, to come to the long-promised dinner at Salisbury and to bring the new pupil, Martin Chuzzlewit.

Mr. Pecksniff's horse was regarded as a kind of sacred animal, that could only be used by him or by some one duly commissioned by him, so both Pinch and Martin Chuzzlewit decided to go on foot to Salisbury. It was a grand walk on a cold day. The distance was eight miles, and as they left their dwelling the milestones fairly came and went, as though no distance had intervened between them. But when, as Dickens says, "the towers of the old cathedral' rose up before them a fall of snow had set in, and they came into the 'sheltered streets' as if they were walking upon a white carpet."

The inn they went to was not the homely one where Pinch first met Martin Chuzzlewit, but another; and from the description we have very little difficulty in identifying the Angel. It was winter time, so that nearly everything was in season, and "the hall was a very grove of dead game and dangling joints of mutton." They could also recognise "an illustrious larder, with glass doors, developing cold fowls and noble joints."

Nothing can exceed, in a few words, the description given of a comfortable room filled with all appliances for a pleasant evening which Dickens gives of the private dining-room at the Angel. "In a room with all the window curtains drawn, a fire piled half-way up the chimney, plates warming before it, wax candles gleaming everywhere, and a table spread for three, with silver and glass enough for thirty." This was the picture that

presented itself to the two new friends after their walk of eight miles on a frosty evening.

There is a graphic little description of the London coach coming down to Salisbury as the two friends, Tom and Martin, for such they had become, waited for Mr. Pecksniff on his road from London. As we may often see on frosty days in early winter, the premature frost had given way to rain, and nothing is more splashy than a December thaw, and, as Dickens has observed, it rained hard. Perhaps in the interest which is excited by the arrival of the virtuous architect at the lane which joined the Andover road and the meeting between him and the somewhat selfish though by no means unkindly Chuzzlewit junior, the description of waiting for a coach on a winter's morning may be overlooked.

But for all this it is very graphic. We all know how interested we feel in waiting at some by-station for a stopping train, and if it is a winter's night and we seek the fire in the waiting-room, our repose is brief. The station-master tells us that our train is a quarter of an hour late, but the goods train that backs up into a siding to make way for the express, and the frightful steam whistling, render quietude all but impossible. In old coaching days it was different, and if we were waiting for a four-in-hand there was little fear of the vehicle being missed. Pinch and Martin were at the finger-post half-an-hour before the time the London coach was due. "It was not by any means a lovely morning, for the sky was black and cloudy, and it rained hard," and Mr. Chuzzlewit's temper was so severely tried that his equanimity quite left him, "for while he and Mr. Pinch stood waiting under a hedge, looking at the rain, the gig, the cart, and its reeking driver, he did nothing but grumble; and but that it was indispensable that there should be two parties to any dispute he would certainly have picked a quarrel with Tom.

"At length the noise of wheels was faintly audible in the distance, and presently the coach came splashing through mud and mire with one miserable outside passenger crouching down among wet straw under a saturated umbrella, and the coachman, guard, and horses in a fellowship of dripping wretchedness." There is something, however, in this outward phase of coach travelling that has its picturesque side. The four bays brought to a stand-still, steaming and breathing loudly, and the glare of the coach-lamps making the surrounding darkness more intense — then we knew that in a few moments the horses would start off at a gallop, and be

quite lost in the darkness, guided not by rails laid down with mechanical precision, but by the steady hand, and the keen eye of the coachman.

The trip to America hardly falls within the limits of the present work, except indeed in so far as the setting off from Liverpool is concerned, but of this Dickens says very little. At the time he wrote, nearly all the emigrant traffic was in the hands of the Americans, and it was impossible to walk along the Liverpool docks, especially from the “Prince’s” to the “Trafalgar,” without being struck with the great number of flags that bore the stars and stripes; again and again have I wandered along the quays, some few years after *Chuzzlewit* was written, and been struck as a boy with this; but the American ships were better models, more neatly kept, and far more intelligently commanded than our own. They taught us our business, as we may say, and if, like England, they had struck off all shackles from shipowners, they would indeed have been formidable rivals, and of the twelve steamers that leave Liverpool for America weekly, it could hardly have been said that every one was built and owned in England. But if a change has come over the harbours of England, we can recognise another and a much more important one in the cities of America, and that since the great civil war has ended. When Martin landed with his faithful henchman Tapley in New York, he was taken possession of by a journalist, who treated him hospitably enough, but, to quote Dickens again, Martin was greeted by “Here’s the Sewer — the New York Sewer! Here’s the Sewer’s exposure of the Wall Street gang. Here’s the Sewer’s article upon the Judge that tried him day afore yesterday for libel, and the Sewer’s tribute to the independent jury that did not convict him, and the Sewer’s account of what they might have expected if they had. Here’s the wide-awake Sewer now in its twelfth thousand, and still a printing off. Here’s the New York Sewer.”

“It is by such enlightened means that the bubbling passions of my country find a vent,” said Colonel Diver, who was the editor of the *New York Rowdy Journal* to Martin Chuzzlewit, as he invited him to see the offices of the great journal, and partake of a bottle of Champagne of his own importation, which bottle increased from one to three as the morning passed. The introduction to Jefferson Brick, the “war correspondent” of the journal, was as follows — “You have heard of Mr. Jefferson Brick, I see, sir,” quoth the Colonel with a smile. “England has heard of Jefferson Brick, Europe has heard of Jefferson Brick;” and in reply, when Martin began to apologise for his ignorance, he was quickly stopped by the Colonel, “Oh,

you Europeans! I have reason to know, sir, that the aristocratic circles of your country quail before the name of Jefferson Brick," etc. etc.

Now, at one time Jefferson Brick had some sort of a prototype in America, and if the picture we see in Dickens is somewhat over coloured, it is not more so than many others of characters that are drawn from English life, like "the Shepherd," or Sam Weller, or Sergeant Buzfuz. But the Americans are quite a changed people, it is a pleasant thing to record, since the days of Mr. Brick. There is much less of inflated language, and, as the writer can speak from personal knowledge of the country, both before and after the war, he may add that the national character is so much improved, and so raised, and Americans are so much more worthy of their traditions and their flag, that they might adopt for their motto, "per castra ad astra" with more aptness than the words were ever used.

Kingsgate Street, where the immortal Mrs. Gamp resided, has altered but little from its old form. It runs from High Holborn to Queen's Square, and is yet so well supplied with barber's shops and very small traders, that one might almost fancy it must needs depend for its subsistence upon the outside world; yet let there only be any commotion in it — let a policeman, for example, have a difference with some resident or wayfarer, and the population that suddenly appears is something amazing. Eastern travellers tell us how, when a camel or goat or any other animal of the desert has paid the debt of nature, and lies on the gravelly sands, that troops of vultures, unseen before, appear on the confines and cover the remains of the carcase; and when some excitement appears in Kingsgate Street it is not too much to say that it would hardly be possible to follow the channels through which the expectant crowd blocks up the roadway. As I happened to pass through it two ladies who resided there would seem to have had a difference, or at any rate they were expecting one, for they were addressing each other in terms of such studious politeness, quite diplomatic indeed, that it was clear the protocols before an engagement were going on, and doors began to unlatch slowly, and at intervals, though they soon would be all as open as the doors of an excursion train ten minutes before its time of starting. The combinations in the nineteenth chapter[^] are humorous. Pecksniff, mistaken for Mr. Whilks when he knocked at the door, and hearing, "Don't say it's you, Mr. Whilks, and that poor creetur Mrs. Whilks, with not even a pincushion ready. Don't say its you, Mr. Whilks!"

“It isn’t Mr. Whilks,” said Pecksniff. “I don’t know the man. Nothing of the kind. A gentleman is dead, and some person being wanted in the house you have been recommended by Mr. Mould, the undertaker.”

Mrs. Gamp with her large bundle, “a pair of pattens, and a species of gig umbrella, the latter article in colour like a faded leaf, except where a circular patch of lively blue had been dexterously let in at the top.” But the finest humour is where Mrs. Gamp in her measure hits off Pecksniff’s vein and moralises to him in the cab. She was the more estimable party of the two, possibly a little more honest, but at any rate she was able to boast of a better knowledge of her own profession than Pecksniff had of his. The scene is almost as full of humour as Harry Foker’s meeting with Major Pendennis at the coffee-room of the George Inn, Beymouth, when he suddenly woke up after



Mrs. Gamp’s House, Kingsgate Street.

his dinner and found the Major sitting with his usual dignity, and entered upon a conversation with him in such familiar terms that his biographer is constrained to say that there were moments in his life when he would have “winked at the Duke of Wellington.”

As for Mrs. Gamp, she was “like most persons who have attained to great eminence in their profession, she took to hers very kindly; insomuch that, setting aside her natural predilections as a woman,” she attended a birth or a death with quite an equal amount of zest and relish.

“And so the gentleman’s dead, sir! The more’s the pity.” She did not even know his name. “But it’s what we must all come to; it’s as certain as being born;” and then, being quite a match for Mr. Pecksniff even at his own weapons, and also being of much more humorous turn, she informed the stately architect how, “When Gamp was summoned to his long home, and she see him a-lying in Guy’s Hospital with a penny-piece on each eye, and his wooden leg under his left arm, she thought she should have fainted away, but she bore up;” and this would seem true if the rumours in Kingsgate Street were founded in fact; for Mrs. Gamp had comported herself with such fortitude that she disposed of the remains of her deceased husband for the benefit of science. A drive of ten or twelve minutes brought them back to’ Chuzzlewit’s, where Mrs. Gamp’s professional duties commenced. Kingsgate Street is also the scene of the memorable quarrel between Mrs. Gamp and Betsy Prigg, in which the latter was certainly in the wrong.

The Bull Inn, Holborn, where Mrs. Gamp attended Mr. Lewsome, yet stands, though it seems to be not quite in as flourishing a condition as it was when she ministered to the wants of the apparently dying man. He took his draughts *regularly*, the experienced nurse said, and indeed her system of administering one was so simple that much trouble was saved with her patients. It consisted of “clutching them by the windpipe till they gasped,” and immediately pouring out the quantity which was mentioned in the prescription. Indeed, she told the doctor when he called in the morning, and inquired whether he had taken his medicine regularly, that while either she or Betsy Prigg were in attendance there was “no fear of that.”

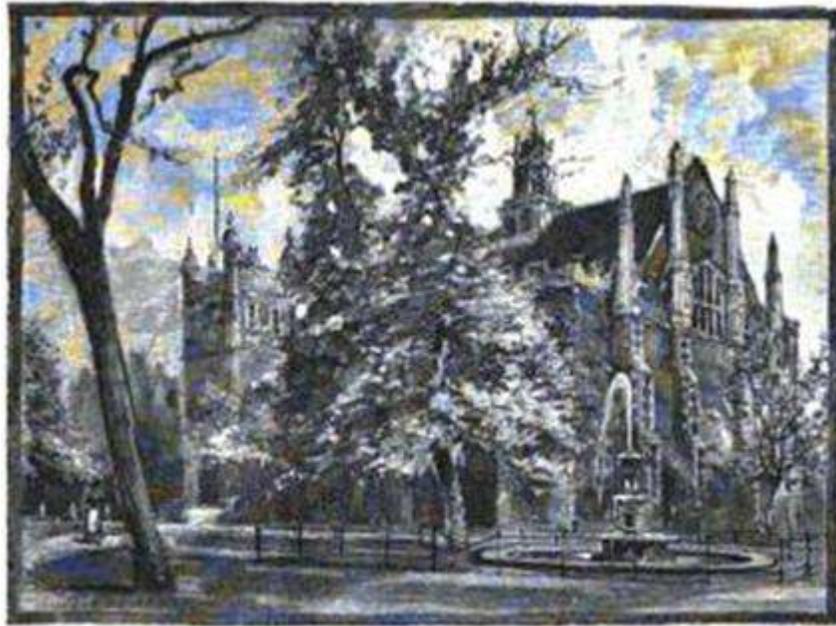
Of Mr. Tigg Montague’s career it is not too much to say that it was at once considered too absurd and overdrawn when it appeared. The Anglo-Bengalee Loan and Life Assurance Company, with its great brass announcement looking “bolder than the Bank;” “the offices newly plastered, newly papered, newly painted, newly counterpaneled, newly floor-clothed, etc., with goods that were substantial and expensive, and designed like the company to last,” would hardly be needed now; there is a somewhat less expensive way of making a show of capital. But when Tigg Montague,

for he had now reversed his name, explained to Jonas Chuzzlewit, who was as simple in knavery as honest men are in fair dealing, that the system was this: “B is a little tradesman who wants a loan, — say fifty or a hundred pounds, perhaps more, — no matter. B proposes self and two securities. B is accepted. Two securities give a bond. B assures his own life for double the amount, and brings two friends’ lives also, just to patronise the office.

“Besides charging B the regular interest we get B’s premium, and B’s friends’ premiums; and we charge B for the bond; and whether we accept it or not we charge B for inquiries — and in short we stick it into B up hill and down dale, and make a devilish comfortable little property out of him.” This is almost exactly the system that was pursued in a very notorious office in Chancery Lane, which came to a sudden ending in consequence of a professional gentleman, who was not to be trifled with, applying for some temporary loan, and being in a sufficiently independent position to demand a scrutiny of their affairs.

Fountain Court has altered since the days when Tom Pinch used to meet his sister Ruth. She had walked briskly all the way from her lodgings, and now she crosses Fleet Street, dodging the cabs and omnibuses, enters the Temple Gate, and passes down the lane into Fountain Court — there to wait for her brother. The Temple figures again in Martin Chuzzlewit at the climax of the story, when old Martin Chuzzlewit appears in his true colours, and Pecksniff is treated in the way that his assumption and fawning hypocrisy merit.

London Bridge is again introduced in this book — for it had a fascination for Dickens. It was a bright morning, when Tom who had come out with Ruth for an



FOUNTAIN COURT, TEMPLE.

early stroll before the commencement of the day's work. "There the steamboats lay alongside of each other; hard and fast for ever, to all appearance, but designing to get out somehow, and quite confident of doing it; and in that faith shoals of passengers, and heaps of luggage, were proceeding hurriedly on board. Little steamboats dashed up and down the stream incessantly. Tiers upon tiers of vessels, scores of masts, labyrinths of tackle, idle sails, splashing oars, gliding row-boats, lumbering barges, sunken piles, with ugly lodgings for the water-rat within their mud-discoloured nooks; church-steeple, warehouses, house roofs, arches, bridges, etc. etc., were all jumbled up together, beyond Tom's powers of separation."

CHAPTER VI.

OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.

In some respects the *Old Curiosity Shop* is the most discouraging of all the works that Dickens has written, to illustrate with a pencil, because he has left little beyond descriptions of places and English scenes, without even indicating their whereabouts. Even the shop itself has disappeared, and

Mr. Vanderhoof has adopted, very happily, another establishment of a similar character, and one that certainly would seem to fill all the requirements of the residence of little Nell and her grandfather. Those who are acquainted with the Holborn district will have no difficulty in remembering the original. When Kit had children six and seven years old he used to take them to see the place where the house had stood; “but it had long been pulled down, and a fine broad road was in its place. At first he would draw with his stick a square upon the ground to show them where it used to stand. But he soon became uncertain of the spot, and could only say it was thereabouts, he thought, and these alterations were confusing.” The old gentleman who tells the story in the first chapter gives some indication of the kind of place it was, but none of the direction in which it lay.



OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.

Some descriptions in this chapter are very beautiful. “Covent Garden Market at sunrise, too, in the spring or summer, when the fragrance of sweet flowers is in the air, overpowering the unwholesome streams of last night’s debauchery, and driving the dusky thrush, whose cage has hung outside the garret window, half mad with joy. Poor bird, the only neighbouring thing at all akin to the other little captives, some of whom, shrinking from the hot hands of drunken purchasers, lie drooping on the path already, while others, sodden by close contact, await the time when they shall be watered up to

please more sober company, and make old clerks, who pass them on their road to business, wonder what has filled their breasts with visions of the country.” Though indeed the market stands in such strange and unfit surroundings, it cheers many a denizen of the city, and reminds him of sunny skies, and shady lanes, and broad gardens. David Copperfield speaks of the delight with which he strolled into Covent Garden Market to look at the pine apples, after he had inspected the windows of a venison shop in Fleet Street. Yet what a picture we have of it, our mutual friend. “The market of Covent Garden was quite out of the creature’s line of road, but it had the attraction for him that it has for the worst of the solitary members of the drunken tribe. It may be the companionship of the gin and beer that slip about among carters and hucksters, or it may be the companionship of the trodden vegetable refuse, which is so like their own dress that perhaps they take the market for a great wardrobe; but be it what it may, you shall see no such individual drunkards on doorsteps anywhere as there. Of dozing women drunkards especially, you shall come upon such specimens there, in the morning sunlight, as you might “seek out of doors in vain through London.”

“There is a swarm of young savages always flitting about this same place, creeping off with fragments of orange chests and mouldy litter — Heaven knows into what holes they convey them, having no homes ! — whose bare feet fall with a blunt dull softness on the pavement as the policeman hunts them.”

Dickens has many allusions to Covent Garden Market in various of his works, and there is no place where the variety of character, which he could so readily hit off, is better adapted for study. Alton Locke speaks of the sound of lumbering wheels that met his wakeful ears all through the night, as the string of heavy waggons followed one after the other with country produce, and he used to go to the garret window where he lived to contemplate them, and the country delights that in his fancy they had left. Such feelings are common to thousands who pass by Covent Garden on an early summer or spring morning, when the demand for vegetables is unlimited at the West End and the City. The loads these waggons bear is enormous, and it is no uncommon sight to see the cauliflowers and cabbages and turnips built up to a height of twelve or thirteen feet from the carrying planks of the waggon; indeed the work of packing must have been performed by very practised hands, or else the high load would never have

reached its destination; but the vegetables are as neatly piled as the ashlar or the bricks in a carefully - built wall. As the vehicles begin to unload, the shandries and light trucks of the greengrocers from every quarter of London put in an appearance, and the vast piles of produce melt away; a skirmishing and active contingent of costermongers' carts close in as the light traps of greengrocers retire, and in a short time the market has settled down to its usual routine of business; for of course the stall-keepers there are among the purchasers just the same as the owners of the vans.

The flowers arrive later, and are soon divided among customers. And as Mr. Dickens has said in his *Guide to London* before quoted, "There are hundreds of women and girls among the crowd purchasing bunches of roses, violets, and other flowers, and then sitting down on the steps of the church or of the houses round the market dividing the large bunches into smaller ones, or making those pretty button-hole bouquets in which our London flower-girls can now fairly hold their own in point of taste with those of France or Italy." Yet so fresh are the vegetables, and years of skill have done so much to retain their freshness, that gentlemen who live near London, and at great care attend to their gardens, sadly admit that the best and by far the cheapest garden near London is Covent Garden.

The old gentleman, who appears but once in the old curiosity shop, describes the premises, and when he met the still older grandfather of Nell, to whom he consigned her after she had lost her way, described the shop as "one of those receptacles for old and curious things which seem to crouch in odd corners of this town, and to hide their musty treasures from the public eye in jealousy and distrust. There were suits of mail standing like ghosts in armour here and there; fantastic carvings brought from monkish cloisters, rusty weapons of various kinds; distorted figures in china, and wood, and iron, and ivory; tapestry and strange furniture that might have been designed in dreams." Such establishments have long disappeared, and the treasures that Nell's grandfather owned within the confines of the old curiosity shop would now, in a much more important establishment at the West End of London, realise him abundant wealth, even enough to satisfy his intentions towards his grand-daughter.

These old curiosity shops yet remain in ancient English cities, especially if they are resorted to by visitors, but even among these such collections as those which Mr. Trent had gathered together about him would now command a much higher value than they would have done of old. In

Chester there are a number of old curiosity shops, and they are much frequented by American purchasers. One or two of the principal ones have occasional suits of armour, and china ornaments, and punch-bowls of forgotten age and design, and many examples of every kind of chest and press — all of them more or less genuine and authentic. Some of these antique stores are of a humbler type, but seem to drive a fine business. Chairs are bought up from farm-houses at prices that continually are rising, and these are carved all over. Chester would furnish some perfect pictures of the old curiosity shops that Dickens drew, for some of these are ancient buildings themselves, with carved gables and overhanging fronts, and decorated outside with the quaintest of carved panels. The profits of old Mr. Trent's magazine were not enough, apparently, for the expectations of the old man, and he betook himself to the fatal avenues of the gaming-table to increase his stores; — with what result need not even be chronicled. Of course his accumulations — for he would seem himself at one time to have acquired some wealth — were soon swept away, as were also the sums he could extract from Quilp.

There is little indication of the direction which little Nell and her worthless grandfather took, but it is pretty clear that it must have been to the East of London. "The town was glad with morning light; places that show ugly and distrustful all night long now wore a smile, and sparkling sunbeams, dancing in chamber windows, and twinkling through blind and curtain before sleepers' eyes, shed light into dreams, and chased away the shadow of the night. Birds in hot rooms covered up close and dark felt it was morning, and chafed and grew restless in their little cells; bright-eyed mice crept back to their tiny homes and nestled timidly together; the sleek house cat, forgetful of her prey, sat winking at the rays of the sun starting through keyhole and cranny in the door, and longed for her stealthy run and warm sleek bask outside. The nobler beasts, confined in dens, stood motionless behind their bars and gazed on fluttering boughs." "Two pilgrims, often pressing each other's hands, or exchanging a smile or cheerful look, pursued their way in silence. Bright and happy as it was, there was something solemn in the long deserted streets, from which, like bodies without souls, all habitual character and expression had departed, leaving one dead uniform repose that made them all alike." Then came, as they journeyed on, straggling carts and coaches rumbling by, and there were tradesmen beginning to open their shops; only the very enterprising ones at

first, and those at long intervals, until as day dawned all the shops began to show some signs of life, and finally they reached “the haunts of commerce and great traffic, where many people were resorting, and business was already rife. The old man looked about him with a startled and bewildered gaze, for these were places that he hoped to shun . . .; again, this quarter passed, they came upon a straggling neighbourhood, where the mean houses, parcelled off into rooms, and windows patched with rags and paper, told of the populous poverty that sheltered there.”

Here we have a clear indication of the road which they took. It could only be such a direction as would lead from somewhere in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road, through Holborn and Cheapside, and on to Shadwell and Limehouse. The neighbourhood of the Tower would naturally remind the old man of the Tower and the consequent proximity of Quilp’s dwelling, even though they had left him behind sleeping in unconscious ignorance of their departure. Then come the tumbledown tenements of Limehouse and Shadwell, and finally the straggling off of the town into country as they reached the borders of Essex. There were “pert cottages with garden plots “ of angular shape laid out in beds with box-wood borders, and here and there a public-house with a bowling-green or tea gardens, that scorned its old-fashioned neighbour with the long wooden horse-trough before the door. But if any positive indications were wanting that they were travelling east it would be removed by the circumstance that they saw, in some of the little gardens passed, summer-houses made out of parts of old boats, “grottoed at the stems with toad stools or tight-sticking snail-shells.” They then must have passed the Roding river; and having breakfasted they could the better enjoy “the freshness of the day, the singing of the birds, the beauty of the waving grass, the deep green leaves, the wild .flowers, and the thousand exquisite scents and sounds that floated on the air.” They had walked many miles from London; it could hardly have been less than sixteen, when they rested at a cottage, and were very kindly treated, and urged to finish their day’s journey; but the old man said they must go to the next county town, which was five miles farther; but a waggon soon picked them up, and set them down at their destination; and this would be a little more than twenty miles from the Metropolis. This would land the pilgrims at Chipping Ongar, where they naturally slept well after their weary journey. The direction they took from London is indicated with perfect certainty, and Chipping Ongar is the town they would certainly

arrive at. The next day's walk was with Codlin and Short, about whose names there is much humour, and the changes that they rang upon them were characteristic of itinerant showmen. Thus "the real name of the little man was Harris, but it had gradually merged into the less euphonious one of Trotters, which, with the prefatory adjective Short, had been conferred upon him by reason of the small size of his legs. "Short Trotters" being, however, a compound name, inconvenient of use in friendly dialogue, the gentleman on whom it had been bestowed was known among his intimates either as Short or Trotters, except in formal conversations, and on occasions of ceremony.

Into this strange company Nell and her grandfather fell in the churchyard at the end of the first day's journey; on the second, they travelled with them, and made the best they could of the accident of meeting them, and they wound up at an out-of-date public-house, called the "Jolly Sandboys," almost more dead than alive, and wet through. "A mighty fire was blazing on the hearth and roaring up the wide chimney with a cheerful sound, which a large iron cauldron, bubbling and simmering in the heat, lent its pleasant aid to swell. There was a deep red ruddy blush upon the room, and when the landlord stirred the fire, sending the flames skipping and leaping up, when he took off the lid of the iron pot and there rushed out a savoury smell, while the bubbling sound grew deeper and more rich, and an unctuous steam came floating out, hanging in a delicious mist above their heads, — when he did this Mr. Codlin's heart was touched." The next day's journey on the same road would bring them to Thaxted or Saffron Walden — the latter probably, though indeed this would involve a long tramp, and, as it would appear, the journey was occasionally stopped when any promising neighbourhood presented itself to the enterprising Codlin for a rehearsal; but it was gradually becoming more apparent to the watchful eyes of the little girl that Short and Codlin had a purpose in keeping them near their company, and their proceedings naturally made the child watchful and suspicious; and she soon observed that whenever they halted to perform outside a village alehouse or other place Mr. Codlin, while he went through his share of the entertainment, kept his eye steadily upon her and the old man, or, with a show of great friendship and consideration, invited the latter to lean upon his arm, and so held him tight until the representation was over and they went forward again." And now the end of the third day's journey is reached, and they find themselves near a town that would, according to the

work done, correspond with the old Roman station of Newmarket. It is thus described by Dickens — ” They were drawing near the town where the races were to begin next day, for, from passing numerous groups of gipsies and trampers on the road, wending their way towards it, and straggling out from every by-way and cross country lane, they gradually fell into a stream of people, some walking by the side of covered carts, others with horses, others with donkeys, toiling on with heavy loads upon their backs, but all tending to the same point. The public-houses by the wayside, from being empty and noiseless as those in the remoter parts had been, now sent out boisterous shouts and clouds of smoke, and from the misty windows clusters of broad red faces looked down upon the road. On every piece of waste or common ground some small gambler drove his noisy trade, and bellowed to the idle passers-by to stop and try their chance; the crowd grew thicker and more noisy, and often a four-horsed carriage, dashing by, obscured all objects in the gritty cloud it raised, and left them stunned and blinded far behind. It was dark before they reached the town itself, and long indeed the few last miles had been. Here all was tumult and confusion; the streets were filled with throngs of people, many strangers were there, it seemed, by the looks they cast about; the church bells rung out their noisy peals, and flags streamed from windows and house-tops. In large inn-yards waiters flitted too and fro and ran against each other, horses clattered on uneven stones, carriage steps fell rattling down, and sickening smells from many dinners came with a heavy lukewarm breath upon the sense. In the smaller public-houses riddles with all their might and main were squeaking out the time to straggling feet;” and so Dickens goes on through all the dismal revelry of the racecourse. “Quickening their steps to get clear of all the riot and uproar, they at length passed through the town and made for the race-course, which was upon an open heath.” The poor child was “frightened and repelled by all she saw.” She went early in the morning to gather some wild flowers to make a few nosegays to sell on the racecourse, and during the races she could not help wondering that such fine honest creatures as horses should make the men they drew about them such shocking vagabonds. She might have been reading the travel in *Gulliver* when he was drifted to some far-off shore where the horses were the rulers, and were served by the most degraded specimens of humanity, such indeed as constitute the rank and file of race-course meetings; and he was at last politely told that he must leave, as he belonged to the species with which

the horses were too familiar, though himself a superior specimen of the degraded order. When the showmen were engaged in their professional duties Nell watched the opportunity for them to escape into the country, fearing as she did that Short and his partner would take them to London, and then she had some vague terror that they would be handed back again to Quilp, but she pressed on through the shady country lanes, which had, even in all their sorrow and forlornness, still something refreshing and hopeful. When the grandfather was startled at some sudden noise Nell told him that it was only the wind whistling or some dead branch falling, until at last the serenity and cheerfulness which she had at first assumed “stole into her breast in earnest, the old man cast no longer fearful looks behind, but felt at ease and cheerful, for the further they passed into the deep green shade the more they felt that the tranquil mind of God was there, and shed its peace on them. At length the path, becoming clearer and less intricate, brought them to the end of the wood and into a public road. Taking their way along it for a short distance they came to a lane so shaded by trees on either hand, that they met together overhead, and arched the narrow way. A broken fingerpost announced that this led to a village three miles off, and thither they resolved to bend their steps. The miles appeared so long that sometimes they thought they must have missed the road. But at last, to their great joy, it led downward in a steep descent with overhanging banks, over which their footpath led, and the clustered houses of the village peeped from the woody hollow below. It was a very small place, and men and boys were playing at cricket on the green.” This is a beautiful description of a typical English village, and one thing is quite clear, that it must have been to the eastward of the race-course they had left, for to the westward they would have found their way into the fen-country, but by travelling eastward they would reach the favourite county of our author — Suffolk, and near Hadleigh, or Ipswich, or Stow Market, they would find many villages such as the one which has been so charmingly described, but as the road so far has been tracked out with certainty, it may be as well not to mar what is done by conjecture, or else there are two that could be pointed out in the district named that nearly fulfil the requirements. There was a school-house here, and the schoolmaster was smoking at the door, in almost a fit of abstraction, when Nell timidly asked him if he could recommend them to any cheap place to lodge at for the night, and laying down his long pipe he looked earnestly at her, and asked her to come in, and took them to his

room, where he laid out some supper and bade them rest. Then we have the incident of the sick scholar that roused Nell's quick sympathy, and, finally, the schoolmaster, who was also parish clerk, begged of them to rest one day, as he wanted little Nell's company for a short space. The old man and Nell sat in the village schoolroom and heard the master instructing the boys in his quiet way, and though they were as rampant and unruly as boys generally are in such an establishment, when he told them about the sick pupil, who was the chief favourite, and who had written the beautiful texts and maxims that adorned the walls of the room, there was a calm. The boys who eat apples in school-time, and pinched, and made grimaces, and, in a word, improved the school hours, as boys too often will, when he told them what the dying child had said last night, and how nearly his little race was run, were awed at once into silence. At twelve o'clock, when the time to disperse came, the schoolmaster told them that they need not return that day, and endeavoured to gain a hearing in the sudden demonstrations of joy which this news had caused. But for some time his efforts were in vain, and he only could at last obtain a hearing by holding up his hand "as a token of his wish that they should be silent;" they were quiet enough, and when he told them to be quiet for the sake of their little school-fellow there was a general and sincere murmur of acquiescence. Here Dickens has faithfully hit off an English school, and if such an appeal were addressed to any scholars, the uproarious students, whether they belonged to a village school or to Harrow or Eton, for they are not confined to any social class, would always be still. Nor does it greatly detract from their sincerity if, when they saw the sun shining and the birds singing as only the sun shines and birds do sing on holidays and "the hay entreating them to come and scatter it to the pure air," it was for a moment more than boys could bear, "and with a joyous whoop the whole cluster took to their heels, and spread themselves about shouting and laughing as they went." It was all over at the close of the day, and the little scholar died with his hand in broken-hearted Nell's, whose own sands had now so nearly ebbed out. The child as they left timidly offered the school-master some money which the lady on the race-course had given her, and of course it was at once refused. There is a beautifully told incident connected with this money. When Nell and her grandfather were wandering with what Mrs. Jarley called "a vulgar punch," and when they had come to Newmarket, Nell stole away early in the morning to gather a few wild flowers to make into bunches to sell at the

carriages on the course, but there were bolder beggars and adept fortune-tellers that generally elbowed her away, though some ladies did say, "See what a pretty face," "and then let the pretty face pass on without thinking how tired and hungry it looked. One lady seemed to understand the child, and only one ;" she sat alone in a handsome carriage, while two young men in dashing clothes who had dismounted from it talked and laughed loudly at a little distance, appearing to forget her quite. There were many ladies all around, but they looked another way and left her to herself. She motioned away a gipsy woman urgent to tell her fortune, saying it was told her already, and had been for some years. What that fortune was, indeed, we hardly need a gipsy woman to tell.

In the city parts of the *Old Curiosity Shop* Dickens again visits the region of the Tower where Mr. and Mrs. Quilp had their residence, and which was a part of London that many scenes are laid in. Of Quilp himself one hardly knows what to say; he is not drawn from any living character, and it would almost seem that in him some confirmation of the Darwinian theory might be found. Types of species, according to the great naturalist, sometimes reappear, after having been lost in the cycles of time — even if only for a moment — and the "dog-like smile," and the impish cunning, that are almost libels on the brute creation, can but be accounted for upon the Darwinian theory. He was a little dwarfish deformity, of much ability, and of great physical strength; and he seemed to have little pleasure excepting in mischief. He was enormously rich, and "collected the rents of whole colonies of filthy streets and alleys by the water side, advanced money to the petty officers and seamen of merchant vessels, had a share in the ventures of divers mates of East Indiamen, smoked his smuggled cigars under the very nose of the Custom-house, and made appointments on 'Change with men in glazed hats and round jackets pretty well every day."

At the time when this was written there is no doubt that with an abundant command of means like Quilp possessed, great returns might be looked for in many ventures, and hence he so easily fell himself a prey to Nell's grandfather, the imbecile, wretched gambler, partly on account of his supposed wealth, and partly, as it would seem, from the respectability that his honest-eyed and beautiful grand-daughter conferred upon him. When Quilp began to suspect that something was wrong, and taxed the old man with haunting the gaming-tables, and losing the large sums he had lent and advanced to him, the only reply was, as he turned his gleaming eyes to the

dwarf, "Yes, it was my mine of gold, — it is — it will be till I die;" and then Quilp, with a contemptuous look that he might be well excused for, said, "That I should have been blinded by a mere shallow gambler!" The residence of Quilp and his wife was on Tower Hill, "and in her bower on Tower Hill Mrs. Quilp was left to pine in the absence of her lord, when he quitted her on his business which he has been already seen to transact." He had a rat-infested dreary yard on the Surrey side of the river, which was called Quilp's Wharf, "in which were a wooden counting-house, burrowing all awry in the dust, as if it had fallen from the clouds, and ploughed into the ground; a few fragments of rusty anchors; several large iron rings; some piles of rotten wood; and two or three heaps of old sheet copper, crumpled, cracked, and battered." Mr. Quilp was by trade a ship breaker, which would easily account for the miscellaneous collection of goods about him, and these all have a market price in London, at which they can at once be converted into cash. Mrs. Quilp was a pretty blue-eyed woman, "who, having allied herself in wedlock to the dwarf in one of those strange infatuations that are by no means scarce, performed a sound practical penance for her folly every day of her life.

There is hardly a pleasanter trip from London than the sail down the river to Greenwich, and the life on the river almost reminds us of the floating population that we read of in the eastern rivers. "A fleet of barges was coming lazily on, some sideways, some head first, some stern first; all in a wrong-headed, dogged, obstinate way, bumping up against the larger craft, running under the bows of steamboats, getting into every kind of nook and corner where they had no business, and being crunched on all sides like so many walnut shells; while each, with its pair of long sweeps struggling and splashing in the water, looked like some lumbering fish in pain. In some of the vessels at anchor all hands were busily engaged in coiling ropes, spreading out sails to dry, taking in or discharging their cargoes. In others no life was visible but two or three tarry boys, and perhaps a barking dog running to and fro upon the deck, or scrambling up to look over the side, and barking the louder for the view. Coming slowly on through a forest of masts was a great steamship, beating the water in short impatient strokes with her heavy paddles, as though she wanted room to breathe, and advancing in her huge bulk like a sea monster among the minnows of the Thames. On either hand were long lines of colliers, and between them vessels slowly working out of harbour with sails glistening in the sun, and

creaking noises on board echoed from a hundred quarters. The water and all upon it was in active motion dancing and buoyant, and bubbling up; while the old gray Tower and piles of building on the shore, with many a church spire shooting up between, looked coldly on, and seemed to disdain their chafing restless neighbour." All this confusion may be seen at any time in a trip to Greenwich, and the passenger wonders more and more how the great traffic of London can be carried on through it all, but it is becoming a serious question if the time has not arrived for attempting to amend the growing evil.

There are two kinds of barges, the sailing barge and the dumb barge, and the fleet of both of them is very large indeed. More than five hundred of the sailing barges leave the London docks daily to distribute their freight and, besides these, there is the enormous fleet of dumb barges; these literally, as is said, come on sideways and endways "but all in a wrong-headed obstinate way." These dumb barges, in fact, are presided over by a man with a sweep-oar, whose office it is to keep the boat moderately straight, and as free as circumstances will admit from collisions with other vessels; but all the motive power is derived from the ebb and the flow of the tide, and the barge has no more independent action than a broken spar. If the men who should guide them were at all skilful the helpless junks would still be a scandal, but they are not even that, in the greater number of cases, and they do not always make the best use of the little craftsmanship they have; they do, indeed, excel at vituperation when they get under the bows of a steamer, which is an event of constant occurrence with them. Indifferent as is the character of the men who work the dumb barges, and too well known as many of them are to the police, it is only just to say that the navigators of the sailing barges who work the boats lower down the river are a different class of men. They are skilful and careful, and understand how to give and take when a steamer is before them. Some of these have quite handy vessels, which are capable of considerable speed. One of the reasons why they are so much better is that they belong to an open service, while the river men are members of the Watermen's Company, and if they subscribe to its funds the assessors, who seem to be judge and jury and everything, grant their license.

In Bevis Mark's was situated the residence and the office of Mr. Sampson Brass. Dickens writes to Mr. Foster: "I intended calling on you this morning on my way back from Bevis Marks, whither I went to look at a house for

Sampson Brass.” This was once the great Jewish quarter of London, and gentlemen of the Hebrew persuasion were generally to be found here and at Aldgate, and Hound’s-ditch and the Minories, Whitechapel, and Petticoat Lane, now called Middlesex Street, but it is more familiar even now to some of the ancient race as “the lane.” Such was the character of Bevis Marks when the *Old Curiosity Shop* was written. There are certainly not many private houses here now; the place is principally occupied with warehouses; but there Miss and Mr. Brass used to practise as attorneys. Miss Brass was indeed the more acute lawyer of the two, and “had not wasted her speculations upon its eagle flights,” but had carefully explored its more devious courses and pit-falls. Here also Mr. Quilp introduced Richard Swiveller as a clerk, and, as Quilp said, Miss Brass would teach him law. Sampson Brass pleaded some engagement in the city, and left Swiveller to make a fair copy of an ejectment, while his sister, in whom Swiveller took an especial interest, was deeply engaged in making out a bill of costs, taking no notice of Dick, “but went scratching on with a noisy pen, scoring down the figures with evident delight, and working like a steam-engine.” Then Mr. Swiveller gradually began to address himself to his task of copying out the ejectment, “a fair copy,” as Mr. Brass said, and occupying for the time the stool Mr. Brass had left. That gentleman promised Quilp that he would soon find another stool in some second-hand shop for his new clerk. Here it was also that the eccentric single gentleman lodged, and paid all the Punch and Judys so handsomely for performing, hoping that at last he might obtain some tidings of his relatives, Nell and her grandfather. The residence of Mr. Garland at Abel Cottage, Finchley, might be identified very easily, and the quiet life they all led is very beautifully described in the fortieth chapter. Kit, as will be remembered, came to the notary’s office and worked out the shilling in holding Mr. Garland’s horse, as he had received such a sum in consequence of his employer having no smaller change about him. Mr. Garland, who had retired from business and lived at Abel Cottage, seems to have led a pleasant quiet life among his rustic surroundings. “On a fine day they were quite a family party, the old lady sitting hard by with her work-basket on a little table;” and then we have a picture of the old gentleman retaining his health and vigour by digging and pruning in the well-sheltered garden, while Kit, on a short ladder against a southern wall, is trimming the leaves, and nailing up the shoots of wall fruit, and just as Kit had become valued by

his employer, who discovered his honest worth, a new master, Mr. Witherden the notary, who said he could find him a much better employ, which indeed was with the single gentleman to go with him to find out the rendezvous of Nell and her grandfather. When Kit found out that this was what they required he at once consented, and learned in the notary's office that they were "from sixty to seventy miles away." This identifies the locality more clearly with what has already been conjectured.

The church and school-house where Nell finally rested from all her toils have no counterpart in any district where she may be supposed now to be. Her old friend the schoolmaster showed her his new house with much pride. "The room into which they entered was a vaulted chamber once nobly ornamented by cunning architects, and still retaining in its rich groined roof and beautiful tracery some remnants of its ancient splendour. Foliage carved in the stone, and emulating the mastery of nature's hand, yet remains to tell how many times the leaves outside had come and gone while it lived on unchanged. The broken figures supporting the burden of the chimneypiece, though mutilated, were yet distinguishable for what they had been, — far different from the dust without, — and showed sadly by the empty hearth like creatures who had outlived their kind, and mourned their only too slow decay." The house had apparently been part of some monastic building which had formerly adjoined the church, and the room had been partitioned off at some comparatively recent time by a richly carved panelled oak screen, so as to form a sitting-room and bed-closet, and an open door that led into a small oratory or cell through which a ray of sun-light broken by ivy leaves was stealing. A few strange-looking chairs, and an old oak chest that once had held the records of the church, with a quaint table, and several articles of convenience, together with a stack of flrewood laid in for winter, completed the furniture of the apartment, and naturally excited the admiration and delight of the poor wanderer; and as she lay down to rest and saw the "glare of the sinking fire reflected in the oaken panels, whose carved tops were dimly seen in the dusky roof, — the aged walls where strange shadows came and went with every flickering of the fire, — the solemn presence within of that decay which falls on senseless things the most enduring in their nature: and without and around about on every side of death, filled her with deep and thoughtful feelings, but with none of terror or alarm." All the descriptions of this church and its surroundings are very beautiful, though, as has been said, we must seek for anything like

them in some distant part of England. I know three such places are in a far western county, one near the Severn and one in the north. In the earliest edition of this work there are some illustrations of great beauty by Cattermole, all in his very best style. There is one especially of Nell sitting in a chantry or some ancient private chapel which opens into the choir through a fine Norman arch. There is a font in it, — perhaps it may be urged that the place is an unusual one for such an article, — but it is not in its original place for the step has been cut to fit it in, and there are three knights in armour on rich tombs of the fourteenth century. The composition of this picture, and the play of light and shade, are very fine; and there is farther on in the book another drawing by Cattermole of another rich chantry where she is buried, and her grandfather is sitting by the tomb he has done so much to make an early one.

CHAPTER VII.

DOMBEY AND SON.

The localities of *Dombey and Son*, so far as they relate to London, are rather less definite than some others in different works of Dickens; and this seems hardly accountable at first, for the tale is one that especially relates to London and various phases of London life.

The description of Mr. Dombey's mansion is vague. "It was a large one on the shady side of a tall, dark, dreadfully genteel street in the region between Portland Place and Bryanstone Square. It was a corner house, with great wide areas, containing a whole suite of drawing-rooms looking upon a gravelled yard, where two gaunt trees with blackened trunks and branches rattled rather than rustled, their leaves were so smoke-dried. The summer sun was never on the street but in the morning about breakfast-time, when it came with the water-carts, and old clothes'-men, and the people with geraniums, and the umbrella mender, and the man who trilled the little bell of the Dutch clock as he went along."

When Mrs. Dombey was buried Mr. Dombey ordered all the furniture to be covered up, and great chandeliers were robed in holland, and card-tables and sofas were heaped together with arm-chairs, and covered up with holland, looking like "a great winding-sheet."

The apartments which were reserved for Mr. Dombey himself “ were attainable from the hall, and consisted of a sitting-room, a library (which, in fact, was a dressing-room, so that the smell of hot-pressed paper, vellum, morocco, and Russia leather, contended in it with the smell of divers pairs of boots), and a kind of conservatory or little glass breakfast-room beyond, commanding a prospect of the trees before mentioned, and, generally speaking, of a few prowling cats. These rooms opened upon one another.” In these rooms Mr. Dombey used to sit in solitary state, and his youthful son Paul and his nurse Richards only saw him at a distance among the dark heavy furniture.

Now there may seem to be a little vagueness here, and if we seek for the house we must look for it in the neighbourhood of Manchester Square, or Baker Street, or Cavendish Square; and I have never been able to identify any particular mansion with the residence of the head of the house of Dombey and Son. There are, indeed, two that might answer the description, and in one a surgeon of great skill lives, while the other is occupied by a rather costly boarding-house. But there is some cause for this vagueness, and much excuse, for Dickens wrote the principal part of *Dombey* when he was at Geneva, and he says that he felt a little astray. He missed his genial streets of London, with their quaint life and their strange dwellings. For myself, if I might venture to record my own experiences in the same page as those of Dickens, I would say that there are few more picturesque recollections than an early walk almost in any part of London, especially in summer, when the city is full of activity, and nearly every shop front has begun to show some signs of life, and water-cresses and prawns are being heralded in squares and past terraces in not unmusical tones by costermongers and basket carriers.

Mr. Pemberton, in his *Dickens's London*, has said that probably the circumstance that the author was residing on the Continent during the writing of the first part of *Dombey and Son* may account for there being less of London in it than in any other of his works; and this must account for the vagueness of the localities. In one of his letters to Foster he complains how sorely he misses the London streets, in which he was accustomed to walk daily and gather fresh food for his imagination; indeed, he goes so far as to say that he finds it almost impossible to do without them.

We have, in a preface to one edition, a curious instance of the individuality that connects itself with the surrounding objects while he

writes. "I began this book by the Lake of Geneva, and went on with it for some months in France before pursuing it in England. The association between the writing and the place of writing is so curiously strong in my mind that at this day, although I know in my fancy every stair in the little midshipman's house, and could swear to every pew in the church in which Florence was married, or to every gentleman's bedstead in Dr. Blimber's establishment, I yet confusedly imagine Captain Cuttle as secluding himself from Mrs. Macstinger among the mountains of Switzerland. Similarly, when I am reminded by any chance of what it is that the waves were always saying, my remembrance wanders for a whole winter night about the streets of Paris, as I restlessly did with a heavy heart on the night when I had written the chapter in which my little friend and I parted company."

Similarly, in a preface to *Copperfield*, he says: "It would concern the reader little, perhaps, to know how sorrowfully the pen is laid down at the close of a two years' imaginative task; or how an author feels as if he were dismissing some part of himself into the shadowy world, when a crowd of the creatures of his brain are going from him for ever. Yet I had nothing else to tell, unless, indeed, I were to confess (which might be of less moment still) that no one can ever believe this narrative in the reading more than I did in the writing."

In *Dombey* we are introduced to a character whose class has become now a matter of history, or at least very nearly so. When Toots called on Captain Cuttle at Gill's shop he was accompanied by the "Game Chicken," whom he introduced to the Captain, though he felt much surprise that the latter did not even recognise the name. "Mr. Toots explained that the man alluded to was the celebrated public character who had covered himself and his county with glory in his contest with the nobby Shropshire one; but this piece of information did not appear to enlighten the Captain very much." He is aptly described as a "stoical gentleman in a shaggy white great-coat and a flat-brimmed hat, with very short hair, a broken nose, and a considerable tract of bare and sterile country behind each ear."

It is somewhat singular that Dickens has so little to say about this fraternity. He must have known every celebrated professor in London very well, and there was always a grim humour about them and their ways. The challenges which appeared in the papers that devoted themselves especially to their interests, and even the encounters themselves, were curious. Pierce Egan was their bard and historian, and some of his accounts were almost

homerick, and were veiled in such excellent language, and all so full of metaphor, that there seemed to be nothing at all shocking in his narrative. ,

In Dickens's time the ring was in what its admirers would have called its glory. Not only was it patronised by the aristocracy, but a combatant was sometimes taken to the scene of his encounter in a coroneted chariot.

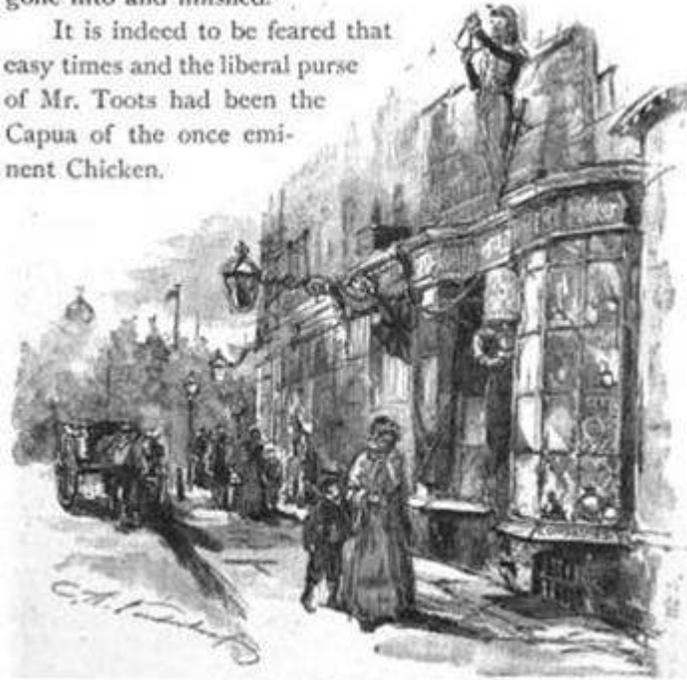
The friendship of Toots for the Game Chicken was quite in keeping with the ordinary life of men of leisure and education. It was no more derogatory to be on intimate terms with them than it would now be for a gentleman to walk along Regent Street with Messrs. Archer or Fordham. Caunt, or Bendigo, or Ward, numbered members of both houses of Parliament among their acquaintances; though I would attach no credit to the often asserted statement that this acquaintance was so catholic as to number even occupants of the bench — not the judicial one, the other.

The only account of a passage-at-arms that I can remember in Dickens is in *Dombey*. When Susan Nipper left Dombey's employ she told Florence that she was going to her brother's, "a farmer down in Essex," and with the money she had in the savings' bank they might be comfortable; and when she went home to her brother's she stayed for a rest with the cook at Mr. Toots's dwelling. The Game Chicken was there, and at once supposed she was Florence Dombey, whose father Toots had "doubled up," and so far relieved the Chicken of any anxiety about his master's or *proteges* game quality. The Chicken himself caused Miss Nipper some slight astonishment, for he had just tried issues with "the Larkey one," and had been worsted, as it appeared, in the combat. "His visage was in such a state of dilapidation as to be hardly presentable in society with comfort to the beholders. The Chicken himself attributed this punishment to his having had the misfortune to get into Chancery early in the proceedings, when he was severely fibbed by the Larkey one and heavily grassed. But it appeared from the public records of that great contest that the Larkey Boy had it all his own way from the beginning, and that the Chicken had been tapped and winged, and had received pepper, and had been made groggy, and had come up piping, and had endured a complication of similar strange inconveniences, until he had been gone into and finished."

It is indeed to be feared that easy times and the liberal purse of Mr. Toots had been the Capua of the once eminent Chicken.

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THE LITTLE WOODEN MIDSHIPMAN.

It may be curious to remark that the name is not quite a haphazard one, but a professional gentleman of more or less skill and eminence did assume the title, and was to be seen in London during the earlier part of Dickens's lifetime.

With reference to the woodcut of the "wooden midshipman," it would seem that the artist has adopted the nautical instrument shop at No. 99 Minories as being a more genial and natural place where we should be introduced to Sol Gills and Captain Cuttle; and Mr. Pemberton has adopted this as the more ideal spot. But the real wooden midshipman yet stands at No. 157 Leadenhall Street, opposite the old East India House; and until lately, probably even till the present time, a naval and nautical instrument maker carried on a successful business there. "Just round the corner stood the rich East India House, teeming with suggestions of precious stuffs and stones, tigers, elephants' howdahs. Anywhere in the vicinity might be seen pictures of ships speeding away full sail to all parts of the world; outfitting warehouses ready to pack anybody anywhere, fully equipped, in half an hour."

The proprietor of the little wooden midshipman had occupied his mart for as many years as a midshipman ever spends, even taking an extreme case,

till he gets his promotion, and was looked up to as an authority in the vicinity.

When little Paul Dombey lost his mother Mrs. Toodle was selected to take care of him, and was thoroughly put through all her facings by Mrs. Chick, Mr. Dombey's sister, and the two Toodles, apple-faced children, were produced for the confused inspection of the lofty London merchant. The London and North-Western Railway was at that time coming into London, and Mr. Toodle was working in the tunnel that we now pass through on our way to Euston. The name of Toodle was, of course, far too plebeian for Mr. Dombey, and Richards was substituted with the full consent of Mr. Toodle, who, indeed, would have consented to anything if his wife ordered it. Staggs's Gardens, where the Toodle family lived, was situated in Camden Town, or, as the inhabitants called it, "Camberling Town." "It was a little row of houses with squalid patches of ground before them, fenced off with old doors, barrel staves, scraps of tarpaulin, and dead bushes; with bottomless tin kettles, and exhausted iron fenders, thrust into the gaps. Here the Staggs's Gardeners trained scarlet beans, kept fowls and rabbits, erected rotten summerhouses, dried clothes, and smoked pipes." A graphic description of the cutting of the tunnel is given. This, of course, is the tunnel at Primrose Hill.

"The first shock of a great earthquake had, just at that period, rent the whole neighbourhood to its centre. Traces of its course were visible on every side. Houses were knocked down, streets broken through and stopped, deep pits and trenches dug in the ground, enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up, buildings that were undermined and shaking propped up with great beams of wood. Here a chaos of carts, overthrown and jumbled together, lay topsy-turvy at the bottom of a steep, unnatural hill; there, confused treasures of iron soaked and rusted in something that had accidentally become a pond. Everywhere were bridges that led nowhere, thoroughfares that were wholly impassable. Babel towers of chimneys wanting half their height; temporary wooden houses and enclosures in the most unlikely situations; carcasses of ragged tenements, and fragments of unfinished walls and arches, and piles of scaffolding, and wildernesses of bricks, and giant forms of cranes, and tripods straddling above nothing. There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the air, mouldering in water, and unintelligible as any dream.

Hot springs and fiery eruptions, the usual attendants upon earthquakes, lent their contributions of confusion to the scene. Boiling water hissed and heaved within dilapidated walls; whence, also, the glare and roar of flames came issuing forth; and mounds of ashes blocked up rights-of-way, and wholly changed the law and custom of the neighbourhood.

“In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress, and from the very core of all this dire disorder trailed smoothly away upon its mighty course of civilisation and improvement.

“But as yet the neighbourhood was shy to own the Railroad. One or two bold speculators had projected streets, and one had built a little, but had stopped among the mud and ashes to consider further of it. A bran-new Tavern, redolent of fresh mortar and size, and fronting nothing at all, had taken for its sign The Railway Arms; but that might be rash enterprise — and then it hoped to sell drink to the workmen. So the Excavators’ House of Call had sprung up from a beer-shop, and the old established Ham and Beef Shop had become the Railway Eating-House, with a roast leg of pork daily, through interested motives of a similar immediate and popular description. Lodging-house keepers were favourable in like manner, and for the like reasons were not to be trusted. The general belief was very slow. There were frowzy fields, and cow-houses, and dunghills, and dust-heaps, and ditches, and gardens, and summer-houses, and carpet-beating grounds, at the very door of the Railway. Little tumuli of oyster-shells in the lobster season, and of broken crockery and faded cabbage leaves in all seasons, encroached upon its high places. Posts, and rails, and old cautions to trespassers, and backs of mean houses, and patches of wretched vegetation, stared it out of countenance. Nothing was the better for it, or thought of being so. If the miserable waste ground lying near it could have laughed, it would have laughed it to scorn, like many of the miserable neighbours.”

When Paul Dombey was in his last illness he had a great desire to see his old nurse, and he sent Susan Nipper to try to find her. The coachman who drove the cab was nearly in despair; and Walter Gay, who had been a long stroll, happened to pass. He had spent his Sunday beyond Hampstead, “listening to the birds, and the Sunday bells, and the softened murmur of the town; breathing sweet scents;” sometimes thinking of going away on his distant voyage, and putting the thought from him as fast as it rose. When he had approached the city he was called from a cab, and he recognised Susan Nipper, who had gone in quest of Mrs. Toodle, and was in despair of

finding Staggs's Gardens. The coachman appealed to Walter with a sort of exulting rebuke: "That's the way the young lady's been a'goin on for upwards of a mortal hour, and me continually backing out of no thoroughfares where she *would* drive up. I've had a many fares in this coach, first and last, but never such a one as this."

When Susan appealed to Walter he at once went into the search with enthusiasm, and the author's account of his search will prevent us from spending much time in trying to find the locality, for, indeed, it bears traces of having been written on the Continent, or at least in some distant place. "There was no such place as Staggs's Gardens. It had vanished from the earth. Where the old rotten summer-houses once had stood palaces now reared their heads, and granite columns of gigantic girth opened a vista to the railway world beyond. The miserable waste ground, where the refuse matter had been heaped of yore, was swallowed up and gone, and in its frowzy stead were tiers of warehouses crammed with rich goods and costly merchandise. The old bye-streets now swarmed with passengers and vehicles of every kind; the new streets that had stopped disheartened in the mud and waggon-ruts formed towns within themselves, originating wholesome comforts and conveniences belonging to themselves, and never tried nor thought of until they sprung into existence. Bridges that had led to nothing led to villas, gardens, churches, healthy public walks. The carcasses of houses and beginnings of new thoroughfares had started off upon steam's own speed, and shot away into the country in a monster train. As to the neighbourhood, which had hesitated to acknowledge the railroad in its struggling days, that had grown wise and penitent, as any Christian might in such a case, and now boasted of its powerful and prosperous relations. There were railway patterns in its drapers' shops, and railway journals in the windows of its newsmen. There were railway hotels, coffee-houses, lodging-houses, boardinghouses; railway plans, maps, views, wrappers, bottles, sandwich - boxes, and time - tables; railway hackney coaches and cab stands, railway omnibuses, railway streets and buildings, railway hangers-on, and parasites, and flatterers out of all calculation."

When Dombey and Major Bagstock made their memorable journey to Leamington the springs had not been in any great public estimation for more than about thirty years, although Camden spoke of their excellence in the reign of Elizabeth. Now its population is not only great and wealthy, but daily increasing, and numbers some thirty thousand. At the beginning of the

century it was hardly more than a pleasant country village, called Leamington Priors, from its connection with the Priory of



WARWICK AND LEAMINGTON.

Kenilworth, and a very beautiful melodious name it was. But it had achieved importance when the Major and Mr. Dombey arrived at the “Royal Hotel,” which, of course, is an alteration of the “Regent.” Mr. Dombey and the Major met Mrs. Skewton at the pump-rooms, which then were perhaps the finest in England. Mrs. Skewton’s daughter, Mrs. Granger, had been travelling over England with a view of changing the single condition of one, or perhaps both of them, and, as Edith Granger sadly said, when her mother remarked that they had been travelling from place to place for a change, “all the places were very much alike” — that is Harrogate, Scarborough, and Torquay, and all such resorts of fashion.

There are many delightful rambles round Leamington, indeed it lies in the centre of the most beautiful part of England. Mrs. Skewton sighs after “nature” to Mr. Dombey, and eagerly embraces the idea of a journey or an excursion anywhere in the neighbourhood.

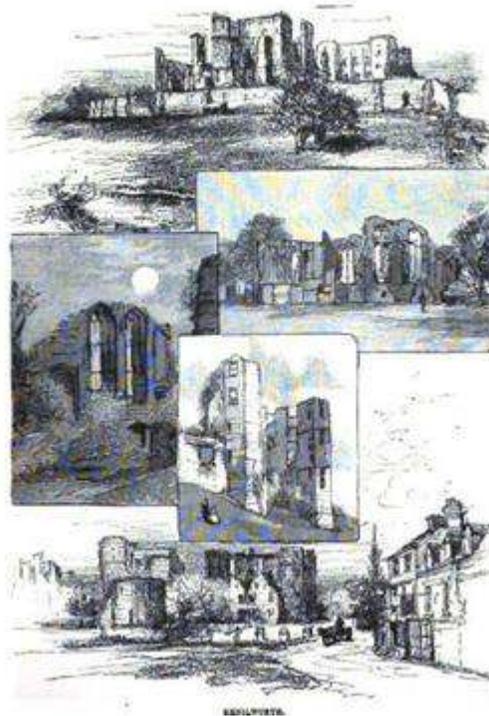
“Seclusion and contemplation are my what’s-his name?” said the ancient dowager; to which her daughter replied, that “If she meant ‘Paradise’ she

had better say so, to render herself intelligible.”

The hotel where Dombey stayed is as well known as if he were the proprietor, and to be daily seen. Mrs. Skewton was also well known, her name was Mrs. Campbell, and the tradesmen in private alluded to her as Mrs. Skewton. So thoroughly had she become identified with her soubriquet, that when a manager of a principal drapery establishment was serving her he unwittingly addressed her as Mrs. Skewton; she sharply replied that that was not her name, and of course all that could be done was to say, with an apparent surprise, “Oh, I beg your pardon.” Her perambulator, which is *at* word that has come into use since Dombey was written, was moved by an invisible page behind, and steered by the Honourable Mrs. Skewton. The page reappeared above the back when the Major and Dombey met the procession, and ducked down when orders were given for marching again.

How thoroughly lodging accommodation has altered in Leamington may be learned from the following account of what were, forty years ago, fashionable and very expensive apartments : —

“The Honourable Mrs. Skewton, being in bed, had her feet at the window and her head at the fireplace, while the Honourable Mrs. Skewton’s maid was quartered in a closet within the drawing-room, so extremely small that, to avoid developing the whole of its accommodations, she was obliged to writhe in and out of the door like a beautiful serpent. Withers, the wan page, slept out of the house under the tiles at a neighbouring milk-shop,” and the wheeled chair was kept in a sort of shed in the milk-house, where there was also a broken donkey-cart, in which the hens that laid the eggs (which were sold at full market prices) roosted, “persuaded to all appearance that it grew there, and was a species of tree.” How different this is from even moderate lodging accommodation now any visitor can say. Here, however, Mr. Dombey and the Major called upon Mrs. Skewton and her widowed daughter, who was then in the prime of youth and beauty.



She was the widow of Colonel Granger, and twenty years his junior, though, as Bagstock informed Mr. Dombey when they walked along the Leamington boulevard, Granger died at the early age of forty-two. He was the colonel of the regiment in which the major held his distinguished command, and of course the ages of the colonel and his wife, with any other light gossip, were well known to him. The party met again and again in the pump-room. Mrs. Skewton had learned that Dombey was a man of vast wealth, or, perhaps to speak more correctly, was reputed to be, and she and the major managed to arrange a trip to Warwick Castle, the latter enlarging upon the splendour of Dombey's establishment, and the entertainments they would enjoy there.

"You have been to Warwick often, unfortunately?" said Mr. Dombey to Edith.

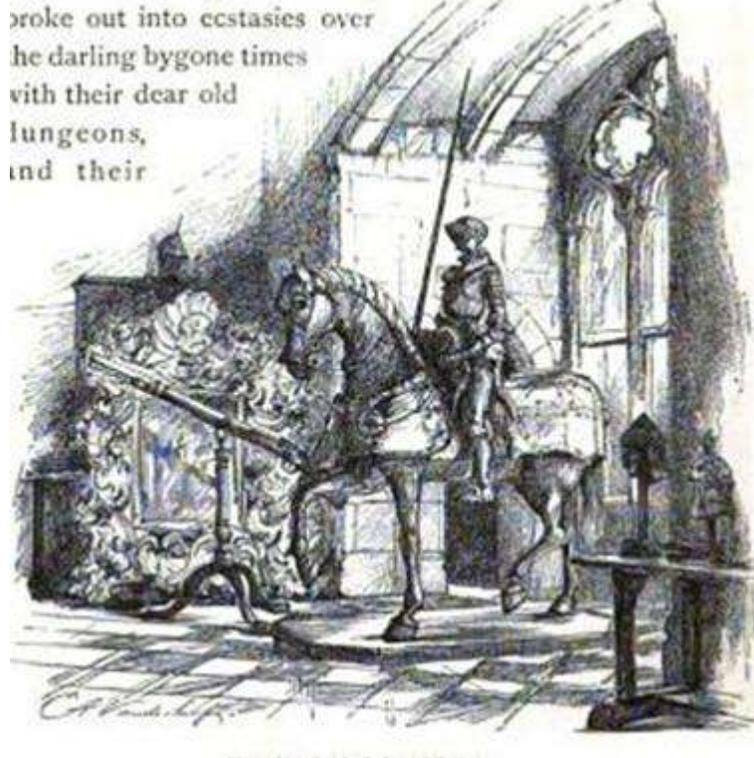
"Several times."

"The visit will be tedious to you, I am afraid?"

"Oh, no, not at all."

And then Mrs. Skewton narrates how her cousin, Lord Feenix, had been to Warwick Castle fifty times, and if he came to Warwick next day he would make "his fifty-second visit." It was arranged that the ladies should dine at the Royal with the gentlemen, and then, in a barouche that had been

waiting, they drove to the most perfect baronial residence in England; indeed, the view of the castle which looks across the mill pool has hardly a rival anywhere for picturesque beauty. Distance lends some enchantment to the “feudal customs that prevailed in the Rhenish castles; and so Mrs. Skewton, in wandering over the great rooms, broke out into ecstasies over the darling bygone times with their dear old dungeons, and their



WARWICK CASTLE, IN THE HALL.

delightful places of torture, and their romantic vengeance, and their picturesque assaults, and sieges, and everything that makes life truly charming.” “We have no faith in the dear old barons, who were the most delightful of creatures, or the dear old priests, who were the most warlike of men, or even in the days of that inestimable Queen Bess upon the wall there ;” and so they went through the halls of the grand old fortress, a fortress that was founded by a daughter of King Alfred, rebuilt in Edward III.’s time, after being destroyed by insurgent barons, spared by Cromwell in its entirety for the loyalty of its noble owner to his cause, and, after having suffered terribly from a fire in 1871 — which nearly consumed the great hall — it yet remains one of the grandest and most perfect relics of feudal times in England.

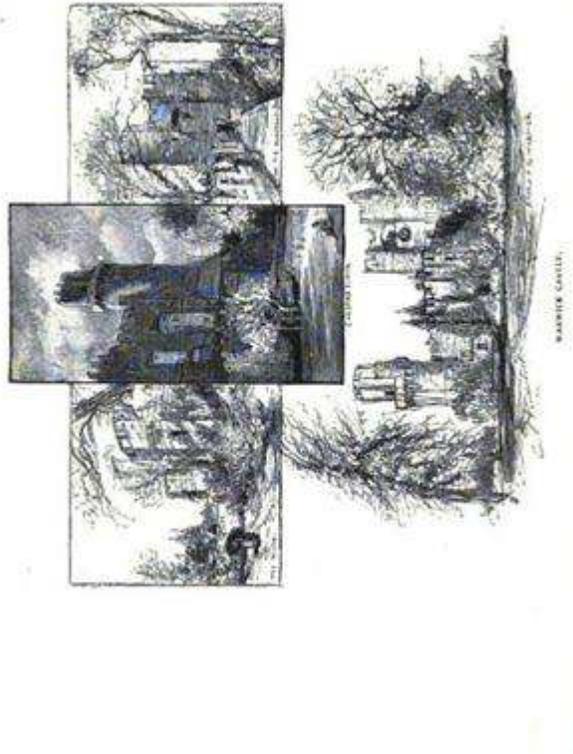
Indeed Warwick Castle figures most conspicuously all through the history of England. Piers Gaveston was led through its portal to execution, and if Guy is to some extent mythical, which, by the way, Dugdale, who is our final authority in monastic history, does not admit, Warwick the king-maker is not legendary, and his history is even more amazing than Guy's. Stow says that when he came to London "six oxen were eaten at a breakfast, and every tavern was full of his meat; for who that had any acquaintance in that house he might have had as much sodden and roast as he could carry away on a long dagger;" and it is computed that no less than thirty thousand men were daily fed at his various palaces during the days of his prosperity. The Wars of the Roses, with which he was intimately connected, were so horrible that one is almost obliged to Mrs. Skewton for her suggestion that it is the "darling bygone times " that makes dungeons and torture delightful. The gateway here shown is the inner court of Warwick Castle, and it is the one through which Gaveston was taken out to execution.

The surroundings of Leamington are lightly sketched and probably from memory, but they are truthful if they are only suggestive, and those who know the charming lanes will at once recognise the walk that Carker took before breakfast when he came down from London to see his principal. "He strolled beyond the town and reentered it by a pleasant walk, where there was a deep shade of leafy trees, and where there were a few benches here and there for those who chose to rest;" in his walk beyond the town he had "strolled about meadows and green lanes, and glided among avenues of trees."

The town of Warwick, which the party visited repeatedly, and which almost forms a part of Leamington, is one of the most picturesque in the kingdom, and for quaint beauty it would seem hardly possible to improve



INNER COURT, WARWICK CASTLE.



the Leicester Hospital, which stands at the entrance to the ancient town. A noble gateway stretches across the road, and forms the basement to a chapel. The roadway runs in a tunnel form under, and there is a curious terrace walk round the chapel and over the gateway, which is somewhat difficult to describe, but which, with its surroundings has few parallels in England. Joining this chapel is the hospital for pensioners founded by Earl Leicester, which encloses a quadrangle of astonishing beauty. The dark oak beams of which it is built, and the rich tinting that time has given the plaster, a tinting that shows through new coats very soon, make it a perfect paradise for lovers of antique architecture.

Of course the motley party visited Kenilworth, though probably none of them cared in the least for either that place or Warwick. Perhaps the most respectable of them all was Mr. Dombey himself; loftily pompous and ignorant, he was at least honest; so indeed was Bagstock, though he resembled one of the old style of noisy and turbulent ship captains in the good old slave days, who threw bootjacks or any missiles at any one who was in their employ. "Where is my scoundrel?" said the major, looking wrathfully round the room. The native had no particular name, but answered -to any vituperative epithet, presented himself instantly at the

door, and ventured to come no nearer. "You villain," said the major, "where is the breakfast?" then when he upset a spoon the major "encouraged him with an awful shake of the fist."

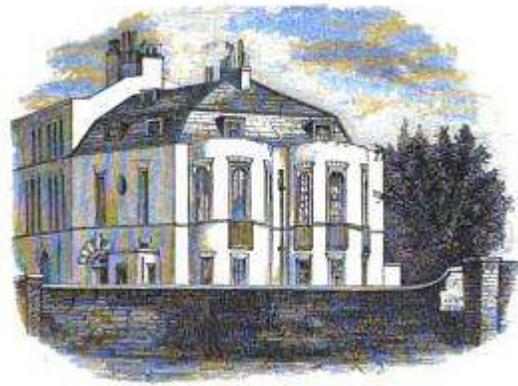
Mrs. Skewton and Mrs. Granger had hardly a redeeming feature; they were the shallowest and the most exceptionable output of a vicious system that ignores domestic comfort, and believes that true happiness consists in an "establishment," as it is conventionally termed. One almost grudges them the opportunities they had of enjoying one of the most beautiful parts of Europe. When Carker rode behind the barouche to Warwick Castle the description of the drive is much more like that which he would take from Leamington to Kenilworth, and indeed it so closely resembles that, that I have no hesitation at all in adopting it as this. The ride to Kenilworth was the day after the one to Warwick, and each was to be preceded by a breakfast with Dombey and his friend. Carker, the manager, who had come from London, and was in attendance, we are told, rode on horseback to the destination, and this is certainly Kenilworth. "Whether he looked on one side of the road or the other, over distant landscape, with its smooth undulations, wind-mills, corn, grass, bean-fields, wild flowers, farmyards, hay-ricks, and the spire among the wood — or upwards in the sunny air, where butterflies were sporting round his head, and birds were pouring out their songs — or downward where the shadows of the branches interlaced and made a trembling carpet on the road — or onward where the overhanging trees formed aisles and arches, dim with the softened light that steeped through the leaves — one corner of his eye was ever on the formal head of Mr. Dombey, addressed towards him, and the feather in the bonnet drooping so neglectfully and scornfully between them, much as he had seen the haughty eyelids droop; not least so when the face met that now fronting it. Once, and once only, did his wary glance release these objects, and that was when a leap over a low hedge, and a gallop across a field, enabled him to anticipate the carriage coming by the road, and to be standing ready at the journey's end to hand the ladies out."

The party dismount at the grand old ruins, that Dugdale quaintly describes as the work of the able Geoffrey de Clinton, though the courtly writer is forced to say that blue blood did not run in his veins, for he was "of very mean parentage, and only raised from the dust by the favour of the said King Henry, from whose hands he received large possessions and no small honour, being made both Lord Chamberlain and Treasurer to the said

King, and afterwards Justice of England, which advancements do show that he was a man of extraordinary parts. It seems he took much delight in this place, in respect of the spacious woods and that large and * pleasant lake (through which divers pretty streams do pass) lying among them; for it was he that first built the strong castle here, which was the glory of these parts, and for many respects may be ranked in a third place, at the least, with the most stately castles in England.”

Its familiar history connects it with some of the most prominent figures in our history, — with the heroic Simon de Montfort, the stern and fearless John of Gaunt, and with Bolingbroke, all of whom in turn possessed it, and lived in regal splendour in its halls; but it is better known from its connection with later history, and the halo that Scott has thrown over its ruins. He peoples these again with Elizabeth and her court, and Leicester and his court, and with all the barbaric splendour of feasts, and tournaments, and music, and dancing, and with the strange and often boisterous pageantry in which Queen Elizabeth would seem to have delighted, or at any rate to have always been ready to participate with good nature. We are met at every stage in *Dombey and Son* with the difficulty that is encountered in starting, the want of greater precision in the details of the places alluded to, which is simply the result of the work having been written on the Continent of Europe, where, of course, he could have no opportunity of “sketching from nature.” A record of the place where it was produced yet exists at Gadshill, in the shape of a summer-house that was presented to him by some of his English friends.

I will quote Mr. Pemberton on Brigg Place, the house in which Mrs. MacStinger lived and attended to the welfare of Captain Cuttle. “It is another place of which the London Directory owns no knowledge, but its locality — except that increase of business has obliterated some of its characteristics, and is fast making valuable every available yard of ground — is still easily to be recognised.” Some parts of *Dombey* were finished in London at a comfortable house in Devonshire Terrace, New Road, which is here shown. It is a pleasant roomy house with ample bow-windows, and dormer lights in the roof. Here Dickens



DICKENS'S HOUSE IN DEVONSHIRE TERRACE.

lived after removing from Doughty Street, and here he wrote a large part of the *Old Curiosity Shop*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and also put some finishing touches on *Dombey and Son*.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR MUTUAL FRIEND AND MISCELLANEOUS.

It is suggested by Mr. Pemberton, that while Dickens was making his waterside researches for *Great Expectations*, he also took note of the spots that figure in *Our Mutual Friend*. Shadwell, Wapping, and Rotherhithe have abundant materials for his pen; and where an indifferent spectator sees nothing but discomfort and annoyance, he can individualise character and find something of interest in every passer-by. His acute sight enabled him to make a shrewd guess at the history and antecedents of those he met with in his rambles, and even to invest them with romance.

If we take the sketch which Mr. Vanderhoof has made of Limehouse Reach, it is impossible to deny it a very considerable amount of quaint picturesque grouping. The chimneys travel from the front to the back of the one-storey building that is in advance of the higher dwelling, and then there are verandahs that have at one time looked on a scene less squalid, with steep steps and gangways, all mingled in picturesque confusion. The barges, too, have not lost their old picturesque Dutch-looking form, though, indeed, their days are numbered, and the reforms in the city, which can hardly be far distant, will embrace even these, and more useful and cleanly if less picturesque merchantmen will supplant the ancient shipping.

Dickens always delighted, even as a boy, in the excursions he made to these regions to see his godfather. He conducted a business which at one time was a profitable one, but has now quite succumbed to a new form of industry. Mr. Huffham was a block-maker and rigger, and his godson was always a welcome visitor. This district to the last of his life was always a pleasant one to him. There was the fresh smell of new wood shavings, and the wholesome odour of boiling tar and pitch, which, when not too pungent, is far from unpleasant; the shaping of oars and the adzing of masts and yards to a circular form by men who seemed at first sight as if they were hitting anywhere, and had no regular plans to go by, but who brought out a shapely spar with perfect certainty. Blocks are now almost a thing of the past. Iron rigging has superseded them, and an old salt who has not been at sea for some years would actually find a little difficulty in laying his hand upon the required rope; and, as one remarked to me, he would have to look up aloft and follow the halyard or brace down to the belays.

Gaffer Hexham lived in some nook in the Limehouse part of the Thames, and part of his business in life was to search the river for any floating waifs and strays that might swim upon its surface, whether this proved to be spars, or planks, or drift-wood, or a more dismal merchandise — the dead bodies that ebbed and flowed with the tide from Southwark Bridge to Millwall. A reward is offered for these, and sometimes a few valuables are found in their pockets, though this cannot be calculated on with any degree of certainty.

When Lightwood and Eugene Wrayburn went to look at one of these ghastly prizes the route was “down by the Monument, and by the Tower, and by the Docks; down by Ratcliffe and by Rotherhithe; down by where accumulated scum of humanity seemed to be washed from higher grounds, like so much moral sewage, and to be pausing until its own weight forced it over the bank and sunk it in the river. In and out among vessels that seemed to have got ashore and houses that seemed to have got afloat; among bowsprits staring into windows, and windows staring into ships; the wheels rolled on until they stopped at a dark corner, river washed, and otherwise not washed at all, where the boy alighted and opened the door.” The rest of the way they had to walk. It was not far, and they were soon at Hexham’s house.

“The low building had the look of having been once a mill. There was a rotten wart of wood upon its forehead that seemed to indicate where the

sails had been, but the whole was very indistinctly seen in the obscurity of the night. The boy lifted the latch of the door, and they passed at once into a low, circular room, where a man stood before a red fire looking down into it, and a girl sat engaged in needlework. The fire was in a rusty brazier, not fitted to the hearth, and a common lamp shaped like a hyacinth root smoked and flared in the neck of a stone bottle on the table. There was a wooden bunk or berth in a corner, and in another corner a wooden stair leading above, so clumsy and steep that it was little better than a ladder. Two or three old sculls and oars stood against the wall, and against another part of the wall was a small dresser, making a spare show of the commonest articles of crockery and cooking vessels. The roof of the room was not plastered, but was formed of the flooring of the room above. This being very old, knotted, seamed, and beamed, gave a lowering aspect to the chamber; and roof, and walls, and floor, alike abounding in old smears of flour, red lead (or some such stain which it had probably acquired in warehousing), and damp, alike, had a look of decomposition.”

Quite corresponding with this weird description of the component parts of one of the waterside houses is the graphic picture of the interior of the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters. “The wood forming the chimney-pieces, beams, partitions, floors, and doors, of the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, seemed in its old age fraught with confused memories of its youth. In many places it had become gnarled and riven, according to the manner of old trees; knots started out of it, and here and there it seemed to twist itself into some likeness of boughs. In this state of second childhood it had an air of being, in its own way, garrulous about its early life. Not without reason was it often asserted by the regular frequenters of the Porters that when the light shone full upon the grain of certain panels, and particularly upon an old corner cupboard of walnut wood in the bar, you might trace little forests there and tiny trees like the parent tree in full umbrageous leaf.

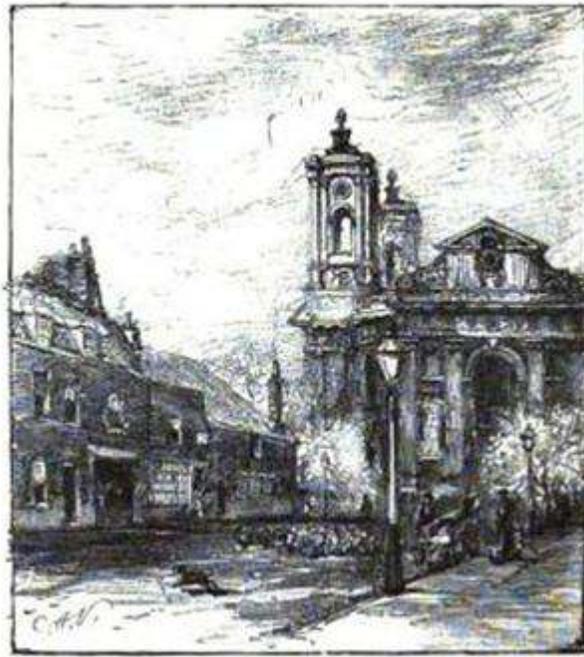
“The bar of the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters was a bar to soften the human breast. The available space in it was not much larger than a hackney coach, but no one could have wished the bar bigger, that space was so girt in by corpulent little casks, and by cordial bottles radiant with fictitious grapes in bunches, and by lemons in nets, and by biscuits in baskets, and by the polite beer-pulls that made low bows when customers were served with beer, and by the cheese in a snug corner, and by the landlady’s own small table in a snugger corner near the fire, with the cloth everlastingly laid.”

It is not difficult to select from the group of houses which form the river front here one which might represent the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, though I could not find the exact sign' anywhere; but the description answers well for many a one, not only here, but in Bristol or Newcastle-on-Tyne, and formerly in Liverpool, until the increasing demand for dock accommodation swept them away. Dickens thus describes it: —

“The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters already mentioned as a tavern of dropsical appearance had long settled down into a state of hale infirmity. In its whole constitution it had not a straight floor, and hardly a straight line, but it had outlasted, and clearly would yet outlast, many a better trimmed building, many a sprucer public-house. Externally it was a narrow, lop-sided, wooden jumble of corpulent windows heaped one upon another, as you might heap as many toppling oranges, with a crazy wooden verandah impending over the water, — indeed the whole house, inclusive of the complaining flagstaff on the roof, impended over the water, but seemed to have got into the condition of a faint-hearted diver who has paused so long on the brink that he will never go in at all.”

This description applies to the river frontage of “The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters.” The back of the establishment, though the chief entrance, was there so contracted that it merely represented, in its connection with the front, the handle of a flat-iron set upright on its broadest end. This handle stood at the bottom of a wilderness of court and alley; which wilderness pressed so hard and close upon “The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters” as to leave the hostelry not an inch of ground beyond its door. For this reason, in combination with the fact that the house was all but afloat at high-water, when the “Porters” had a family wash, the linen subjected to that operation might usually be seen drying on lines stretched across the reception-rooms and bedchambers.

There is in *Our Mutual Friend* an account of an old-fashioned church at Millbank, of which the somewhat



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S CHURCH, SMITH SQUARE.

fantastic description is given in *Our Mutual Friend*. “In this region are a certain little street called Church Street, and a certain little blind square called Smith Square, in the centre of which last retreat is a very hideous church, with four towers at the four corners, generally resembling some petrified monster, frightful and gigantic, on its back with its feet in the air.” This is the description of St. John the Evangelist, a church that occupies all the centre part of Smith Square. Yet the church was the work of an architect who enjoyed great honour in his day, and whose designs figure worthily among stately elms in some of the most beautiful parts of England. By some strange mutation in affairs the architecture that exercised Dickens is again coming in vogue, and the Church of St. John the Evangelist is greatly admired by architects and artists. A happy issue even this is, out of the iconoclastic spirit that has within the last half century destroyed the interest and the beauty of some — it is supposed nearly eighty per cent. — of the parish churches of England. The quaint high pews that are now so prized among artists and antiquarians, and that are unhappily becoming so rare, were of the date of this church; and the details of the church itself are chaste and good. Probably the revived interest in this style may preserve the remnant that remains of our old parish churches; they are nearly all destroyed, but some portion may escape. Of the origin of Mr. Venus’s

establishment we have Mr. Foster's authority for saying that his trade was brought under Dickens's notice by Marcus Stone, who had seen such a place at Seven Dials in St. Giles; and we may quote the words of the proprietor, as he sums over a list of his valuables to Mr. Wegg: "You're casting your eye about the shop, Mr. Wegg. Let me show you a light. My working bench. My young man's bench. A nice tub. Bones, various. Skulls, various. Preserved Indian baby. African ditto. Bottled preparations, various. Everything within reach of your hand in good preservation. The mouldy ones a-top. What's in those hampers over them again? I don't quite remember. Say human, 'various!' Cats! articulated English baby." A list of curiosities that Dickens would have built a world of romance and history upon.

Our Mutual Friend gives us a graphic account of a London fog. Those who have not seen what Mr. Guppy used to call a "London particular, or what in the Metropolis is termed a "pea-souper," can form very little idea of what one really is. When the Americans come over to London, they are rather apt to smile at an English fog, that is, if they have never seen one, and speak of those on the banks of Newfoundland that cover a thousand miles and more. I have seen many of the latter, and some that would be considered dense ones; and it has also been my lot to see several of the London fogs, though the worst I ever saw was, I am assured, hardly up to what Guppy designated the London particular. Well, any fog that ever stole over the "banks" is simply a blaze of light, if compared to the cloud that settles over London in winter when a continuance of easterly winds has driven the damp mists from the Essex and Kent marshes into the Metropolis. The damp air is light, for mists always ascend, and the sulphurous carbonated gas that rises from thousands of chimneys cannot escape. There are doubtless many other minor causes that produce the phenomenon known as a London fog, but at any rate it stands all alone. Then those who stay at home have the advantage of those who live out of town and return to their daily business by Euston or Paddington stations, and have to make their way through a darkness that may be felt. The Hebrew residents of Bevis Marks or Hound's-ditch can fairly rejoice in the gas that rather brightens up their places of business which they have no call to leave, and taunt the West-Enders as they grope their way with their own happier lot, the Children of Israel have light in their dwellings. But let Dickens himself describe one. "It was a foggy day in London, and the fog

was heavy and dark. Animate London, with smarting eyes and irritated lungs, was blinking, wheezing, and choking; inanimate London was a sooty spectre divided in purpose between being visible and invisible, and so being wholly neither. Gas-lights flared in the shops with a haggard and unblest air, as knowing themselves to be night creatures that had no business abroad under the sun; while the sun itself, when it was for a few moments dimly indicated through circling eddies of fog, showed as if it had gone out, and was collapsing flat and cold. Even in the surrounding country it was a foggy day, but there the fog was gray; whereas in London it was at about the boundary line, dark yellow, and a little within it brown, and then browner, and then browner, until at the heart of the city — which call St. Mary Axe — it was rusty black. From any point of the high ridge of land northward, it might have been discerned that the loftiest buildings made an occasional struggle to get their heads above the foggy sea, and especially that the great dome of St. Paul's seemed to die hard; but this was not perceivable in the streets at their feet, where the whole Metropolis was a heap of vapour charged with muffled sounds of wheels, and enfolding a gigantic catarrh.

At nine o'clock on such a morning the place of business of Pubsey and Company was not the liveliest object in St. Mary Axe; which is not a very lively spot with a sobbing gas-light in the counting-house window, and a burglarious stream of fog creeping in to strangle it through the keyhole of the main door. But the light went out, and the main door opened, and Riah came forth with a bag under his arm.

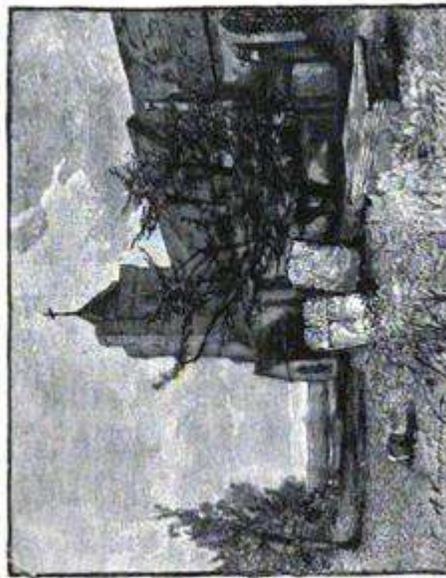
The "Seven Dials" was always a place where Dickens was able to see life in the phases in which he loved to contemplate it. It is within the west end of London, but it contains a population as poor and almost as lawless as any that are to be found in the precincts of London Bridge. The readiest way to reach it is through St. Martin's Lane, crossing between Cranborne Street and Long Acre; and Mr. Dickens, in his *Guide to London*, to which not only these pages, but every one who is a visitor to London is indebted, says that "turning up northwards the stranger finds himself in a street altogether unique in its way. It is the abode of bird-fanciers," and in it every variety of lop-eared or Russian rabbit, or any other kind, may be purchased. Pigeons of every sort, from Almond bald-pates to carriers, are represented here, and even rare foreign cage-birds may be had at any time by a purchaser. Dog-fanciers, also, are well represented, and perhaps they are advisedly called "fanciers," for if there is a very choice "King Charles" or fashionable which

any of the dealers happen to “fancy,” and which is supposed to be following its mistress, it will probably soon have a temporary home at the Seven Dials.

Seven streets meet here, and hence it derives its name. The shops only sell second or third class articles, old dresses, old coats, old hats, or shoes, and anything in fact that has seen more prosperous days; yet even in its thronged thoroughfares may be seen youths who are devoted to the sports of childhood, such as tipcat, battledore, and shuttlecock, and tops, or marbles, and they pursue their amusements even under the most untoward circumstances with great energy, and sometimes indeed not without peril to the passer-by.

Public houses abound in the Seven Dials, and on Saturday nights they are in the full glare of light and noise showing that whatever may be wanting at home there is money enough to spend upon alcohol. Sometimes we may see the men’s wives anxiously waiting outside, and almost hoping against hope that they may come out before all their week’s wages are done, and quite as often the women themselves are participants in the orgies. I had the fortune to see one episode that in all probability would have struck the humour of Dickens if he had witnessed it. Some reveller had left the precincts of a gin palace, either to get tobacco or meet a friend at a neighbouring place of like entertainment, or some such cause, when he fell into the hands, if not the arms, of his better half. He was not what is called very far gone, and had not indeed passed the amiable stage of inebriation, and addressed his lady in terms of great affection, repeatedly saying that she was his “diamond darling.” He seemed to be a lusty fellow, and had clog boots on, which at a later period of the evening he might have put to evil use, but he was quietly captured and “cuffed,” and indignantly told to “talk sense,” and probably the lucky find saved his week’s money, and may have enabled him to pass the ensuing week in comfort.

In *Great Expectations* the little village of Cooling figures. It was a favourite walk of Dickens by way of Higham, and it lies on the marshy lands that are between the Thames and Medway, and were at one time, and that even recently, a paradise for snipe and plover. Its



neglected roads are grown over with thistle and brier, and there are but a few scattered houses about it, and these almost partake of the desolate character of the church and its surroundings. “The churchyard was a bleak place, overgrown with nettles.” The visit to this place should be made on a cloudy day, such as Dickens himself used to select, for it is then that the strange weird landscape is seen at its best. “As we stand in the graveyard, looking across the low wall over which the convict climbed before Pip dared to start away, we may see the same dreary marshes, and the same limitless stretches of low land and grass and mud, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, and beyond this the silvery streak of the Thames appears at intervals.”

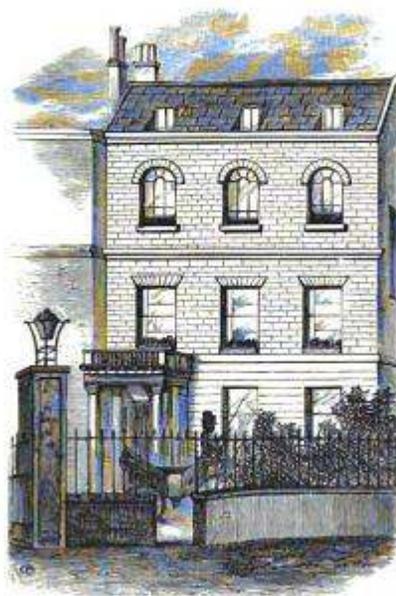
On a hot July day all wears a roseate hue, and we can hardly suppose that the marshes, which are completely bathed in faint golden mist, are accumulating the materials for a London fog which will culminate in about four months from the time the prospect is delighting the eye of the wayfarer.

CHAPTER IX.

BLEAK HOUSE AND LITTLE DORRIT.

THE house which is here shown is in Tavistock Square, and while residing in it Dickens wrote *Bleak House* and *Little Dorrit* among other works, such as a *Child's History of England*, etc. All this part of London is suggestive of the great house of Bedford, who own vast wealth here. We have Tavistock Square, Bedford Square, Russell Square, Woburn Place, and many other reminders that the family to which was granted the great estates of Woburn Abbey are as much represented by the surroundings of the district as the house of Westminster is by Pimlico and Belgravia. The dwelling which is shown here was the residence of Dickens until the year 1860. He had resided in it for nearly ten years, and before he went to live there it was the residence of Mr. Perry, the once famous chief of the *Morning Post*. The monotony of this part of London is very striking, though it might surprise any curious inquirer if he saw the interiors of some of those monotonous houses. Once they were the abodes of the aristocracy, who crowded into London in spring and summer, and there are chimney-pieces and ceilings of the early Hanoverian days, often inaccurately

spring and summer, and there are chimney-pieces and ceilings of the early Hanoverian days, often inaccurately



TAVISTOCK HOUSE

described as being in “Queen Anne’s style,” and now again in great favour with the public, through the excellent skill of Mr. Norman Shaw,

who recognised a merit in them that to me always seemed apparent. I say nothing of the weary unbroken facades we see in what we might call Woburnia, but only speak of the architectural details. The streets themselves, and the depressing effect of the architecture that frowns on them, are graphically described by Dickens in *Little Dorrit*, and there is no difficulty in supposing that he must have resided principally at home when he wrote the tale. "It was a Sunday evening in London, gloomy, close, and stale. Maddening church bells of all degrees of dissonance, sharp and flat, cracked and clear, fast and slow, made the brick and mortar echoes hideous. Melancholy streets in a penitential garb of soot steeped the souls of the people who were condemned to look at them out of windows, in dire despondency." Mr. Arthur Clennam, who was newly arrived from Marseilles by way of Dover and by the Dover coach, "The Blue-eyed Maid," was sitting in the window of a coffee-house in Ludgate Hill, and he was surrounded by "miles of houses, where the inhabitants gasped for air;" and yet, as he truly says, "Through the heart of the town a deadly sewer ebbed and flowed, in place of a fine fresh river."

Mr. Arthur Clennam was full of these reflections, and putting on his coat to shield him from a passing shower he could not but remember that "in the country the rain would have developed a thousand fresh scents, and every drop would have had its bright association with beautiful forms of growth or life. In the city, it developed only foul stale smells, and was a sickly, lukewarm, dirt-stained wretched addition to the gutters."

"He crossed by Saint Paul's and went down at a long angle almost to the water's edge, through some of the crooked and descending streets which lie (and lay more crookedly and closely then) between the river and Cheapside. Passing now the mouldy hall of some obsolete worshipful company, now the illuminated windows of a congregation less church, that seemed to be waiting for some adventurous Belzoni to dig it out and discover its history; passing silent warehouses and wharves, and here and there a narrow alley leading to the river where a wretched little bill, 'Found Drowned,' was weeping on the wet wall — he came at last to the house he sought. An old brick house, so dingy as to be all but black, standing by itself within a gateway. Before it a square courtyard, where a shrub or two and a patch of grass were as rank (which is saying much) as the iron railings enclosing them were rusty; behind it a jumble of roots. It was a double house, with long, narrow, heavily-framed windows. Many years ago it had had it in its

mind to slide down-ways; it had been propped up, however, and was leaning on some half-dozen gigantic crutches; which gymnasium for the neighbouring cats, weather-stained, smoke-blackened, and overgrown with weeds, appeared in these latter days to be no very sure reliance.” But the “crooked and descending streets” that lie between the river and Cheapside are being really improved off the face of the city, and more commodious ones are taking their places. Queen Victoria Street is indeed one of the greatest improvements of modern London.



COURTYARD, MARSHALSEA.

In *Little Dorrit* the Marshalsea holds a very prominent place indeed; and if we refer to Forster's *Life of Dickens* we shall find that the incidents which he himself relates of his own experiences show how keenly he was alive to observe human nature, and even at an early age to begin to collect materials for his future career in literature.

There was, as it would appear, a meeting held by the inmates of the Marshalsea to devise the best means to 'forward a petition from the inmates to ask for a bounty to drink His Majesty's health on his forthcoming birthday, and commenting upon this he says: "I mention the circumstance because it illustrates, to me, my early interest in observing people. When I went to the Marshalsea of a night I was always delighted to hear from my mother what she knew about the histories of the different debtors in the

prison; and when I heard of this approaching ceremony I was so anxious to see them all come in, one after another (though I knew the greater part of them already to speak to and they me), that I got leave of absence on purpose, and established myself in a corner near the partition. It was stretched out, I remember, on a great ironing board under the window, which, in another part of the room, made a bedstead at night. The internal regulations of the place for cleanliness and order, and for the government of a common room in the ale-house — where hot water, and some means of cooking, and a good fire, were provided for all who paid a very small subscription — were excellently administered by a governing committee of debtors, of which my father was chairman for the time being.” Then there is a picture of Captain Porter standing over the petition with dignity, as the unhappy petitioners filed in, and, as it were, taking possession of them and theirs when they entered the room to sign the momentous document. The Captain had, it would seem, felt the importance of the occasion, and had “washed himself,” and when any one had the pen presented to him to affix his signature he was asked if he had heard it read, and if there was the slightest disposition to do so, or even if there happened to be a faint suspicion of wavering, Captain Porter at once took advantage.

In one of his works Dickens has said that people always enjoy themselves over any legal affirmation or oath, — perhaps such things are rather less in vogue now than they were, — but he says that all such expressions as “I do by these presents solemnly declare and avow,” or “and I will hereafter well and truly and to the best of my ability and knowledge,” give intense satisfaction.

If any hesitation appeared on the part of a signer of the petition Captain Porter at once cleared his throat and read it full from end to end, and he doubtless enjoyed himself over the opening sentence that set forth the “humble petition” in due legal phraseology, and the closing one that the “humble petitioners ever will pray,” even though there is a little obscurity in the last promise.

Near the Marshalsea was the lodging-house and academy kept by Mr. Cripples, where old Frederick Dorrit and his niece had their home; just across the road was a pie-shop, where Flora led Little Dorrit for conversation.

As for the prison itself, in the collected edition of Dickens he says, in the preface to *Little Dorrit*: “Some of my readers may have an interest in being

informed whether or no any portions of the Marshalsea Prison are yet standing. I myself did not know until I was approaching the end of the story, when I went to look. I found the outer front courtyard often mentioned here metamorphosed into a butter shop, and then I almost gave up every brick of the jail as lost. Wandering, however, down a certain adjacent Angel Court leading to Bermondsey, I came to Marshalsea Place, the houses in which I recognised, not only as the great block of the former prison, but as preserving the rooms that arose in my mind's eye when I became Little Dorrit's biographer. Whoever goes into Marshalsea Place, turning out of Angel Court leading to Bermondsey, will find his foot in the very paving stones of the extinct Marshalsea Jail; will see its narrow yard to the right and to the left, very little altered if at all, except that the walls were lowered when the place got free; will look upon the rooms in which the debtors lived; and will stand among the crowding ghosts of many miserable years."

Southwark Bridge contends with Blackfriars the honour of being the handsomest bridge over the river. It rests on two piers, and the centre span of 402 feet was the widest in England until tubes were invented. On this bridge Little Dorrit loved to walk, because it was quieter than the others, — owing, doubtless, to its approaches being less convenient — and here she saw Clennam for the first time, and felt attracted towards him. Here also young John, who had the excellent gift of seeing everything in a favourable light, and could transform a yard of drying clothes into a grove of trees by a happy effort of the imagination, declared his undying attachment to her.

Where Mr. Casby lived we cannot now discover, for the place has long since disappeared, but the description of it is a life-like picture of many suburbs of London, and indeed of many other suburbs of growing cities where country scenes and associations are being crowded out. Even Chester itself, where these lines are written, and which is a walled city, cannot prevent such transformation within its ancient gates, but occasionally a high wall that has perhaps for centuries shut out some fruit garden which lies within its enclosure, and possibly was at one time part of a monastic establishment, is removed. First the coping goes down, then, as course after course is lowered, the ancient pleasance is exposed to passers-by who never even knew of it. Gnarled old fruit-trees are open to the street, and then masons and bricklayers usurp the place and a new street is formed, and every trace of garden land is lost. This is, in a small scale, a picture of what

John Casby used to see from his home. It was “in a street in the Gray’s Inn Road, which had set off* from that thoroughfare with the intention of running at one heat down into the valley and up again to the top of Penton-



ville Hill, but which had run itself out of breath in twenty yards, and had stood still ever since.”

There is no such place as that now, but it remained there for many years, looking with a balked countenance at the wilderness patched with unfruitful gardens and pimped with eruptive summer-houses.

Chancery Lane is in the very heart of legal London, or as I happen to remember a London youth, who seemed to be a very juvenile appendage to some legal firm, say to a suitor from the country who was quite at sea in the legal districts of the metropolis: “Go to Chancery Lane, sir; you must go there first before you can get anywhere;” and indeed to those who do not know which gateways to dive through, or which passages to disappear into, this is very far from being an unjust *resume* of the merits of Chancery Lane.

This lane continually figures in the pages of Dickens, and the drawing of it that Mr. Vanderhoof has given fairly represents the centre of legal London, and there is not much probability that the vast new courts that now overshadow it will for a long time alter its character. Mr. Guppy can always be met with in Chancery Lane, carrying a blue bag and cordially

fraternising with brother law clerks. He is quite an authority upon the restaurants of the neighbourhood, and can tell you exactly where the best value may be had for a shilling that is to be spent in lunch or dinner, and even knows the varying merits of each chop-house as it may happen to change in its management. If one of these establishments is well conducted and has any specialty the proprietor is not far from fame and fortune. A case involving some law proceedings was before the public some little time since, and it appeared in evidence that a fortune of £45,000 had been accumulated in a building that can hardly have a frontage of more than eighteen feet to the street.

Clients waiting for their suits to be heard are generally hungry, and often, indeed, thirsty; and lawyers' clerks are generally dexterous in the use of a knife and fork. Messrs. Jobling and Smallweed were taken by Mr. Guppy to a well-known grill, "one of the class known by its frequenters by the denomination of Slap Bang;" and, as we may see in fifty houses in the neighbourhood, there was a "seductive show of artificially whitened cauliflowers in the windows, with poultry, and verdant baskets of greens, coolly-blooming cucumbers, and joints ready for the spit;" and in the interior the guest was greeted with a "general flush and steam of hot joints, cut and uncut, and a considerably heated atmosphere, in which the soiled knives and table-cloths seemed to break out spontaneously into eruptions of grease and blotches of beer."

Thavie's Inn and Clifford's Inn also figure in this vicinity, and at the former Esther Summerson, Ada Clare, and Richard Carstone passed their first night in London under the roof of Mrs. Jellaby. Mr. Guppy, who well knew how to cut off corners, and find his road in London, described Thavie's Inn as being "round the corner. We just twist up Chancery Lane and cut along Holborn, and there we are, in four minutes' time, as near as a toucher."

Clifford's Inn, which stands in the opposite of Chancery Lane, is so called from Robert Clifford, who lived in the time of Edward II., and to whom the lands upon which it stands were devised. The entrance to it is from Fetter Lane, which contains yet some curious specimens of old London architecture that were evidently before Dickens when he wrote some of the descriptions of the antique parts of the city.

Though it is somewhat in the background, Clifford's Inn has not a few histories to relate. After the great fire of London Sir Matthew Hale and

seventeen other judges sat to adjust the claims of the landlords and tenants of the burned districts; and, difficult as this task was, they are said to have completed it to the entire satisfaction of all parties concerned!

But *Bleak House* is principally intended to draw attention to the law's delays; and the estate of Mr. Carstone, when it was placed at his disposal beyond doubt, was of no value to him. After many years of litigation the document turned up that settled every point, and would have done so in the first instance, but some £80,000, the value of the property, was sunk in expenses. It is generally said that the Jarndyce case was suggested to Dickens by the well-known one of *Martin v. Earl Beauchamp* — a case that appeared, disappeared, and reappeared, for a period of about eighty years, and when young Dickens was engaged in doing some work connected with it as a law writer.

Mr. Tangle, who was always concerned in the Jarndyce case, was a well-known character, and he could be seen any day at one o'clock enjoying a lunch of fried oysters; or, if it were summer, he would be discussing a lobster or chicken salad and imbibing stout, though that in strictly correct quantities.

This restaurant yet stands at the end of Chancery Lane, and fully maintains its ancient fame.

But there are many other life-like characters in the environs of Chancery Lane that appear in Dickens; and notably among others Mr. Snagsby, the law stationer, who has dealt in every form of legal process, "skins and rolls of parchment; in paper — foolscap, brief, draft, brown, whitey brown, and blotting; in stamps, in office-quills, pens, ink, indiarubber, etc. etc.;" and when the eminent lawyer, Mr. Tulkinghorn, called upon him to worm out the name of a law writer whom he wished to discover for very different reasons from those assigned, Mr. Snagsby's respect and veneration for the great man knew no bounds, though, even as he went out with him on business, he was obliged to conciliate his wife, for, as the narrative says, though Mr. and Mrs. Snagsby were of one bone and one flesh, "to the neighbours' thinking there was one voice too, which voice, of course, was that of Mrs. Snagsby." Chancery Lane was also the scene of the wanderings of Miss Flite, as she travelled from Court to Court. She was an actual character, and had some real or fancied grievance, possibly a real one, but her actual story is not generally known. I remember on one occasion to have been in the Vice-Chancellor's Court (Lord Hatherley's), and when a

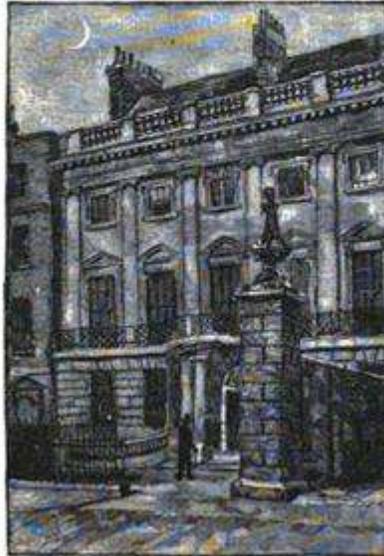
case was closed this lady, who had been sitting behind, suddenly jumped up to address the bench; she was thin and energetic looking, but she had a dreamy eye. There was a slight hush in the court as she rose and called out in a shrill mechanical voice, "My Lord — may it please your Lordship to hear the humble petition of "I cannot now remember the name, but the Vice-Chancellor said, "Ah, this is not the day for hearing petitions." He knew her, of course, perfectly well, and called out to the clerk to read out the next case on the paper.

Lincoln's Inn was the scene of Miss Flite's daily peregrinations, and there were not many of the wigged gentry who were unfamiliar with her appearance and weaknesses. This Inn figures conspicuously through all of Dickens' works, but especially in *Bleak House*. The principal entrance is from Chancery Lane, and this was built soon after the battle of Bosworth Field; over it Oliver Cromwell once lived, and it is said that Ben Jonson worked at the wall as a bricklayer. Dickens brings, in a few words, the surroundings of Lincoln's Inn before our eyes: "Michaelmas Term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall." It was November weather, and there was so much mud in the streets that in the murky gloom, that a palaeozoic lizard "some fifty feet long or so" might be expected "waddling up Holborn Hill." Dogs are simply undistinguishable; and on the London bridges it seemed as though the passengers "peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog" were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds; and in the "very heart of the fog sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery."

Another picture is given of Lincoln's Inn Fields in Mr. Tulkinghorn's chambers; and this eminent lawyer sits in his rooms, where, indeed, he resides, and on a sultry summer's evening "a breeze from the country that has lost its way takes fright and makes a blind hurry to rush out again," leaving, however, its contribution of dust. Still, even Mr. Tulkinghorn can enjoy a bottle of very old port which he brings up from some priceless bin in some artful cellar under the Fields, and enjoys it after a dinner served from some neighbouring chop-house to his chambers. These chamber lodgers are not quite so common as formerly, but a few of the old-fashioned sort yet exist. Lincoln's Inn at night, however, is the same as ever, the "perplexed and troublous valley of the shadow of the law." The bell that rings at nine o'clock "has ceased its dolorous clangour about nothing." It is only in "dirty upper casements here and there are little hazy patches of

candle-light,” where the denizens are toiling on at parchments — who work, “ though office hours be past, that they may give for every day some good account at last.” Mr. Tulkinghorn’s house has been identified as No. 58.

Mr. Tulkinghorn's house has been identified as No. 58

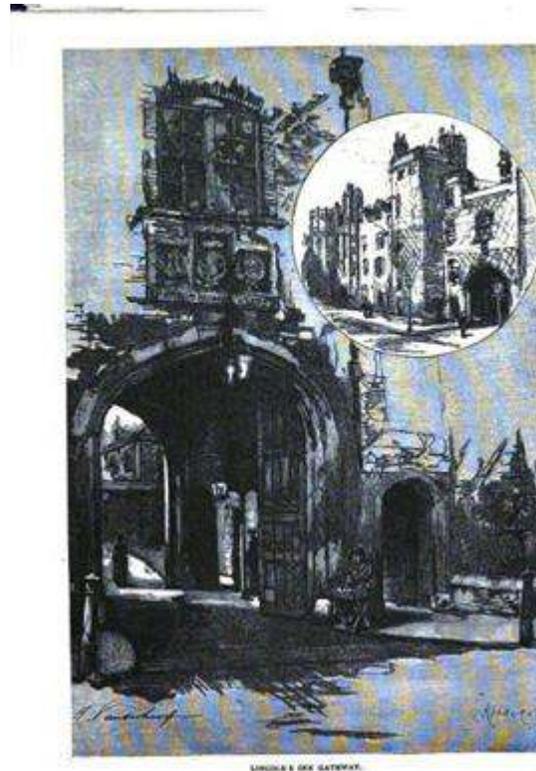


58 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

Lincoln’s Inn Fields in the following words: “Our immediate visit showed that number on the door of one of these two houses. As we had already suspected, he had taken the house in which Forster had lived, and with which he was so familiar as the residence of Tulkinghorn, and if any further corroborative proof was needed it was unexpectedly stumbled on by one of these identifiers. Let the reader turn to Maclise’s sketch, in the *Life*, of the gathering in Forster’s chambers to hear Dickens read his new Christmas story, *The Chimes*. He had come on from Italy for this reading prior to publication, having written Forster to invite Carlyle, Jerrold, Maclise, Stanfield, and others, to hear him, in that delightful letter, beginning ‘Now, if you was a real gent.’ Maclise made a sketch of the room and its inmates, and there, in the left-hand corner, you shall still see the very frescoes — weird figures with waving arms and pointing fingers — which Dickens placed with such ghastly effect on Tulkinghorn’s ceiling.”

The gateway to Lincoln’s Inn which faces Chancery Lane is a very fine piece of brick architecture, and some of the older parts of the square are

perfect models of artistic brickwork, and show what can be made out of a material that hardly any one can use now with anything like good effect. Hampton Court, St. James's Palace, and the older parts of Lincoln's Inn, afford examples of the way artists can handle bricks, a building material that even the Romans were enamoured with, and employed when the best building stone was at hand, but which in the present day we use no better than in the flat front of a terrace with square windows. Lincoln's Inn received its



name from Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, who died in the year 1312. It is built on the site of his old town house. The chapel on the right of the entrance was designed by Inigo Jones at about the same time that he built the towers of Westminster, and they have every indication of being the work of the same hand. He had the good taste to admire the architecture of the Tudors, but it had ceased to be employed in buildings, except, perhaps, in some remote country church; and we see that he only was acquainted with the principles of Italian architecture. The stained glass windows are very good, and honest Mr. Pepys used to find great consolation under the sort of open crypt above which the chapel stands. These windows represented different saints, and Mr. Hare notices that Archbishop Laud thought it

curious that his own stained glass windows at Lambeth should be so much abused when those at Lincoln's Inn were allowed to pass unnoticed, and yet he thinks it best, on very general principles, not to say anything about it, "lest he should thereby set some furious spirit at work to destroy those harmless goodly windows to the just dislike of that worthy society."

The Hall of Lincoln's Inn was built when Dickens was in the height of his prosperity, and when he was producing his very best works. Next to Westminster, it is probably the finest hall in London. It is 120 feet in length, 45 in breadth, and 64 feet high. The screen is a very elaborate piece of work, and the roof is rich and costly. At the northern end of the hall is a painting in fresco by Watts, R.A. — "The Lawgivers." But all the classical associations of Lincoln's Inn will receive a shock when the law courts are removed to the vast building that now occupies so large a portion of the Strand. It is, indeed, in a sanitary point of view, a great improvement to this part of the city; alleys and lanes, that it seems almost incredible were ever in the midst of the Metropolis, have been swept away, and a space of some seven acres secured for a great court-house, where law will be almost remodelled, and where some new Dickens must arise to invest its routine with the romance that hangs about the old courts of Lincoln's Inn. How far the new buildings will commend themselves to the public taste time must show. The designer is no more; he has done excellent work in his time, and he may have calculated upon the chemistry of a London atmosphere, for all I know correctly, to give his last work repose and harmony.

In Chancery Lane is an old quadrangle containing the Rolls court and chapel; the latter is a building that abounds with classic associations. Donne, Atterbury, and the learned Butler were all preachers, and Burnet was dismissed by the restored king for preaching a sermon upon the text, "Save me from the lion's mouth, thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorn." The little chapel contains one of the noblest pieces of sculpture in England, this is the recumbent figure of Dr. John Young,



HALL OF LINCOLN'S INN.

Master of the Rolls in Henry VIII.'s time. Every line in this grand piece of sculpture speaks of repose, and there is a quiet lofty dignity that, as it were, seems to linger to the last over the handsome features. The effigy and the sarcophagus on which it rests are the works of Torregiani, and the master who so literally sleeps in cold dull marble is worthy even of his chisel. Amongst other masters that lie buried here is Sir John Strange, on whom the epitaph was written, —

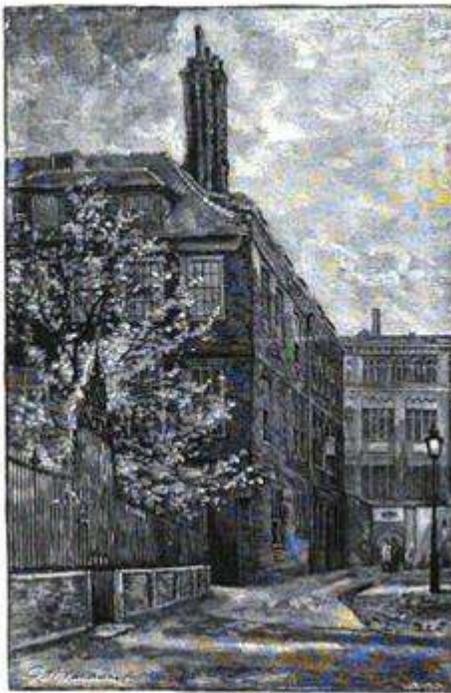
“Here lies an honest lawyer, that is Strange.”

CHAPTER X.

MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD.

Edwin Drood opens with the interior of an opium den where John Jasper was lying on a bed in company with a besotted Chinaman and a Lascar, all of them under the influence of opium vapour. The visions of Jasper are quite characteristic of a man recovering from his dream, and he saw the tower of Rochester Cathedral mingling with fantastic Eastern scenes, and a

hook or spike where the sultan used to impale Turkish robbers. All this was mixed with revelry, and dancing girls, and banqueting, while the iron spike still remained before him supported in mid-air. White elephants in endless procession, richly caparisoned, with cymbals clashing all round them, fill in the lurid picture. Still through all this the tower of Rochester, which he knows has no right to be there, rises clearly up in the distance over and above all the heterogeneous scenes. The opium “den,” as such places are called, we learn from Charles Dickens’s admirable *Guide to London*, is situated near Ratcliffe Highway, in a garret kept by a man called Johnstone, though his real name, or at least one that more



CLIFFORD'S 1886.

accurately described him, was “John Chinaman.” Here, for the consideration of a shilling, a sailor or any customer may smoke his pipe, and dream the hours away.

The site is so clearly known that a visitor to London purchased the bed upon which John Jaspur lay with his smoke-dried companions, and this enthusiastic relic-hunter had it safely transported to his home in America. The proprietor of this den is himself so imbued with the smoke of opium that, after a lapse of years, he has become, as we may say, thoroughly acclimatised to it, and a breeze of country air would be intolerable to him even on a day in June. Indeed, in the *Guide to London* Dickens mentions

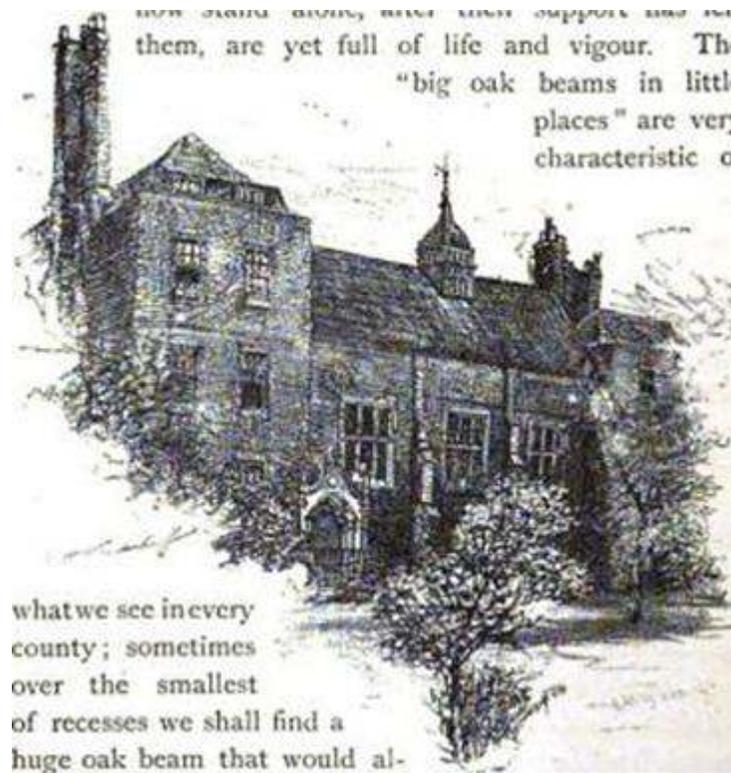
that he suddenly closed the grimy window with as honest a shudder as he himself felt the fumes and opened it. The first chapter of the last work of Dickens deals with the temporary delights of opium, which have such appalling penalties, and result in a delirium worse even than that which alcohol can inflict. When the "opium demon" has fairly taken hold of a man, human aid is at an end, and, utterly prostrate, he must linger on till death releases him. Supported by the drug that has undone him, and with eyes that glare like those of a wild animal, he is of no further use, and he must bide his time. Those who have read De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium-eater* will remember how terribly the effects are described, and I am almost reminded of an incident that occurred within sight of the window where these lines were written. All visitors to the ancient city of Chester will remember the grand old abbey church of St. John's, which has seen seven hundred summers, and was once the cathedral of Chester; near it are magnificent remains of carved work that once formed the bosses, and capitals, and enrichments of the wealthy abbey.

A house was built out of some of these remains, and, but that all is on too large a scale, the place might well stand for that where little Nell found a resting-place after life's brief but fitful struggle. In this house at one time De Quincey the opium-eater lived and wrote; and in the year 1880, on the eve of Good Friday, it may be remembered that the great tower fell without a moment's warning, and its many tons of *debris* covered the site of the house where De Quincey lived.

There is a fine description of Rochester Cathedral after the bell had ceased ringing for afternoon service. Jasper had heard the "unintelligible" mutterings of the crazy inmates he left behind him, and had presence *of mind enough left to grope his way down the stairs, and "give a good morning to some rat-ridden doorkeeper in a bed in a black hutch beneath the stairs, and pass out." He went on to Rochester, and in the same afternoon "the bells are going for daily vesper service, and he needs attend it, one would say, from his haste to reach the open cathedral door. The choir are getting on their sullied white robes, in a hurry, when he arrives among them, gets on his own robe and falls into the procession filing into service. Then the sacristan locks the iron-barred gates that divide the sanctuary from the chancel, and all of the procession having scuttled into their places, hide their faces; and then the intoned words, *When the wicked man*, rise among the groins of arches, and beams of roof, awakening muttered thunder."

There are many beautiful descriptions of the pleasant nooks in a cathedral city, or such as may often be seen in an ancient market town where the parish church has been some part of one of the smaller abbeys or priories. One only must suffice out of many — it was in the cathedral close in the minor canon's quarter: "Red-brick walls harmoniously toned down in colour by time, strong-rooted ivy, latticed windows, panelled rooms, big oak beams in little places, and stone-walled gardens, where annual fruit yet ripened upon monkish trees, were the principal surroundings of pretty old Mrs. Crisparkle and the Rev. Septimus as they sat at breakfast."

There is no passage in all Dickens that more clearly shows his keen observation and delight in mute things, and the sympathy that did not stop with the phases of human life, deep as that was. Red-brick walls not only mellow with time, but artists say that even an old London brick wall is a study of colour, and that anywhere within a stone's-throw of St. Paul's or the Tower "strong-rooted ivy" is peculiarly applicable to the gnarled and knotted roots we see curling round and under ancient masonry; and yet, as he says, "annual fruit ripen on monkish trees," and this long after the supports to which they have clung have disappeared. I know one garden in Cheshire, and one in Shropshire, attached to old farm buildings that once were parts of a priory, where espaliers in perfect growth that followed some cloister wall, and now stand alone, after their support has left them, are yet full of life and vigour. The "big oak beams in little places" are very characteristic of



THE NOOK OF STABLE INN

what we see in every county; sometimes" over the smallest of recesses we shall find a huge oak beam that would almost carry a cathedral tower, and is fifty times as strong almost as its little duties require; but the fact is, that the country was so full of heavy wood, in forests and parks, that men could afford to be lavish, and it cost almost less to place the great beam where it stands than to reduce it.

Stable Inn in Holborn is just such a place as Dickens in his happiest moments delighted in, and it appears by name or by implication again and again in his pages. "Behind the most ancient part of Holborn, London, where certain gabled houses, some centuries of age, still stand looking on the public way, as if disconsolatory, looking for the old bourne that has long since run dry, is a little nook composed of two irregular quadrangles called Stable Inn. It is one of those nooks the turning into which out of the clashing streets imparts to the relieved pedestrian the sensation of having put cotton in his ears and velvet soles to his boots. It is one of those nooks where a few smoky sparrows twitter in smoky trees, as though they called to each other, 'Let us play at country,' and where a few feet of garden mould, and a few yards of gravel, enable them to do that refreshing violence

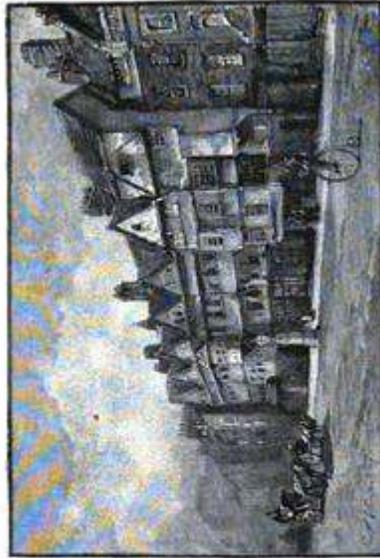
to their tiny understandings. Moreover, it is one of those nooks which are legal nooks, and it contains a little hall with a little lantern in its roof, to what obstructive purposes devoted and at whose expense this history knoweth not. Mr. Grewgious himself occupied a set of chambers in a corner house, in the little inner quadrangle presenting in black and white over its ugly portal the mysterious inscription: —

P
J T
1747

In which set of chambers never having troubled his head about the inscription, unless to bethink himself at odd times on glancing up at it that haply it might mean, ‘perhaps John Thomas,’ or ‘perhaps Joe Tyler,’ sat Mr. Grewgious writing by the fire.” This place is indeed a perfect preserve of sparrows, and swallows seem to linger here when they have left even the London parks. There is another description of chambers in Staple Inn, where Mr. Neville Landless lived and studied, and it is a picture of exceeding comfort and cosiness. He took himself to Staple Inn, but not the P. J. T. of Mr. Grewgious. Full many a creaking stair he climbed before he reached some attic rooms in a corner, turned the latch of their unbolted door, and stood beside the table of Neville Landless.

“An air of retreat and solitude hung about the rooms and about their inhabitant. He was much worn, and so were they. Their sloping ceilings, cumbrous rusty locks and grates, with heavy wooden bins and beams slowly mouldering withal, had a prisonous look, and he had the haggard face of a prisoner. Yet the sunlight shone in at the ugly garret window, which had a penthouse to itself thrust out among the tiles, and on the cracked and smoke-blackened parapet beyond, some of the deluded

sparrows of the place rheumatically hopped, like little feathered



cripples who had left their crutches in their nests, and there was a play of living leaves at hand that changed the air, and made an imperfect sort of music in it that would have been melody in the country. Hawthorne describes the singular feeling of stillness and repose in this courtyard, which contrasts so thoroughly with all its surroundings and is immediately lost when Holborn is regained. The small hall at Staple Inn is exceedingly picturesque, with its open roof, and stained windows, and ancient portraits. When Dr. Johnson left Gough Square he took up his abode at Staple Inn, and here he wrote *Rasselas*. The front to Holborn, which is here shown, is one of the most picturesque facades in London. It seems to date back to the early part of James I.'s reign, and its quaint overhanging gables are full of light and shade. An hotel near Aldersgate is spoken of here. "It is a hotel, boarding-house, or lodging-house at its visitor's option." This is the place that was frequented by John Jasper on the occasions of his visits to London, and about this locality and St. Paul's Churchyard are many similar ones. "This accommodating place" announces itself in the new railway advertisers as a novel enterprise, timidly beginning to spring up. It bashfully, almost apologetically, gives the traveller to understand that it does not expect him, on the good old constitutional hotel plan, to order a

pint of sweet blacking for his drinking, and throw it away; but insinuates that he may have his boots blacked instead of his stomach, and may also have bed, breakfast, attendance, and a porter up all night, for a certain fixed charge. From these and similar premises, many true Britons in the lowest spirits deduce that the times are levelling times, except in the article of highroads, of which there will shortly be not one in England.” Institutions similar to this may be found in the pages of *Bradshaw*, and many of them are very comfortable indeed, and if one of them only gets a name for anything that is a little better than its neighbour can boast of, whether it is chops, or Yarmouth bloaters, or bottled stout, the owner’s fortune is not far off.

The *Mystery of Edwin Drood* must close with one more quotation, which is a description of Cloisterham on a warm summer’s day. The “transparency of the walls” that is alluded to is a very accurate picture of the solid walls of an old building when, as it were, it is bathed in sunlight, and is an effect that we do not see in a new building. “Cloisterham is so bright and sunny in these summer days that the cathedral and the monastery ruin show as if their strong walls were transparent. A soft glow seems to shine from within them rather than upon them from without, such is their mellowness as they look forth on the hot cornfields and the smoking roads that distantly wind among them. The Cloisterham gardens blush with ripening fruit. Time was when travel-stained pilgrims rode in clattering parties through the city’s welcome shades; time is when wayfarers, leading a gipsy life between hay-making time and harvest, and looking as if they were just made of the dust of the earth, so very dusty are they, lounge about on cool door-steps, trying to mend their unmendable shoes, or giving them to the city kennels as a hopeless job, and seeking others in the bundles they carry, along with their yet unused sickles swathed in bands of straw. At all the more public pumps there is much cooling of bare feet, together with much bubbling and gurgling of drinking with hand to spout on the part of these Bedouins; the Cloisterham police meanwhile looking askant from their beats with suspicion, and manifest impatience that the intruders should depart from within the civic bound, and once more fry themselves on the simmering roads.”

CHAPTER XI

A HOUSE AND SOME CHARACTERS.

Furnival's Inn was always a favourite place with Dickens. Here simple honest John Westlock had his chambers which so astonished Tom Pinch with their completeness; and Rosebud took up her quarters here instead of Staple Inn. But it deserves especial notice from the circumstance that it was here that Dickens had his early home. He lived here as a reporter for some time before he was connected with the press. It was here that he wrote his *Sketches by Boz*, and, beyond all, it was here that he commenced his great career as an author, by writing the *Pickwick Papers*.

The central figure of the group facing this is Mr. Pickwick, and though Dickens himself was not always satisfied with his production of the philosopher, he it was that gave him his first start in life. When he heard that a brother of St. Bernard was going to read it he said, "What a humbug he will think me." Mr. Pickwick had been in business in London, and retired upon an ample competence. At the Bardell trial Mr. Snubbin says, "I



have no objection to admit, my lord, if it will save the examination of another witness, that my client has retired



HOUSE IN FURSIVALS INN.

from business, and is a gentleman of considerable independent property.” One almost fears that the discoverer of *Bil Stumps His Mark* would hardly be a suitable man to trust among the buyers and sellers of this world, yet it by no means follows that he was not a steady sound man of business. “His money always was as good as the bank — always,” is the willing testimony of Mrs. Bardell; and it is probable that he would at any rate have looked well after the internal economy of an office, even if he did not undertake some of the departments that belong to buying and selling, — not that there is any necessary reason why he should not have been able to hold his own even there. Weller, of course, is always spoken of in connection with him, and their relations were rather peculiar for master and man. Still Weller was exceedingly faithful, and had precisely the ready wit that made him of use to Mr. Pickwick. Indeed, the two Wellers and Pickwick are the real characters in the book; Mr. Snodgrass, the poet; Mr. Winkle, the sportsman; and Mr. Tupman, the impressionable, are very minor characters, and hardly rise to being even amusing. Weller is a slightly exaggerated specimen of the sharp Londoner who is yet to be met with. Omnibuses have kept them alive, though they have not preserved the class of which his parent was a type. Old Tony Weller is a fine example of the English stage-coachman now no more. He fairly loved his calling, and, indeed, to a man who was fond of

horses, and the pleasurable excitement of a ride, which had its merits in any weather, for he was provided accordingly, such a life had many attractions. There is a tale of an old coachman who drove out of London, and who had for more than quarter of a century never missed a trip or had been behind time, and when he asked for a holiday to celebrate his twenty-fifth wedding-day it was freely granted by his employers, and a substitute found to fill his place; but at starting time, when the deputy came, he found the old coachman on the box. He had puzzled what he should do, and how he could best spend his holiday, and found that his old way of life had the greatest of all attractions for him.

Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz and Mr. Snubbin are well enough drawn, but they only appear in the scene for a moment. Mr. Perker is a very good example of a safe methodical London lawyer, such as we might find any day in the neighbourhood of any of the Inns of court; and if we read the police reports it is to be feared that Dodson and Fogg are not quite an unknown type of practitioner; indeed, there may be even some almost of a more exceptionable character, for they seem to have been prosperous, and were far too wide-awake to use a client's money in speculation, or to put themselves within the pale of the law. We must remark that everything has changed so much since *Pickwick* was written that many things which passed without comment in those days would cause us some little astonishment at present. Perhaps a gentleman would consider at least twice before he went into a tavern with his servant, if something had gone wrong, and beguiled dull care with a tumbler of hot brandy and water, while the servant refreshed himself with stout. Again, the too hilarious state of Mr. Pickwick and all his followers at Dingley Dell is told with more gusto than any one would use in describing it now. But we must remember that Dickens painted things very much as he saw them; and as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* has preserved pictures of the magistracy and the hierarchy of his day (which were not contemplated, indeed, by the author), and Smollett and Fielding have left records of their time, Dickens has portrayed the daily life that he saw around him. It has been objected that he was too needlessly sarcastic upon the temperance lecturers of the day, and the class of local preachers of which Stiggins was a type, or perhaps a burlesque. Uphill work they had, and much good they often did. To deny that there were self-seekers among them, and to assert that they were all actuated by no desire to provide scrip for their journey, would be as rash as

to say that the *nolo episcopari* of an English bishop was always a genuine outpouring of one who had resolved to be shod with sandals, and to put no money in his purse. Still one thinks that Stiggins has had scanty justice, and as that appeared to be the case soon after he came before the public, it is but fair to let Dickens speak for himself. He writes to a Mr. David Dickson, who has found fault with the way in which he treats the subject: "Sir — Permit me to say, in reply to your letter, that you do not understand the intention (I daresay the fault is mine) of that passage in the *Pickwick Papers* which has given you offence. The design of 'The Shepherd,' and of this, and of every other allusion to him, is to show how sacred things are degraded, vulgarised, and rendered absurd, when persons who are utterly incompetent to teach the commonest things take upon themselves to expound such mysteries, and how, in making cant phrases of Divine words, these persons miss the spirit in which they had their origin. I have seen a great deal of this sort of thing in many parts of England, and I never knew it lead to charity or good deeds. . . . That every man who seeks heaven must be born again, in good thoughts of his Maker, I sincerely believe. That it is expedient for every hound to say so in a certain snuffling form of words, to which he attaches no good meaning, I do not believe."

In *Nicholas Nickleby* the best characters are Mrs. Nickleby and Mantalini. They are the most artistically drawn by far. Squeers is simply a cruel brute who overdoes himself by his wickedness, and the usurers, Gridle and Ralph Nickleby, are not very difficult to draw; Nicholas and Kate are most estimable and very sensible, and we must go to the subtleties of the Darwinian theory to know how it happens that such parents — as we learn from Ralph Nickleby what his brother was, and we know what Mrs. Nickleby was — could have had such a clever family; but, on the other hand, we continually see the cleverest of parents the progenitors of youths who do not rank high even among the mediocrities of life. Mrs. Squeers is also a character that will live; she is very much like Sally Brass in her way of life and her estimate of right and wrong, but she is rather more natural.

"'He'll take a meal with us to-night,' said Squeers, 'and go among the boys to-morrow morning. You can give him a shake-down here to-night, can't you?'"

"'We must manage it somehow,' replied the lady. 'You don't much mind how you sleep, I suppose, sir?'"

"'No, indeed,' replied Nicholas; 'I am not particular."

“‘That’s lucky,’ said Mrs. Squeers; and, as the lady’s humour was considered to lie chiefly in retort, Mr. Squeers laughed heartily, and seemed to expect that Nicholas should do the same.”

And again, when Mrs. Squeers was asked for her opinion about Nicholas, she said to her husband: “‘ Oh, that Knuckleboy, I hate him;”“ and at once she shut up Mr. Squeers, who rather gently said, “‘ But why?”“ with “‘ What’s that to you? if I hate him that’s enough, ain’t it?”“ and the estimable lady said further that he was “‘a proud, haughty, consequential, turned-up-nosed peacock.”

Her spouse seemed rather to deprecate the vehemence of the outbreak, and said —

“‘He’s cheap, my dear, the young man is very cheap.’

“‘Not a bit of it,’ retorted Mrs. Squeers; ‘he’s dear if you don’t want him; I don’t see that you want him any more than the dead — don’t tell me. You can put in the cards and in the advertisements: “‘Education by Mr. Wackford Squeers and able assistants” without having any assistants, can’t you? Isn’t it done every day by all the masters about? I’ve no patience with you.’“

The rest of this conversation in the ninth chapter is very full both of humour and character; indeed she is the presiding spirit of Dotheboys Hall.

Mrs. Nickleby is essentially an opposite character. Her dreams of Kate’s great match with Sir Mulberry Hawk of Mulberry Castle, North Wales — “‘ only daughter of Nicholas Nickleby, Esquire, of Devonshire “ — and the poetic lines that she conjured up as appearing in some annual in honour of her daughter, with a possible allusion to herself that might bring an admirer, are true to the life. Then her gliding off from one subject to another without the slightest connection, and her constant references to the silver spoons and ancient grandeur of her family, are all in keeping with the luckless lady — for a lady she always was through all her vicissitudes.

The original of Nicholas Nickleby himself, as we learn from an article in the *Literary World*, was a teacher of music on the Hullah system, and was well known in Manchester.

At the top of the sheet, on the left-hand side, is the immortal Bumble and his forlorn charge, Oliver; and it is only fair to add that the fame of Dickens will go down to posterity on the strength of the portraits that this sheet contains; for there are those who would wish that he had never written another work after *Copperfield*. In the *Literary World* a writer who reviews Professor Ward’s work on Dickens, and speaks of the reaction that followed

his popularity, has said, when alluding to an excess of his fame: “Twenty years ago, to take one illustration, every one in the universities who read novels at all read Dickens from end to end, and quoted him and imitated him without measure or restraint. The state of things is altered now. Few undergraduates are conversant even with the superficial elements of Pickwickian lore, and not many months since it was our lot to meet one evening six scholars of a college not altogether given over to mathematics, and itself not without honour in fiction, of whom not one was familiar with more than the mere name of Samuel Weller and the Deputy Shepherd. Though this is an extreme case of ignorance, yet it illustrates the tendency of the day. Such an ebb of popularity cannot be lasting, and when the dross is cleared away Dickens must secure a permanent place among the great masters of English fiction.”

Now it is hardly excusable that even assiduous students at a university should be ignorant of the characters here alluded to any more than they might be of Dominie Sampson or Major Pendennis. It must always be borne in mind that in his later works Dickens has introduced characters that perhaps may not be so generally known. “To be ignorant of the poets of one’s country denotes indolence,” a Roman moralist once said; but though we may all admit this, we can hardly attach much blame to any one who is not familiar with Mr. Veneering or Mr. Podsnap or Mr. Boffin. These characters were delineated at his last residence at Gadshill, and it may be that he was away from the old sources of his inspiration, or it may be that perhaps a little of the old cunning had left his pen; at any rate in his days of wealth and well-earned



GADSHILL

prosperity the characters he has portrayed do not leave the same impressions as those that he created in his earlier days. Even Mr. Grewgious or John Jaspar or Mr. Neville Landless are not exactly familiar characters with many to whom Weller and Codlins are quite household words.

Among some reviewers it has been said that Pecksniff is an overdrawn, unnatural character, and that any one so transparent could not be supposed to gain any confidence. Nothing, however, is more astonishing than the facility with which pretension and cunning will be accepted by the public, especially in a professional man. Let us only consider how often a foreigner becomes a lion if he can only look wise and adhere to broken English. When Pecksniff undertook to transform Martin Chuzzlewit's drawing of the school into a fine design by a few touches — "the hand of a master" — which touches were adding a window and sub-cornice or some such device, there are many more clients that would than would not have believed him; and then this eternal self-puffing has a very imposing effect upon more than the half of mankind. It is recorded on very good authority that a Russian who was in needy circumstances, but who possessed a good suit of clothes, made quite a comfortable income in the vicinity of London by teaching music and singing, though he could neither play a tune nor sing a song.

Pecksniff is no more overdrawn than the mistress of a London boarding-school who never teaches, and who never could, but who makes an abundant income out of a straight figure, a clear complexion, hair slightly inclining to gray, and a double gold pebble glass. This picture is at least drawn from life. The young ladies, who paid what many clergymen would consider an ample income, were obliged to speak French, a language the governesses understood perfectly, and when the pupils were ushered at some indefinite period into the august presence of the mistress — if, indeed, that is the correct word — they in their simplicity addressed her in that language. But she, with great impatience, stopped them and said that their accent simply shocked her, and if they wished to be understood they must address her in English. And this was quite true, for it was exceedingly doubtful if she could have asked her way from the Tuileries to the Louvre. Now here is a simple statement of fact, and yet this woman had applications from all parts of England for the privilege of placing some young lady under her charge. Is Pecksniff any more incredible? But Dickens says that he is drawn from an actual character, which, indeed, there is no difficulty in crediting. He says that what is called long sight perceives on a prospect

innumerable features that do not appear to short-sighted people, and he had in his eye a model when he drew Pecksniff, and this model would be shocked if he were shown his portrait.

Mr. Skimpole, of course, is Leigh Hunt. Hunt did not see the likeness, but some considerate friends pointed it out for him, and he was deeply hurt, saying that Dickens had no right so to treat an old acquaintance; and though Dickens said all he could to make amends — “I take it at its worst, and say I am deeply sorry, and that I feel I did wrong in doing it” — the injury was done, and Hunt could never forget it. Dickens even went so far as to admit to Hunt that his own father and mother figured in his works.

Mr. Micawber will be recognised at once on the right of Mr. Pecksniff, as the humorous Mrs. Gamp is on the architect’s left hand. Pinch is behind him, and the expression is well preserved. He is by no means an impossible though perhaps not a common character. We might find a dozen Pecksniffs for one character even approaching Tom Pinch. The dwarf Quilp, who is behind Mr. Pickwick, is quite exceptional, and for myself I do not remember to have met with any character that he resembles; there may be such persons, and perhaps there are, but certainly they are not common. Swiveller, however, who has struck up a kind of grotesque friendship with him, is among the very best drawn of all Dickens’s characters. Under the dwarf are Nell and her grandfather. He at least is eminently natural, and believes that he must at last make a great fortune by gaming. He robs poor Nell of the trifle she has put by, and of course it goes at once when he sits down with gamblers. The same infatuation may be seen any time at races. In Chester, where the iniquity is focused, it is quite common for some one with fair prospects to turn their backs on all sense and experience and go to certain destruction on race week. An old proverb says that “experience makes fools wise,” but what a change in the world, and what a change for the better, there would be if it did.

Cuttle with his hook occupies the lowest part of the sheet. Steamboats and a higher education have done much to alter the class of ship captains now, and we must look for him among coasters or Glasgow schooners. Still we find, in any service, from the royal navy to the mackerel boat, true, honest, kindly tars, that are the happiest when they are doing a generous, kindly action.



The residence of the Right Hon. Milner Gibson, rented by Dickens when he wrote some parts of *Edwin Drood*. He took it for six months, from November to May 1870, and died at Gadshill the month after his tenancy expired.

From: **The Dickens Circle – A Narrative of the
Novelist’s Friendships**, by J.W.T. Ley, Chapman and Hall, Ltd.,
1918



CHARLES DICKENS
(1856)
From a Pencil Sketch by George Cruikshank
Frestupace

PREFACE

From the time when, as a very raw youth, I first came to know anything about Charles Dickens, I have been attracted by the magnetic personality of the man himself even more than by the men and women he created. The outstanding impression that I gained from my first reading of Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens* was of this magnetism of his personality which attracted to him so many of the most brilliant men and women of the time, and won for him their wholehearted friendship. That impression was deepened as I read more widely. Youth, of course, discovers wonders continually which it is amazed to find are already well known to its parents, but the amazement in my case arose out of the fact that this very striking phase of Dickens's character — this extraordinary capacity of his for friendship — had not apparently been discovered. At any rate, it had never been adequately dealt with. I was struck by the fact that this man Dickens, comparatively unlettered as he was, who had had no material advantages in life, but, on the contrary, many disadvantages, should not merely have come to know so many of his peers — that was inevitable — but should have so won their affection; should have been so loved by old men like Landor and Leigh

Hunt, and Jeffrey, by men of his own age like Forster, and Maclise, and Talfourd, and by men of a younger generation like Percy Fitzgerald, James Payn and Charles Kent; should have been accepted by them all as the sun of their firmament.

If it be true that the proper study for mankind is Man, it is equally true that men most reveal themselves in their relations with men. In my desire to gain a true notion as to what manner of man Dickens really was, I found Forster's book disappointing. I have no quarrel with him on that ground; he could not be expected to give more than a comprehensive portrait of his subject, with the lights and shades that he himself saw. But his book did little more than whet my appetite, as it were. Paragraphic references were made to famous men of brilliant and fascinating parts, little more than hints were given of the novelist's relations with some of those men. And so I sought elsewhere. I began to read widely in Victorian biography and autobiography, and thus I gained a knowledge, not only of Dickens, but of many other noble and worthy men of the period, which I could not have gained otherwise, and which has been helpful and inspiring to me.

The result of my labours — unhappy word! — is here. It has many faults, I have no doubt. I only claim that it has been done conscientiously by one who loves his subject. My difficulty has been to decide what to omit. I have been almost overwhelmed with material, but I tried all along to avoid anything in the nature of a Gradgrindish compilation. I am vain enough to hope that my fellow Dickensians will find this book a useful auxiliary to Forster. I am modest enough to have aimed at nothing higher.

I suppose it would be impossible for any man to write a book on Dickens to-day without having to acknowledge indebtedness to Mr. B. W. Matz. That gentleman has been one of my most valued personal friends for a good many years now. I succeeded him as Hon. General Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship, and sat with him on the Council of that remarkable organisation for five years; I was a member, with him, of the little Committee which, with fear and trembling, launched *The Dickensian*, that bright little magazine which he has so ably edited for fourteen years; I have been associated with him in innumerable Dickensian ventures; and time and time again I have been indebted to him for his advice and help — both ever ready and ever valuable — as well as for many personal kindnesses of a more intimate character. And now I want to say that but for him I could never have written this book. I have had to turn to him again and again. His

unique knowledge was always at my disposal, so were the contents of his excellent library, and when he did not himself possess a book that I needed he begged or borrowed it for me. But for his persistent encouragement I doubt if I should ever have seriously tackled the work at all; but for his consistent help I know I could never have completed it.

There are others who have rendered help which I gratefully acknowledge. Mr. William Miller, another old Dickensian friend, has answered many inquiries out of his marvellous store of knowledge, and loaned me books; Mrs. Perugini, too, has most kindly answered inquiries; the Marquis of Crewe generously loaned to me the originals of all Dickens's letters to his father and mother; Lord Tennyson gave me some valuable information about his father's friendship with Dickens, and authorised me to quote from his Memoir of his father; Mr. Marcus Stone, R.A., gave me a personal interview.

Of the books I have consulted I could not possibly give a complete list. Their name is Legion. But where I have quoted I have made acknowledgment in the text or in a footnote.

J. W. T. Ley.

Newport, Mon.,

June 1918.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION TO THE AMERICAN EDITION

“I do believe that from the great majority of honest minds on both sides, there cannot be absent the conviction that it would be better for this globe to be riven by an earthquake, fired by a comet, overrun by an iceberg, and abandoned to the Arctic fox and bear, than that it should present the spectacle of these two great nations, each of which has, in its own way and hour, striven so hard and so successfully for freedom, ever again being arrayed the one against the other.” So said Charles Dickens in the last speech but one that he made in America — in April 1868. How his heart would have glowed if he had been alive when, forty-nine years later to the very month, the two great nations were thrown together in the culminating fight for freedom. How those immortal words of General Pershing's in 1918 would have thrilled him: “I have come to tell you that America would feel itself greatly honoured if its troops were engaged in the present battles.”

America and England have stood side by side in the great fight. The blood of their sons has mingled on the fields of France, and such a world disaster as Dickens proclaimed against has surely been rendered impossible for all time. I offer no apology for striking this note here. My book is almost wholly concerned with friendship. In the last two or three years there has been cemented a friendship between the two great English-speaking nations of tremendous import to the future of Man. There are captious people on both sides of the Atlantic, and they have loud voices, but on this side I know they do not speak for the masses; I am not without evidence that the same may be truthfully said of those on the other side. The two great free Peoples are friends. They have suffered and sorrowed together in the common cause — the noblest cause of all — and a friendship so sealed in suffering and sorrow cannot but be lasting. Dickens' words were true in 1868; they have infinitely more force to-day. Such an event as he then declared would be a world-disaster is unthinkable now. "Out of evil cometh good." Out of the horrors of the recent war has come this great friendship which will assuredly prove the mightiest influence for good the world has ever known.

Dickens would have been the first to realise the true significance of this happening, and he would have been very glad. I believe, indeed, that if we were to trace back the influences that have combined to bring about this consummation we should find that Dickens was one of the most potent. He offended America when he was yet a very young man, but I think the resentment never lay very deep, and all the time the spirits of Little Nell, and Smike, Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, Paul Dombey and Oliver Twist were exercising their good influence. When he returned to the land of Washington Irving and Longfellow after a lapse of a quarter of a century, America showed him that she had forgiven, and he, on his part, was glad to grasp the hand of friendship and to make amends nobly. That declaration which accompanies every copy of *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* bears lasting testimony to the magnanimity of Americans and the frank true-heartedness of Dickens. He laughed at national foibles, he declared boldly and uncompromisingly the grievance under which he chafed, but the evidence is overwhelming that in his heart always there was a genuine admiration and affection for the American people.

They perhaps had some justification for the resentment they felt in 1842 and 1843, but in truth their hearts never ceased to incline to the man who

had brought so much healthful enjoyment into their lives, and when he revisited them all unpleasantness was flung aside forever more. To-day the spirit of Dickens holds sway in America as it always did, and there can be no doubt but that the common affection for that great lover of humanity, that great proclaimer of the fundamental goodness of human nature, has done more than almost anything else, save the common sorrows of the recent war, to bring the two Peoples to a better understanding of each other, and so to friendship. I believe that the spirits of good men who have passed over go on incessantly serving us who are awaiting our turn. Is it too extreme a fancy to imagine the spirits of Dickens and Irving, and Longfellow, and Holmes, and Felton, and Lowell, close-bound there as they were here, working together to bring the two great nations whom they so nobly served when in the flesh close together in bonds of imperishable friendship?

I would say but a word or two about this book. I have learned from American reviewers (who, without exception, have been most generous) that I have omitted one or two Americans who were friendly with Dickens. I hope I shall be forgiven such a fault. I think it will be found that I have omitted very few men of real standing in their time who were on terms of friendship with the novelist. One or two who have been named are never referred to in any biography of Dickens or in any of his letters, and therefore can scarcely be presumed to have entered into his life to any appreciable extent. A more common criticism has been that I included rather too many people, and that some famous people have no business in the book because, although they had extensive associations with the novelist, they were never friends. One American reviewer has included George Cruikshank in this category. He is wrong, for George was, in the earlier days, very friendly indeed with Dickens. But my purpose was not simply to treat of friendship as such, but to show, if I could, how Dickens and great men and women of his time acted and reacted upon one another, and so to throw some fresh light upon a great and attractive personality. That is why I called the book *The Dickens Circle*, and not *The Friendships of Charles Dickens*.

For the rest, I want to say how deeply the reception of this book in America has touched me. Not one reviewer has uttered an unkind word. It is in keeping with all my experience of Americans. I am proud in the possession of many personal friends across the Atlantic. Some I have met in

the flesh, and spent happy hours with them; others I know autographically; but all of them I may truthfully describe as friends. If this book creates more friendships for me in the land of Washington Irving, I shall be a happy man.

J. W. T. Ley.

Newport, Monmouthshire, England.

August. 1919.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTORY

“My art has brought acquaintances by scores.
But to my character I owe my friends.”

There is no surer test of a man's character than to ask, “Who are his friends?” For the unworthy man does not hold the friendship of worthy men. Few men come out of the test better than Charles Dickens. Many other great men have had big circles; many Davids have had their Jonathans; but no man ever had a bigger or more notable circle, and none was ever more loved by those who were admitted to his friendship. He had, indeed, the capacity for friendship in a superlative degree. Of the attractiveness of his personality many have written in terms of enthusiasm. They all bear testimony to the truth of Forster's declaration:

“His place was not to be filled by any other. To the most trivial talk he gave the attraction of his own character. It might be a small matter; something he had read during the day, some quaint odd fancy from a book, a vivid little outdoor picture, the laughing exposure of some imposture, or a burst of sheer mirthful enjoyment; but of its kind it would be something unique, because genuinely part of himself. This, and his unwearying animal spirits, made him the most delightful of companions; no claim on good-fellowship ever found him wanting; and no one so constantly recalled to his friends the description Johnson gave of Garrick, as the cheerfulest man of his age.”

In another place Forster says:

“It was an excellent saying of the first Lord Shaftesbury, that, seeing every man of any capacity holds within himself two men, the wise and the foolish, each of them ought freely to be allowed his turn; and it was one of

the secrets of Dickens's social charm that he could, in strict accordance with this saying, allow each part of him its turn: could afford thoroughly to give rest and relief to what was serious in him, and when the time came to play his gambols, could surrender himself wholly to the enjoyment of the time, and become the very genius and embodiment of one of his own most whimsical fancies."

These are the declarations of a man who loved Dickens as his life, but they are confirmed by a hundred witnesses. But he was something very much more than a bright and delightful companion. He won friendship, and he won it because he gave it. "Charles Dickens," says Lady Pollock, "was and is to me the ideal of friendship." "He was indeed a man of magnanimous and *practical* sympathy," wrote Mrs. Cattermole. Read of him cheering Macready in his lonely retirement; read of him going to see Stanfield in his illness and so cheering him by his description of Fechter's latest play, "fighting a duel with the washstand, defying the bedstead, and saving the life of the sofa-cushion," that the sick man "turned the corner on the spot." Read of him always glad to slap a friend on the back and felicitate him on a success; always first to cheer him in failure; always by to grasp his hand and say and do the right thing in sorrow and suffering; read of him helping to start capable young writers on the road that leads to success; read of him as an editor to whom nothing was too much trouble if he could advise or help a young and promising contributor; read of him the life and the soul of children's parties. What wonder that this man should have attracted good men to him and wound their affections round his heart?

"Angels," says Young, "from Friendship gather half their joys." Dickens was, indeed, a happy man. Scarce a great man of his time but loved him. And, be it noted, in all his wide circle there was none who sought reflected glory. They all shone by their own unaided light. Many of them were famous before he had been heard of; there were few of them who were not better educated than he was, who had not had better opportunities in life. Herein, surely, lies proof of the man's innate greatness. It is a wonderful thing that this newspaper reporter who had had no opportunities but what he had made for himself, whose earliest admirers had been the frequenters of the bar-parlour at Chatham, who had had practically no schooling at all, whose chief mentors in his boyhood had been the inmates of a Debtors' prison, whose boyhood companions had been the drudges of a blacking warehouse — that this man should, before he was thirty years old, have

been the dominating spirit in a circle which comprised some of the finest minds of a period which was so rich in fine minds.

Before he was thirty years old! Nay, before he was twenty-six years old. He celebrated his thirtieth birthday in America, where he had already formed close friendships with Washington Irving, Longfellow, Felton, and others, whilst he had left behind him men like Macready, Maclise, Forster, Jerrold, Talfourd, Jeffrey, Landor, who loved him truly, with whom he was on terms of intimate friendship.

When he was yet some two or three years short of thirty he was one of the leading members of the Shakespeare Society, in association with Proctor, Talfourd, Macready, Thackeray, Blanchard, Charles Knight, Douglas Jerrold, Maclise, Stanfield, Cattermole, Charles and Thomas Landseer, and Frank Stone. Every one of these names is that of a man of first-class abilities who called Dickens friend. And to them, even at this time, must be added Jeffrey, Leigh Hunt, Landor, Samuel Rogers, Carlyle, etc. A short three years before Dickens had been an utterly obscure newspaper reporter with never a book to his credit. Practically every one of these men had at that time achieved independent fame. Several of them were much older than Dickens; three of them were old enough to be his grandfather, and had been famous before he was born. They were exceptionally gifted men of widely differing temperaments, irresistibly attracted by the magnetism of this young writer. And as the years rolled on none of them drifted away. In one or two cases the friendships were temporarily clouded, but in all such cases the sun rose again, and the friendships were renewed to last unto death. The Circle grew steadily year by year, and each new friendship was cemented as the old ones had been.

It was his sheer joy in life, his frank, hearty, wholly unspoiled outlook, his joyous laugh, yet withal his realisation of the seriousness, as well as the joy of life, his love for human nature and his never-failing determination to take it at its best — these were the qualities that won for him such a host of friends. It has been noted that he was the dominating personality in all this great company. That surely is the most remarkable fact of all. He was not simply admitted to the company of his peers: it was they who formed the Dickens Circle. They were the planets and stars that circled around the Dickens sun. Let it be a Christmas party, a game of leap-frog, a trip to Cornwall, amateur theatricals, a public dinner to Macready or Thackeray, or a private dinner to Black — whatsoever it be, if Dickens is in it at all, he is

the moving spirit. All his associates, great men as well as lesser men, are dominated by the personality of this man who, in social upspring, education, and all that usually counts for so much, was their inferior.

It is no conscious, aggressive domination either; it is just the working of the natural law which forces the strong man to the top. He had learned self-reliance in a hard school. All he had achieved was due absolutely to his inborn genius and to his own force of character. He had faced fearful odds in his most impressionable years — the years during which the boy begets the man. He had conquered, and out of the fight he had come strong, self-reliant, clean-minded and pure-hearted, joyous at his victory, with no trace of bitterness in him. Those early struggles had made him what he was. They had had some ill-effects, no doubt, but the good far outweighed the ill, and at the age of twenty-five Dickens sprang before the world, fully equipped to take and to hold his place among men.

Let us spend a short time in the Dickens Circle. Let us see the man in the company of his friends. Thus shall we come to know him better even than we know him now, and to love him more. We shall see him the jolliest of companions for the social hour; we shall see him the kind sympathetic friend in times of sorrow and of sadness; we shall see him almost womanly in his tenderness when his friends are stricken; we shall see him ever ready to prove his friendship at whatsoever sacrifice; we shall see him winning and holding surely the whole-hearted love of scores of men who did not lightly give their love; we shall find that he was indeed “the ideal of friendship” — ”the good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever friendly, noble Dickens, every inch of him an honest man.

CHAPTER II

FRIENDS OF BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

And to imitate David Copperfield, and begin at the beginning, there are one or two friends of the novelist’s early years who certainly must have mention. First, a couple of friends of his boyhood. Let Bob Fagin have pride of place. Scarcely entitled to a place in the Dickens Circle, you say. Well, no; but a friend of Dickens’s all the same, a friend in the darkest days: Bob Fagin, the fellow-drudge in the blacking warehouse, who, when a third drudge, Poll Green, objected to the future novelist being treated as “the

young gentleman,” “settled him speedily”; who, when “the young gentleman” was one day taken ill, was so kind to him, filled empty blacking-bottles with hot water, and applied relays of them to his side half the day, and when it came towards evening, refused to allow him to go home alone. “I was too proud to let him know about the prison,” Dickens tells us, “and after making several efforts to get rid of him, to all of which Bob Fagin in his goodness was deaf, shook hands with him on the steps of a house near Southwark Bridge on the Surrey side, making believe that I lived there. As a finishing piece of reality, in case of his looking back, I knocked at the door, and asked, when the woman opened it, if that was Mr. Robert Fagin’s home.” Kind-hearted Bob Fagin, it was hardly fair, was it? to use your name so roughly in after years.

Then there were his schoolfellows at Wellington House Academy, whither he went when the days of drudgery were over — Daniel Tobin, Henry Danson, Owen R. Thomas, and Richard Bray. They were his chief associates in those days when the sun had begun to shine again. That the young Dickens made some impression on these boyish friends is evident from the fact that Thomas preserved a letter which the future Boz wrote to him when he was between thirteen and fourteen years old.

Writing to Forster after Dickens’s death, Thomas said: “After the lapse of years I recognised the celebrated writer as the individual I had known so well as a boy, from having preserved this note; and upon Mr. Dickens visiting Reading in December 1854 to give one of his earliest readings, . . . I took the opportunity of showing it to him, when he was much diverted therewith. On the same occasion we conversed about mutual schoolfellows, and among others Daniel Tobin was referred to, whom I remember to have been Dickens’s *most* intimate companion in the school-days (1824 to 1826). His reply was that Tobin either was then, or had previously been, assisting him in the capacity of amanuensis; but there is a subsequent mystery about Tobin, in connection with his friend and patron, which I have never been able to comprehend; for I understood shortly afterwards that there was an entire separation between them, and it must have been an offence of some gravity to have sundered an acquaintance formed in early youth, and which had endured, greatly to Tobin’s advantage, so long.”

There was no mystery about it. “The offence,” says Forster, “went no deeper than the having at last worn out even Dickens’s patience and kindness.” Forster records that he could recollect Dickens helping this old

schoolfellow on many occasions, and he adds: "His applications for relief were so incessantly repeated, that to cut him and them adrift altogether was the only way of escape from what had become an intolerable nuisance."

Danson, who became a physician, also recorded at Forster's request, his recollections of those days, and it is interesting to note that he remembered that the boys had a small club for the lending and circulating of small tales written by Dickens. He also records that the theatrical instinct was even then strong in Dickens. The boys mounted small theatres, and got up very gorgeous scenery to illustrate "The Miller and his Men" (for which play Dickens retained a curious likings — I had nearly written affection — all his life) and "Cherry and Fair Star."

It will be seen that Dickens made no lasting friendship at school, though Tobin hung on to him for years; but with a schoolfellow of his brother's he did form a friendship that endured till the end. This was Thomas Mitton, who was with the other Dickens boys at Mr. Dawson's school in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square. Afterwards, it is believed, he and Charles were fellow-clerks at Mr. Molloy's in New Square, Lincoln's Inn, where Dickens was employed for a few weeks between leaving school and going to Mr. Blackmore's. Mitton stuck to the law, and in 1838 we find him drafting his friend's will. And so late as June 13, 1865, we find a letter to him giving a full account of the Staplehurst accident.

There is a friend who should be mentioned here, though he only just walks across the stage, as it were. His name was Potter, and he was a fellow-clerk in the office of Mr. Blackmore, attorney, Gray's Inn. It is recorded of him that he did much to stimulate Dickens's theatrical tastes. The pair took every opportunity, we are told by their employer, of going together to a minor theatre, where they not infrequently engaged in parts. That is all we know about Potter, but he was Dickens's friend — or shall we say pal? — during a very interesting and not at all unimportant phase of the novelist's life, and so he is entitled to a place in the Circle.

We pass on to the next period in the career of *Pickwick's* author. In the big Dickens Circle see that John Black is given his proper place. He was not an intimate friend; I suppose he and Dickens rarely met on really equal terms; but Black was the first friend who influenced Dickens's career and encouraged him when he could as yet scarcely have dreamed of future fame. "Dear old Black! my first out-and-out appreciator," Dickens wrote only a few weeks before he died. He never forgot that it was "this good old

mirth-loving man” who flung the slipper after him, as he put it, who first recognised his genius and encouraged him. For Black was Editor of the “Morning Chronicle” when young Dickens was a reporter on that paper, and Charles Mackay, who was also a member of the staff, tells us that he repeatedly heard Black predict the future greatness of Charles Dickens. Indeed, says Mackay, it was because he had heard his Editor say this so often that he begged from him the letter which Dickens wrote proposing to write for the paper the *Sketches by Boz*. Dickens was an unknown man with no worldly prospects when he became a member of Black’s staff, and undoubtedly he owed much to the Editor, who was then past his fiftieth birthday. He always acknowledged it and paid hearty tribute. In that well-known speech at the dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund in 1865, for instance, in which he recalled some of his journalistic experiences, he said: “Returning home from exciting political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known in this country. I have been, in my time, belated in miry by-roads, towards the small hours, forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheelless carriage, with exhausted horses and drunken postboys, and have got back in time for publication, to be received with never-forgotten compliments by the late Mr. Black, coming in the broadest of Scotch from the broadest of hearts I ever knew.” And I have already quoted what he said not long before he died. After he gave up journalism he saw but little of this excellent man, but they met occasionally, Black proud of his old reporter, Dickens loving and respecting his old Editor and never forgetting his indebtedness to him. In 1848 Black ceased to be Editor of the “Morning Chronicle,” “in circumstances,” says Forster, “strongly reviving all Dickens’s sympathies.” The novelist wrote: “I am deeply grieved about Black. Sorry from my heart’s core. If I could find him out, I would go and comfort him this moment.” He did find him out, and he gladdened his old Editor’s heart by arranging in his honour a dinner at Greenwich. This is the last record of any meeting between the two men, but I do not doubt but that they did meet again, for Black lived another twelve years not far from London.

Two of Dickens’s colleagues on the “Morning Chronicle” were Charles Mackay and Thomas Beard. The former calls for no more mention than he has already had, but with Beard a very close friendship was formed, which lasted right through the years until that sad day in June 1870. Beard was the

first friend he made when he entered the gallery; indeed, he was the only friend among his gallery colleagues, for Dickens seems to have kept himself very much to himself in those days — a curious fact in view of his great capacity for friendship and his great sociability in all other periods of his career. Beard's was one of the familiar faces at Twickenham in the summer of 1838; he was present at the *Haunted Man*, christening dinner; and he was a guest at the wedding of Kate Dickens to Charles Collins in 1860; whilst in 1862, when the novelist thought of going to America for a reading tour, he proposed to his old friend to accompany him as secretary.

There is one famous man whose place is in this chapter. He is Wentworth Dilke, grandfather of a still more famous grandson. He knew Dickens in the blacking warehouse days. He was acquainted with the future novelist's father, with whom he one day visited the warehouse, and gave the young drudge a half-crown, receiving in return a low bow. In after years Dilke related this story to Forster, who mentioned it to Dickens. "He was silent for several minutes," says the biographer. "I felt that I had unintentionally touched a painful place in his memory; and to Mr. Dilke I never spoke of the subject again." A few weeks later Dickens referred to the matter, however, and as a result of the conversation that followed, related the whole story of his unhappy boyhood. So that it is to Dilke that we owe the knowledge of that experience in the novelist's boyhood which helps us so much to understand the whole of his subsequent career. Through the after years Dilke remained a friend, though not a very intimate one. They were associated in connection with the Literary Fund, and were in opposite camps in respect of its management. For some years, says Forster, he fought unsuccessfully against Dilke in this matter, but there was no personal feeling in the struggle.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH

Suddenly, at the age of twenty-four, Dickens sprang into fame as the author of *Pickwick*. Previously, however, the *Sketches by Boz*, appearing in the "Morning Chronicle," had attained a considerable degree of popularity, and a few of the more discerning had read into them the promise which was so soon fulfilled. Among these was William Harrison Ainsworth, who

ascertained the identity of Boz, advised him to publish the *Sketches* in book form, and introduced him to a publisher and to an illustrator. There is something odd in the fact that the man who rendered Dickens two of the greatest services of his life, has almost the least mention of any of the novelist's friends in Forster's book. For he very materially influenced Dickens's life. He was not only the first to encourage him to publish a book, introducing him to publisher and illustrator — Macrone and George Cruikshank — but also first made the young writer and John Forster acquainted, thus bringing about one of the most memorable friendships in literary history. In view of these facts one would expect to find him filling a very prominent place in a biography of Dickens from the pen of Forster. Yet he is not mentioned more than about half a dozen times.

The explanation is that though Ainsworth was still alive when Forster wrote his book, he had completely dropped out of the old circle, and was almost completely forgotten. Further, after the first few years he ceased to be one of Dickens's really intimate friends. In the beginning he was, undoubtedly, and up to the late 'forties he was still welcomed as a pleasant companion, but the original intimacy disappeared. The truth is, I think, that Ainsworth had not those solid qualities of friendship that Dickens required, and found in others. But in his early manhood he must have been a striking and attractive personality, and, in addition, he was the first prominent literary man with whom Dickens associated on level terms.

Imagine what the youthful "Boz" would feel. See what his boyhood had been. See how he had passed through the successive states of drudgery. Then he writes a few "specials" for his paper. Imagine his elation when he discovers that these sketches have been observed by no less a person than Harrison Ainsworth, the novelist who has recently taken the town by storm with "Rookwood" and that glorious description of Dick Turpin's ride to York. Is it surprising that he is elated by the honour of such a man's friendship? And naturally there is also a sense of indebtedness to Ainsworth for suggesting and facilitating the publication of the sketches in book form.

And so for a time the two young novelists are close friends and constant companions. But after a year years, as Dickens steadily establishes himself and forms a circle of famous friends around him, these two drift apart, until the old ties are severed altogether, and they live on through year after year without ever meeting at all. Ainsworth seems to have lost almost all his friends in much the same way. Indeed, the story of his life makes sad

reading, for it is a tragic picture that it presents in the 'seventies of the old man, who thirty years before was one of the most brilliant stars in the London firmament, now neglected and well nigh forgotten. "I recall a dinner at Teddington in the 'sixties," says Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, "given by Frederic Chapman, the publisher, at which were Forster and Browning. The latter said humorously: 'A sad, forlorn-looking being stopped me today, and reminded me of old times. He presently resolved himself into — whom do you think? — Harrison Ainsworth!' 'Good heavens!' cried Forster, 'is he still alive?'" "That is one of the saddest anecdotes that I have ever read.

In the early days, however, when "Rookwood" was outdistanced in popularity only by *Pickwick* itself, and Forster was just beginning that career which was to make him one of the greatest literary forces of his time, we may be sure that none of the three ever foresaw the day when one should learn with surprise that another was still alive. It was at the Christmas of 1836 that Dickens and Forster met at



W. Harrison Ainsworth



Ainsworth's house, and for the next few years the three were inseparable. Forster does not tell us that Ainsworth took part in those daily ridings which are recalled with the sadness with which the memory of the happy days of long ago must ever be tinged, but he certainly did. Mr. S. M. Ellis, in his

delightful book, “William Harrison Ainsworth and His Friends,” makes that quite clear:

“In the first few years of their friendship the three were devoted to horse exercise, and Dickens and Forster would ride out from town to Kensal Lodge to pick up Ainsworth. . . . The three *literati* would gallop off for miles into the lovely country that stretched away to the north and west. Away by Twyford Abbey and the clear, winding Brent to tiny Perivale and Greenford, most sylvan of hamlets, through the green vale of Middlesex to Ruislip, and home by Stanmore and Harrow. Or another day away across breezy Old Oak Common to Acton, stopping for a few minutes at Berrymead Priory to exchange greetings with Bulwer Lytton. On through Acton’s narrow High Street, with its quaint raised pavement and ancient red-tiled houses, past ‘Fordhook,’ Fielding’s last and well-loved home, past Ealing’s parks and long village green, round through orchard-bordered lanes to Chiswick, with its countless memories, and so by Shepherd’s Bush to Wood Lane and the Scrubbs, home again.”

Week-end trips, we are told, were also frequently indulged in together, and in view of the undoubted fact that there was this intimacy, we may, with Mr. R. Renton,¹ echo Mr. Ellis’s regret that Forster “devotes but a few words to the social or convivial phase of Dickens in these first glorious years of youth and fame. He barely mentions the frequent rides through the lovely country surrounding the suburbs of London which Dickens delighted to take in company with his two intimates, Forster and Ainsworth, and the even more frequent dinings and festivities the trio enjoyed go almost unrecorded.”

1 “John Forster and his Friendships.”

Tis true, and pity ‘tis, ‘tis true. The only direct reference he makes to Ainsworth’s share in the enjoyments of those days is when, writing of the summer of 1838, which Dickens spent at Twickenham, he says: “A friend now especially welcome, also, was the novelist, Mr. Ainsworth, who shared with us incessantly for the three following years in the companionship which began at his house, . . . and to whose sympathy in tastes and pursuits,

accomplishments in literature, open-hearted generous ways, and cordial hospitality, many of the pleasures of later years were due.”

As a matter of fact, Dickens was at Ainsworth’s house, Kensal Lodge, very frequently indeed, and we are told that, “as the host’s most intimate friend,” he used to preside at one end of the table. Open house was kept at Kensal Lodge, but still more was this the case when Ainsworth moved to Kensal Manor House in 1841.

Ainsworth was one of the company at the dinner to celebrate the completion of *Pickwick*, of which he received a presentation copy — one of the three specially-bound copies sent to the author by his publishers, as witness this letter to Forster:

“Chapman and Hall have just sent me . . . three extra-super bound copies of *Pickwick*, as per specimen enclosed. The first I forward to you, the second I have presented to our good friend Ainsworth, and the third, Kate has retained for herself.”

Of the *Pickwick* dinner Ainsworth wrote to his friend, James Crossley:

“On Saturday last we celebrated the completion of *The Pickwick Papers*. We had a capital dinner, with capital wine and capital speeches. Dickens, of course, was in the chair. Talfourd was the Vice, and an excellent Vice he made. . . . Just before he was about to propose *the* toast of the evening the head waiter — for it was at a tavern that the carouse took place — entered, and placed a glittering temple of confectionery on the table, beneath the canopy of which stood a little figure of the illustrious Mr. Pickwick. This was the work of the landlord. As you may suppose, it was received with great applause. Dickens made a feeling speech in reply to the Serjeant’s eulogy. . . . Just before dinner Dickens received a cheque for £750 from his publishers.”

This is the most extended account of the dinner that exists. Ainsworth continued to be a guest at these christening dinners until *Dombey*, whilst Dickens was certainly present at the “Tower of London” dinner.

Mr. Ellis points out that Ainsworth had quite a marked influence on Dickens’s earlier work. Undoubtedly it was the popularity of “Rookwood” that caused Sam Weller to select as his contribution to the harmony on a

certain occasion the song, “Bold Turpin vunce on Hounslow Heath,” and it is interesting to note also that the name of Turpin’s companion robber was Sikes. But, above all, it was to Ainsworth that Dickens was indebted for an introduction to the brothers Grant, better known to the wide, wide world as the Cheeryble Brothers. That Dickens did actually meet the Grants is now established beyond any doubt at all. To James Crossley, on October 31, 1838, Ainsworth wrote: “Dickens has just started for Stratford-upon-Avon and Chester, accompanied by Mr. Browne (the ‘Phiz’ of *Pickwick* and *Nickleby*), the artist. He will reach Manchester on Saturday, I believe. On Sunday next Forster starts, per railroad, to join him, and I suppose on Monday they will call on you, as they are armed with letters of introduction to you. Dickens’s object is to see the interior of a cotton mill — I fancy with reference to some of his publications. I have given him letters to G. Winter and Hugh Beaver.”

On the authority of one of Ainsworth’s daughters, Dickens paid this visit with the definite object of meeting the Grants, as well as of seeing the inside of a cotton mill. Ainsworth had known them when he was a boy, for Manchester was his native city, and he had described them to his friend. He now gave Mr. Winter a hint, and that gentleman arranged a dinner to which Dickens and the Grants were invited. And so Ainsworth rendered a further great service to Dickens and to the world at large.

During this visit to Manchester the three friends went out to Cheadle Hall, Cheshire, in order to see Ainsworth’s three little girls, who were at boarding-school there, and they “took with them three books, duly inscribed and autographed, to present to the three little girls, who had never seen their visitors before.”

In 1889 Ainsworth had the gratification of visiting his native city in company with his famous friend, and of being entertained by the citizens at dinner. The position must have been an embarrassing one for him, as the following extract from a letter to Crossley shows:

“Now, in respect of the public dinner. Is it to be given to me or Dickens — or to both? Acting upon your former letter, I invited my friend to accompany •me, imagining the dinner was to be given in my honour; but I have no feeling whatever in the matter, and only desire to have a distinct understanding about it. If the dinner is given expressly to Dickens, I think a letter of invitation should be sent him. But you are the best judge of the

propriety of this step; and it might be only giving needless trouble, as he is sure to come if the dinner *is* to be given to me.”

The spirit reflected by this letter is excellent. The truth appears to be that Ainsworth had been originally invited, and that he had invited Dickens to accompany him, and the citizens of Manchester rather allowed the glory of “Boz” to eclipse the glory of Ainsworth. But the latter was devoid of jealousy, and he was quite willing that the greater honour should go to his friend, whose genius he readily and frankly recognised. Needless to say, Forster kept them company on this visit. The three friends stayed with Mr. Hugh Beaver, at the Temple, Cheetham Hill. They arrived in Manchester on Saturday, January 12. On the Monday the public dinner was held, followed, on the Tuesday, by a dinner at Crossley’s house, and on the Wednesday by a dinner at Winter’s house.

One doubts if throughout his long life there was any incident upon which Ainsworth looked back with so much gratification as this visit to Manchester. To return to his native city a famous man, and to be feted by the citizens, was in itself a notable and pleasing event, but to be accompanied by and feted in company with the most popular writer of his time — whom he would call “friend” — it must have been a proud day indeed for him.

At about this time Dickens and Ainsworth had an interesting scheme in hand which was destined not to fructify. “I think I have told you,” the latter wrote to Crossley, “that Dickens and I are about to illustrate ancient and modern London in a *Pickwick* form. We expect much from this.” It would have been an almost ideal collaboration. Who could have dealt with ancient London so well as he who was to write “The Tower of London” and “Old Saint Paul’s,” and who could have dealt with modern London so delightfully as the author of *Sketches by Boz* and *Pickwick*? But the scheme was abandoned, and this is the only reference to it that exists.

There is no need to deal here with Dickens’s dispute with Macrone. Ainsworth had nought to do with it, except that he was naturally interested and sorry that the unpleasantness should have arisen between the publisher and the author whom he had been instrumental in bringing together. There was, however, real danger of a rupture between the two novelists, arising out of Dickens’s dispute with Bentley in 1889, which led to Ainsworth succeeding Dickens as Editor of “Bentley’s Miscellany.” A rumour got

abroad to the effect that Forster had persuaded Dickens to break his agreement with the publisher, and Dickens wrote a letter to Ainsworth from which the following is an extract:

“If the subject of this letter, or anything contained in it, should eventually become the occasion of any disagreement between you and me, it would cause me very deep and sincere regret. But with this contingency — even this before me — I feel that I must speak out without reserve, and that every manly, honest, and just consideration impels me to do so. By some means . . . the late negotiations between yourself, myself, and Mr. Bentley have placed a mutual friend of ours in a false position, and one in which he has no right to stand, and exposed him to an accusation . . . equally untrue and undeserved. . . . However painful it will be to put myself in communication once again with Mr. Bentley, and openly appeal to you to confirm what I shall tell him, there is no alternative, unless you will frankly and openly, and for the sake of your old friend, as well as very intimate and valued one, avow to Mr. Bentley yourself that he (Forster) is not to blame. . . . Believe me, Ainsworth, that for your sake, no less than on Forster’s account, this should be done. . . . I do not mean to hurt or offend you by anything I have said, and I should be truly grieved to find that I have done so. But I must speak strongly, because I feel strongly.”

Happily the affair ended amicably, and there was no breach between the friends. This letter (which is given in full in Mr. Ellis’s book) was written in March 1839. A month earlier Dickens had handed over the Editorship of the “Miscellany” to Ainsworth in the following words: “In fact, then, my child, you have changed hands. Henceforth I resign you to the guardianship and protection of one of my most intimate and valued friends, Mr. Ainsworth, with whom, and with you, my best wishes will ever remain.” 1

In 1842 Ainsworth was one of the party that gathered at Greenwich to welcome Dickens home from America. After that, references to meetings of the two novelists are very few indeed. In 1847 Ainsworth, during a Continental tour, met Dickens at Lausanne, and the latter wrote to Forster: “I breakfasted with him at the Hotel Gibbon next morning. . . . We walked about all day, talking of our old days at Kensal Lodge.” Those old days were not forgotten, but times had changed, and the two men who once saw one another almost daily now but rarely met. There was in each a sentiment

for the “day that is dead,” however, and in 1849 Dickens did a very graceful thing when he invited Ainsworth to act as godfather to his sixth son (now Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens, K.C.). Four years later Ainsworth gave up Kensal Manor House, and those glorious reunions were once for all ended.

The last record of any meeting between Dickens and Ainsworth is in June 1854, when the latter, who had gone to live in Brighton, came up to London expressly to meet some of his old friends. Thackeray tried to effect a reunion in 1857. He proposed a dinner at which Dickens, Ainsworth, Maclise, and himself should meet once more and live again the old, far-off happy days. But his efforts failed. “Ainsworth and ‘Boz’ won’t come,” he wrote to Maclise, “and press for delay. Well, then, although I know, from the state of the banker’s account at present, next week there will probably be about five shillings wherewith to buy a dinner, yet let them have their will. Something tells me that it may be long before the banquet in question takes place — but it is their wish — so be it. The greatest of all the names of Allah (Goethe says) is ‘Amen.’” And he wrote to Ainsworth: “Here comes a note from Dickens, who begs, too, for a remission of the dinner. As I can’t have it without my two roaring animals, and the play wouldn’t be worth coming to with the part of Hamlet omitted, the great Titmarsh Banquet is hereby postponed, to be held on some other occasion, however, with uncommon splendour.”

1 “Familiar Epistle from a Parent to a Child.”

Thackeray’s forebodings were realised, and it is certain that the two friends who had been so intimate in the first days of popularity and success, did not meet for some years prior to Dickens’s death. For on July 7, 1870, Ainsworth wrote to Charles Kent: “I was greatly shocked by the sudden death of poor Dickens. I have not seen him of late years, but I always hoped that we might meet again, as of old.”

The tone of this letter certainly suggests that there had been an estrangement, and the impression is confirmed by Thackeray’s note to Maclise just quoted: “Ainsworth and ‘Boz’ *won’t* come.” There is no direct evidence of an estrangement, however, and for memory’s sake — the memory of those joyous early years — one hopes that the impression is false.

CHAPTER IV

GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

It must have been a red-letter day for the obscure young newspaper reporter on which he learned that his first book was to be illustrated by the great George Cruikshank. For George was famous before Dickens had left school, and in 1837 he was the most famous illustrator of the day. For an unknown author to have his name on the title-page of his book was a guarantee against failure. Sam Weller came into being almost simultaneously with the publication of the *Sketches*, so that Dickens did not owe so much to the artist as he might have done, but the fact remains that the first real distinction that he ever had was that of having a book illustrated by the great George Cruikshank. And we may regard it as likely that he would, in a sense, be “carried away” by this personal acquaintance with one whose name had been a household word when he was a boy. But after a while he began to make other and better friends, and gradually he became less enthusiastic about Cruikshank and about Ainsworth too. I think we are justified in assuming this. It implies no reproach to the novelist. To put it in somewhat colloquial language, whilst Cruikshank was a distinguished man to be on intimate terms with, and whilst he was all very well as a companion on a convivial evenings — at a Greenwich or Richmond dinner, shall we say? — little of his company would go a very long way.

For the *Sketches* sixteen illustrations were done, and the artist did a new frontispiece for the first cheap edition. It should be noted that in no fewer than five of these pictures, portraits of Dickens appear. In the title-page of the second series, both author and artist may be seen waving flags from the balloon; whilst in the illustration to the paper on *Public Dinners* we have author, artist, and publishers (Messrs. Chapman & Hall). It was at about this time also that Cruikshank drew the portrait of Boz which is well known to Dickensians. It is said that this was drawn on the spur of the moment at a meeting of the Hook and Eye Club.

For *Oliver Twist* as it ran through “Bentley’s Miscellany” Cruikshank did twenty-four etchings, and when the book was published in ten monthly parts in 1846 he designed the wrapper.

Here is the place to refer to Cruikshank's extraordinary claim that he was the real author of *Oliver Twist*. It was Shelton Mackenzie who first gave publicity to the claim in his *Life to Dickens*, published in America, shortly after the novelist's death. He said that Cruikshank made the assertion to him in 1847. Forster, in the first volume of his *Life of Dickens*, gave it the he direct, whereupon the artist wrote a letter to "The Times" in which he said:

"When 'Bentley's Miscellany' was started, it was arranged that Mr. Dickens should write a serial in it, and which was to be illustrated by me; and in a conversation with him as to what the subject should be for the first serial, I suggested to Mr. Dickens that he should write the life of a London boy, and strongly advised him to do this, assuring him that I would furnish him with the subject and supply him with all the characters, which my large experience of London life would enable me to do."

And then, after retelling Shelton Mackenzie's circumstantial story, he said: "Without going any further, I think it will be allowed from what I have stated that I am the originator of *Oliver Twist*, and that all the principal characters are mine." Supposing it to have been true, there was no reason why Cruikshank should not have been given the full credit of having suggested the general outline of the plot, and provided the ideas for the leading characters. Shakespeare did not invent all his plots. But it was not true, and Forster was able to prove it. He published in facsimile the following letter of Dickens's, written to the artist in 1838:

"My Dear Cruikshank,

"I returned suddenly to town yesterday afternoon to look at the latter pages of *Oliver Twist* before it was delivered to the booksellers, when / saw the majority of the plates in the last volume for the first time. /

"With reference to the last one — Rose Maylie and Oliver — without entering into the question of great haste or any other cause which may have led to its being what it is — I am quite sure there can be little difference of opinion between us with respect to the result. May I ask you whether you will object to designing this plate afresh and doing so *at once*, in order that as few impressions as possible of the present one may go forth?

"I feel confident you know me too well to feel hurt by this inquiry, and with equal confidence in you, I have lost no time in preferring it."

And, as all the world knows, the plate was designed afresh. And yet in a pamphlet entitled “The Artist and the Author,” which Cruikshank published in 1872, he had the effrontery to say:

“. . . I, the artist, suggested to the author of those works the original idea, or subject, for them to write out — furnishing, at the same time, the principal characters and the scenes. And then, as the tale had to be produced in monthly parts, the writer, or author, and the artist, had every month to arrange and settle what scenes, or subjects, and characters were to be introduced, and the author had to *weave in* such scenes as I wished to represent.”

If further evidence had been wanted of the falsity of this claim, it was provided in an article which appeared in the “Strand Magazine” in August 1897, on “Some Unpublished Sketches by George Cruikshank.” One of these sketches represented *Bill Sikes* in the condemned cell, the burglar being depicted in practically the identical attitude in which Fagin appears in the famous illustration. And yet, according to Shelton Mackenzie, it was the drawing of *Fagin* in the condemned cell which first attracted Dickens. Mackenzie wrote

1These italics are my own.



that Cruikshank told him that Dickens dropped in at his studio one day and ferreted out a bundle of drawings. “When he came to that one, which represents Fagin in the condemned cell, he silently studied it for half an hour.” This unfinished sketch effectually disposes of that statement.

And yet the artist persisted in it, and in a speech at a temperance meeting in Manchester in 1874 he reiterated the whole story. His worst enemies never accused him of being a rogue. There can be no doubt but that he really had brought himself to believe this monstrous story. Dickens had touched him on a sore spot several times, also. The novelist had been one of his most doughty opponents on the teetotal question, and it is conceivable that he had hurt the artist’s dignity in another way. That is to say, I think it is highly probable that Dickens had rather “cold shouldered” him in the last twenty years of his life. But this is not enough, for Cruikshank also claimed to have been the practical author of several of Harrison Ainsworth’s novels. Indeed he claimed almost as much for himself as the less reasoning Baconians claim for their hero. In very truth, there can be no doubt but that his mind was none too well balanced in his old age.

In the Manchester speech to which I have referred, Cruikshank remarked that Dickens was a great enemy of teetotal doctrines, and that he called its advocates “Old Hogs.” As a matter of fact, he called them “Whole Hogs,” and in *Household Words*, August 23, 1851, he had an article with that title, in which he put it to those who listened to these people “whether they have any experience or knowledge of a good cause that was ever promoted by such bad means? Whether they ever heard of an association of people, deliberately, by their chosen vessels, throwing overboard every effort but their own, made for the amelioration of the conditions of men, unscrupulously villifying all other labourers in the vineyard; calumniously setting down as aiders and abettors of an odious vice which they know to be held in general abhorrence, and consigned to general shame, the great compact mass of the community — of its intelligence, of its morality, of its earnest endeavour after better things? If, upon consideration, they know of no such other case, then the inquiry will perhaps occur to them, whether, in supporting a so-conducted cause they really be upholders of Temperance, dealing with words, which should be the signs for Truth, according to the truth that is in them?”

Two years later Dickens had another tilt, and this time at Cruikshank personally. This took the form of an article entitled *Frauds on the Fairies*, which also appeared in *Household Words*. Cruikshank had rewritten certain fairy tales as Temperance tracts, and Dickens resented such “frauds on the fairies.”

He satirised it with the story of Cinderella “‘edited’ by one of these gentlemen doing a good stroke of business and having a rather extensive mission.” It was excellent, and perfectly legitimate criticism, but Cruikshank did not like it, and he replied in his magazine with “A letter from Hop-o’my-thumb to Charles Dickens, Esq.” But the blow had gone home, and his “Fairy Library” did not last long.

It should be added that in 1848 Dickens wrote a criticism of the artist’s series of plates, “The Drunkard’s Children,” the sequel to “The Bottle.” The criticism, which appeared in “The Examiner,” opened with “a few words by way of gentle protest”:

“Few men have a better right to erect themselves into teachers of the people than Mr. George Cruikshank. Few men have observed the people as he has done, or know them better; few are more earnestly and honestly

disposed to teach them for their good; and there are very few artists, in England or abroad, who can approach him in his peculiar and remarkable power. But this teaching, at last, must be fairly conducted. It must not be all on one side. When Mr. Cruikshank shows us, and shows us so forcibly and vigorously, that side of the metal on which the people in their crimes and faults are stamped, he is bound to help us to a glance at that other side on which the government that forms the people, with all *its* faults and vices, is no less plainly impressed. Drunkenness, as a national horror, is the effect of many causes. ... It would be as sound philosophy to issue a series of plates under the title of the Physic Bottle, or the Saline Mixture, and, tracing the history of typhus fever by such means, to refer it all to the gin-shop, as it is to refer Drunkenness there and to stop there. Drunkenness does not begin there. . . . The hero of the bottle, and father of these children, lived in undoubted comfort and good esteem until he was some five-and-thirty years of age, when, happening unluckily to have a goose for dinner one day ... he jocularly sent out for a bottle of gin and persuaded his wife ... to take a little drop, after the stuffing, from which moment the family never left off drinking gin, and rushed downhill to destruction very fast. Entertaining the highest respect for Mr. Cruikshank's great genius, and no less respect for his motives in these publications, we deem it right, on the appearance of a sequel to 'The Bottle,' to protest against this."

Cruikshank, extremist that he was, could hardly have felt very friendly toward Dickens, in view of these numerous lusty blows that the latter dealt him.

In addition to *Sketches by Boz* and *Oliver Twist*, Cruikshank illustrated *The Public Life of Mr. Tulrumble*, and the *Mudfrog Papers*; whilst he also did an etching for *The Lamplighter's Story*, which was Dickens's contribution to "The Pic-nic Papers," published for the benefit of Macrone's widow. He also illustrated the *Life of Grimaldi*, which Dickens edited. Thus all his artistic relations with Dickens were confined to the latter's very earliest years of fame. But in those early years the pair met pretty often, and they often dined at each other's house. Cruikshank formed one of the company at the Greenwich dinner at which Dickens's friends welcomed him home from America in 1842 — the dinner of which the novelist wrote to Prof. Felton as follows: "I wish you had been at Greenwich the other day, when a party of friends gave me a private dinner; public ones I have

refused. C – was perfectly wild at the reunion, and after singing all manner of marine songs, wound up the entertainment by coming home (six miles) in a little open phaeton of mine, *on his head*, to the mingled delight and indignation of the metropolitan police. We were very jovial, indeed; and I assure you that I drank your health with fearful vigour and energy.” There was only one member of the company on that occasion whose name began with C. “We were very jovial.” No doubt they were, but whilst Dickens could enjoy this sort of thing once in a while, he did not care about it too frequently. Cruikshank did in those days.

It only remains to be noted that the artist was associated with the early amateur dramatic performances. He took Stanfield’s place in the performances at Miss Kelly’s theatre in 1845, and he again had a part in the performances in aid of Leigh Hunt and John Poole in 1847. But he was a very ordinary actor. Chosen as a stop-gap, he could not be got rid of afterwards. For we find Dickens writing to Forster: “I make a desperate effort to get C. to give up his part. Yet in spite of all the trouble he gives me I am sorry for him, he is so evidently hurt by his own sense of not doing well. He clutched the part, however, tenaciously; and three weary times we dragged through it last night.”

We find Cruikshank prominently mentioned in the burlesque account of the tour of 1847, supposed to have been written by Mrs. Gamp, which Forster prints.

Dickens intended that the artist members of the company should illustrate this account of the trip, but they backed out for some unexplained reason, and the thing was never carried through. But one drawing has been preserved. It is by Cruikshank, and was published in the “Strand Magazine” for August 1897. It illustrates the scene in which he himself is supposed to be addressing Mrs. Gamp, and depicts him raising his hat in the most polite manner.

CHAPTER V

WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY

We have seen that Dickens met Forster at Christmas 1836. Six months later Forster gave his new friend one of the greatest joys of his life. Under date June 16, 1837, William Charles Macready records in his diary: “Forster

I came into my room with a gentleman whom he introduced as Dickens, *alias* Boz. I was glad to see him.” And the Editor of the Diary truthfully comments: “Thus began a friendship of the happiest and most genial description that was only terminated by Dickens’s death, thirty-three years afterward.”

And the fact is certainly worthy of note. One needs only to read Macready’s Diary to know that he was not the easiest man in the world to get on with. Browning described him as one of the most admirable and fascinating characters he had ever known, and Sala’s description of him as “high-minded, generous, just,” was perfectly accurate, but his quick and violent temper tried the patience of his friends very often. With nearly every one of them he quarrelled at some time or another, and most of them come in for emphatic reference in his Diary. But never Dickens. He never had a mis-word with his friend, who is never referred to but in terms of affection. The novelist’s frankness, geniality, and generosity seem to have exercised their spell over him always. And Dickens, on the other hand, saw beneath the sometimes forbidding exterior of his friend that “high-minded, generous, just spirit” which was the real man. As Forster says: “No swifter or surer perception than Dickens’s for what was solid and beautiful in character; he rated it higher than intellectual effort, and the same lofty place, first in his affection

1 Forster and Macready had been acquainted since 1833, when they had been introduced to each other at Edmund Kean’s funeral.

and respect, would have been Macready’s” if he had not been the greatest of actors.

For each other as artist as well as man they had the highest admiration. “Wonderful Dickens!” exclaims Macready very often. “He is a great genius!” is another entry. “As a great indulgence and enjoyment, walked out to call on Dickens,” he writes in another place; and when one of Dickens’s books is unkindly reviewed in “The Times” we find him commenting: “Read the paper, in which was a most *savage* attack on Dickens and his last book — *The Cricket* — that looks to me like a heavy and remorseless blow of an enemy determined to disable his antagonist by striking to maim him or kill if he can, and so render his hostility powerless.¹ I was sorry to see in a newspaper so powerful as ‘The Times’ an attack so ungenerous, so

unworthy of itself. . . . Alas! for my poor dear friend Dickens!" In 1847 he records how, on going to see Dickens after reading Number 5 of *Dombey*, "I could not speak to him for sobs. It is indeed most beautiful; it is true *genius*," and in October 1850, he writes: "Purchased two last numbers of *Copperfield* and read parts of each. Was very much affected and very much pleased with them. His genius is very great."

That Dickens had an equally high opinion of Macready's abilities as an actor is shown by the notices he wrote for the "Examiner" of his friend's performances of *Lear* and *Benedict* — performances which he placed on the highest pinnacle, whilst in many of his letters are to be found eulogies of Macready's acting.

It would be possible to give many quotations showing the regard the two men had for each other entirely apart from their respective arts. From that first meeting in 1837 there sprang up a heart-whole affection. From boyhood Dickens had adored Macready, and when at last he achieved success and was able to meet the object of his idolatry on level terms, none of his ideals was destroyed. The friendship which was to last unbroken, without a cloud to obscure its sunshine, was formed at once. Within a month Dickens was revealing to Macready his plan for a comedy that he desired to write for him. The suggestion, which arose out of Dickens's desire to assist his friend's Covent Garden enterprise, was taken up seriously, and towards the end of 1838 he wrote to Macready: "I have not seen you for the past week, because I hoped when we next met to bring *The Lamplighter* in my hand. It would have been finished by this time, but I found myself compelled to set to work first at *Nickleby*. ... I am afraid to name any particular day, but I pledge myself that you shall have it this month." It is obvious that this letter, which is not dated, is wrongly placed in the collection of Dickens's "Letters." It follows a letter dated December 12, but it must have been written earlier than that, for on December 5 Macready has this entry in his Diary: "Dickens brought me his farce, which he read to me. The dialogue is very good, full of point, but I am not sure about the meagreness of the plot. He reads as well as an experienced actor would — he is a surprising man." Six days later there is this entry: "Dickens came with Forster and read his farce. There was manifest disappointment. It went flatly; a few ready laughs, but generally an even smile, broken in upon by the horse-laugh of Forster, the most indiscreet friend that ever allied himself to any person. . . . It was agreed that it should

be put into rehearsal, and, when nearly ready, should be seen and judged of by Dickens.” On the next day, however, Macready records that the farce is to be withdrawn, and a day or two later we have this entry: “Wrote to Bulwer, and to Dickens about his farce, explaining to him my motive for wishing to withdraw it and my great obligation to him. He returned me an answer which is an honour to him. How truly delightful it is to meet with high-minded and warm-hearted men. Dickens and Bulwer have been certainly to me noble specimens of human nature.” And so the proposal fell through. But Dickens was still anxious to serve his friend if possible. He had sent Macready a copy of *The Strange Gentleman*, which Harley had produced at Drury Lane a year or two before, thinking it “barely possible you might like to try it.” “Believe me,” he added, “if I had as much time as I have inclination, I would write on and on, farce after farce, and comedy after comedy, until I wrote you something that would run. You do me justice when you give me credit for good intentions, but the extent of my goodwill and strong and warm interest in you personally and your great undertaking, you cannot fathom nor express.” There is no further reference to this play in this connection. Macready certainly never acted in it. A month earlier Dickens had suggested that his friend might appear in a version of *Oliver Twist*, but Macready’s comment was: “Nothing can be kinder than this generous intention of Dickens, but I fear it is not acceptable.” He was convinced that the book was utterly impracticable for any dramatic purpose.

1 The reference is to the forthcoming publication of the “Daily News.”

Frequent were the meetings between the two friends in these early days, and on November 18, 1837, Macready was one of the company that gathered at the Prince of Wales Tavern to celebrate the completion of *Pickwick*. A fortnight later Macready records the gift to him by Dickens of a copy of the book.

In 1839 — on March 30 — Dickens presided at a dinner given in honour of Macready by the members of the Shakespeare Club, of which they were both members, together with Thackeray, Talfourd, Maclise, Jerrold, Stanfield, etc., and Macready tells us that the novelist’s “speech in proposing my health was most earnest, eloquent, and touching. It took a review of my enterprise at Covent Garden, and summed up with an eulogy

on myself that quite overpowered me. ... I rose to propose Dickens's health, and spoke my sincere opinion of him as the highest eulogy, alluding to the verisimilitude of his characters. I said that I should not be surprised at receiving the offer of an engagement from Crummles for the next vacation." Later in the same year Dickens was one of the speakers at a public banquet given in honour of Macready on the occasion of the termination of his Covent Garden management.

When the announcement of the actor's impending retirement from Covent Garden was made, Dickens wrote him the following delightful letter:

"I ought not to be sorry to hear of your abdication, but I am . . . for my own sake and for the sake of thousands who may now go and whistle for a theatre- — at least, such a theatre as you gave them; and I do now in my heart believe that for a long and dreary time that exquisite delight has passed away. If I may jest



WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY

with my misfortunes, and quote the Portsmouth Critic of Mr. Crummles's company, I say that, 'As an exquisite embodiment of the poet's visions and a realisation of human intellectuality, gilding with refulgent light our dreary

moments, and laying open a new magic world before the mental eye, the drama is gone — perfectly gone.’

“With the same perverse and unaccountable feeling which causes a broken-hearted man at a dear friend’s funeral to see something irresistibly comical in a red-nosed or one-eyed undertaker, I receive your communication with ghostly facetiousness; though on a moment’s reflection I find better cause for consolation in the hope that, relieved from your most trying and painful duties., you will now have leisure to return to pursuits more congenial to your mind, and to move more easily and pleasantly among your friends. In the long catalogue of the latter there is not one prouder of the name, or more grateful for the store of delightful recollections you have enabled him to heap up from boyhood, than . . .”

And he thus referred to the event in a letter to Laman Blanchard: “Macready has, as Talfourd remarked in one of his speeches, ‘cast a new grace round joy and gladness, and rendered mirth more holy!’ Therefore we are preparing crowns and wreaths here to shower upon the stage when that sad curtain falls and kivers up Shakespeare for years to come. I try to make a joke of it, but, upon my word, when the night comes, I verily believe I shall cry.”

Many years afterwards Dickens paid (in *All the Year Round*, 1869), a tribute to Macready’s Covent Garden management in the following words:

“It is a fact beyond all possibility of question that Mr. Macready, in assuming the management of Covent Garden Theatre in 1887, did instantly set himself, regardless of precedent and custom down to that hour obtaining, rigidly to suppress this shameful thing,¹ and did rigidly suppress and crush it during his whole management of that theatre, and during his whole subsequent management of Drury Lane. That he did so, as certainly without favour as without fear; that he did so, against his own immediate interests; that he did so, against vexations and oppositions which might have cooled the ardour of a less earnest man, or a less devoted artist, can be better known to no one than the writer of the present words, whose name stands at the head of these pages.”

1 “The outrage upon decency which the lobbies and upper-boxes of even our best Theatres habitually paraded within the last twenty or thirty years.”

Between the dates of the two dinners referred to, Dickens had stood godfather to Macready's son, Henry. "One to be proud of," comments the father in his Diary. Dickens's acceptance of the invitation to undertake the trust was as follows: "I feel more true and cordial pleasure than I can express to you in the request you have made. Anything which can serve to commemorate our friendship, and to keep the recollection of it alive among our children is, believe me, and ever will be, most deeply prized by me. I accept the office with hearty and fervent satisfaction; and, to render this pleasant bond between us the more complete, I must solicit you to become godfather to the last and final branch of a genteel small family of three which I am told may be looked for in that auspicious month when Lord Mayors are born and guys prevail." The invitation was accepted, the expected branch — but not the "last and final" — arrived in October, and on August 25, 1840, Kate Macready Dickens — now Mrs. Perugini — was christened.

In 1839 Dickens gave Macready another proof of the regard in which he held him by dedicating *Nicholas Nickleby* to him in the following terms: "To W. C. Macready, Esq., the following pages are inscribed, as a slight token of admiration and regard, by his friend, the Author." The completion of the book was celebrated by a dinner held at the Albion, Aldersgate Street, at which Macready proposed the toast of the evening, saying that the declaration of Dickens in his dedication was a tangible manifestation to him that he was not wholly valueless, and that the friendship of such a man increased his self-respect.

Three weeks later Macready received from Boz a copy of the book with this letter; "The book, the whole book, and nothing but the book . . . has arrived at last, and is forwarded herewith. The red represents my blushes at its gorgeous dress; the gilding, all those bright professions which I do not make to you; and the book itself, my whole heart for twenty months, which should be yours for so short a term, as you have it always." Macready's comment in his Diary is: "Returned home, found a parcel with a note from Dickens, and a presentation copy of *Nickleby*. What a dear fellow he is!"

Boz had no more assiduous and no more admiring reader than this friend, who was one of the many to plead with him to allow Little Nell to live. "Asked Dickens to spare the life of Nell in his story, and observed that he was cruel, lie blushed, and men who blush are said to be proud or cruel. He

is not proud, and therefore, or, as Dickens added the axiom is false.” The very next entry perhaps explains why Dickens blushed. Nell was already dead. “Found at home notes from Ransom, and one from Dickens with an onward number of *Master Humphrey’s Clock*. I saw one print in it of the dear dead child that gave a dead chill through my blood. I dread to read it, but I must get it over. I have read the two numbers. I never have read printed words that gave me so much pain. I could not weep for some time. Sensation, sufferings have returned to me, that are terrible to awaken. It is real to me; I cannot criticise it.” Who can doubt but that that blush was caused by the thought that the death of Nell would reawaken the actor’s recent grief!

Macready showed his friendship for Dickens when, in 1841, the latter, contemplating a visit to America, was perplexed as to what arrangements to make for the care of his children during his absence. Macready relieved him of his anxiety by offering to undertake the responsibility. The offer was gratefully accepted, and the little ones spent their days at the actor’s house whilst their father travelled in the Western World. How much Dickens appreciated Macready’s kindness is shown, not only by his letters to him, but by his letters to Forster and others. During his journey from Pittsburg to Cincinnati, for instance, he wrote to the actor: “God bless you, my dearest friend, a hundred times, God bless you! I will not thank you (how can I thank you!) for your care of our dear children, but I will ever be, heart and soul, your faithful friend.” And he was.

He sailed on January 4, and on the 1st he said “Farewell” to Macready. “Dear Dickens called to shake hands with me. My heart was quite full; it is much to me to lose the presence of a friend who really loves me. He said there was no one whom he felt such pain in saying good-bye to — God bless him.” Some of the most interesting of his American letters were written to Macready, and when he returned to England Macready was among the first whom he hastened to greet. “I was lying on my sofa when a person entered abruptly whom I glanced at as Forster? — no; Jonathan Bucknill? — no. Why, who was it but dear Dickens, holding me in his arms in a transport of joy, God bless him!”

In December 1842 Macready spoke Dickens’s Prologue to J. Westland Marston’s new play, “The Patrician’s Daughter,” and, according to his own account, spoke it “tolerably well.” A little less than a year later he set out on his first American tour. Prior to his departure he was entertained to dinner at

the Star and Garter, Richmond, and Dickens, who was the prime organiser of the function, took the chair. He was also made the recipient of a testimonial at Willis's Rooms.

On the advice of Captain Marryat, Dickens did not go to see his friend off for the States, the fear — which Dickens shared — being that the *Nickleby* dedication would damage Macready. America was angry with the author of *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and “if I were to go on board with him,” he wrote to Forster, “I have not the least doubt that the fact would be placarded all over New York before he had shaved himself in Boston. And that there are thousands of men in America who would pick a quarrel with him on the mere statement of his being my friend I have no more doubt than I have of my existence.” During his absence Macready received from Dickens a copy of the *Carol* — “a little book I published on the 17th of December, and which has been a most prodigious success — the greatest, I think I have ever achieved. It pleases me to think that it will bring you home for an hour or two, and I long to hear you have read it on some quiet morning.”

When Macready returned to England Dickens was in Italy. None the less, he was greeted by the following letter which he found awaiting him: “My very dear Macready, — My whole heart is with you ‘at home.’ I have not felt so far off as I do now, when I think of you there and cannot hold you in my arms. This is only a shake of the hand. I couldn't say much to you if I were to greet you. Nor can I write much when I think of you safe and sound — happy after all your wanderings. My dear fellow, God bless you twenty thousand times; happiness and joy be with you. I hope to see you soon. If I should be so unfortunate as to miss you in London, I will fall on you with a swoop of love in Paris. . . . Again, and again, and again, my own true friend, God bless you!”

They met in Paris, and Macready writes in December 1844: “Dickens dined with us, and left us at half-past five, taking with him the last pleasant day I expect to pass in Paris.” Macready had gone to the French capital to fulfil an engagement, and Dickens met him there on his way back to Genoa from London, whence he had gone to give that memorable reading of *The Chimes* at Forster's chambers. Macready was not present at that reading, but on the night before Dickens read the book to him, and in a letter to his wife the novelist wrote: “If you had seen Macready last night,

undisguisedly sobbing and crying on the sofa as I read, you would have felt, as I did, what a thing it is to have power.”

In the following year Dickens and his friends gave the first of that memorable series of amateur theatricals, playing “Every Man in His Humour” at Miss Kelly’s theatre in Dean Street in September, and repeating that play, together with “The Elder Brother,” at the same theatre in December. It is not surprising that Macready’s help and advice were much sought after by the amateur actors. Nor need we be surprised if the amateurs irritated him occasionally. “Called on Forster,” he records, “with whom I found Dickens, and gave them the best directions I could to two unskilled men, how to manage their encounter in the play of ‘The Elder Brother.’” “And again: “Went out with Edward to call on Forster. Found Dickens and his tailor at his chambers, he encased in his doublet and hose. It is quite ludicrous the fuss which the actors make about this play! — but I was sorry to hear of intemperate language between them, which should neither have been given or received as it was.”

In 1851 Macready said farewell to the stage, and on the day after he had made his last appearance he received a letter from his friend which contained the following:

“I cannot forbear a word about last night. I think I have told you sometimes, my much-loved friend, how, when I was a mere boy, I was one of your faithful and devoted adherents in the pit — I believe as true a member of that true host of followers as it has ever boasted. As I improved myself, and was improved by favouring circumstances in mind and fortune, I only became the more earnest (if it were possible) in my study of you. No light portion of my life arose before me when the quiet vision to which I am beholden, in I don’t know how great a degree, or for how much — who does? — faded from my bodily eyes last night. And if I were to try to tell you what I felt — of regret of its being past for ever, and of joy in the thought that you could have taken your leave of *me* but in God’s own time — I should only blot this paper with something that would certainly not be in ink, and give very faint expressions to very strong emotions. What is all this in writing? It is only some sort of relief to my full heart, and shows very little of it to you; but that’s something, so I let it go.”

The actor went to live at Sherborne, and there he lived a life of quiet and dullness. As the Editor of his Diary says: "On the whole, the period of his residence at Sherborne must have been a depressing one, and he looms out of its greyness for the most part a brooding, sombre, figure much engrossed with family cares, and more than once bowed down by a fresh stroke of bitter affliction." And Dickens, in a letter to Forster, struck a similar note. Macready visited him in Paris in 1857, and after his return the novelist wrote to Forster: "It fills me with pity to think of him away in that lonely Sherborne place. I have always felt of myself that I must, please God, die in harness, but I have never felt it more strongly than in looking at and thinking of him." It was in those days that Dickens proved the sincerity of those professions of friendship which, as we have seen, he had made in his letters through the years that had passed. Lady Pollock bears testimony to this. "When the weight of time and sorrow pressed him down, Dickens was his most frequent visitor. He cheered him with narratives of bygone days; he poured some of his own abundant warmth into his heart; he led him into new channels of thought; he gave readings to rouse his interest; he waked up in him again by his vivid descriptions, his sense of humour; he conjured back his smile and his laugh — Charles Dickens was and is to me the ideal of friendship." Could any man wish to have a better epitaph than that?

In 1859, however, Macready removed from Sherborne to Cheltenham, where he spent the remaining years of his life. There Dickens visited him in January, 1862, and his old friend came to hear him read. In a letter to Miss Hogarth, Dickens relates the effect of the *Copperfield* reading on Macready. "When I got home ... I found him quite unable to speak, and able to do nothing but square his dear old jaw all on one side, and roll his eyes (half closed) like Jackson's picture of him. And when I said something light about it he returned: 'No — er — Dickens! I swear to Heaven that as a piece of passion and playfulness — er — indescribably mixed up together, it does — er — no, really, Dickens — amaze me as profoundly as it moves me. But as a piece of art — and you know — er — that I — no, Dickens! By —! have seen the best art in a great time — it is incomprehensible to me. How is it got at? — er — how is it done? — er — how one man can — well! It lays me on my — er — back, and it is of no use talking about it!' With which he put his hand upon my breast and pulled out his pocket-handkerchief, and I felt as if I were doing somebody to his Werner."

Seven years later Dickens again visited Cheltenham, and gave a special reading of the murder scene from *Oliver Twist* for the benefit of his friend — now a feeble old man. Its effect on Macready has been told by many, but by none better than by Dolby. The latter took him to Dickens's room at the conclusion of the reading, and there, after being seated on the sofa, he said: "You remember my best days, my dear old boy? — No, that's not it. Well, to make a long story short, all I have to say is — two Macbeths!"

And Dolby has also given us an interesting, if pathetic, picture of the old tragedian that same evening, when he entertained Dickens at his house. "Dickens was all life and vivacity, and when he found his old friend relapsing into feebleness and forgetfulness, was equal to the occasion, and refreshed his memory by some question about the olden days which caused Macready's face to change from its usual stolidity to an expression of quite vivacious humour." He had an idea that in his retirement he was forgotten by the world, and Dickens delighted him by telling him that his old harlequin had desired to be remembered to him. Says Dolby: "The fact of Smith remembering Macready put the latter in such a good humour that he insisted on having another bottle of the 'old straw Madeira' . . . brought into the room. This being done he cheered up, and proceeded to tell us anecdotes of his managerial days. . . . In the recital of these he seemed to have changed his nature, and, as Dickens remarked afterwards, it was difficult to imagine that Macready had ever been anything but a low comedian. This little incident, told here, can scarcely produce much effect, but the *vis comica* employed by Macready, and the manner in which Dickens contrived to enliven his friend by his brief visit — and especially the way these stories were extracted from him — formed a pantomimic treat not easily to be forgotten."

This was the last meeting of the two friends. Macready outlived Dickens by practically three years. His daughter, Kate, it may be noted, was a contributor to *Household Words*.

CHAPTER VI

ROBERT BROWNING

We are told by the Editors of *The Letters of Charles Dickens* that Robert Browning was a dear and valued friend of the novelist. That is undoubtedly

true, and therefore it is a pity that so little record of their friendship exists. Their friendship was inevitable, of course, for, with the sole exception of Dickens, Browning was Forster's greatest friend, and he was the friend of Macready too. And a friendship between two such men as Dickens and Browning was very natural. True, one was a cultured man and the other had no learning at all, but Browning was no ponderous pedant, and had none of the eccentricities or posings that are too commonly associated with poets. Both men were optimists. Both were sure that "God's in His heaven, All's right with the world," and preached that gospel untiringly. Both loved their fellow-men; both believed in and taught the gospel of love, and faith, and hope. I have seen no reference to the poet's opinions of Dickens's works, but we know that Dickens appreciated the worth of Browning's work from the beginning. He wrote "Blot on the 'scutcheon'" in manuscript in 1842, Forster having privately passed it on to him; and this is what he wrote:

"Browning's play has thrown me into a perfect passion of sorrow. To say there is anything in its subject save what is lovely, true, deeply affecting, full of the best emotion, the most earnest feeling, and the most true and tender source of interest, is to say that there is no light in the sun, and no heat in the blood. It is full of genius, natural and great thoughts, profound and yet simple and beautiful in its vigour. I know nothing that is so affecting, nothing in any books I have ever read, as Mildred's recurrence to that 'I was so young — I had no mother.' I know no love like it, no passion like it, no moulding of a splendid thing after its conception, like it. And I swear it is a tragedy that Must be played; and must be played, moreover, by Macready. There are some things I would have changed if I could (they are very slight, mostly broken lines), and I assuredly would have the old servant *begin his tale upon the scene*; and be taken by the throat, or drawn upon, by his master, in its commencement. But the tragedy I never shall forget, or less vividly remember than I do now. And if you tell Browning that I have seen it, tell him that I believe from my soul there is no man living (and not many dead) who could produce such a work."

Peculiar interest attaches to this letter. It never saw the light of day — Browning never knew of its existence, until it was published in Forster's *Life of Dickens*. The play was produced by Macready in 1843, and there was unpleasantness between the actor and the author over its production. It

was a failure. In 1884 Browning wrote an account of the whole business in a letter to Mr. Hill, then Editor of the "Daily News." "Macready," he wrote, "accepted the play 'at the instigation' of nobody — and Charles Dickens was not in England when he did so: it was read to him after his return, by Forster — and the glowing letter which contains his opinion of it, although directed by him to be shown to myself, was never heard of nor seen by me till printed in Forster's book some thirty years after."

Now, Dickens returned from America in July 1842: that letter to Forster was written in the last week of November. Browning says that the play was accepted by Macready while he was still at the Haymarket theatre, to be produced at Drury Lane later on. He adds: "When the Drury Lane season began, Macready informed me that he should act the play when he had brought out two others — 'The Patrician's Daughter,' and 'Plighted Troth'; having done so, he wrote to me that the former had been unsuccessful in money drawing, and the latter had 'smashed his arrangements altogether'; but he would still produce my play." Browning writing forty years later, suggests that this was a hint from Macready that he would like to be relieved from his undertaking, but that he did not appreciate it at the time. He then goes on to suggest unmistakably that Macready set himself to fulfil his undertaking in the letter only, doing all he could to discourage the author with a view to disgusting him into withdrawing it. That is clearly the only interpretation of the poet's letter.

Why did Forster, the friend of Browning, Macready, and Dickens, withhold the novelist's letter; with its passionate appreciation of the play? The poet's biographer, Mrs. Sutherland Orr, says that he felt it a just cause of bitterness that the letter, which "was clearly written to Mr. Forster in order that it might be seen, was withheld for thirty years from his knowledge, and that of the public whose judgment it might so largely have influenced." Not unnaturally. The publication of the letter would have been balm to the poet in those days when he was struggling for recognition; at a time when he was being so much worried over the production of the play it would have meant much to him indeed. Then why did Forster, his closest friend, withhold it? Suppose he was torn by the claims of two friends? We know that he apprized Browning's genius at its true value, that he was the first critic of real standing to do so, and to foresee the poet's greatness. Suppose he felt that by withholding the letter he would be doing the one friend — Macready — an immediate substantial service, and doing the

other no lasting harm, knowing that the actor had to “make good” in the present, and that the poet was certain of greatness notwithstanding a present disappointment? Suppose he laid this point of view before Dickens, and the latter said: “Very well; but publish the letter some day, to show to the world that I recognised a genius when I saw him”? On any other grounds than these Forster’s conduct is simply inexplicable. Dickens must have acquiesced, for he and Browning were friends till the end of his life, and but for some reason for silence, the matter must have cropped up in the course of an intimacy extending over thirty years.

CHAPTER VII

“Phiz”

At the time that Cruikshank was illustrating *Sketches by Boz* a much younger artist was illustrating another book by the same author. *Sunday Under Three Heads* was published in the same year, and a young artist of promise was engaged to do the illustrations. He had not met the author, but was destined soon to do so, and to win immortality through an almost lifelong association with him. How that came about does not need to be retold in detail. The first number of *Pickwick* appeared on March 31, 1836. Immediately afterwards the artist, Seymour, committed suicide. R. W. Buss took his place, and after two more numbers he was deemed unsatisfactory, and Hablot Knight Browne commenced an association with Dickens that was to last for practically a quarter of a century. Browne was barely twenty-one years old, but three years previously he had received a silver medal from the Society of Arts for a large engraving, “John Gilpin’s Ride.” Buss afterwards stated that at this time Browne was “quite incapable of ‘biting-in’ and finishing his own designs.” This, I believe, is quite true; it is confirmed, indeed, by Phiz’s biographer, Mr. David Croal Thomson; but the artist was able to rely upon the assistance of his lifelong friend, Robert Young, who was one of the most expert engravers in London, in whose hands Phiz’s work never suffered.

I think that Buss was not given quite a fair trial, but we have to remember, in fairness to Dickens and the publishers, that *Pickwick* was in parlous plight — that at this time it was almost a “toss up” whether the work should be persevered with or not. Browne had already illustrated a

book of Dickens's to the author's satisfaction. What more natural than that he should say, "Try Browne"? From Dickens's standpoint, Phiz was ideal in this way — he was, as one of his biographers puts it, "a marvel of pliability"; he was "amenable to discipline," so to speak. It was sufficient for Dickens to say, "I want this done in such and such a way"; he could rely upon it being so done. I fancy the relations between Dickens and Browne, as author and illustrator, resembled those of superior and subordinate. If Browne had been a man of very strong individuality I doubt if he would have illustrated Dickens for twenty-three years. In effect, he was content to receive instructions from the novelist and to do his best to give satisfaction.

It is said that Thackeray was the first to inform Browne of his good fortune. The story is that when Titmarsh submitted his sketches to Boz, the latter informed him that Browne had been selected, and that thereupon he hunted out the lucky man and congratulated him. It would certainly be like Thackeray to do so. Phiz's first published illustration to Dickens was the one which "standardised" Sam Weller, and it appeared in the fourth number of *Pickwick*, which was the number that marked the commencement of the book's wondrous success. It was indeed an auspicious beginning.

It is totally unnecessary to go into details concerning Phiz's illustrations to Dickens: all we are concerned with is the personal relations between the two men. And I fancy we shall be correct if we say that there was a friendliness rather than a friendship. Their temperaments were totally unlike. Dickens was a man of the world, always at his best in company, to whom, indeed, company was as the breath of his nostrils; Browne was a shy retiring man, who almost dreaded company. And it was most difficult to persuade him to meet a few friends, we are told, and when he did accept an invitation, he always tried to seclude himself in a corner of the room, or behind a curtain. Mr. Arthur Allchin says, "Into the social life of Dickens Browne could seldom be drawn," and the artist's son¹ tells us that his father "was by nature shy ...and given to self-effacement, and when he became a busy man and had consequently little time or opportunity for social amusements, these tendencies increased till his dread of strangers amounted to a detrimental feature in his character."

1 The late Dr. Edgar Browne, of Liverpool.

“It became very difficult to make him go anywhere. At the beginning of his career he was certainly considered a cheerful companion, and took a part, if he found himself in congenial company, in any fun that was going. . . . But by living so much alone in his study, having an innate dislike of push, and a sort of natural distrust of strangers, he gradually worked himself up until it was difficult to get him to see anybody except intimate friends. He did not realise that there must be a stage before intimacy.”

It is rather curious that Browne should not have been present at the *Pickwick* dinner. Neither Forster, nor Macready, nor Ainsworth includes his name among the names of the guests. He was present at the *Nickleby* and *Clock* dinners, however, and I believe he was present at all the subsequent book dinners until his business associations with Dickens were severed in 1859.

Before *Pickwick* was finished author and artist were on such excellent terms that Browne accompanied Dickens and his wife to Flanders for a summer holiday in July 1837. In January of the following year the two young men made their trip to Yorkshire, which may almost be described as historic, their object being to obtain “local colour” and firsthand information for the Dotheboy scenes in *Nicholas Nickleby*. In November of the same year, they made another excursion together, with the object of securing material for the same book, going to Manchester, ostensibly to see the inside of a cotton mill, but in reality, as we now know, to see the Brothers Grant, who were unconsciously to pose for their portraits to the brilliant young novelist, and were to be immortalised by him as the Brothers Cheeryble.¹

The last book that Phiz illustrated for Dickens was *A Tale of Two Cities*. That was in 1859. I can find no evidence of any quarrel. Mr. Arthur Allchin says: “His (Phiz’s) reserved nature was becoming intensified as he grew older, while upon Dickens began to flow that stream of flattery and adulation which eventually urged him to break with publishers, with assistants, and with tried friends.” Quite

¹ See chapter iii.



Ed. Hall
H. Browne
(Phiz)

respectfully, I beg to state my opinion that this is absurd, and grossly unjust to Dickens. The man had his faults unquestionably, but that the flattery and adulation of the world ever caused him to turn from any friend of earlier years, no evidence exists to prove. It is true that Mr. Allchin quotes Phiz as saying: "I was about the last of those who knew him in early days with whom Dickens fell out, and considering the grand people he had around him and the compliments he perpetually received, it is a wonder we remained friends so long." Phiz may have written this, but it would be in a moment of perhaps not unnatural pique. I am very sure that this was not his true judgment of Dickens. The novelist had been receiving flattery and adulation, and had moved among the highest in the land, for twenty years. If such things were likely to turn his head, they would have done so long before 1859. Whatever else may be said of Dickens, it cannot be said with any show of justification that he was a snob.

Then Mr. Allchin goes on to make another suggestion. This is to the effect that Phiz was dropped because he refused to side with Dickens in his domestic troubles: "Browne," he says, "persistently refused to express an opinion or to interfere, and though Dickens said nothing further at the time, the book then in progress, *A Tale of Two Cities*, was the last Browne was

commissioned to illustrate.” One would like to know exactly on what ground the suggestion is based. Browne himself seems to have had no definite explanation, as witness his letter to his friend Young:

“By your enclosed, Marcus is no doubt to do Dickens. I have been a ‘good boy,’ I believe — the plates are all in hand in good time, so that I don’t know what’s up any more than you do. Dickens probably thinks a new hand would give his old puppets a fresh look, or perhaps he does not like my illustrating Trollope neck and neck with him, though, by Jingo! he need fear no rivalry there! Confound all authors and publishers, say I; there is no pleasing or satisfying one or t’other. I wish I never had anything to do with the lot.”

This letter was so obviously written in a moment of irritation — at the very time when Phiz knew that he was to be dropped — that it cannot be taken seriously. But it does prove that, at the time, at any rate, Browne had no idea what was the reason for his having been dropped. Years afterwards he wrote the following letter to one of his sons, referring to *A Tale of Two Cities*:

“A rather curious thing happened with this book: Watts Phillips, the dramatist, hit upon the very same identical plot; they had evidently both of them been to the same source in Pais for their story. Watts’s play came out with great success with stunning climax at about the time of Dickens’s sixth number. The public saw that they were identically the same story, so Dickens shut up at the ninth number instead of going on to the eighteenth as usual. All this put Dickens out of temper, and he squabbled with me amongst others, and I never drew another line for him.”

It will be noted that in the letter to Young written at the time, Phiz makes no mention of any squabble. I have been unable to find any confirmation of the statement that Dickens reduced the length of *A Tale of Two Cities* by one half; there certainly is no internal evidence to support it. Nor have I found any confirmation of the assertion that Dickens was out of temper because of the success of “A Dead Heart” — though the coincidence must have been exceedingly annoying.

But, after all, there is a likely explanation for Dickens's change of illustrator. His old friend, Frank Stone, died in 1859, and he promptly exerted himself on behalf of young Marcus Stone, of whose abilities as an artist he had a very high opinion. As witness this letter that he wrote to Thomas Longman, the publisher:

“I am very anxious to present to you, with the earnest hope that you will hold him in your remembrance, young Mr. Marcus Stone, son of poor Frank Stone. . . . You know, I daresay, what a start this young man made in the last Exhibition, and what a favourable notice his picture attracted. He wishes to make an additional opening for himself in the illustration of books. He is an admirable draughtsman, has a most dextrous hand, a charming sense of grace and beauty, and a capital power of observation. These qualities in him I know well to my own knowledge. He is, in all things, modest, punctual, and right, and I would answer for him, if it were needful, with my head. If you will put anything in his way, you will do it a second time, I am certain.”

Given a young artist of whom he had such a glowing opinion, given the desire to help him as the son of a very dear friend, given the opportunity presented by the publication of a new book — what more natural than that he should commission Marcus Stone to illustrate *Our Mutual Friend*? It may be, too, that Dickens felt that a change was desirable even though such a capable young artist, with such strong claims upon him had not been ready to hand. Phiz had been illustrating his works for twenty-three years; times had changed, tastes had changed; the style of illustrations that was popular in 1836 was not so adapted to the tastes of 1860. We may well understand Phiz feeling hurt: nothing could be more natural; but assuredly Dickens had a very strong case indeed — a case possibly greatly strengthened by Phiz's action in joining the staff of “Once a Week.”

But we have it on the authority of the late F. G. Kitton that relations were not strained for long, and that just after Dickens's death Phiz was “considerably affected by the mere mention of the name of the illustrious novelist, which seemed to stir up feelings of regret at losing such a friend.”

CHAPTER VIII

THOMAS NOON TALFOURD

Pickwick appeared in volume form in the autumn of 1837, with a dedication to Thomas Noon Talfourd, with whom a close friendship had been formed while the book was appearing in parts. Dickens had first been drawn to Talfourd by the latter's activity in the cause of copyright. Sitting in the Press Gallery of the old House of Commons, he looked down, as we know, with something very like contempt upon the nation's legislators. But for a couple of Sessions before he left, he had the opportunity of watching the young barrister who had entered the House in 1835, and had been enthusiastic in the copyright cause. As a young author — . not, of course, dreaming of the greatness that lay before him, but still conscious of abilities and hopeful for success — he welcomed Talfourd's efforts, and we may at least accept it as probable that his appreciation of those efforts led him to seek the acquaintance of the Member for Reading, who had just gained some fame as the author of "Ion," which Macready had staged.

Acquaintance ripened into friendship very quickly, and it is not surprising. In Talfourd Dickens found a man, not of genius, perhaps, but of great gifts and undoubted versatility. More than that, he had been one of Charles Lamb's intimate friends, and had known every member of that great company of stars that had had the gentle Elia for its sun; he had scored a success with "Ion," and he was a friend of the great actor who had staged the piece, for whom Dickens had from boyhood entertained feelings of the greatest admiration. To become personally acquainted with such a man must have been a great joy to Boz.

And so, by the time *Pickwick* was finished, they had formed a friendship that was never to be clouded. It is true that *Pickwick* was dedicated to Talfourd largely out of gratitude for his efforts in respect to copyright, but that was not all. The dedication was a tribute to the personal friendship which existed between the men. Talfourd was selected to occupy the vice-chair at the dinner which was held to celebrate the completion of this book. "And an excellent Vice he made," wrote Ainsworth; "he speaks with great fervour and tact, and being really greatly interested on the occasion, exerted himself to the utmost." Whilst Macready records in his Diary: "Talfourd proposed Dickens's health in a very good speech."

Talfourd could scarcely have been a man of strongly marked personality, otherwise the friend of Lamb, and Coleridge, and Dickens would be better known to posterity than he is. But he must have been a lovable man. "Facile

and fluent of kindest speech,” Forster says he was. “Those who knew him,” says Ballantine, “will never forget his kindly and genial face, the happiness radiating from it when imparting pleasure to others, and his generous hospitality,” and Edmund Yates tells us that he was a “kindly host, with . . . beaming face.” And when, in 1854, he died suddenly while addressing the Grand Jury at Stafford, Dickens paid a noble tribute in *Household Words* to his fine qualities:

“So amiable a man, so gentle, so sweet-tempered, and of such noble simplicity, so perfectly unspoiled by his labours, and their rewards, is very rare upon this earth. . . . The chief delight of his life was to give delight to others. His nature was so exquisitely kind, that to be kind was its highest happiness.

“An example in his social intercourse to those born to station, an example equally to those who win it for themselves; teaching the one class to abate its stupid pride, the other to stand upon its eminence, not forgetting the road by which it got there and fawning upon no one. The conscientious judge, the charming writer and accomplished speaker, the gentle-hearted, guileless, affectionate man, has entered on a brighter world. Very, very many have lost a friend; nothing in creation has lost an enemy.

“The hand that lays this poor flower on his grave was a mere boy’s when he first clasped it — newly come from the work in which he himself began life, little used to the plough it has followed since — obscure enough, with much to correct and learn. Each of its successive tasks through many intervening years has been cheered by his warmest interest, and the friendship then begun has ripened to maturity in the passage of time; but there was no more self-assertion or condemnation in his winning goodness at first than at last. The success of other men made as little change in him as his own.”

The man of whom that could be written, even by his most partial friend, must have been a good man, a man worthy of friendship, a man with whom the world ought to be better acquainted than it is.

Talfourd was one of the select circle in the days of Dickens’s earliest happiness. In 1839 he was at the *Nickleby* dinner; two years later he presided at the dinner to celebrate the second volume of *Master Humphrey’s Clock*. In 1842 he was one of those who entertained Dickens to dinner at

Greenwich on his return from America, and he was at many other of these delightful gatherings.

In 1844 Talfourd was disappointed in what had seemed to be a grand opportunity of rendering his friend some signal service. The story of how Dickens's novels were plagiarised and pirated is well known, and it is equally common knowledge how strongly the novelist felt about it. At last, in a case of peculiar flagrancy in respect of the *Carol*, he took action in response to Talfourd's and Forster's urging. But the case was so flagrant that the Vice-Chancellor would not even hear Talfourd, who, of course, had been briefed by Dickens, and Forster comments: "What it cost our dear friend to suppress his speech by very much exceeded the labour and pains with which he had prepared it." After leaving the court, Dickens wrote to Forster: "Oh! the agony of Talfourd at Knight Bruce's not hearing him! He had sat up till three o'clock in the morning, he says, preparing his speech, and would have done all kinds of things with the affidavits."

The author of "Ion" was of course a great admirer of Dickens's works, and we are told that for the Artful Dodger he evinced a particular regard. As Jeffrey pleaded that Lit-



tle Nell might live, so Talfourd pleaded for the Dodger, "as earnestly in mitigation of judgment as ever at the bar for any client he most respected."

And when the book in which the Dodger appears was completed he wrote the following sonnet:

“Not only with the author’s happiest praise
Thy work shall be rewarded; ‘tis akin
 To deeds of men who, scorning ease to win
 A blessing for the wretched, pierce the maze
 Which heedless ages nurture round the ways,
Where fruitful sorrow tracks its parent sin,
 Content to listen to the wildest din
 Of passion, and in fearful shapes to gaze,
So they may earn the power that intercedes.
 Wills the bright world and melts it; for within
 Wan childhood’s squalid haunts, where barest needs
 Make tyranny more bitter, at thy call
 An angel face with plaintive sweetness pleads,
For infant suffering, to the heart of all.”¹

It is sometimes said that Talfourd was the original of Tommy Traddles. I can find no proof of this, but there is just enough internal evidence to justify suspicion, so to speak. As Mr. Percy Fitzgerald says, “he may have offered suggestions for the character.” Traddles’s lovable ways and qualities of friendship may well have been taken from Talfourd. It is certainly conceivable that the latter’s elevation to the bench just when the last numbers of *Copperfield* were being written suggested Traddles’s destiny to Dickens. For though he has not yet donned the ermine when the book closes, we know he did so ultimately.

In 1846 Talfourd and his wife visited Dickens at Lausanne. In 1841 commenced the “splendid strolling” on behalf of Leigh Hunt and John Poole, and at one of the earliest performances — at Manchester — Dickens delivered a prologue written by Talfourd. In 1849 this valued friend was raised to the bench, which, says Forster, “he adorned with qualities which are justly the pride of that profession, and with accomplishments which have become more rare in its highest places than they were in former times.” And he adds: “Talfourd assumed nothing with the ermine but the privilege of more frequent intercourse with the tastes and friends he loved, and he continued to be the most joyous

1 Another version of this Sonnet appeared in *The Dickensian* in 1905.

And that Landor should have reciprocated the regard is no more remarkable. It seems to me to be the most natural thing in the world that a man of his enthusiasm for liberty, hatred of chicanery and humbug, and fundamental tenderness, should have welcomed the entry into the lists of so sturdy a champion as Charles Dickens, and formed an admiration for this young writer who moved to laughter and to tears, and almost in a day had gained the ear of the public in the cause of the suffering and oppressed.

Landor was sixty-one years old before the first number of *Pickwick* appeared. He was almost the doyen of literary men when “Boz” at an unusually early age started his great career. He had lived through great and stirring and epoch-making events, which had already receded into history; to Dickens he must have seemed like the survivor of a past heroic age. On the novelist’s side there were reverence and enthusiasm for a “grand old man”; on Landor’s there was a whole-hearted welcome for a young writer who promised to carry on the great fight against oppression and corruption, that he himself had waged all his life, and whose earnestness and frank joy of life must have had an irresistible appeal for him. There was, in short, a mutual admiration that developed into genuine affection, almost as of parent and child.

The poet’s first message to Dickens is recorded by Forster as having been entrusted to him in April 1839: “Tell him he has drawn from me more tears and more smiles than are remaining to me for all the rest of the world, real or ideal.” The friendship quickly ripened, and on Landor’s next birthday — January 30, 1840 — Dickens and Forster, with Mrs. Dickens, and also Maclise, visited the old man at Bath, where he was then living. This visit is, of course, historic, because it was marked by the birth of the idea which subsequently took the form of Little Nell. It was a happy circumstance, for, as Forster tells us, “No character in prose fiction was a greater favourite with Landor. He thought that upon her, Juliet might for a moment have turned her eyes from Romeo and that Desdemona might have taken her hair-breadth escapes to heart, so interesting and pathetic did she seem to him.” In lines which he addressed to Dickens in “The Examiner” in 1844, Landor wrote:

“Write no few letters; I’m content

With what for all the world is meant;
Write then, for all; but since my breast
Is far more faithful than the rest,
Never shall any other share
With little Nelly nestling there.”

Forster adds that when the circumstance referred to was mentioned to Landor some years later “he broke into one of those whimsical bursts of extravagance out of which arose the fancy of Boythorn. With tremendous emphasis he confirmed the fact, and added that he had never in his life regretted anything so much as his having failed to carry out an intention he had formed respecting it; for he meant to have purchased that house, 35 St. James’s Square, and then and there to have burnt it to the ground, to the end that no meaner association should ever desecrate the birthplace of Nell. Then,” adds the biographer, “he would pause a little, become conscious of his absurdity, and break into a thundering peal of laughter.”

For many years Dickens and Forster travelled to Bath on January 30, to help to make their friend happy on his birthday, and Mrs. Lynn Linton has told us something about the visit of 1849 — Landor’s 75th birthday. “Dickens,” she says, “was bright, gay, and winsome, and while treating Mr. Landor with the respect of a younger man for an older, allowed his wit to play about him, bright and harmless as summer lightning.”

According to Forster, it was on this occasion that Landor spoke of the many tears that *David Copperfield* had caused him to shed, “to which the author of that delightful book himself replied by a question, which, from so powerful and so gentle a master of both laughter and tears, startled us. . . . ‘But is it not yet more wonderful that one of the most popular books on earth has absolutely nothing in it to cause any one either to laugh or cry?’” The reference was to “Robinson Crusoe.” Here Forster’s memory obviously played him false. This conversation is reported as having taken place in 1849, but as a matter of fact Forster is recalling a conversation which took place seven years later, and at which Landor was not present. This is proved by the fact that Dickens wrote the following letter to the poet on July 5, 1856:

“. . . I have just been propounding to Forster, if it is not a wonderful testimony to the homely force of truth, that one of the most popular books

on earth has nothing in it to make any one laugh or cry? Yet I think, with some confidence, that you never did either over any passage in ‘Robinson Crusoe.’ In particular I took Friday’s death as one of the least tender, and (in the true sense) least sentimental things ever written. It is a book I read very much; and the wonder of its prodigious effect on me and every one, and the admiration thereof, grows on me the more I observe this curious fact.”

After Landor left Bath¹ those birthday parties ceased to be, and when Dickens visited the city in 1869, poor in health, there was sadness in remembrance. “Landor’s ghost,” he wrote to Forster, “goes along the silent streets here before me. . . . The place looks to me like a cemetery which the Dead have succeeded in rising and taking. Having built streets of their old gravestones, they wander about scantily trying to ‘look alive.’ A dead failure.”

Shortly after that first visit to Landor at Bath, in 1840, Forster was amused to receive from the poet, with the query, “What on earth does it all mean?” a letter which Dickens had written to him:

“Society is unhinged here (wrote the novelist) by her Majesty’s marriage, and I am sorry to add that I have fallen hopelessly in love with the Queen, and wander up and down with vague and dismal thoughts of running away to some uninhabited island with a maid of honour, to be entrapped by conspiracy for that purpose. Can you suggest any particular young person, serving in such a capacity, who would suit me? It is too much, perhaps, to ask you to join the band of noble youths (Forster is in it and Maclise) who are to assist me in this great enterprise, but a man of your energy would be invaluable. I have my eye upon Lady, principally because she is very beautiful and has no strong brothers. Upon this, and other points of the scheme,

¹ He returned to the City some years later, but not to St. James’s Square.

however, we will confer more at large when we meet; and meanwhile burn this document, that no suspicion may arise or rumour get abroad.”¹

It is not difficult to understand that Landor should have been puzzled by the receipt of such an effusion! It was all a wildly irresponsible joke, of

course, “encouraged,” Forster records, “to such whimsical lengths not alone by him, but (under his influence) by the two friends named, that it took the wildest forms of humorous extravagance.” But it must have been sadly bewildering to poor Landor!

In 1841 Dickens gave the poet marked proof of the esteem in which he held him, by inviting him to act as godfather to his second son. And he conveyed the invitation in a letter that must have sent a glow through the old man’s heart. It would give the child something to boast of, to be called Walter Landor, he wrote, and to call him so would do his own heart good. For, as to himself, whatever realities had gone out of the ceremony of christening, the meaning still remained in it of enabling him to form a relationship with friends he most loved; and as to the boy, he held that to give him a name to be proud of was to give him also another reason for doing nothing unworthy or untrue when he came to be a man.

In December of that year the christening took place, and Landor came up from Bath for the event. “We had some days of much enjoyment,” says Forster. The poet always took a keen interest in his godson’s progress, one of his most winning qualities being his love of children. In 1851, when Dickens was engaged in that “splendid strolling,” with the famous company of distinguished amateur actors, he wrote to his wife from Clifton as follows: “I saw old Landor at Bath, who has bronchitis. When he was last in town, Kenyon drove him about, by God, half the morning, under a most damnable pretence of taking him to where Walter was at school, and they never found the confounded house! He had in his pocket on that occasion a souvenir for Walter in the form of a Union shirt pin, which is now in my possession, and shall be duly brought home.”

1 About eighteen years ago, I saw this letter quoted quite seriously in a London newspaper as evidence of Dickens’s occasional lack of mental balance!

In 1852 Dickens paid his friend another compliment by painting a full-length portrait of him in *Bleak House* — a portrait of him as he was when they were first acquainted, and undoubtedly as accurate a portrait as was ever produced of any man.

“We all conceived a prepossession in his favour,” says Esther Summerson, “for there was a sterling quality in his laugh, and in his vigorous healthy voice, and in the roundness and fullness with which he uttered every word he spoke, and in the very fury of his superlatives, which seemed to go off like blank cannons and hurt nothing. But we were hardly prepared to have it so confirmed by his appearance, when Mr. Jarndyce presented him. He was not only a very handsome old gentleman — upright and stalwart as he had been described to us — with a massive grey head, a fine composure of face when silent, a figure that might have become corpulent but for his being so continually in earnest that he gave it no rest, and a chin that might have subsided into a double chin but for the vehement emphasis in which it was constantly required to assist; but he was such a true gentleman in his manner, so chivalrously polite, his face was lighted by a smile of so much sweetness and tenderness, and it seemed so plain that he had nothing to hide, but showed himself exactly as he was — incapable ... of anything on a limited scale, and firing away with those blank great guns, because he carried no small arms whatever — that really I could not help looking at him with equal pleasure as he sat at dinner, whether he smilingly conversed with Ada and me, or was led by Mr. Jarndyce into some great volley of superlatives, or threw up his head like a bloodhound, and gave out that tremendous ha, ha, ha!”

And not only in regard to the broad outline of the character did Dickens draw upon his knowledge of his friend. One very important event in Landor’s life is given with a disguise that must have been far from impenetrable to the poet’s friends. We all remember the dispute that Boythorn had with his neighbour, Sir Leicester Dedlock, at Chesney Wold.

““But how do you and your neighbour get on about the disputed right of way?” said Mr. Jarndyce.

““By my soul!” exclaimed Mr. Boythorn, suddenly firing another volley, ‘that fellow is, and his father was, and his grandfather was, the most stiff-necked, arrogant, imbecile, pig-headed, numskull, ever, by some inexplicable mistake of nature, born in any station of life but a walking-stick’s! The whole of that family are the most solemnly conceited and consummate blockheads! But it’s no matter; he should not shut up my path

if he were fifty baronets melted into one, and living in a hundred Chesney Wolds, one within another, like the ivory balls in a Chinese carving. The fellow, by his agent, or secretary, or somebody writes to me, "Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, presents his compliments to Mr. Lawrence Boythorn, and has to call his attention to the fact that the green pathway by the old parsonage house, now the property of Mr. Lawrence Boythorn, is Sir Leicester's right of way, being in fact a portion of the park of Chesney Wold; and that Sir Leicester finds it convenient to close up the same." I write to the fellow, "Mr. Lawrence Boythorn presents his compliments to Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, and has to call *his* attention to the fact that he totally denies the whole of Sir Leicester Dedlock's positions on every possible subject, and has to add, in reference to closing up the pathway, that he will be glad to see the man who may undertake to do it." The fellow sends a most abandoned villain with one eye, to construct a gateway. I play upon that execrable scoundrel with a fire-engine, until the breath is nearly driven out of his body. The fellow erects a gate in the night, I chop it down and burn it in the morning. He sends his myrmidons to come over the fence, and pass and repass. I catch them in humane man-traps, fire split peas at their legs, play upon them with the engine — resolve to free mankind from the insupportable burden of the existence of those lurking ruffians. He brings actions for trespass: I bring actions for trespass. He brings actions for assault and battery; I defend them, and continue to assault and batter. Ha, ha, ha!"

Forster relates several stories of Landor's quarrels with his neighbours at Llanthony, in Monmouthshire, and in those stories there are many touches which might have been taken from the pages of *Bleak House*. Here, for instance, is an extract from a letter of Landor's relating to the troubles he had with one of his tenants. The man referred to deserved the vituperation heaped upon him, it may be said, but the point is that the whole passage is entirely in the Boythorn spirit.

"I have mentioned only a few instances of this fellow's roguery and ingratitude; but enough for you to judge of him. All his brothers — three certainly — have abandoned every visible means of procuring an honest livelihood, and are with him; although his poor labourers are starving, and he has actually borrowed money from them. In fact, he thinks it more

reputable to be convicted of roguery than suspected of poverty. He has embezzled the money I allowed for the repairs of the house, because I insisted on no written agreement and relied on his honour. He has discharged me and my gamekeeper from shooting on his farm.”

Some time before that Landor, in view of the obvious need that existed for a Justice of the Peace in his district, appealed to the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Beaufort, to recommend him for the Commission. The Duke declined, and Landor wrote to Lord Chancellor Eldon. Here is an extract from the letter:

“When the Duke of Beaufort thought proper to decline my offer, I wrote again to him with perfect temper, and requested him to appoint one better qualified. He had no reply to make. . . . What honour it will confer on the Lord Lieutenant to have rejected the public and gratuitous service of such a man, is worth his consideration rather than mine. It certainly will bestow on him a more lasting celebrity than any other Duke of Beaufort has acquired. I did not believe him to have been so ambitious. But if it should appear that any Lord Lieutenant has erred in pursuing game by a track so unfrequented and so cheerless, your lordship at least has the power of preventing the ill consequences which would arise from his stupid precipitancy or his unruly passion. . . . It is possible that a Lord Lieutenant may have been instructed in little else than in the worming of hounds, the entrapping of polecats, the baiting or worrying of badgers and foxes; that he may be a perverse, and ignorant, and imbecile man; that he may be the passive and transferable tool of every successive administration; and that he may consider all whose occupations are more becoming, the gentleman and the scholar who is wiser or more independent than himself, as a standing and living reproach.”

Does not Boythorn himself speak here?

Dickens pictures many of Landor’s most winning traits. Every reader will remember Boythorn’s pet canary which would be perched on his master’s forehead, or on his finger eating out of his hand, what time he would be pouring out the most tremendous denunciations in the most thunderous of voices. Well, it is all a transcript from life. As one of Landor’s friends wrote: “He was an enthusiastic friend, and as far as sound violence, and unmeasured vituperation went, a bitter hater; but beyond unsparing

vituperation, he would not have injured an enemy. He would certainly not have lent a hand to crush him.” And another friend wrote: “He had the reputation of being a violent man. . . . But I never saw anything but the greatest gentleness and courtesy in him, especially to women.” In almost similar words Esther Summerson writes of Boythorn over and over again. And if Boythorn had his canary, Landor had his dormice and his pet dog. The latter — a Pomeranian named Pomero — was his especial favourite for many years. “By Heaven,” says Boythorn, he is the most astonishing bird in Europe! He *is* the most wonderful creature! I wouldn’t take ten thousand guineas for that bird. I have left an annuity for his sole support, in case he should outlive me. He is, in sense and attachment, a phenomenon.’

Writes Landor to Forster: “Pomero was on my knee when your letter came. He is now looking out of the window; a sad male gossip as I often tell him. I dare not take him with me to London. He would most certainly be stolen, and I would rather lose Ipsley or Llanthony.” And when a lady asked him if he would care to part with the dog, he replied, “No, madam, not for a million of money!” “*Not for a million!*” she exclaimed. “Not for a million,” he added. “A million would not make me at all happier, and the loss of Pomero would make me miserable for life.”

In 1853 we find Dickens acknowledging a dedication in these terms:

“My Dear Landor,

“I am in town for a day or two, and Forster tells me I may now write to thank you for the happiness you have given me by honouring my name with such generous mention, on such a noble place, in your great book. . . . You know how heartily and inexpressibly I prize what you have written to me, or you never would have selected me for such a distinction. I could never thank you enough, my dear Landor, and I will not thank you in words, any more. Believe me, I receive the dedication like a great dignity, the worth of which I hope I thoroughly know. The Queen could give me none in exchange that I wouldn’t laughingly snap my fingers at.”

Landor spent the last few years of his life in Italy, and in one of the last letters he wrote from Florence he sent his love to “noble Dickens.” The friends had met for the last time just before his departure in 1858, which was in consequence of a libel action in which the old man had got himself embroiled at Bath. Passing through London, he stayed a night at Forster’s

house. Dickens was of the party there to meet him, but Landor did not join the company. Dickens left the room to greet his friend. "I thought," wrote one of the company, "that Landor would talk over with him the unpleasant crisis; and I shall never forget my amazement when Dickens came back into the room laughing, and said that he had found him very jovial, and that his whole conversation was upon the character of Catullus, Tibullus, and other Latin poets."

Landor died in 1864, and in *All the Year Round* Dickens paid a tribute to his memory in a review of Forster's biography of their "mutual friend."

"In a military burial-ground in India, the name of Walter Landor is associated with the present writer's over the grave of a young officer. No name could stand there, more inseparably associated in the writer's mind with the dignity of generosity; with a noble scorn of all littleness, all cruelty, oppression, fraud, and false pretence."

Twenty years before, Dickens, about to journey to Italy, had asked Landor what he would most wish to have in remembrance of that land, and he had been told "An ivy leaf from Fiesole." Dickens had plucked a leaf and sent it to the poet "with his love." When Landor died, that ivy leaf was found among his treasures.

CHAPTER X

"Dear Old Mac"

Young Dickens — still not twenty-six years old — was now fairly launched on the sea of success. Instantaneously almost, he had sprung right into the front rank. At a bound he had become the most popular author that England had ever known. How popular he was has been told by many, and it is not my purpose to recount it yet again; but it is true to say that his name was a household word. He had awakened to find himself famous, his name on everybody's lips, he himself sought after by the most famous men of the time, who a bare two years ago had not heard of his existence, with whom, two years previously, he could scarcely have dared to dream that he might ever be on speaking terms. Yet here he was already on intimate terms with Ainsworth and Macready and Landor, and forming new friends as brilliant

and as famous almost daily. Among these Daniel Maclise was the favourite. For years he played a very big part in Dickens's life, and a rare friendship existed. They were to drift apart to some extent in after years, but there was to be no quarrel or ill-feeling. Maclise* was to meet with disappointment and injustice in the pursuit of his art, and it was to lead him into a waywardness (as Dickens called it) which was to cause him to drift out of the circle of friends who held him in such true esteem, but there was to be no real rupture of the friendship with Boz. The affection which was formed in the beginning was to last until the end.

In the early days, when each was in the first flush of his success, when hearts were young, and every month was May, they, with Forster, spent many happy hours. Other friends were with them sometimes — Ainsworth most often — but these three were “choice spirits,” and every one who knew them at this time, tells how inseparable they were, and how they gave themselves up, heart and soul, to the enjoyment of life's morning. Scarcely a day passed but they met; scarcely a day but they were off riding or tramping together. Sometimes one would tempt the others; sometimes two would conspire to tempt the third. As thus:

“Mr. John Forster (of Lincoln's Inn Fields), and Mr. Charles Dickens (of universal popularity), request the favour of Mr. Maclise's company at supper, at the Parthenon Club to-night at half-past ten precisely.

“Thinking it possible that Mr. Maclise may have gone to Court at an early hour this morning, they address this letter both to his private house and to the Athenaeum; and but for the veneration due to their youthful sovereign, they would forward a duplicate to the Palace at Pimlico.”

All records tell us that Maclise — this “dear and familiar friend” — must have been a glorious companion at this time — a companion after Boz's own heart. Handsome, brilliant, loyal, full of buoyant animal spirits, and yet with a full appreciation of the seriousness of life, he was a soul very much akin to Dickens. Forster, in describing the summer spent by the novelist at Twickenham in 1838, tells us: “. . . the social charm of Maclise was seldom wanting, nor was there anything that exercised a greater fascination over Dickens than the grand enjoyment of idleness, the ready self-abandonment to the luxury of laziness, which we both so laughed at in Maclise, under whose easy swing of indifference, always the most amusing at the most

aggravating events and times, we knew that there was artist-work as eager, energy as unwearying, and observation almost as penetrating as Dickens's own."

And he adds, "A greater enjoyment than the fellowship of Maclise at this period it would be difficult to imagine. Dickens hardly saw more than he did, while yet he seemed to be seeing nothing, and the small esteem in which this rare faculty was held by himself, a quaint oddity that in him gave to shrewdness itself an air of Irish simplicity, his unquestionable turn for literature, and a varied knowledge of books not always connected with such love and such unwearied practice of one special and absorbing art, combined



to render him attractive far beyond the common. His fine genius and his handsome person, of neither of which he seemed himself to be in the slightest degree conscious, completed the charm."

It is scarce an exaggeration to say that not even Forster himself was better loved in the early days than Maclise, and there is something peculiarly sad in the record of the artist's cares and disappointments, causing him gradually to change his habits, until he "shut himself up within himself," and drifted away from the friends who loved him so well.

But “sufficient unto the day “Let us not leave those early days yet. Dickens spent the summer of 1839 at Petersham, and here, we read, he and Maclise were the most prominent in all sorts of sports. “Bar-leaping, bowling, and quoits,” says Forster, “were among the games carried on with the greatest ardour. . . . Even the lighter recreations of battledore and bagatelle were pursued with relentless energy.”

Of course, Maclise was present at the dinner given to Macready in 1839, over which Dickens presided. In this same year, too, he was one of the company that gathered at The Albion to celebrate the completion of *Nicholas Nickleby*. It was a happy thought of those concerned to hang his recently executed portrait of Dickens in the room. This, of course, was the painting known as the “Nickleby portrait,” which now hangs in its rightful place, the National Portrait Gallery. It was bequeathed to the nation by Sir E. R. Jodrell, who bought it at the Gad’s Hill sale in 1870 for £693. There are many portraits of the novelist in existence, but it is the unanimous testimony of all who knew him at this time, that this is by far the best. As a likeness, said Thackeray, “it is perfectly amazing; a looking-glass could not render a better facsimile. Here we have the real identical man, Dickens; the artist must have understood the inward Boz as well as the outward, before he made this admirable representation of him.” It was painted for Messrs. Chapman & Hall for reproduction as a frontispiece to the first volume edition of *Nickleby*, and after it had been duly engraved for that purpose, it was presented by the publishers to Dickens — a graceful act. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1840.

In 1840 Maclise accompanied Dickens and his wife and Forster to Bath, on that visit to Landor, during which Dickens first conceived the idea of *Little Nell*. This was but one of many trips in which Maclise accompanied the novelist. In April of this same year, for instance, the launching of *Master Humphrey’s Clock* was celebrated by a trip to Stratford-on-Avon. The party was the same that had visited Bath. The *Clock* met with a huge sale, and so the holiday was extended somewhat, Litchfield being visited as well as Shakespeare’s native town. In the same year, Maclise and Forster met Dickens on his way back from Broadstairs, where he had spent the summer, and they “passed two agreeable days in re-visiting well-remembered scenes” at Chatham, Rochester, and Cobham.

Naturally Maclise was to the fore in welcoming Dickens home from America in 1842. “By the sound of his cheery voice,” says Forster, “I first

knew that he was come, and from my house we went together to Maclise, also without a moment's warning." "Dear old Mac" was present at the Greenwich dinner, of course, but, says Forster, "the most special celebration was reserved for the autumn, when, by way of challenge to what he had seen while abroad, a home journey was arranged with Stanfield, Maclise, and myself for his companions, into such of the most striking scenes of a picturesque English county as the majority of us might not before have visited; Cornwall being ultimately chosen."

The trip duly came off, and surely never did four schoolboys let loose for the holidays have a more rollicking time. Three weeks the tour lasted, and in that time "land and sea yielded each its marvels to us."

"Blessed star of morning," wrote Dickens to Prof. Felton, "such a trip as we had into Cornwall. . . ! . . . We went down into Devonshire by railroad, and there we hired an open carriage, from an innkeeper, patriotic in all Pickwick matters, and went on with post horses. Sometimes we travelled all night, sometimes all day, sometimes both. I kept the joint-stock purse, ordered all the dinners, paid all the turnpikes, conducted facetious conversations with the postboys, and regulated the pace at which we travelled, . . . and Maclise,



Charles Dickens

(1839) *From an Engraving by Finden of a Painting by Daniel Maclise, R.A.*

having nothing particular to do, sang songs. Heavens! If you could have seen the necks of bottles . . . peering out of the carriage pockets! ... If you could have followed us into the earthy old churches we visited, and into the strange caverns on the gloomy seashore, and down into the depths of mines, and up to the tops of giddy heights where the unspeakably green water was roaring, I don't know how many hundred feet below! If you could have seen but one gleam of the bright fires by which we sat in the big rooms of ancient inns at night, until long after the small hours had come and gone, or smelt but one steam of the hot punch . . . which came in every evening in a huge broad china bowl! I never laughed in my life as I did on this journey. It would have done you good to hear me. I was choking and gasping and bursting the buckle off the back of my stock, all the way. . . . Seriously, I do believe there was never such a trip. And they made such sketches, those two men, in the most romantic of our halting-places, that you would have sworn we had the Spirit of Beauty with us, as well as the Spirit of Fun."

Maclise's principal contribution to the artistic products of the tour was "The Nymph of the Waterfall." For the figure of the nymph, Miss Georgina Hogarth posed; the waterfall was that of St. Knighton. This picture was exhibited at the Academy in 1843, and Forster tells us that "so eager was Dickens to possess this landscape . . . yet so anxious that our friend should be spared the sacrifice which he knew would follow an avowal of his wish, that he bought it under a feigned name before the Academy opened, and steadily refused to take back the money which on discovery of the artifice Maclise pressed upon him." The artist, indeed, returned Dickens's cheque, with the following letter:

"My Dear Dickens,

"How could *you* think of sending me a cheque for what was to me a matter of gratification? I am almost inclined to be offended with you. May I not be permitted to give some proof of the value I attach to your friendship?

I return the cheque with regret that you should have thought it necessary to send it to yours faithfully,
“Daniel Maclise.”

To which Dickens replied:

“Do not be offended, I quite appreciate the feeling which induced you to return what I sent you; notwithstanding, I *must* ask you to take it back again. If I could have contemplated for an instant the selfish engrossment of so much of your time, and extraordinary power, I should have had no need (knowing you, I knew that well) to resort to the little artifice I played off. I will take anything else from you at any time that you will give me, and any scrap from your hand; but I entreat you not to disturb this matter. I am willing to be your debtor for anything else in the whole wide range of your art, as you shall very readily find whenever you put me to the proof.”

Maclise put his friend to the proof five years later. He then painted a portrait of Mrs. Dickens as a companion to the *Nickleby* portrait of the novelist, and this was accepted as a token of his friendship. The “Nymph of the Waterfall” was purchased after Dickens’s death by Forster for 610 guineas, and is now in the Forster Collection at South Kensington.

In addition to the more extended trips, and to the daily ridings and trampings, to which reference has been made there were frequent junketings. Macready, for instance, records on July 30, 1841, “Prepared for our long-promised expedition; Stanfield came to accompany us; we set out together, calling for Mrs. Dickens; went to Belvedere; arrived there, found the other carriage with Dickens, Forster, Maclise, and Cattermole. . . . Leaving Belvedere, we lunched at the small inn, and returned to Greenwich, where we saw the hospital, and meeting Drs. Elliotson and Quin, and Mr. Roberts, we dined at the Trafalgar.” On another date the actor writes, “Catherine called for me, and we went to Greenwich to dine with Stanfield. Our party consisted of the Dickenses, Quin, Liston, Maclise, E. Landseer, Grant, Allan



THE FOUR ELDER CHILDREN OF CHARLES DICKENS
Charley, Annie, Katey and Wally, with Grip, the Raven
From a Drawing by Daniel Maclise, R.A., 1848



The Nymph At The Waterfall At St. Knighton's
KIEVE, Near Tintagel

The Nymph is a portrait of Miss Georgina Hogarth, Who
Stood for the Figure

Painted by Daniel Maclise, R.A..

and niece, Forster, who was *stentorian*, Ainsworth, etc.; cheerful day.”
Again, “Went to Richmond — Star and Garter; met Forster, Mr. and Mrs.

Dickens, Miss Hogarth, Maclise, and Stanfield; we had a very merry — I suppose I must say *jolly* day — rather more tumultuous than I like.”

And yet again: “Stanfield, Maclise, Mr. and Mrs. Horace Twiss arrived; then Mr. and Mrs. Dickens, Miss Hogarth, and Catherine, and Troughton, and we sat down to one of those peculiar English banquets, a whitebait dinner. We were all very cheerful — very gay; all unbent, and without ever forgetting the respect due to each other; all was mirth unrestrained and delighted gaiety. Songs were sung in rapid succession, and jests flung about from each part of the table. Choruses broke out, and the reins were flung over the necks of the merry set. After, ‘Auld Lang Syne,’ sung by all, Catherine giving the solos, we returned home in our hired carriage and an omnibus hired for the house, Kenyon and I on the box of the carriage. A very happy day.”

Maclise’s pencil was often at the service of his friend. For instance, Dickens took with him to America a delightful drawing of his children; and in the following year the well-known sketch of Dickens, his wife, and his sister-in-law was executed, of which, Forster says, “never did a touch so light carry with it more truth of observation. The likenesses of all are excellent. . . . Nothing ever done of Dickens himself has conveyed more vividly his look and bearing at this yet youthful time. He is in his most pleasing aspect; flattered, if you will; but nothing that is known to me gives a general impression so life-like and true of the then frank, eager, handsome face.” Maclise took no part in the amateur theatricals, but there is in existence a fine painting by him of Forster as Kiteley in “Everyman in his Humour,” whilst in the Dyce and Forster Collection at South Kensington, is a playbill of this play (September 20, 1845) bearing a pencil sketch by Maclise of Forster as Kiteley and Dickens as Bobadil. He immortalised, too, the famous reading of *The Chimes* at Forster’s house on December 2, 1844. Further, he executed a drawing of Dickens’s house at Devonshire Terrace, whilst his “Apotheosis of the Raven” is also well known.

Last, but very far from least, Maclise contributed illustrations to three of the Christmas Books — two each to *The Chimes* and *The Cricket on the Hearth*, and four to *The Battle of Life*, and also one picture, Nell and the Sexton, to *The Old Curiosity Shop*. “It is a delight, wrote Dickens to Forster with reference to *The Battle of Life*, “to look at these little landscapes of the dear old boy. How gentle and elegant, and yet how manly and vigorous they are! I have a perfect joy in them.”

Of Maclise's opinion of Dickens's work there is only one piece of evidence. In a letter to Forster when *Dombey and Son* was appearing in numbers, he wrote: "I think it very good — the old nautical instrument seller novel and most promising. I'm never up to his young girls — he is so very fond of the age of 'Nell,' when they are most insipid. I hope he is not going to make another 'Slowboy' — but I am only trying to say something and to find fault when there is none to find. *He is absolutely alone.*"

It need hardly be said that Dickens had a very high opinion of Maclise's gifts, but that waywardness, to which reference has been made, and which is remarked on by several who knew him, was very early observed by the novelist. "He is such a discursive fellow," Dickens wrote to Fenton, "and so eccentric in his might, that on a mental review of his pictures I can hardly tell you of them as leading to any one strong purpose. . . . He is a tremendous creature, and might be anything. But, like all tremendous creatures, takes his own way, and flies off at unexpected breaches in the conventional wall." To the same friend he also wrote, "You asked me long ago, about Maclise. . . . He is such a wayward fellow in his subjects, that it would be next to impossible to write such an article as you were thinking about. . . . He is in great favour with the Queen, and paints secret pictures for her to put upon her husband's table on the morning of his birthday, and the like. But if he has a care, he will leave his mark on more enduring things than palace walls." >

And with his inherent generosity towards his friends he wrote in "Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine," August 1845, a fine appreciation of Maclise's cartoon, "The Spirit of Chivalry," which he described as "a composition of such marvellous beauty, of such infinite variety, of such masterly design, of such vigorous and skilful drawing, of such thought and fancy, of such surpassing and delicate accuracy of detail, subserving one grand harmony, and one plain purpose, that it may be questioned whether the Fine Arts in any period of their history, have known a more remarkable performance." This cartoon was painted for Westminster Hall to the order of the Commissioners. How meanly and despicably Maclise was treated by that body of circumlocutionists is known, and Dickens, bursting with indignation at this treatment of his friend, whose genius he knew and understood, gave full vent to his indignation in this article, which breathes throughout the spirit of chivalry itself.¹

1 It is curious that to-day Maclise is known to most people only by his frescoes on the walls of the Houses of Parliament — the Palace of Westminster.

As already stated, it was the bitterness arising from his treatment by the Commissioners that caused Maclise to lose his interest in life. His health had never been good, and it steadily broke now. He died but a few weeks before his great friend — on April 27, 1870. “Like you at Ely, so I at Higham, had the shock of first reading at a railway station of the death of our dear old friend and companion,” wrote Dickens to Forster. “What the shock would be, you know too well. It has been only after great difficulty, and after hardening and steeling myself to the subject, by at once thinking of it and avoiding it in a strange way, that I have been able to get command over it and over myself. If I feel at the time that I can be sure of the necessary composure, I shall make a reference to it at the Academy tomorrow.”

The reference was made at the Academy banquet on May 1. Having replied to the toast of “Literature,” Dickens said:

I cannot forbear, before I resume my seat, adverting to a sad theme to which H.R.H. the Prince of Wales also made allusion, and to which the President referred with the eloquence of genuine feeling. . . .

“For many years I was one of the two most intimate friends and most constant companions of the late Mr. Maclise. Of his genius in his chosen art I will venture to say nothing here, but of his prodigious fertility of

1 See *Miscellaneous Papers*.

mind and wonderful wealth of intellect I may confidently assert that they would have made him, if he had been so minded, at least as great a writer as he was a painter. The gentlest and most modest of men, the greatest as to his generous appreciation of young aspirants, and the greatest and largest hearted as to his peers, incapable of a sordid or ignoble thought, gallantly sustaining the true dignity of his vocation, without one grain of self-ambition, wholesomely natural at the last as at the first; in wit a man, simplicity a child; no artist, of whatsoever denomination, I make bold to

say, ever went to his rest leaving a golden memory more pure from dross, or having devoted himself with a truer chivalry to the art goddess whom he worshipped.”

“The words came from his lips, I have been told,” says Dickens’s daughter, Mrs. Perugini, “as though he were inspired, and after the sound of his voice died away, there was for a few instants a great silence in the room, then all the artists and other guests present crowded round him, thanking and congratulating him.” One of these guests has recorded that other toasts and speeches were to have followed, but after this magnificent tribute to the memory of a dear friend, the company, moved by a common instinct, rose and departed. All felt that nothing should follow such a speech as had just been made. To quote Forster once more: “These were the last public words of Dickens, and he could not have spoken any worthier of himself, or better deserved than by him of whom they were spoken.”

CHAPTER XI

GEORGE CATTERMOLE

George Cattermole, who was one of the most welcome visitors to Twickenham in that summer of 1838, had married a distant relative of Dickens’s, and it was through his engagement that the novelist came to know him. Dickens was at his wedding, and, we are told, hilariously pelted the couple with rice. The following day he wrote from Petersham:

“You know all I would say from my heart and soul on the auspicious event of yesterday; but you don’t know what I would say about the delightful recollections I have of your ‘good lady’s’ charming looks and bearing, upon which I discoursed most eloquently here last evening, and at considerable length. As I am crippled in this respect, however, by a suspicion that possibly she may be looking over your shoulder while you read this note (I would lay a moderate wager that you have looked round twice or thrice), I shall content myself with saying that I am ever heartily, my dear Cattermole, Hers and yours.”

Writing of Cattermole in those early days Forster says that he “had then enough and to spare of fun as well as fancy to supply ordinary artists and

humorists by the dozen, and wanted only a little more ballast and steadiness to possess all that could give attraction to good-fellowship.” This must not be taken too literally. It is merely a not very happy way of saying that Cattermole was not a practical man. Given the two alternatives that the late Mr. Peter Keary offered to every man, Cattermole would have “got out.” He was a brilliant artist with a rare gift of fancy, who, if he had had anything of Forster’s practical nature, would have made a fortune, and left a bigger name behind him than he did. But the artistic temperament was too strong in him, self-consciousness was a failing with him, it was not in him to “push” himself, and so he has suffered an effacement which ought not to have been his. He lacked those qualities of “push and go” which are worshipped with rather an excess of adoration in these days. He lacked anything like worldly ambition, and in 1839 refused a knighthood.

Dickens liked him immensely, and was frequently at his house, and the artist’s son recalls the dinners at Clapham Rise, which, he says, “had a charm of their own.” And Mrs. Cattermole speaks of the many kind and successful excursions that Dickens made to comfort and console him in the time of intense grief. “It was here,” she says, “that Charles Dickens was the *friend*; he could ‘weep with those that wept and rejoice with those that did rejoice.’ He was indeed a man of magnanimous and *practical* sympathy.”

But, of course, Cattermole is known to Dickensians chiefly as one of the illustrators of *Master Humphrey’s Clock*. It was in January 13, 1840, that Dickens wrote to him:

“I am going to propound a mightily grave matter to you. My new periodical work appears ... on Saturday the 28th of March. Instead of being published in monthly parts at a shilling each only, it will be published in weekly parts at threepence and monthly parts at a shilling; my object being to baffle the imitators and make it as novel as possible. The plan is a new one — I mean the plan of the fiction — and it will comprehend a great variety of tales. . . .

“Now, among other improvements, I have turned my attention to the illustrations, meaning to have woodcuts dropped into the text and no separate plates. I want to know whether you would object to make me a little sketch for a woodcut — in indian ink would be quite sufficient — about the size of the enclosed scrap; the subject, and old quaint room with

antique Elizabethan furniture, and in the chimney-corner an extraordinary old clock — the clock belonging to Master



Photo by F. H. Taylor
-4 ALMA PARK VILLA, TWICKENHAM, WHERE DICKENS REMAINED IN 1858

1858



CHARLES DICKENS

From: **Dickens' London**, by Francis Miltoun

Dickens' London

By
Francis Miltoun

Author of "Dumas' Paris," "Cathedrals of France," "Rambles in Normandy," "Castles and Chateaux of Old Touraine," etc.

Illustrated



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Fourth Impression, April, 1908

Fifth Impression, April, 1910

COLONIAL PRESS

Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, U. S. A.

*All sublunary things of death partake!
What alteration does a cent'ry make!
Kings and Comedians all are mortal found,
Cæsar and Pinkethman are underground.
What's not destroyed by time's devouring hand?
Where's Troy, and where's the Maypole in the Strand?
Pease, cabbages, and turnips once grew where
Now stands New Bond Street and a newer square;
Such piles of buildings now rise up and down,
London itself seems going out of town.
James Bramston, *The Art of Politicks.**

The attempt is herein made to present in an informal manner such facts of historical, topographical, and literary moment as surrounded the localities especially identified with the life and work of Charles Dickens in the city of London, with naturally a not infrequent reference to such scenes and incidents as he was wont to incorporate in the results of his literary labours; believing that there are a considerable number of persons, travellers, lovers of Dickens, enthusiasts *et als.*, who might be glad of a work which should present within a single pair of covers a résumé of the facts concerning the subject matter indicated by the title of this book; to remind them in a way of what already exists to-day of the London Dickens knew, as well as of the changes which have taken place since the novelist's time.

To all such, then, the present work is offered, not necessarily as the last word or even as an exhaustive résumé, knowing full well the futility for any chronicler to attempt to do such a subject full justice within the confines of a moderate sized volume, where so many correlated facts of history and side lights of contemporary information are thrown upon the screen. The most that can be claimed is that every effort has been made to present a

truthful, correct, and not unduly sentimental account of the sights and scenes of London connected with the life of Charles Dickens.

In Praise of London

“The inhabitants of St. James’, notwithstanding they live under the same laws and speak the same language, are as a people distinct from those who live in the ‘City.’“

Addison.

”If you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of the City you must not be satisfied with its streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts.”

Johnson.

”I have often amused myself with thinking how different a place London is to different people.”

Boswell.

”I had rather be Countess of Puddle-Dock (in London) than Queen of Sussex.”

Shadwell.

”London ... a place where next-door neighbours do not know one another.”

Fielding.

”London ... where all people under thirty find so much amusement.”

Gray.

”Dull as London is in summer, there is always more company in it than in any other one place.”

Walpole.

”London! Opulent, enlarged, and still — increasing London!”

Cowper.

”What is London?”

Burke.

”I began to study a map of London ... the river is of no assistance to a stranger in finding his way.”

Southey.

DICKENS' LONDON

INTRODUCTION

This book is for the lover of Dickens and of London, alike. The former without the memory of the latter would indeed be wanting, and likewise the reverse would be the case.

London, its life and its stones, has ever been immortalized by authors and artists, but more than all else, the city has been a part of the very life and inspiration of those who have limned its virtues, its joys, and its sorrows, — from the days of blithe Dan Chaucer to those of the latest west-end society novelist.

London, as has been truly said, is a “mighty mingling,” and no one has breathed more than Dickens the spirit of its constantly shifting and glimmering world of passion and poverty.

The typical Londoner of to-day — as in the early Victorian period of which Dickens mostly wrote — is a species quite apart from the resident of any other urban community throughout the world. Since the spell which is recorded as first having fallen upon the ear of Whittington, the sound of Bow Bells is the only true and harmonious ring which, to the ears of the real cockney, recalls all that is most loved in the gamut of his sentiments.

It is perhaps not possible to arrange the contents of a book of the purport of this volume in true chronological, or even topographical, order. The first, because of the necessitous moving about, hither and then thither, — the second, because of the fact that the very aspect of the features of the city are constantly under a more or less rapid process of evolution, which is altering all things but the points of the compass and the relative position of St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. Between these two guide-posts is a mighty maze of streets, ever changing as to its life and topography.

Hungerford Market and Hungerford Stairs have disappeared, beside which was the blacking factory, wherein the novelist's first bitter experiences of London life were felt, — amid a wretchedness only too apparent, when one reads of the miserable days which fell upon the lad at this time, — the market itself being replaced by the huge Charing Cross Railway Station, in itself no architectural improvement, it may be inferred, while the “crazy old houses and wharves” which fronted the river have likewise been dissipated by the march of improvement, which left in its

wake the glorious, though little used, Victoria Embankment, one of the few really fine modern thoroughfares of a great city.

Eastward again Furnival's Inn, where *Pickwick* was written, has fallen at the hands of the house-breaker.

The office of the old *Monthly Magazine* is no more, its very doorway and letter-box — "wherein was dropped stealthily one night" the precious manuscript of "*Pickwick*" — being now in the possession of an ardent Dickens collector, having been removed from its former site in Johnson's Court in Fleet Street at the time the former edifice was pulled down.

Across the river historic and sordid Marshalsea, where the elder Dickens was incarcerated for debt, has been dissipated in air; even its walls are not visible to-day, if they even exist, and a modern park — though it is mostly made up of flagstones — stands in its place as a moral, healthful, and politic force of the neighbourhood.

With the scenes and localities identified with the plots and characters of the novels the same cleaning up process has gone on, one or another shrine being from time to time gutted, pulled to pieces, or removed. On the other hand, doubtless much that existed in the fancy, or real thought, of the author still remains, as the door-knocker of No. 8 Craven Street, Strand, the conjectured original of which is described in the "*Christmas Carol*," which appeared to the luckless Scrooge as "not a knocker but Marley's face;" or the Spaniards Inn on Hampstead Heath described in the XLVI. Chapter of *Pickwick*, which stands to-day but little, if any, changed since that time.

For the literary life of the day which is reflected by the mere memory of the names of such of Dickens' contemporaries in art and letters, as Mark Lemon, W. H. Wills, Wilkie Collins, Cruikshank, "Phiz," Forster, Blanchard Jerrold, Maclise, Fox, Dyce, and Stanfield, one can only resort to a history of mid or early Victorian literature to realize the same to the full. Such is not the scheme of this book, but that London, — the city, — its surroundings, its lights and shadows, its topography, and its history, rather, is to be followed in a sequence of co-related events presented with as great a degree of cohesion and attractive arrangement as will be thought to be commensurate and pertinent to the subject. Formerly, when London was a "snug city," authors more readily confined their incomings and outgoings to a comparatively small area. To-day "the city" is a term only synonymous with a restricted region which gathers around the financial centre, while the cabalistic letters (meaning little or nothing to the stranger within the gates),

E. C., safely comprehend a region which not only includes “*the city*,” but extends as far westward as Temple Bar, and thus covers, if we except the lapping over into the streets leading from the Strand, practically the whole of the “Highway of Letters” of Doctor Johnson’s time.



NO. 8 CRAVEN STREET, STRAND.



MR TULKINGHORN'S HOUSE.

A novelist to-day, and even so in Dickens' time, did not — nay could not — give birth to a character which could be truly said to represent the complex London type. The environment of the lower classes — the east end and the Boro' — is ever redolent of him, and he of it. The lower-middle or upper-lower class is best defined by that individual's predilection for the "good old Strand;" while as the scale rises through the petty states of Suburbia to the luxuries of Mayfair or Belgravia, — or to define one locality more precisely, Park Lane, — we have all the ingredients with which the novelist constructs his stories, be they of the nether world, or the "*hupper suckles*." Few have there been who have essayed both. And now the suburbs are breeding their own school of novelists. Possibly it is the residents of those communities who demand a special brand of fiction, as they do of coals, paraffine, and boot-polish.

At any rate the London that Dickens knew clung somewhat to Wordsworth's happy description written but a half century before:

"Silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie,
Open unto the fields and to the sky,"

whereas to-day, as some “New Zealander” from the back blocks has said: “*These Londoners they never seen no sun.*” And thus it is that the scale runs from grave to gay, from poverty to purse full, and ever London, — the London of the past as well as the present, of Grub Street as well as Grosvenor Square. The centre of the world’s literary activities, where, if somewhat conventional as to the acceptance of the new idea in many of the marts of trade, it is ever prolific in the launching of some new thing in literary fashions.

At least it is true that London still merits the eulogistic lines penned not many years gone by by a certain minor poet:

*“Ah, London! London! Our delight,
Great flower that opens but at night,
Great city of the Midnight Sun,
Whose day begins when day is done.”*

It is said of the industrious and ingenious American that he demands to be “shown things,” and if his cicerone is not sufficiently painstaking he will play the game after his own fashion, which usually results in his getting into all sorts of unheard-of places, and seeing and learning things which your native has never suspected to previously have existed. All honour then to such an indefatigable species of the *genus homo*.

Nothing has the peculiar charm of old houses for the seeker after knowledge. To see them, and to know them, is to know their environment, — and so it is with London, — and then, and then only, can one say truly — in the words of Johnson — that they have “seen and are astonished.”

A great mass of the raw material from which English history is written is contained in parochial record books and registers, and if this were the only source available the fund of information concerning the particular section of mid-London with which Dickens was mostly identified — the parishes of St. Bride’s, St. Mary’s-le-Strand, St. Dunstan’s, St. Clement’s-Danes, and St. Giles — would furnish a well-nigh inexhaustible store of old-time lore. For a fact, however, the activities of the nineteenth century alone, to particularize an era, in the “Highway of Letters” and the contiguous streets lying round about, have formed the subject of many a big book quite by itself. When one comes to still further approximate a date the task is none the less formidable; hence it were hardly possible to more than limn herein a sort of fleeting itinerary among the sights and scenes which once existed, and point out where, if possible, are the differences that exist to-day. Doctor

Johnson's "walk down Fleet Street" — if taken at the present day — would at least be productive of many surprises, whether pleasant ones or not the reader may adduce for himself, though doubtless the learned doctor would still chant the praises of the city — in that voice which we infer was none too melodious:

*"Oh, in town let me live, then in town let me die,
For in truth I can't relish the country; not I."*

Within the last decade certain changes have taken place in this thoroughfare which might be expected to make it unrecognizable to those of a former generation who may have known it well. Improvements for the better, or the worse, have rapidly taken place; until now there is, in truth, somewhat of an approach to a wide thoroughfare leading from Westminster to the city. But during the process something akin to a holocaust has taken place, to consider only the landmarks and shrines which have disappeared, — the last as these lines are being written, being Clifford's Inn, — while Mr. Tulkinghorn's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, redolent of Dickens and Forster, his biographer, is doomed, as also the *Good Words* offices in Wellington Street, where Dickens spent so much of his time in the later years of his life. The famous "Gaiety" is about to be pulled down, and the "old Globe" has already gone from this street of taverns, as well as of letters, or, as one picturesque writer has called it, "the nursing mother of English literature."

THE LONDON DICKENS KNEW

The father of Charles Dickens was for a time previous to the birth of the novelist a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, then in Somerset House, which stands hard by the present Waterloo Bridge, in the very heart of London, where Charles Dickens grew to manhood in later years.

From this snug berth Dickens, senior, was transferred to Portsmouth, where, at No. 387 Commercial Road, in Portsea, on the 7th February, 1812, Charles Dickens was born.

Four years later the family removed to Chatham, near Rochester, and here the boy Charles received his first schooling.

From Chatham the family again removed, this time to London, where the son, now having arrived at the age of eleven, became a part and parcel of

that life which he afterward depicted so naturally and successfully in the novels.

Here he met with the early struggles with grim poverty and privation, — brought about by the vicissitudes which befell the family, — which proved so good a school for his future career as a historian of the people. His was the one voice which spoke with authoritativeness, and aroused that interest in the nether world which up to that time had slumbered.

The miseries of his early struggles with bread-winning in Warren's Blacking Factory, — in association with one Fagin, who afterward took on immortalization at the novelist's hands, — for a weekly wage of but six shillings per week, is an old and realistic fact which all biographers and most makers of guide-books have worn nearly threadbare.

That the family were sore put in order to keep their home together, first in Camden Town and later in Gower Street, North, is only too apparent. The culmination came when the elder Dickens was thrown into Marshalsea Prison for debt, and the family removed thither, to Lant Street, near by, in order to be near the head of the family.

This is a sufficiently harrowing sequence of events to allow it to be left to the biographers to deal with them to the full. Here the author glosses it over as a mere detail; one of those indissoluble links which connects the name of Dickens with the life of London among the lower and middle classes during the Victorian era.

An incident in "David Copperfield," which Dickens has told us was real, so far as he himself was concerned, must have occurred about this period. The reference is to the visit to "Ye Olde Red Lion" at the corner of Derby Street, Parliament Street, near Westminster Bridge, which house has only recently disappeared. He has stated that it was an actual experience of his own childhood, and how, being such a little fellow, the landlord, instead of drawing the ale, called his wife, who gave the boy a motherly kiss.

The incident as recounted in "David Copperfield" called also for a glass of ale, and reads not unlike:

"I remember one hot evening I went into the bar of a public-house, and said to the landlord: 'What is your best — your *very best* ale a glass?' For it was a special occasion. I don't know what. It may have been my birthday. 'Twopence-halfpenny,' says the landlord, 'is the price of the Genuine Stunning Ale.' 'Then,' says I, producing the money, 'just draw me a glass of the Genuine Stunning, if you please, with a good head to it.'"

After a time his father left the Navy Pay Office and entered journalism. The son was clerking, meanwhile, in a solicitor's office, — that of Edward Blackmore, — first in Lincoln's Inn, and subsequently in Gray's Inn. A diary of the author was recently sold by auction, containing as its first entry, "13s 6d for one week's salary." Here Dickens acquired that proficiency in making mental memoranda of his environment, and of the manners and customs of lawyers and their clerks, which afterward found so vivid expression in "Pickwick."

By this time the father's financial worries had ceased, or at least made for the better. He had entered the realms of journalism and became a Parliamentary reporter, which it is to be presumed developed a craving on the part of Charles for a similar occupation; when following in his father's footsteps, he succeeded, after having learned Gurney's system of shorthand, in obtaining an appointment as a reporter in the press gallery of the House of Commons (the plans for the new Parliament buildings were just then taking shape), where he was afterward acknowledged as being one of the most skilful and accomplished shorthand reporters in the galleries of that unconventional, if deliberate, body, which even in those days, though often counting as members a group of leading statesmen, perhaps ranking above those of the present day, was ever a democratic though "faithful" parliamentary body.

In 1834 the old Houses of Parliament were burned, and with the remains of St. Stephen's Hall the new structure grew up according to the plan presented herein, which is taken from a contemporary print.

At the end of the Parliamentary session of 1836 Dickens closed his engagement in the Reporters' Gallery, a circumstance which he recounts thus in *Copperfield*, which may be presumed to be somewhat of autobiography:

"I had been writing in the newspapers and elsewhere so prosperously that when my new success was achieved I considered myself reasonably entitled to escape from the dreary debates. One joyful night, therefore, I noted down the music of the Parliamentary bagpipes for the last time, and I have never heard it since." ("David Copperfield," Chap. XLVIII.)

Again, in the same work, the novelist gives us some account of the effort which he put into the production of "Pickwick." "I laboured hard" — said he — "at my book, without allowing it to interfere with the punctual discharge of my newspaper duties, and it came out and was very successful.

I was not stunned by the praise which sounded in my ears, notwithstanding that I was keenly alive to it. For this reason I retained my modesty in very self-respect; and the more praise I got the more I tried to deserve.” (“David Copperfield,” Chap. XLVIII.)

From this point onward in the career of Charles Dickens, he was well into the maelstrom of the life of letters with which he was in the future to be so gloriously identified; and from this point forward, also, the context of these pages is to be more allied with the personality (if one may be permitted to so use the word) of the environment which surrounded the life and works of the novelist, than with the details of that life itself.

In reality, it was in 1833, when Dickens had just attained his majority, that he first made the plunge into the literary whirlpool. He himself has related how one evening at twilight he “had stealthily entered a dim court” (Johnson’s Court, Fleet Street, not, as is popularly supposed, named for Doctor Johnson, though inhabited by him in 1766, from whence he removed in the same year to Bolt Court, still keeping to his beloved Fleet Street), and through an oaken doorway, with a yawning letter-box, there fell the MS. of a sketch entitled “A Dinner at Poplar Walk,” afterward renamed “Mr. Minns and His Cousin,” These were the offices of the old *Monthly Magazine* now defunct. Here the article duly appeared as one of the “Sketches by Boz.” In the preface to an edition of “Pickwick,” published in 1847, Dickens describes the incident sufficiently graphically for one to realize, to its fullest extent, with what pangs, and hopes, and fears his trembling hand deposited the first of the children of his brain; a foundling upon the doorstep where it is to be feared so many former and later orphans were, if not actually deserted, abandoned to their fate.

These were parlous times in Grub Street; in the days when the art of letters, though undeniably prolific, was not productive of an income which would assure even a practised hand freedom from care and want. Within a half-mile on either side of this blind alley leading off Fleet Street, from Ludgate Hill on the east — redolent of memories of the Fleet, its Prison, and its “Marriages” — to Somerset House on the west, is that unknown land, that *terra incognita*, whereon so many ships of song are stranded, or what is more, lost to oblivion which is blacker than darkness itself.

In January, 1837, while still turning out “Pickwick” in monthly parts, Dickens was offered the editorship of the already famous *Bentley’s*

Magazine, which he accepted, and also undertook to write “*Oliver Twist*” for the same periodical.

In March, of the same year, the three rooms at Furnival’s Inn presumably having become crowded beyond comfort, he removed with his wife to his former lodgings at Chalk, where the couple had spent their honeymoon, and where in the following year their son Charles was born.

What memories are conjured up of the past and, it is to be hoped, of future greatness by those who, in taking their walks abroad, find themselves within the confines of the parish of St. Bride’s, with its church built by Wren shortly after the great fire, and its queer pointed steeple, like a series of superimposed tabourets overtopped with a needle-like spire?

Here the brazen chimes ring out to all and sundry of the world of journalism and letters, whose vocations are carried on within its sound, the waking and sleeping hours alike. True! there are no sleeping hours in Fleet Street; night is like unto day, and except for the absence of the omnibuses, and crowds of hurrying throngs of city men and solicitors and barristers, the faces of those you meet at night are in no way unlike the same that are seen during the hours in which the sun is supposed to shine in London, but which — for at least five months of the year — mostly doesn’t.

Old St. Bride’s, destroyed by the great fire of London in the seventeenth century, sheltered the remains of Sackville, who died in 1608, and the printer, Wynken de Worde, and of Lovelace (1658). To-day in the present structure the visitor may see the tomb of Richardson, the author of “*Clarissa Harlow*,” who lived in Salisbury Square, another near-by centre of literary activity. In the adjacent churchyard formerly stood a house in which Milton for a time resided. In later times it has been mostly called to the minds of lion hunters as being the living of the Reverend E. C. Hawkins, the father of our most successful and famed epigrammatic novelist, — Mr. Anthony Hope Hawkins.

Equally reminiscent, and linked with a literary past in that close binding and indissoluble fashion which is only found in the great world of London, are such place names as Bolt Court, where Johnson spent the last years of his life (1776-1784), Wine Office Court, in which is still situated the ancient hostelry, “*The Cheshire Cheese*,” where all good Americans repair to sit, if possible, in the chair which was once graced (?) by the presence of the garrulous doctor, or to buy alleged pewter tankards, which it is confidently asserted are a modern “*Brummagem*” product “made to sell.”

Gough Square at the top of Wine Office Court is where Johnson conceived and completed his famous dictionary. Bouverie Street (is this, by the way, a corruption or a variant of the Dutch word *Bouerie* which New Yorkers know so well?), across the way, leads toward the river where once the Carmelite friary (White Friars) formerly stood, and to a region which Scott has made famous in "Nigel" as "Alsatia." Fetter Lane, and Great and Little New Streets, leading therefrom, are musty with a literary or at least journalistic atmosphere. Here Izaak Walton, the gentle angler, lived while engaged in the vocation of hosier at the corner of Chancery Lane.

At the corner of Bouverie Street are the *Punch* offices, to which mirthful publication Dickens made but one contribution, — and that was never published. Further adown the street is still the building which gave shelter to the famous dinners of the round-table when all the wits of *Punch* met and dined together, frequently during the London season.

In Mitre Court, until recently, stood the old tavern which had, in its palmier if not balmier days, been frequently the meeting-place of Johnson, Goldsmith, and Boswell; while but a short distance away we are well within the confines of the Temple which not only sheltered and fostered the law, but literature as well.

An incident which shows Dickens' sympathy with the literary life of the day was in 1854, when the great-grandson of the man who has given so much to all ages of Englishmen, — De Foe, — was made happy with a relief of £2 a month. Dickens was (as might have been expected) amongst the most liberal subscribers to the little fund. If everybody who has derived delight from the perusal of "Robinson Crusoe" had but contributed a single farthing to his descendant, that descendant would become a wealthy man. When De Foe was asked what he knew of his great ancestor's writings, he answered (though doubtless without any intentional comment on his ancestor's reputation) that in his happier days he had several of De Foe's works; but that he never could keep a copy of "Robinson Crusoe;" "there were so many borrowers of the book in Hungerford Market alone." Charles Knight, the publisher and antiquarian, instituted the fund, and the money was raised by him chiefly among literary men.

The most sentimental and picturesque interest attaches itself to the extensive series of buildings on the south side of Fleet Street, familiarly known as the Temple. Here Goldsmith is buried beside the curious and interesting Temple Church. The other of the four great Inns of Court are

Lincoln's Inn in Chancery Lane and Gray's Inn in Holborn. Allied with the four great inns were the more or less subsidiary Inns of Chancery, all situated in the immediate neighbourhood, one of which, at least, being intimately associated with Dickens' life in London — Furnival's Inn, which, with Thavie's Inn, was attached to Lincoln's Inn. Here Dickens lived in 1835 at No. 15, and here also he lived subsequent to his marriage with Catherine Hogarth in the following year. It was at this time that the first number of "Pickwick" was written and published. The building itself was pulled down sometime during the past few years.

Comprising several squares and rows, what is commonly referred to as the Temple, belongs to the members of two societies, the Inner and Middle Temple, consisting of "benchers," barristers, and students. This famous old place, taken in its completeness, was, in 1184, the metropolitan residence of the Knights Templars, who held it until their downfall in 1313; soon afterward it was occupied by students of the law; and in 1608 James I. presented the entire group of structures to the "benchers" of the two societies, who have ever since been the absolute owners. The entrance to Inner Temple, from Fleet Street, is nothing more than a mere gateway; the entrance to Middle Temple is more pretentious, and was designed by Sir Christopher Wren.

Here in the heart of the great world of London exists, as in no other city on the globe, a quiet and leafy suburb, peopled only by those whose vocation is not of the commonalty. Its very environment is inspiring to great thoughts and deeds, and small wonder it is that so many master minds have first received their stimulus amid the shady walks and rather gloomy buildings of the Temple.

True it is that they are gloomy, on the outside at least, — dull brick rows with gravelled or flagged courtyards, but possessing withal a geniality which many more glaring and modern surroundings utterly lack.

The stranger, for sightseeing, and the general public, to take advantage of a short cut to the river, throng its walks during the busy hours around noontime. All sorts and conditions of men hurry busily along in a never-ending stream, but most to be remarked is the staid and earnest jurist, his managing clerk, or the aspiring bencher, as his duties compel him to traverse this truly hallowed ground.

By nightfall the atmosphere and associations of the entire Temple take on, if possible, a more quiet and somnolescent air than by day. It must, if

report be true, be like a long-deserted city in the small hours of the night. A group of chambers, called rather contemptuously Paper Buildings, is near the river and is a good example of revived Elizabethan architecture. A new Inner Temple Hall was formally opened in 1870, by the Princess Louise. In October, 1861, when the Prince of Wales was elected a bencher of the Middle Temple, the new Library was formally opened. The Temple Church, as seen from the river, with its circular termination, like nothing else in the world except Charlemagne's church at Aix la Chapelle, is one of the most interesting churches in London. All the main parts of the structure are as old as the time of the Knights Templars; but restorations of the middle nineteenth century, when the munificent sum of £70,000 was spent, are in no small way responsible for its many visible attributes which previously had sadly fallen to decay. There are two portions, the Round Church and the Choir, the one nearly 700 years old and the other more than 600. The chief distinguishing features of the interior are the monumental effigies, the original sculptured heads in the Round Church, the triforium, and the fittings of the Choir. The north side of the church has been opened out by the removal of the adjoining buildings where, in the churchyard, is the grave of Oliver Goldsmith, who died in chambers (since pulled down) in Brick Court. The Temple Gardens, fronting the river, are laid out as extensive shrub and tree-bordered lawns, which are generously thrown open to the public in the summer. A more charming sylvan retreat, there is not in any city in the world.

In the good old times, legal education and hospitality went hand in hand, and the halls of the different Inns of Court were, for several centuries, a kind of university for the education of advocates, subject to this arrangement. The benchers and readers, being the superiors of each house, occupied, on public occasions of ceremony, the upper end of the hall, which was raised on a *daïs*, and separated from the rest of the building by a *bar*. The next in degree were the *utter* barristers, who, after they had attained a certain standing, were called from the body of the hall to the bar (that is, to the first place outside the bar), for the purpose of taking a principal part in the mootings or exercises of the house; and hence they probably derived the name of *utter* or outer barristers. The other members of the inn, consisting of students of the law under the degree of *utter* barristers, took their places nearer to the centre of the hall, and farther from the bar, and, from this manner of distribution, appear to have been called inner barristers. The

distinction between *utter* and inner barristers is, at the present day, wholly abolished; the former being called barristers generally, and the latter falling under the denomination of students; but the phrase “called to the bar” still holds and is recognized throughout the English-speaking world.

The general rule, as to qualification, in all the Inns of Court, is, that a person, in order to entitle himself to be called to the bar, must be twenty-one years of age, have kept *twelve terms*, and have been for five, or three years, at least, a member of the society. The keeping of terms includes dining a certain number of times in the hall, and hence the pleasantry of *eating the way to the bar*; the preparatory studies being now private. Of the great business of refectory, the engraving herewith shows the most dignified scene — the Benchers’ Dinner; the benchers, or “antients,” as they were formerly called, being the governors of the inn, at the Temple called the Parliament. The Middle Temple hall surpasses the halls of the other societies in size and splendour. Begun in 1562, and finished about ten years afterward, it is 100 feet long, 40 feet wide, and upwards of 60 feet in height. The roof and panels are finely decorated, and the screen at the lower end is beautifully carved. There are a few good pictures: amongst others, one of Charles I. on horseback, by Vandyke; also portraits of Charles II., Queen Anne, George I., and George II.

Lincoln’s Inn was once the property of Henry De Lacy, Earl of Lincoln. It became an Inn of Court in 1310. The New Hall and Library, a handsome structure after the Tudor style, was opened in 1845. The Chapel was built in 1621-23, by Inigo Jones, who laid out the large garden in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, close by, in 1620. Lord William Russell was beheaded here in 1683. In Lincoln’s Inn are the Chancery and Equity Courts. Lincoln’s Inn vied with the Temple in the masques and revels of the time of James I.

Gray’s Inn, nearly opposite the north end of Chancery Lane, once belonged to the Lords Gray of Wilton. Most of its buildings — except its hall, with its black oak roof — are of comparatively modern date. In Gray’s Inn lived the great Lord Bacon, a tree planted by whom, in the quaint old garden of the Inn, could, in Dickens’ time, yet be seen — propped up by iron stays. To-day a diligent search and inquiry does not indicate its whereabouts, which is another manifestation of the rapidity of the age in which we live.

The nine Inns of Chancery allied with the four Inns of Court, the Inner and Middle Temple, Lincoln’s Inn and Gray’s Inn, are Clifford’s Inn,

Clement's Inn, Lyons' Inn, New Inn, Furnival's Inn, Thavie's Inn, Sergeant's Inn, Staple Inn, and Barnard's Inn, all of which were standing in Dickens' day, but of which only Staple Inn and Sergeant's Inn have endured, Clement's Inn having only recently (1903) succumbed to the house-breaker.

Staple Inn, in Holborn, "the fayrest inne of Chancerie," is one of the quaintest, quietest, and most interesting corners of mediæval London left to us.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, describing his first wanderings in London, said, "I went astray in Holborn through an arched entrance over which was Staple Inn, and here likewise seemed to be offices; but in a court opening inwards from this, there was a surrounding seclusion of quiet dwelling-houses, with beautiful green shrubbery and grass-plots in the court and a great many sunflowers in full bloom. The windows were open, it was a lovely summer afternoon, and I had a sense that bees were humming in the court." Many more years have passed over the old corner since Hawthorne's visit, but still it retains its ancient charm, and still the visitor is struck by the rapid change from the hurrying stream of Holborn's traffic to this haunt of ancient peace about which Mr. Worsfold writes with pardonable enthusiasm.

With a history traceable backward for many centuries, Staple Inn was at first associated in the middle ages with the dealing in the "staple commodity" of wool, to use Lord Chief Justice Coke's words, but about the fifteenth century the wool merchants gave way to the wearers of woollen "stuff," and their old haunt became one of the Inns of Chancery — the Staple Inn of the lawyers — perpetuating its origin in its insignia, a bale of wool. For many years the connection of the Inn with the Law was little beyond a nominal one, and in 1884 the great change came, and the haunt of merchants, the old educational establishment for lawyers, passed from the hands of "The Principal, Ancients and Juniors of the Honourable Society of Staple Inn," to those of a big insurance society, while the fine old hall became the headquarters of the Institute of Actuaries.

True it is, that perhaps no area of the earth's surface, of say a mile square, has a tithe of the varied literary association of the neighbourhood lying in the immediate vicinity of the Temple, the birthplace of Lamb, the home of Fielding, and the grave of Goldsmith.

Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, is still haunted by the memory of the boy Chatterton, and Will's Coffee House, the resort of wits and literary lights of

former days, vies with Royal Palaces as an attraction for those who would worship at the shrines of a bygone age, — a process which has been made the easier of late, now that the paternal Society of Arts has taken upon itself to appropriately mark, by means of a memorial tablet, many of these localities, of which all mention is often omitted from the guide-books. Often the actual houses themselves have disappeared, and it may be questioned if it were not better that in some instances a tablet commemorating a home or haunt of some notability were not omitted. Still if the accompanying inscription is only sufficiently explicit, the act is a worthy one, and truth to tell, a work that is well performed in London.

Suburban London, too, in a way, may well come within the scope of the passion of any lover of material things which have at one time or another been a part and parcel of the lives of great men. And so, coupled with literary associations, we have the more or less imaginary “Bell” at Edmonton to remind us of Cowper, of many houses and scenes identified with Carlyle, at Chelsea; of the poet Thompson, of Gainsborough, and a round score of celebrities who have been closely identified with Richmond, — and yet others as great, reminiscent of Pepys, Addison, Steele, Thackeray and the whole noble band of chroniclers, essayists, and diarists of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The “houses of entertainment” — as the Georgian novelist was pleased to refer to inns and taverns — had in Dickens’ day not departed greatly from their original status. Referring solely to those coaching and posting-houses situated at a greater or lesser distance from the centre of town, — on the main roads running therefrom, and those city establishments comprehended strictly under the head of taverns, — which were more particularly places of refreshment for mankind of the genus male. These two classes were, and are, quite distinct from the later-day *caravanserai* known as hotels, and as such performed vastly different functions.

To be sure, all life and movement of the early nineteenth century, and for a couple of hundred years before, had a great deal to do with inns and taverns.

From Chaucer’s famous “Tabard,” where —

*“In Southwark at the Tabard as I lay
Ready to wenden on my pilgrimage,”*

to “The Bull,” at Rochester, whose courtyard is still as described by Dickens, and the somewhat mythical “Maypole” of “Barnaby Rudge,” is a

far cry, though it would appear that the kind of cheer and accommodation varies to a much lesser degree than might be supposed. Certainly the demand for brevity and the luxuriousness of the later years of the nineteenth century, and even to some extent during Dickens' time, with the innovation of railway travel, gas-lamps, the telegraph, and what not, was making an entirely new set of conditions and demands.

The old "Tabard" of Chaucer's day is no more, though an antiquary of 1840 has attempted to construct what it may have been out of the "Talbot" of that day, which stood in the ancient High Street of Southwark, just across London Bridge, where, said the annalist Stow, "there were so many fair inns for receipt of travellers," — the rivals of the Boar's Heads and Mermaids of another generation.

Of the actual Dickens' inns, perhaps none is more vividly impressed on the imagination than that of the "Maypole," that fantastic structure of "Barnaby Rudge," the original of which is the "King's Head" at Chigwell on the borders of Epping Forest. It was here that Mr. Willet sat in his accustomed place, "his eyes on the eternal boiler." "Before he had got his ideas into focus, he had stared at the plebeian utensil quite twenty minutes," — all of which indicates the minutiae and precision of Dickens' observations. This actual copper, vouched for by several documents of attestation, with an old chair which formerly stood in the Chester Room of the "Maypole," is to-day in the possession of Mr. Bransby Williams, of London, an ardent enthusiast of all matters in connection with Dickens and his stories.

Of the *Pickwickian Inns*, the "White Horse" at Ipswich — "the overgrown tavern" to which Mr. Pickwick journeyed by the London Coach — is something of tangible reality, and doubtless little changed to this day; the same being equally true of "The Leather Bottle" at Cobham. The old "White Hart" in the Borough High Street, the scene of the first meeting of Mr. Pickwick and Weller, was demolished in 1889. Not so the "Magpie and Stump," — that referred to in "Pickwick" as being in the vicinity of the Clare Market, and "closely approximating to the back of the 'New Inn.'" "This seems to have been of an imaginary character in nomenclature, at least, though it is like enough that some neighbourhood hostelry — or, as it is further referred to, as being what the ordinary person would call a "low public-house" — was in mind.

The old "Fountain Inn" of the Minories, referred to in "Oliver Twist," and the "little inn" ("The Sun") at Canterbury, where the Micawbers lodged, and the "White Hart" at Hook, — or more probably its predecessor of the same name, — visited by the Pickwickians en route to Rochester, — were realities in every sense of the word, and show once again the blending of truth and fiction which was so remarkable in the novels, and which indicates so strongly the tendency of Dickens to make every possible use of accessories, sights, and scenes, with which, at one time or another, he had been acquainted.

The "Saracen's Head" at Snow Hill, — a real thing in Dickens' day, — where the impetuous Squeers put up during his visits to London, has disappeared. It was pulled down when the Holborn Viaduct was built in 1869, and the existing house of the same name in no way merits the genial regard which is often bestowed upon it, in that it is but an ordinary London "*Pub*" which does not even occupy the same site as its predecessor.

"The Spaniards," where foregathered the No-Popery rioters, on Hampstead Heath, remains much as of yore; certainly it has not changed to any noticeable degree since Mrs. Bardell, *et als.*, repaired hither in the Hampstead stage for their celebrated tea-party, as recounted in "Pickwick."

The very term *Pickwickian Inns* inspires rumination and imagination to a high degree. Remembrance is all very well, but there is a sturdy reality about most of the inns of which Dickens wrote. Thus the enthusiast may, if he so wish, in some cases, become a partaker of the same sort of comfort as did Dickens in his own time, or at least, amid the same surroundings; though it is to be feared that New Zealand mutton and Argentine beef have usurped the place in the larder formerly occupied by the "primest Scotch" and the juiciest "Southdown."

It is said there are twenty-five inns mentioned in "Pickwick" alone; the writer has never been able to count up but twenty-two: still the assertion may be correct; he leaves it to the curious to verify. Certainly such well revered names as the "Golden Cross," "The Bull," at Rochester, which, above all other localities drawn in "Pickwick," has the liveliest associations, "The Leather Bottle," "The Magpie and Stump," "The Marquis of Granby," "The Blue Boar," "The White Horse Cellars" in Piccadilly, and "The Great White Horse" at Ipswich are for ever branded upon the memory. The following half-dozen will perhaps be best recalled: "The Old White Hart" in the Borough High Street; "The George and Vulture," Mr. Pickwick's own

favourite; “The Golden Cross,” reminiscent of Dickens’ own personality as well; “The White Horse Cellars,” the starting-place of the Ipswich Coach; “Osborne’s Hotel” in the Adelphi, still occupied as a rather shabby sort of hostelry, though the name has gone; “Jack Straw’s Castle,” where “Boz” and his friend Forster so often enjoyed that “shoemaker’s holiday;” and lastly, “The Spaniards” at Hampstead. A description of one, as it is to-day, must suffice here.

“The Golden Cross,” which stands opposite Charing Cross Railway Station, with its floriated gilt crosses usually brightly burnished, and the entire edifice resplendent in new paint.

There is still, however, something of the air of the conservatism of a former day, if only in the manner of building, which in the present case furthers the suggestion that the ways of the modern architect — striving for new and wonderful constructive methods — were unknown when the walls of this old hostelry were put up.

Its courtyard has disappeared, or rather has been incorporated into a sort of warehouse or stable for a parcels delivery company, and the neighbourhood round about has somewhat changed since the days of “Copperfield” and “Pickwick.” The Charing Cross Railway Station has come upon the scene, replacing old Hungerford Market, and palatial hotels have been built where the gardens of Northumberland House once were. St.-Martin’s-in-the-Fields is still in its wonted place, but with a change for the worse, in that the platform with its ascending steps has been curtailed during a recent alleged improvement in the roadway in St. Martin’s Lane.

The National Gallery remains as of yore, except that it has recently been isolated by pulling down some adjoining structures to the northwest, as a precautionary measure against fire.

The Nelson Monument in Trafalgar Square, then newly arrived, is as it was in the days of Dickens’ early life. But there is little suggestion in the hotel or its surroundings of its ever having been a “mouldy sort of an establishment in a close neighbourhood,” and it is hard to believe that Copperfield’s bedroom “smelt like a hackney-coach and was shut up like a family vault.”

DICKENS’ LITERARY LIFE

A brief account is here given of Dickens’ literary career, which presents chronologically a review of his productions as they appeared.

The first of his literary efforts was the tragedy of "The Sultan of India," written in his precocious school-days at Chatham, when, if we except his Parliamentary journalistic work, nothing else was put forth until "The Dinner at Poplar Walk" was published in the *Monthly Magazine* (1833). The original "Sketches by Boz" — the first of which bore no signature — also followed in the *Monthly Magazine*. Other sketches under the same generic title also appeared in the *Evening Chronicle*, and yet others, under the title of "Scenes and Characters," were published in "Bell's Life in London" and the "Library of Fiction."

In 1836 a number of these fugitive pieces were collected into a volume, the copyright of which was sold to one Macrone for £100, who published them under the first and best known title, "Sketches by Boz." The familiar story of "Pickwick," its early conception and its final publication, is well known. Its first publication (in parts) dated from 1836-37. About this time Dickens had another bad attack of stage-fever, and wrote a farce, "The Strange Gentleman," the libretto of an opera called "The Village Coquettes," and a comedy, "Is She His Wife?" more particularly perhaps for amateur representation, in which he was very fond of taking part. "Oliver Twist," a courageous attack on the Poor Laws and Bumbledom, followed in 1838, though it was not completed until after "Nicholas Nickleby" began to appear in 1839.

At this time was started *Master Humphrey's Clock*, a sort of miscellany in which it was intended to publish a series of papers written chiefly by Dickens himself after the style of Addison's *Spectator* of a former day. It was not at first successful, and only upon the commencement therein of the "Old Curiosity Shop" did it take on in any sense.

Master Humphrey's Clock ran down with the completion of the novel, though this story, in company with "Barnaby Rudge," a tale of the riots of '80, was not issued in book form until 1848 and 1849.

The authorship of "Pickwick" was unknown by the great mass of the public until very nearly the completion of the work in serial parts. Much conjecture was raised, and a writer in *Bentley's Miscellany* published the following lines under the title of:

IMPROMPTU

*"Who the Dickens 'Boz' could be
Puzzled many a learned elf,*

*Till time revealed the mystery,
And 'Boz' appeared as Dickens' self."*

The other contributions made by Dickens to this periodical were afterward added to his published works under the title of "Master Humphrey's Clock."

Dickens' first tour to America followed the abandonment of the periodical in 1842. This event called forth the following verses by Tom Hood, entitled:

TO CHARLES DICKENS

On his Proposed Voyage to America, 1842.

*"Pshaw! away with leaf and berry
And the sober-sided cup!
Bring a Goblet and bright Sherry!
And a bumper fill me up. —
Tho' I had a pledge to shiver,
And the longest ever was, —
Ere his vessel leaves our river,
I will drink a health to 'Boz.'
"Here's success to all his antics,
Since it pleases him to roam,
And to paddle o'er Atlantics,
After such a sale at home
May he shun all rocks whatever,
And the shallow sand that lurks, —
And his passage be as clever
As the best among his works."*

With what favour his visit was received in America is too well known to require detailed mention here. His experiences and observations recounted in "American Notes," first published in 1842 upon his return to England, has told these vividly and picturesquely, if not exactly consistently.

As a reader, Dickens stood as preëminently to the fore as when posing as a writer. His phenomenal success on the platform is given in detail in a volume written by George Dolby, who accompanied him and managed his American tour. The mental and physical strain was such that in fifteen years

of combined editorial, literary, and reading labours, it left him attenuated and finally curtailed his brilliant work.

What the readings really did accomplish was to increase and firmly assure the permanence of his already wide-spread fame.

“Martin Chuzzlewit” had begun to appear in shilling parts in 1843, and at that time was considered by the novelist to be by far the best work he had yet written. “Dombey and Son” followed, and afterward “David Copperfield,” to which Dickens transferred his affections from “Chuzzlewit.” This new “child of fancy,” as he called it, was so largely autobiographical as to be accepted by many as being a recounting of his own early struggles as a poor boy in London, and his early literary labours. He himself said: “I seemed to be sending a part of myself into the shadowy world.”

While “Chuzzlewit” was appearing in serial form, that masterpiece perhaps of all Dickens’ shorter stories, “A Christmas Carol,” — the first of the “Christmas Stories,” — appeared.

This earned for its author the sobriquet, “The Apostle of Christmas.”

Its immediate popularity and success was, perhaps, influenced by the following endorsement from Thackeray:

“It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness.”

Others under the same generic title followed: “The Chimes,” 1844; “The Cricket on the Hearth,” 1845; “The Battle of Life,” 1846; and “The Haunted Man,” 1848. In January, 1846, Dickens began his short connection with the *Daily News*. Here his “Pictures from Italy” appeared, he having just returned from a journey thither.

“Dombey and Son,” which Dickens had begun at Rosemont, Lausanne, took him from 1846 to 1848 to complete.

In 1850 the idea of *Household Words*, the periodical with which Dickens’ fame is best remembered, took shape. His idea was for a low-priced periodical, to be partly original, and in part selected. “I want to suppose,” he wrote, “a certain shadow which may go into any place by starlight, moonlight, sunlight, or candle-light, and be in all homes and all nooks and corners.” The general outlines and plans were settled, but there appears to have been no end of difficulty in choosing a suitable name. “The Highway of Life,” “The Holly Tree,” “The Household Voice,” “The Household Guest,” and many others were thought of, and finally was hit upon

“Household Words,” the first number of which appeared on March 30, 1850, with the opening chapters of a serial by Mrs. Gaskell, whose work Dickens greatly admired. In number two appeared Dickens’ own pathetic story, “The Child’s Dream of a Star.” In 1859, as originally conceived, *Household Words* was discontinued, from no want of success, but as an expediency brought about through disagreement among the various proprietors. Dickens bought the property in, and started afresh under the title of *All the Year Round*, among whose contributors were Edmund Yates, Percy Fitzgerald, Charles Lever, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, and Lord Lytton. This paper in turn came to its finish, and phoenix-like took shape again as *Household Words*, which in one form or another has endured to the present day, its present editor (1903) being Hall Caine, Jr., a son of the novelist.

Apart from the general circulation, the special Christmas numbers had an enormous sale. In these appeared other of the shorter pieces which have since become famous, — “Mugby Junction,” “The Seven Poor Travellers,” “The Haunted House,” etc.

In the pages of *Household Words* “The Child’s History of England,” “The Uncommercial Traveller” (1861), and “Hard Times” (1854) first appeared; while *All the Year Round* first presented “A Tale of Two Cities” (1859) and “Great Expectations.”

“Bleak House” was issued in parts in 1852. “Little Dorrit,” originally intended to be called “Nobody’s Fault,” was published in 1857.

“Our Mutual Friend” dates from 1865 in book form. “Edwin Drood” was left unfinished at the author’s death in 1870.

In 1868 “The Uncommercial Traveller” was elaborated for the first issue in *All the Year Round*, and subsequently again given to the world in revised book form.

Curiously enough, though most of Dickens’ works were uncompleted before they began to appear serially, they have been universally considered to show absolutely no lack of continuity, or the least semblance of being in any way disjointed.

Dickens’ second visit to America in 1867 was, like its predecessor, a stupendous success. A New York paper stated at this time that: “Of the millions here who treasure every word he has written, there are tens of thousands who would make a large sacrifice to see and hear a man who has made so many happy hours.”

Dickens' fame had deservedly attracted a large circle of acquaintances around him, who, in truth, became firmly converted into fast friends.

His literary life and his daily labours had so identified him with the literary London of the day that all reference to literary events of that time must make due allowance of his movements.

The house at 48 Doughty Street still stands, and at the end of 1839 the novelist removed to the "handsome house with a considerable garden" in Devonshire Terrace, near Regent's Park, the subject of a sketch by Maclise which is here given. His holidays during his early and busy years were spent at Broadstairs, Twickenham, and Petersham on the Thames, just above Richmond. Dickens was always a great traveller, and his journeys often took him far afield.



DICKENS' HOUSE IN DEVONSHIRE TERRACE.

From a drawing by Maclise.



NO. 48 DOUGHTY STREET, WHERE DICKENS LIVED.

In 1841 he visited Landor at Bath, and in the same year he made an excursion to Scotland and was granted the freedom of the city of Edinburgh. The first visit to America was undertaken in 1842; his Italian travels in 1844; residence in Switzerland 1846; three months in Paris 1847; Switzerland and Italy revisited in 1853. Three summers were spent at Boulogne in 1853, 1854, 1856; residence in Paris 1855-56; America revisited 1867-68.

Such in brief is a review of the physical activities of the author. He did not go to Australia — as he was variously importuned — but enough is given to show that, in spite of his literary associations with old London and its institutions, Charles Dickens was, for a fact, a very cosmopolitan observer.

As for Dickens' daily round of London life, it is best represented by the period of the magazines, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, *Household Words*, and *All the Year Round*, particularly that of the former. In those days he first met with the severe strain which in after life proved, no doubt, to have shortened his days.

Considering his abilities and his early vogue, Dickens made some astonishingly bad blunders in connection with his agreements with

publishers; of these his biographer Forster tells in detail.

After the publication of “Martin Chuzzlewit,” Dickens expressed dissatisfaction with his publishers, Messrs. Chapman and Hall, which resulted in his making an agreement with Messrs. Bradbury and Evans.

To conserve his intellectual resources, he resolved to again visit Italy, to which country he repaired after a farewell dinner given him at Greenwich, where Turner, the artist, and many other notables attended. He accordingly settled in a suburb of Genoa, where he wrote “The Chimes,” and came back to London especially to read it to his friends. Writing from Genoa to Forster in November, 1844, he said:

“.. But the party for the night following? I know you have consented to the party. Let me see. Don’t have any one this particular night for dinner, but let it be a summons for the special purpose, at half-past six. Carlyle indispensable, and I should like his wife of all things; *her* judgment would be invaluable. You will ask Mac, and why not his sister? Stanny and Jerrold I should particularly wish; Edwin Landseer, Blanchard ... and when I meet you, oh! Heaven, what a week we will have!”



THE READING OF “THE CHIMES” AT FORSTER’S HOUSE IN LINCOLN’S INN FIELDS.

From a drawing by D. Maclise.

Forster further describes the occasion itself as being —

“Rather memorable ... the germ of those readings to larger audiences by which, as much as by his books, the world knew him.”

Among those present was Maclise, who, says Forster, “made a note of it” in pencil, which is reproduced herein. “It will tell the reader all he can wish to know, and he will thus see of whom the party consisted.”

Of Dickens’ entire literary career nothing was more successful than his famous public readings. From that night at Forster’s house in Lincoln’s Inn Fields (No. 58, still standing, 1903), afterward made use of as Mr. Tulkinghorn’s in “Bleak House,” and later among other friends, at first in a purely informal and private manner and in a semi-public way for charitable objects, these diversions, so powerful and realistic were they, ultimately grew into an out-and-out recognized business enterprise.

The first series was inaugurated in 1858-59, and absolutely took the country by storm, meeting with the greatest personal affection and respect wherever he went. In Dublin there was almost a riot. People broke the pay-box, and freely offered £5 for a stall. In Belfast he had enormous audiences, being compelled, he said, to turn half the town away. The reading over, the people ran after him to look at him. “Do me the honour,” said one, “to shake hands, Misther Dickens, and God bless you, sir; not ounly for the light you’ve been to me this night, but for the light you’ve been to me house, sir (and God bless your face!), this many a year.” Men cried undisguisedly.

During the second American tour, in 1867, the public went almost mad. In Boston his reception was beyond all expectations; and in New York the speculators assembled the night before the reading in long lines to wait the opening of the doors at nine the next morning for the issue of the tickets. They continued to come all night, and at five o’clock in the morning there were two lines of eight hundred each, whilst at eight there were five thousand. At nine o’clock, each of the two lines reached more than three-quarters of a mile in length, members of the families were relieving each other, waiters from neighbouring restaurants were serving breakfasts in the open December air, and excited applicants for tickets offering five or ten dollars for the mere permission to exchange places with other persons standing nearer the head of the line. Excitement and enthusiasm increased wherever he travelled, and it has been freely observed by all who knew him well that this excitement and strain finally culminated, after he had returned

to England and undertaken there another series of readings, in an illness which hastened his death.

THE HIGHWAY OF LETTERS

In Dickens' time, as in our own, and even at as early a period as that of Drayton, Fleet Street, as it has latterly been known, has been the abode of letters and of literary labours.

The diarists, journalists, political and religious writers of every party and creed have adopted it as their own particular province. Grub Street no longer exists, so that the simile of Doctor Johnson does not still hold true.

The former Grub Street — "inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems" (*vide* Doctor Johnson's Dictionary) — has become Milton Street through the mindful regard of some former sponsor, by reason of the nearness of its location to the former Bunhill residence of the great epic poet. But modern Fleet Street exists to-day as the street of journalists and journalism, from the humble penny-a-liner and his product to the more sedate and verbose political paragrapher whose reputation extends throughout the world.

Nowhere else is there a long mile of such an atmosphere, redolent of printers' ink and the bustle attendant upon the production and distribution of the printed word. And nowhere else is the power of the press more potent.

Its historian has described it as "a line of street, with shops and houses on either side, between Temple Bar and Ludgate Hill, one of the largest thoroughfares in London, and one of the most famous."

Its name was derived from the ancient streamlet called the Fleet, more commonly "Fleet Ditch," near whose confluence with the Thames, at Ludgate Hill, was the notorious Fleet Prison, with its equally notorious "marriages."

This reeking abode of mismanagement was pulled down in 1844, when the "Marshalsea," "The Fleet," and the "Queen's Bench" (all three reminiscent of Dickens, likewise Newgate, not far away) were consolidated in a new structure erected elsewhere.

The unsavoury reputation of the old prison of the Fleet, its "chaplains," and its "marriages," are too well-known to readers of contemporary literature to be more than mentioned here.

The memory of the famous persons who were at one time or another confined in this “noisome place with a pestilential atmosphere” are recalled by such names as Bishop Hooper, the martyr; Nash, the poet and satirist; Doctor Donne, Killigrew, the Countess of Dorset, Viscount Falkland, William Prynne, Richard Savage, and — of the greatest possible interest to Americans — William Penn, who lived “within the rules” in 1707.

The two churches lying contiguous to this thoroughfare, St. Dunstan’s-in-the-West and St. Bride’s, are mentioned elsewhere; also the outlying courts and alleys, such as Falcon, Mitre, and Salisbury Courts, Crane Court, Fetter Lane, Chancery Lane, Whitefriars, Bolt Court, Bell Yard, and Shoe Lane, the Middle and Inner Temples, and Sergeant’s Inn.

The great fire of London of 1666 stopped at St. Dunstan’s-in-the-West and at the easterly confines of the Temple opposite.

Michael Drayton, the poet, lived at “a baye-windowed house next the east end of St. Dunstan’s Church,” and Cowley was born “near unto the corner of Chancery Lane.”

The “Horn Tavern,” near which was Mrs. Salmon’s celebrated waxwork exhibition (for which species of entertainment the street had been famous since Elizabeth’s time), is now Anderton’s Hotel, still a famous house for “pressmen,” the name by which the London newspaper writer is known.

A mere mention of the sanctity of letters which surrounded the Fleet Street of a former day, is presumably the excuse for connecting it with the later development of literary affairs, which may be said so far as its modern repute is concerned, to have reached its greatest and most popular height in Dickens’ own time.

The chroniclers, the diarists, and the satirists had come and gone. Richardson — the father of the English novel lay buried in St. Bride’s, and the innovation of the great dailies had passed the stage of novelty. *The Gentleman’s Magazine* and the Reviews had been established three-quarters of a century before. *The Times* had just begun to be printed by steam. Each newspaper bore an imprinted government stamp of a penny per copy, — a great source of revenue in that the public paid it, not the newspaper proprietor. (*The Times* then sold for five pence per copy.) The *Illustrated London News*, the pioneer of illustrated newspapers, had just come into existence, and *Punch* under Blanchard Jerrold had just arrived at maturity, so to speak. Such, in a brief way, were the beginnings of the journalism of our day; and Dickens’ connection therewith, as Parliamentary reporter of

The True Sun and *The Morning Chronicle*, were the beginnings of his days of assured and adequate income, albeit that it came to him at a comparatively early period of his life. The London journalist of Dickens' day was different in degree only from the present. *The True Sun*, for which Dickens essayed his first reportorial work, and later *The Morning Chronicle*, were both influential journals, and circulated between them perhaps forty thousand copies, each bearing a penny stamp impressed on the margin, as was the law.

The newspapers of London, as well as of most great cities, had a localized habitation, yclept Newspaper Row or Printing-House Square, and other similar appellations. In London the majority of them were, and are, printed east of Temple Bar, in, or south of, Fleet Street, between Waterloo and Blackfriars Bridges. To borrow Johnson's phrase, this is the mart "whose staple is news."

The Times — "The Thunderer" of old — was housed in a collection of buildings which surrounded Printing-House Square, just east of Blackfriars Bridge. In 1840 *The Times* had, or was understood to have, three editors, fifteen reporters, with a more or less uncertain and fluctuating number of correspondents, news collectors, and occasional contributors. These by courtesy were commonly referred to as the intellectual workers. For the rest, compositors, pressmen, mechanics, clerks, *et al.*, were of a class distinct in themselves. The perfecting press had just come into practical use, and though the process must appear laboriously slow to-day when only 2,500 *perfected* copies of a four-page paper were turned out in an hour, *The Times* was in its day at the head of the list as to organization, equipment, and influence.

The other morning and evening papers, *The Post*, *The Advertiser*, *The Globe*, *The Standard*, *The Morning Chronicle*, and *The Sun*, all had similar establishments though on a smaller scale.

But two exclusively literary papers were issued in 1840 — *The Literary Gazette* and *The Athenæum*, the latter being to-day the almost universal mentor and guide for the old-school lover of literature throughout the world. *The Spectator* was the most vigorous of the weekly political and social papers, now sadly degenerated, and *Bell's Life in London*, which had printed some of Dickens' earlier work, was the only nominal "sporting paper." Church papers, trade papers, society papers, and generally

informative journals were born, issued for a time, then died in those days as in the present.

Punch was, and is, the most thoroughly representative British humorous journal, and since its birth in the forties has been domiciled in Bouverie Street, just off the main thoroughfare of Fleet Street.

The literary production in this vast workshop in point of bulk alone is almost beyond comprehension. In 1869, a year before Dickens' death, there were published in London alone three hundred and seventy-two magazines and serials, seventy-two quarterlies, and two hundred and ninety-eight newspapers etc.

As for the golden days of the "Highway of Letters," they were mostly in the glorious past, but, in a way, they have continued to this day. A brief review of some of the more important names and events connected with this famous street will, perhaps, not be out of place here.

Among the early printers and booksellers were Wynken de Worde, "at ye signe of ye Sonne;" Richard Pynson, the title-pages or colophons of whose works bore the inscription, "emprynted by me Richard Pynson at the temple barre of London (1493);" Rastell, "at the sign of the Star;" Richard Tottel, "within Temple-bar, at the signe of the Hande and Starre," which in Dickens' day had become the shop of a low bookseller by the name of Butterworth, who it was said still held the original leases. Others who printed and published in the vicinity were W. Copeland, "at the signe of the Rose Garland;" Bernard Lintot, "at the Cross Keys;" Edmund Curll, "at the Dial and Bible," and Lawton Gulliver, "at Homer's Head," against St. Dunstan's Church; and Jacob Robinson, on the west side of the gateway "leading down the Inner Temple Lane," an establishment which Dickens must have known as Groom's, the confectioner's. Here Pope and Warburton first met, and cultivated an acquaintanceship which afterward developed into as devoted a friendship as ever existed between man and man. The fruit of this was the publication (in 1739) of a pamphlet which bore the title, "A Vindication of Mr. Pope's 'Essay on Man,' by the Author of 'The Divine Legation of Moses,' printed for J. Robinson."

At Collins' shop, "at the Black Boy in Fleet Street," was published the first "Peerage," while other names equally famous were the publishers, T. White, H. Lowndes, and John Murray.

Another trade which was firmly established here was the bankers, "Child's," at Temple Bar, being the oldest existing banking-house in

London to-day. Here Richard Blanchard and Francis Child, “at the Marygold in Fleet Street,” — who were goldsmiths with “*running cashes*,” — were first established in the reign of Charles II. “In the hands of Mr. Blanchard, goldsmith, next door to Temple Bar,” Dryden deposited his £50 received for the discovery of the “bullies” by whom Lord Rochester had been barbarously assaulted in Covent Garden.

Another distinctive feature of Fleet Street was the taverns and coffee-houses. “The Devil,” “The King’s Head,” at the corner of Chancery Lane, “The Bolt-in-Tun,” “The Horn Tavern,” “The Mitre,” “The Cock,” and “The Rainbow,” with “Dick’s,” “Nando’s,” and “Peele’s,” at the corner of Fetter Lane — its descendant still existing, — completes the list of the most famous of these houses of entertainment.

To go back to a still earlier time, to connect therewith perhaps the most famous name of English literature, bar Shakespeare, it is recorded that Chaucer “once beat a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street,” and was fined two shillings for the privilege by the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple. As the chroniclers have it: “So Speght heard from Master Barkly, who had seen the entry in the records of the Inner Temple.”

A rather gruesome anecdote is recounted by Hughson in his “Walks through London” (1817), concerning Flower-de-Luce Court (Fleur-de-Lis Court), just off Fetter Lane in Fleet Street. This concerned the notorious Mrs. Brownrigg, who was executed in 1767 for the murder of Mary Clifford, her apprentice. “The grating from which the cries of the poor child issued” being still existent at the time when Hughson wrote and presumably for some time after. Canning, in imitation of Southey, recounts it thus in verse:

“... Dost thou ask her crime?
She whipp’d two female ‘prentices to death,
And hid them in the coal-hole. For this act
Did Brownrigg swing. Harsh laws! But time shall come,
When France shall reign and laws be all repeal’d.”
Which gladsome (?) day has fortunately not yet come.

No résumé of the attractions of Fleet Street can well be made without some mention of Whitefriars, that region comprehended between the boundaries of the Temple on one side, and where once was the Fleet Ditch on the other. Its present day association with letters mostly has to do with journalism, Carmelite Street, Whitefriars Street, and other lanes and alleys

of the immediate neighbourhood being given over to the production of the great daily and weekly output of printed sheets. This ancient precinct formerly contained the old church of the White Friars, a community known in full as *Fratres Beatæ Mariæ de Mont Carmeli*.

Founded by Sir Richard Grey in 1241, the church was surrendered at the Reformation, and the Hall was made into the first Whitefriars Theatre, and the precinct newly named Alsatia, celebrated in modern literature by Scott in the "Fortunes of Nigel." "The George Tavern," mentioned in Shadwell's play, "The Squire of Alsatia," became later the printing shop of one Bowyer, and still more recently the printing establishment of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, the publishers and proprietors of *Punch*, which building was still more recently removed for the present commodious structure occupied by this firm. In Dickens' time it was in part at least the old "George Tavern." It is singular perhaps that Dickens' connection with the famous "Round Table" of *Punch* was not more intimate than it was. It is not known that a single article of his was ever printed in its pages, though it is to be presumed he contributed several, and one at least is definitely acknowledged.

Ram Alley and Pye Corner were here in Alsatia, the former a passage between the Temple and Sergeant's Inn, which existed until recently.

Mitre Court is perhaps the most famous and revered of all the purlieus of Fleet Street. "The Mitre Tavern," or rather a reminiscence of it, much frequented by the London journalist of to-day and of Dickens' time, still occupies the site of a former structure which has long since disappeared, where Johnson used to drink his port, and where he made his famous remark to Ogilvie with regard to the noble prospects of Scotland: "I believe, sir, you have a great many ... but, sir, let me tell you the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees is the highroad that leads him to England."

Of all the old array of taverns of Fleet Street, "The Cock" most recently retained a semblance, at least, of its former characteristics, which recalls one of Tennyson's early poems, "A Monologue of Will Waterproof," which has truly immortalized this house of refreshment:

*"Thou plump head-waiter at the Cock
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? Is't nine o'clock?
Then fetch a pint of port."*

Salisbury Court, or Salisbury Square as it has now become, is another of those literary suburbs of Fleet Street — if one may so call it — where modern literature was fostered and has prospered. It occupies the courtyard of Salisbury or Dorset House. Betterton, Cave, and Sandford, the actors, lived here; Shadwell, Lady Davenant, the widow of the laureate; Dryden and Richardson also. Indeed Richardson wrote “Pamela” here, and Goldsmith was his “press corrector.”

DICKENS' CONTEMPORARIES

When Scott was at the height of his popularity and reputation, cultivated and imaginative prose was but another expression of the older poesy. But within twenty-five years of Scott's concluding fictions, Dickens and Thackeray, and still later, George Eliot and Kingsley, had come into the mart with an entirely new brand of wares, a development unknown to Scott, and of a tendency which was to popularize literature far more than the most sanguine hopes of even Scott's own ambition.

There was more warmth, geniality, and general good feeling expressed in the printed page, and the people — that vast public which must ever make or mar literary reputations, if they are to be financially successful ones, which, after all, is the standard by which most reputations are valued — were ready and willing to support what was popularly supposed to stand for the spread of culture.

Biographers and critics have been wont to attribute this wide love for literature to the influence of Scott. Admirable enough this influence was, to be sure, and the fact is that since his time books have been more pleasingly frank, candid, and generous. But it was not until Dickens appeared, with his almost immediate and phenomenal success, that the real rage for the novel took form.

The first magazine, *The Gentleman's*, and the first review, *The Edinburgh*, were contemporary with Scott's productions, and grew up quite independently, of course, but their development was supposed, rightly or wrongly, to be coincident with the influences which were set in motion by the publication of Scott's novels. Certainly they were sent broadcast, and their influence was widespread, likewise Scott's devotees, but his books were “hard reading” for the masses nevertheless, and his most ardent champion could hardly claim for him a tithe of the popularity which came so suddenly to Charles Dickens.

“Pickwick Papers” (1837) appeared only six years later than Scott’s last works, and but eight years before Thackeray’s “Vanity Fair.” It was, however, a thing apart from either, with the defects and merits of its author’s own peculiar and energetic style.

Jealousies and bickerings there doubtless were, in those days, as ever, among literary folk, but though there may have been many who were envious, few were impolite or unjust enough not to recognize the new expression which had come among them. One can well infer this by recalling the fact that Thackeray himself, at a Royal Academy banquet, had said that he was fearful of what “Pickwick’s” reputation might have been had he succeeded in getting the commission, afterward given to Seymour, to illustrate the articles.

There appears to have been, at one time, some misunderstanding between Dickens and his publishers as to who really was responsible for the birth of “Pickwick,” one claim having been made that Dickens was only commissioned to write up Seymour’s drawings. This Dickens disclaimed emphatically in the preface written to a later edition, citing the fact that Seymour only contributed the few drawings to the first serial part, unfortunately dying before any others were even put in hand.

There is apparently some discrepancy between the varying accounts of this incident, but Dickens probably had the right of it, though the idea of some sort of a “Nimrod Club,” which afterward took Dickens’ form in the “Pickwickians,” was thought of between his publishers and Seymour. In fact, among others, besides Dickens, who were considered as being able to do the text, were Theodore Hook, Leigh Hunt, and Tom Hood.

As originally planned, it was undoubtedly a piece of what is contemptuously known as hack work. What it afterward became, under Dickens’ masterful power, all the parties concerned, and the world in general, know full well.

The statement that Dickens is “out of date,” “not read now,” or is “too verbose,” is by the mark when his work is compared with that of his contemporaries. In a comparative manner he is probably very much read, and very well read, too, for that matter. Far more so, doubtless, than most of his contemporaries; certainly before George Eliot, Wilkie Collins, Bulwer, or even Carlyle or Thackeray.

The very best evidence of this, if it is needed, is to recall to what great extent familiarity with the works of Dickens has crept into the daily life of

“the people,” who more than ever form the great majority of readers.

True, times and tastes have changed from even a quarter of a century ago. Fashions come and go with literature, novels in particular, as with all else, and the works of Dickens, as a steady fare, would probably pall on the most enthusiastic of his admirers. On the other hand, he would be a dull person indeed who could see no humour in “Pickwick,” whatever his age, creed, or condition.

Admirers of the great novelist have been well looked after in respect to editions of his works. New ones follow each other nowadays in an extraordinarily rapid succession, and no series of classics makes its appearance without at least three or four of Dickens’ works finding places in its list.

In England alone there have been twenty-four complete copyright editions, from “the cheap edition,” first put upon the market in 1847, to the dainty and charming India paper edition printed at the Oxford University Press in 1901.

“In the Athenæum Club,” says Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, “where many a pleasant tradition is preserved, we may see at a window a table facing the United Service Club at which Dickens was fond of having his lunch.... In the hall by the coats (after their Garrick quarrel), Dickens and Thackeray met, shortly before the latter’s death. A moment’s hesitation, and Thackeray put out his hand ... and they were reconciled.”

It has been said, and justly, that Thackeray — Dickens’ contemporary, not rival — had little of the topographical instinct which led to no small degree of Dickens’ fame. It has, too, been further claimed that Thackeray was in debt to Dickens for having borrowed such expressions as “*the opposite side of Goswell Street was over the way.*” And such suggestions as the “Two jackals of Lord Steyne and Mess. Wegg and Wenham, reminiscent of Pike and Pluck, and Sedley’s native servant, who was supposed to have descended from Bagstock’s menial.” Much more of the same sort might be recounted, all of which, if it is true, is perhaps no sin, but rather a compliment.

The relics and remains of Dickens exist to a remarkable degree of numbers. As is well known, the omnific American collector is yearly, nay daily, acquiring many of those treasures of literature and art which the old world has treasured for generations; to the gratification of himself and the pride of his country, though, be it said, to the disconcert of the Briton.

The American, according to his English cousin, it seems, has a pronounced taste for acquiring the rarest of Dickens' books, and the choicest of Dickens' holographs, and his most personal relics.

The committee of the "Dickens Fellowship," a newly founded institution to perpetuate the novelist's name and fame, recently sought to bring together in an exhibition held in Memorial Hall, London, as many of those souvenirs as possible; and a very attractive and interesting show it proved to be.

The catalogue of this exhibition, however, had tacked on to it this significant note: "The Committee's quest for literary memorabilia of the immortal 'Boz' indicates the distressing fact that many of the rarest items are lost to us for ever."

All of which goes again to show that the great interest of Americans in the subject is, in a way, the excuse for being of this monograph on London during the life and times of Dickens.

Various exhibitions of Dickens' manuscripts have been publicly held in London from time to time, at The Exhibition of the Works of the English Humourists in 1889, at the Victorian Exhibition of 1897, and the British Museum has generally on show, in the "King's Library," a manuscript or two of the novels; there are many more always to be seen in the "Dyce and Forster Collection" at South Kensington. Never, before the exhibition held in 1902 by the "Dickens Fellowship," has there been one absolutely restricted to Dickens.

It is, of course, impossible to enumerate the various items, and it would not be meet that the attempt should be made here. It will be enough to say that among the many interesting numbers was the first portion of an unpublished travesty on "Othello," written in 1833, before the first published "Boz" sketch, and a hitherto unknown (to experts) page of "Pickwick," this one fragment being valued, says the catalogue, at £150 sterling. First editions, portraits, oil paintings, miniatures, and what not, and autographs were here in great numbers, presentation copies of Dickens' books, given to his friends, and autographs and portraits of his contemporaries, as well as the original sketches of illustrations to the various works by Seymour, "Phiz," Cruikshank, Stone, Leech, Barnard, and Pailthorpe, not forgetting a reference to the excellent work of our own Darley, and latterly Charles Dana Gibson.

Among the most interesting items of contemporary interest in this exhibition, which may be classed as unique, were presentation copies of the novels made to friends and acquaintances by Dickens himself.

Among them were "David Copperfield," a presentation copy to the Hon. Mrs. Percy Fitzgerald; "Oliver Twist," with the following inscription on the title-page, "From George Cruikshank to H. W. Brunton, March 19, 1872;" "A Child's History of England," with an autograph letter to Marcus Stone, R. A.; "A Tale of Two Cities," presented to Mrs. Macready, with autograph; "The Chimes" (Christmas Book, 1845), containing a unique impression of Leech's illustration thereto.

Other interesting and valuable *ana* were the Visitors' Book of "Watts' Charity," at Rochester, containing the signatures of "C. D." and Mark Lemon; the quill pen belonging to Charles Dickens, and used by him just previous to his death; a paper-knife formerly belonging to "C. D.," and the writing-desk used by "C. D." on his last American tour; silver wassail-bowl and stand presented to "C. D." by members of the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh in 1858; walking-stick formerly belonging to "C. D.;" a screen belonging to Moses Pickwick, of Bath — the veritable Moses Pickwick of Chap. XXXV. of "Pickwick Papers;" the oak balustrade from the old "White Hart" (pulled down in 1889); pewter tankards from various of the Pickwickian Inns; the entrance door of Newgate Prison, of which mention is made in "Barnaby Rudge," Chap. LXIV.; warrant officer's staff, formerly in use in the Marshalsea Prison; original sign of "The Little Wooden Midshipman" ("Dombey and Son"), formerly over the doorway of Messrs. Norie and Wilson, the nautical publishers in the Minories. This varied collection, of which the above is only a mere selection, together with such minor *personalia* as had been preserved by friends and members of the family, formed a highly interesting collection of Dickens' reliques, and one whose like will hardly be got together again.

Innumerable portraits, photographs, lithographs, and drawings of the novelist were included, as well as of his friends and contemporaries.

Letters and documents referring to Dickens' relations with Shirley Brooks, Richard Bentley, Hablôt K. Browne, Frederic Chapman, J. P. Harley, Mark Lemon, Samuel Rogers, Newby, John Forster, David Maclise, and many others, mostly unpublished, were shown, and should form a valuable fund of material for a biographer, should he be inclined to add to

Dickens' literature of the day, and could he but have access to and the privilege of reprinting them.

A word on the beginnings of what is commonly called serial literature is pertinent to the subject. The first publication with which Dickens' identity was solely connected was the issue of "Pickwick" in monthly parts in 1836-37.

A literary critic, writing in 1849, had this to say on the matter in general, with a further reference to the appearance of "David Copperfield," whose author was the chief and founder of the serial novel:

"The small library which issues from the press on the first of every month is a new and increasing fashion in literature, which carves out works into slices and serves them up in fresh portions twelve times in the year. Prose and poetry, original and selected, translations and republications, of every class and character, are included. The mere enumeration of titles would require a vast space, and any attempt to analyze the contents, or to estimate the influence which the class exerts upon the literary taste of the day would expand into a volume of itself. As an event of importance must be mentioned the appearance of the first number of a new story, 'David Copperfield,' by Charles Dickens. His rival humourist, Mr. Thackeray, has finished one and begun another of his domestic histories within the twelve-month, his new story, 'Pendennis,' having journeyed seven-twentieths of the way to completion. Mr. Lever rides double with 'Roland Cashel' and 'Con Cregan,' making their punctual appearance upon the appointed days. Of another order is Mr. Jerrold's 'Man Made of Money.' Incidents are of little consequence to this author, except by way of pegs to hang reflections and conclusions upon.

"Passing over the long list of magazines and reviews as belonging to another class of publication, there is a numerous series of reprints, new editions, etc., issued in monthly parts, and generally in a cheap and compendious form. Shakespeare and Byron among the poets, Bulwer, Dickens, and James among the novelists, appear pretty regularly, — the poets being enriched with notes and illustrations. Other writers and miscellaneous novels find republication in the 'Parlour Library of Fiction,' with so rigid an application of economy that for two shillings we may purchase a guinea and a half's worth of the most popular romances at the original price of publication. Besides the works of imagination, and above them in value, stand Knight's series of 'Monthly Volumes,' Murray's

‘Home and Colonial Library,’ and the ‘Scientific’ and ‘Literary Libraries’ of Mr. Bohn. The contents of these collections are very diversified; many volumes are altogether original, and others are new translations of foreign works, or modernized versions of antiquarian authors. A large mass of the most valuable works contained in our literature may be found in Mr. Bohn’s ‘Library.’ The class of publications introduced in them all partakes but little of the serial character. It is only the form of their appearance which gives them a place among the periodicals.”

In the light of more recent events and tendencies, this appears to have been the first serious attempt to popularize and broaden the sale of literature to any considerable extent, and it may be justly inferred that the cheap “Libraries,” “Series,” and “Reprints” of the present day are but an outgrowth therefrom.

As for Dickens’ own share in this development, it is only necessary to recall the demand which has for many years existed for the original issues of such of the novels as appeared in parts. The earliest issues were: “The Pickwick Papers,” in 20 parts, 1836-37, which contained the two suppressed Buss plates; “Nicholas Nickleby,” in 20 parts, 1838-39; “Master Humphrey’s Clock,” in 88 weekly numbers, 1840-41; “Master Humphrey’s Clock,” in 20 monthly parts, 1840-41; “Martin Chuzzlewit,” in 20 parts, 1843-44; “Oliver Twist,” in 10 octavo parts, 1846.

At the time when “Oliver Twist” had scarce begun, Dickens was already surrounded by a large circle of literary and artistic friends and acquaintances. His head might well have been turned by his financial success, many another might have been so affected. His income at this time (1837-38) was supposed to have increased from £400 to £2,000 per annum, surely an independent position, were it an assured one for any litterateur of even the first rank, of Dickens’ day or of any other.

In November of 1837 “Pickwick” was finished, and the event celebrated by a dinner “at the Prince of Wales” in Leicester Place, off Leicester Square. To this function Dickens had invited Talfourd, Forster, Macready, Harrison Ainsworth, Jerdan, Edward Chapman, and William Hall.

Dickens’ letter to Macready was in part as follows:

“It is to celebrate (that is too great a word, but I can think of no better) the conclusion of my ‘Pickwick’ labours; and so I intend, before you take that roll upon the grass you spoke of, to beg your acceptance of one of the

first complete copies of the work. I shall be much delighted if you would join us.”

Of “Nicholas Nickleby,” written in 1838-39, Sydney Smith, one of its many detractors, finally succumbed and admitted: “‘Nickleby’ is very good — I held out against Dickens as long as I could, but he has conquered me.”

Shortly after the “Pickwick” dinner, and after the death of his wife’s sister Mary, who lived with them, Dickens, his wife, and “Phiz,” — Hablôt K. Browne, — the illustrator of “Pickwick,” journeyed together abroad for a brief time. On his return, Dickens first made acquaintance with the seaside village of Broadstairs, where his memory still lives, preserved by an ungainly structure yclept “Bleak House.”



CHARLES DICKENS, HIS WIFE, AND SISTER GEORGINA.

From a pencil drawing by D. Maclise.

It may be permissible here to make further mention of Broadstairs. The town itself formed the subject of a paper which he wrote for *Household Words* in 1851, while as to the structure known as “Bleak House,” it formed, as beforesaid, his residence for a short time in 1843.

Writing to an American friend, Professor Felton, at that time, he said:

“In a bay-window in a ‘one pair’ sits, from nine o’clock to one, a gentleman with rather long hair and no neckcloth, who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny indeed. His name is Boz.... He is brown as a berry, and they *do* say is a small fortune to the innkeeper who sells beer and cold punch....”

Altogether a unique and impressive pen-portrait, and being from the hand of one who knew his sitter, should be considered a truthful one.

In 1843 Maclise made that remarkable and winsome pencil sketch of Dickens, his wife, and her sister Georgina, one of those fleeting impressions which, for depicting character and sentiment, is worth square yards of conventional portraiture, and which is reproduced here out of sheer admiration for its beauty and power as a record *intime*. It has been rather coarsely referred to in the past as Maclise’s sketch of “Dickens and his pair of petticoats,” but we let that pass by virtue of its own sweeping condemnation, — of its being anything more than a charming and intimate record of a fleeting period in the novelist’s life, too soon to go — never to return.

Dickens’ connection with the *Daily News* was but of brief duration; true, his partisans have tried to prove that it was under his leadership that it was launched upon its career. This is true in a measure, — he was its first editor, — but his tenure of office only lasted “*three short weeks*.”

He was succeeded in the editorial chair by his biographer, Forster.

The first number came out on January 21, 1846, — a copy in the recent “Dickens Fellowship Exhibition” (London. 1903) bore the following inscription in Mrs. Dickens’ autograph: “Brought home by Charles at two o’clock in the morning. — Catherine Dickens. January 21.” Thus it is that each issue of a great newspaper is born, or made, though the use of the midnight oil which was burned on this occasion was no novelty to Charles Dickens himself. The issue in question contained the first of a series of “Travelling Sketches — Written on the Road,” which were afterward published in book form as “Pictures from Italy.”

A unique circumstance of contemporary interest to Americans occurred during Dickens’ second visit to America (1868) in “The Great International Walking Match.” A London bookseller at the present time (1903) has in his possession the original agreement between George Dolby (British subject), *alias* “The Man of Ross,” and James Ripley Osgood, *alias* “The Boston

Bantam,” wherein Charles Dickens, described as “The Gad’s Hill Gasper,” is made umpire.

One of the most famous and interesting portraits of Dickens was that made in pencil by Sir John Millais, A. R. A., in 1870. This was the last presentment of the novelist, in fact, a posthumous portrait, and its reproduction was for a long time not permitted. The original hangs in the parlour of “The Leather Bottle,” at Cobham, given to the present proprietor by the Rev. A. H. Berger, M. A., Vicar of Cobham. Among other famous portraits of Dickens were those by Ary Scheffer, 1856; a miniature on ivory by Mrs. Barrow, 1830; a pencil study by “Phiz,” 1837; a chalk drawing by Samuel Lawrence, 1838; “The Captain Boabdil” portrait by Leslie, 1846; an oil portrait by W. P. Frith, R. A., 1859; a pastel portrait by J. G. Gersterhauer, 1861; and a chalk drawing by E. G. Lewis, 1869. This list forms a chronology of the more important items of Dickens portraiture from the earliest to that taken after his death, subsequent to which was made a plaster cast, from which Thomas Woolner, R. A., modelled the bust portrait.

The “Boz Club,” founded in 1899 by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, one of Dickens’ “bright young men” in association with him in the conduct of *Household Words* was originally composed of members of the Athenæum Club, of whom the following knew Dickens personally, Lord James of Hereford, Mr. Marcus Stone, R. A., and Mr. Luke Fildes, R. A., who, with others, foregathered for the purpose of dining together and keeping green the memory of the novelist.

Its membership has since been extended to embrace the following gentlemen, who also had the pleasure and gratification of acquaintanceship with Dickens: the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava (since died), Lord Brompton, Hamilton Aide, Alfred Austin, Sir Squire Bancroft, Arthur à Beckett, Francesco Berger, Henry Fielding Dickens, K. C., Edward Dicy, C. B., W. P. Frith, R. A., William Farrow, Otto Goldschmidt, John Hollingshead, the Very Reverend Dean Hole, Sir Henry Irving, Frederick A. Inderwick, K. C., Sir Herbert Jerningham, K. C., M. G., Charles Kent, Fred’k G. Kitton, Moy Thomas, Right Honourable Sir Arthur Otway, Bart., Joseph C. Parkinson, George Storey, A. R. A., J. Ashby Sterry, and Right Honourable Sir H. Drummond Wolfe.

Perhaps the most whole-souled endorsement of the esteem with which Dickens was held among his friends and contemporaries was contributed to the special Dickens’ memorial number of *Household Words* by Francesco

Berger, who composed the incidental music which accompanied Wilkie Collins' play, "The Frozen Deep," in which Dickens himself appeared in 1857:

"I saw a great deal of Charles Dickens personally for many years. He was always most genial and most hearty, a man whose friendship was of the warmest possible character, and who put his whole soul into every pursuit. He was most generous, and his household was conducted on a very liberal scale.

"I consider that, if not the first, he was among the first, who went out of the highways into the byways to discover virtue and merit of every kind among the lower classes, and found romance in the lowest ranks of life.

"I regard Dickens as the greatest social reformer in England I have ever known outside politics. His works have tended to revolutionize for the better our law courts, our prisons, our hospitals, our schools, our workhouses, our government offices, etc.

"He was a fearless exposé of cant in every direction, — religious, social, and political."

Such was the broad-gauge estimate of one who knew Dickens well. It may unquestionably be accepted as his greatest eulogy.

None of Dickens' contemporaries are more remembered and revered than the illustrators of his stories. Admitting all that can possibly be said of the types which we have come to recognize as being "Dickenesque," he would be rash who would affirm that none of their success was due to their pictorial delineation.

Dickens himself has said that he would have preferred that his stories were not illustrated, but, on the other hand, he had more than usual concern with regard thereto when the characters were taking form under the pencils of Seymour, Cruikshank, or "Phiz," or even the later Barnard, than whom, since Dickens' death, has there ever been a more sympathetic illustrator?

The greatest of these was undoubtedly George Cruikshank, whose drawings for "Oliver Twist," the last that he did for Dickens' writings, were perhaps more in keeping with the spirit of Dickens' text than was the work of any of the others, not excepting the immortal character of Pickwick, which conception is accredited to Seymour, who unfortunately died before he had completed the quartette of drawings for the second number of the serial.

In this same connection it is recalled that the idea of recounting the adventures of a “club of Cockney sportsmen” was conceived by the senior partner of the firm of Chapman and Hall, and that Dickens was only thought of at first as being the possible author, in connection, among others, with Leigh Hunt and Theodore Hook.

On the death of Seymour, one R. W. Buss, a draughtsman on wood, was commissioned to continue the “Pickwick” illustrations, and he actually made two etchings, which, in the later issues, were suppressed. “Crowquill,” Leech, and Thackeray all hoped to fill the vacancy, but the fortunate applicant was Hablôt K. Browne, known in connection with his work for the Dickens stories as “Phiz.” This *nom de plume* was supposed to have been adopted in order to harmonize with “Boz.”

“Phiz” in time became known as the artist-in-chief, and he it was who made the majority of illustrations for the tales, either as etchings or wood-blocks. His familiar signature identifies his work to all who are acquainted with Dickens. George Cattermole supplied the illustrations to “The Old Curiosity Shop” and “Barnaby Rudge.” Of these Dickens has said “that it was the very first time that any of the designs for which he had written had touched him.” Marcus Stone, R. A., provided the pictures for “Our Mutual Friend.”

John Leech, of *Punch* fame, in one of his illustrations to “The Battle of Life,” one of the shorter pieces, made the mistake of introducing a wrong character into one of the drawings, and a still more pronounced error was in the Captain Cuttle plates, where the iron hook appears first on the left and then on the right arm of the subject.

Leech illustrated the “Christmas Carol” complete, including the coloured plates, and shared in contributing to the other Yule-tide stories.

Of the leading artists who contributed the illustrations to Dickens’ writings during his lifetime, it is notable that three were “Royal Academicians,” — Stanfield, Maclise, and Landseer, — one an “Associate of the Royal Academy,” and, besides those already mentioned, there were in addition Richard (Dicky) Doyle, John Leech, and (now Sir) John Tenniel, Luke Fildes, and Sir Edwin Landseer, who did one drawing only, that for “Boxer,” the carrier-dog, in “The Cricket on the Hearth.” Onwyn, Crowquill, Sibson, Kenney Meadows, and F.W. Pailthorpe complete the list of those artists best known as contemporary with Dickens.

In creating the characters of his novels, as is well known, Dickens often drew upon his friends and acquaintances as models, and seldom did these effigies give offence. On one occasion the reverse was the case, as in "Bleak House," which was issued in 1857. Boythorne, who was drawn from his friend Landor, and Skimpole, from Leigh Hunt, were presumably so pertinent caricatures of the originals that they were subsequently modified in consequence.

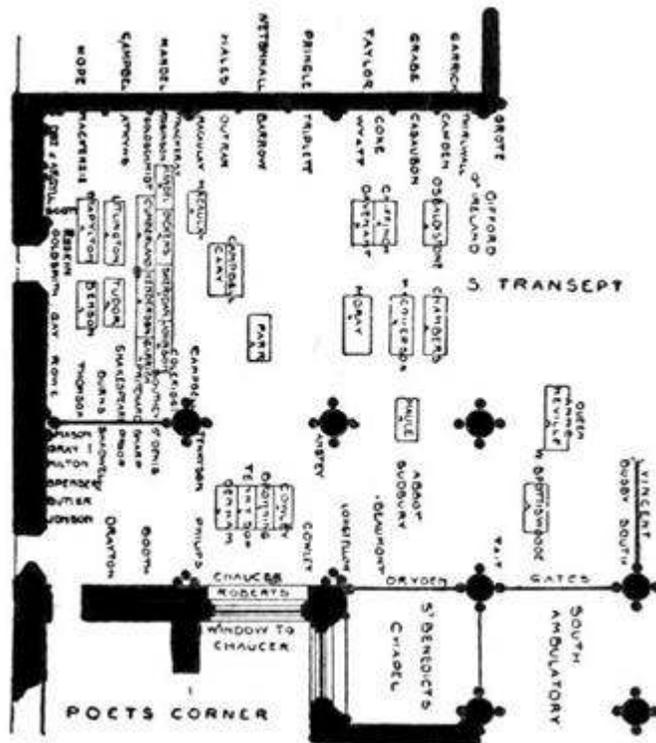
Another incident of more than unusual importance, though not strictly dealing with any of Dickens' contemporaries, is a significant incident relating to the living worth of his work. It is related that when Bismarck and Jules Favre met under the walls of Paris, the former waiting to open fire upon the city, the latter was seen to be busily engrossed, quite oblivious of the situation, devouring "Little Dorrit." The story may be taken for what it appears to be worth; it is doubtful if it could be authenticated, but it serves to indicate the wide-spread and absorbing interest of the novels, and serves again to indicate that the power of the novel in general is one that will relax the faculties and provide the stimulus which an active brain often fails to find otherwise.

Dickens had dedicated to Carlyle "Hard Times," which appeared as early as 1854, and paid a still further tribute to the Scotch genius when, in 1859, he had begun "A Tale of Two Cities."

In it he hoped to add something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding the terrible time of the French Revolution; "though no one," he said, "could hope to add anything to the philosophy of Carlyle's wonderful book." To-day it is one of the most popular and most read of all his works.

Dickens died on the 9th of June, 1870, leaving "Edwin Drood" unfinished. What he had written of it appeared in the usual green paper parts and afterward in volume form. In October, 1871, a continuation entitled "John Jasper's Secret" began to appear, and occupied eight monthly parts, produced uniformly with "Drood;" and recently a gentleman in Holland sent the publishers — Messrs. Chapman and Hall — a completion written by himself. There were other attempts of this nature, but Dickens' book must always remain as he left it.

That a reference to the "Poets' Corner" in Westminster Abbey might properly be included in a section of this book devoted to the contemporaries of Charles Dickens, no one perhaps will deny.



It seems fitting, at least, that it should be mentioned here rather than elsewhere, in that the work does not pretend to be a categorical guide to even the more important sights of London, but merely that it makes mention of those sights and scenes, places and peoples, more or less intimately associated with the great novelist.

Charles Dickens was buried in Westminster Abbey on the 14th June, 1870, since which time various other graves have been made, Browning and Tennyson notably, and monuments and memorials put into place of Longfellow and Ruskin.

The Poets' Corner occupies about half of the south transept of Westminster Abbey. This famous place for the busts and monuments of eminent men includes those of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Drayton, Ben Jonson, Milton, Butler, Davenant, Cowley, Dryden, Prior, Rowe, Gay, Addison, Thomson, Goldsmith, Gray, Mason, Sheridan, Southey, Campbell, etc. Lord Macaulay and Lord Palmerston were buried here in 1860 and 1865. Thackeray is not buried here, but at Kensal Green, though his bust is

placed next to the statue of Joseph Addison. Dickens' grave is situated at the foot of the coffin of Handel, and at the head of the coffin of R. B. Sheridan. More recently, Doctor Livingstone, the celebrated African traveller, was buried here. Near to England's great humourist, toward his feet, lie Doctor Johnson and Garrick, while near them lies Thomas Campbell. Shakespeare's monument is not far from the foot of the grave. Goldsmith's is on the left.

THE LOCALE OF THE NOVELS

If one may make legitimate use of the term, "the topography of Dickens," — which an English writer coined many years since, — it may well be indiscriminately applied to Dickens' own life and that of the characters of his stories as well.

The subject has ever been a favourite one which has cropped up from time to time in the "bitty" literature of the last quarter of a century.

To treat it exhaustively would be impossible; the changes and progress of the times will not permit of this. Nothing would be final, and new shadows would constantly be thrown upon the screen.

Dickens' observation, as is well known, was most keen, but he mostly saw only those things which, in some degree, actually existed, — towns, villages, streets, localities, and public and private houses. Not an unusual method of procedure for many an author of repute, but few have had the finesse to lay on local colour to the extent used by Dickens, without tending toward mere description. This no one has ever had the temerity to lay to Dickens' door.

Mention can be made herein of but a few of the localities, many of which had existed to very near the present day.

To enumerate or to even attempt to trace them all would be practically impossible, but enough has been authenticated to indicate a more substantial reality than is found in the work of any other modern English author.

If one is so minded, he can start out from the very hotel, — "The Golden Cross" at Charing Cross, — from which Pickwick and Jingle started on their coach ride to Rochester, and where Copperfield and Steerforth also stayed. The "dark arches of the Adelphi," the Temple, and Fountain Court, remain much as of yore.

Fleet Street was well known to Dickens, and has changed but little, and Lincoln's Inn Fields, Bloomsbury, and many other localities have in reality changed not at all in their relation to their environment. In matters of detail they have, of course, in many instances undergone a certain remoulding, which is no greater perhaps than the usual liberties taken by the average author.

Dickens, in the main, changed the surroundings of his scenes — which he may have given another name — but little.

“Copperfield” is redolent of his own early associations and experiences in London. The neighbourhood of Charing Cross will be first called to mind. Hungerford Market and Hungerford Bridge (as the present Charing Cross Railway Bridge is often called by the old resident), and the “Adelphi,” with its gruesome arches beneath, all give more than a suggestion of the sights and scenes which met Dickens' own eye when his personality was closely associated therewith.

Hence, regardless of whether it is biography or pure fiction, there are to-day substantial reminders throughout London, not only of his life but of the very scenes associated with the characters of his novels. More particularly in the early novels, “Pickwick,” “Nickleby,” and “Copperfield,” are their topographical features to be most readily recognized, because, in the first place, they are, presumably, the more familiar; and secondly, because they are more vividly recalled.

It is a fact, however, that in Dickens' sketches and tales, and in many of his minor works, as, for instance, in the pages of “Master Humphrey's Clock,” there are passages especially concerning persons and places in London, which to-day have, as then, a stern reality, referring to such familiar spots as the site of the Marshalsea Prison, or “The Old White Horse,” or Peggotty's Yarmouth home.

Reality or imagination, — it's all the same, — Dickens drew in his pictures, after a veritable fashion, this too, in spite of the precedent of a former generation of authors, who had for ages, one may say centuries, tilled the field over and over. But it was not until Dickens “arrived” that the reading world in general, and wherever found, acquired that nodding acquaintance with London which has since so redounded to this author's reputation. No such acquaintance was previously to be had with the contemporary London life of the middle and lower classes, if one may be pardoned for expressing it thus confidently.

The marvel is that some ardent spirit has not before now compiled an out-and-out Dickens guide-book. One writer, at least, is recalled who is competent to do it, and he, be it said, is an American, Doctor Benjamin S. Martin, who many years ago contributed to an American monthly publication a series of illuminating articles on what might with propriety be called the local colour of Dickens. These were the forerunners and foster-parents of most of the “scrappy” articles of a similar purport which appear intermittently in the English and American periodical press.

The references and descriptions of certain of the localities connected with the novels which follow are given without attempt at classification or chronological arrangement. No other plan appears possible, where only a selection can be given. As before said, the limitations of the bulk of this book preclude a more extensive résumé.

The following references will be found to be fully classified in the index which accompanies the book, and will perhaps prove suggestive, at least, of further research on the part of the individual reader.

Further west, beyond Westminster and the Parliament Houses, is Millbank, where is Church Street, running from the river to St. John’s Church, Westminster, that atrociously ill-mannered church of Queen Anne’s day, built it is said on the lines of a footstool overturned in one of that lady’s fits of petulant wrath. Down Church Street ran Martha, followed by Copperfield and Peggotty, bent on suicide.

Not the slum it was when described by Dickens, it is to-day a sufficiently “mean street” to be suggestive.

Here too, was Jenny Wren’s house, on the left going toward the church in Smith Square.

Vauxhall Bridge, also reminiscent of Dickens, is near by, though the structure which formerly graced the site has given way to a temporary ungainly thing, which is neither beautiful to look upon nor suitable to its purpose.

In the neighbourhood of Charing Cross, on Craven Street, at No. 8, is still the door-knocker which so looked, to Scrooge, like a human face.

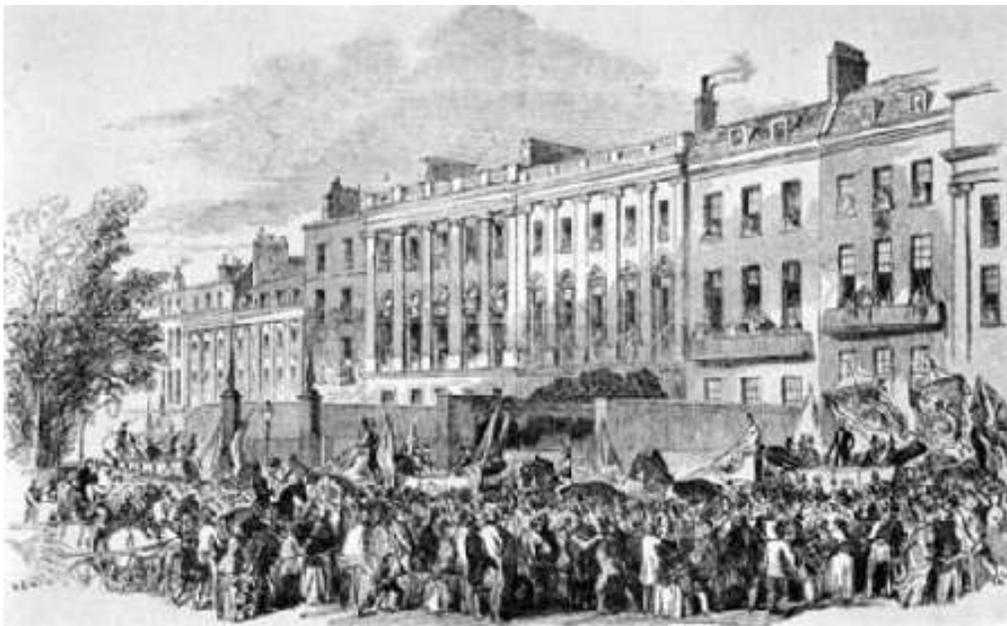
In Chandos Street, till within the last eight or ten years, were two old-time shops, to which Warren’s Blacking Factory removed before the boy Dickens left their employ.

In Chandos Street, too, were the “pudding-shop” and “à la mode beef-shop,” of which Dickens made such emphatic mention to his biographer,

Forster.

At the corner of Parliament Street and Whitehall, in Westminster, was, until the beginning of the twentieth century, the “Old Red Lion” public house, which calls to mind the episode of “the very best stunning ale” in “Copperfield,” but which is reputedly attributed as actually happening to Dickens himself.

Chancery Lane is largely identified with the story of “Bleak House.” The garden of Lincoln’s Inn was fondly referred to by little Miss Flite as “her garden.” Law offices, stationers’ shops, and eating-houses abound in the purlieu of Chancery Lane, which, though having undergone considerable change in the last quarter-century, has still, in addition to the majesty which is supposed to surround the law, something of those “disowned relations of the law and hangers-on” of which Dickens wrote.



RESIDENCE OF JOHN FORSTER, LINCOLN’S INN FIELDS.

In this immediate neighbourhood — in Lincoln’s Inn Fields — was Mr. Tulkinghorn’s house, of which an illustration is here given, and which is still standing (1903). This house, which is readily found, — it is still No. 58, — is now given over to lawyers’ offices, though formerly it was the residence of Dickens’ biographer, Forster, where Dickens gave what was practically the first of his semi-public readings, on the occasion when he

came from Italy especially to read the “Christmas story,” “The Chimes,” to a few favoured friends.

Hard by, just off the southwestern corner of the square, is the apocryphal “Old Curiosity Shop,” a notable literary shrine, as is mentioned elsewhere, but not the original of the novel which bears the same name, as Dickens himself has said.

The “Clare Market,” an unsavoury locality which had somewhat to do with “Pickwick,” was nearby, but has practically disappeared from view in a virtuous clearing-up process which has recently been undertaken.

In Portugal Street, leading into Lincoln’s Inn Fields, was Mr. Solomon’s headquarters; while further east, toward the city, we find the “George and Vulture,” mentioned in “Pickwick,” existing to-day as “a very good old-fashioned and comfortable house.” Its present nomenclature is “Thomas’ Chop-House,” and he who would partake of the “real thing” in good old English fare, served on pewter plates, with the brightest of steel knives and forks, could hardly fare better than in this ancient house in St. Michael’s Alley.

By one of those popular and oft-times sentimental conclusions, “poor Jo’s crossing” has been located as being on Holborn, near where Chancery Lane comes into that thoroughfare.

This may like enough be so, but as all crossings are much alike, and all sweepers of that impoverished class which we recognize in the description of “Jo” (now luckily disappearing), it would seem a somewhat doubtful accomplishment in attempting to place such a spot definitely.

Mrs. Jellyby lived in Thavie’s Inn, — “Only ‘round the corner” from Chancery Lane, said Guppy, — one of the seven inns allied with the four great Inns of Court, all of which had a particular sentiment for Dickens, both in his writings and his life. In fact, he began with “Pickwick” to introduce these “curious little nooks” and “queer old places.” Indeed, he lived in Furnival’s Inn when first married, and there wrote the most of the “Boz” sketches as well as “Pickwick.”

Clifford’s Inn, too, now on the eve of departure, is also a reminder of “Pickwick.” One, “a tenant of a ‘top set,’ was a bad character — shut himself in his bedroom closet and took a dose of arsenic,” as is told in “Pickwick,” Chapter XXI.

To “Mr. Perker’s chambers,” in Gray’s Inn, — which still endures as one of the four great Inns of Court, — went Mr. Pickwick one afternoon, to find

no one at home but the laundress. In Holborn Court, in Gray's Inn, lived also Traddles and his bride.

Pip was quartered in Barnard's Inn, called by him a "dingy collection of shabby buildings."

The Temple has ever been prolific in suggestion to the novelist, and Dickens, like most others who have written of London life, has made liberal use of it in "Barnaby Rudge," in "The Tale of Two Cities," and in many other of his novels.

Staple Inn, at "Holborn Bars," is perhaps the most quaint and unmodern of any considerable structure in all London. Mr. Grewgious and Mr. Tartar lived here; also Landless, who occupied "some attic rooms in a corner," and here Mr. Snagsby was wont to ramble in this old-world retreat.

The "little hall," with "a little lantern in its roof," and its weathercock, is still there, and the stroller down that most businesslike thoroughfare, known in its various continuations as "High Holborn," "Holborn Bars," and "Holborn Viaduct," will find it difficult to resist the allurements of the crazy old timbered frontage of Staple Inn, with its wooden gateway and tiny shops, looking for all the world like a picture from out of an old book.

In Bishop's Court, leading from Chancery Lane, was Crook's rag and bottle shop, where its owner met so ghastly a death. A court to the back of this shop, known as "Chichester Rents," harboured a public house called by Dickens "Sol's Arms." To-day it exists as the "Old Ship," if supposedly authoritative opinion has not erred.

Took's Court is to-day unchanged. Dickens was pleased to call it "Cook's Court." By some it has been called dirty and dingy; it is hardly that, but it may well have been a more sordid looking place in days gone by. At any rate, it was a suitable enough environment for Snagsby, identified to-day as the stationer's shop next the Imperial Chambers.

As vivid a reminiscence as any is that of the old debtors' prison of Marshalsea. The institution was a court of law and a prison as well, and was first established in 1376 for the determination of causes and differences among the king's menials; and was under the control of the knight marshal, hence its name. Later this court had particular cognizance of murders and other offences committed within the king's court; and here also were committed persons guilty of piracies.

In 1381 the Kentish rebels "broke down the houses of the Marshalsea and the King's Bench in Southwark," and in 1593 "a dangerous insurrection

arose in Southwark, owing to the attempt of one of the knight marshal's men to serve a warrant upon a feltmaker's apprentice."

At this time the inhabitants of Southwark complained that "the Knight Marshal's men were very unneighbourly and disdainful among them," with every indication that a prolonged insurrection would endure. However, the matter was brought to the attention of the lord chamberlain, and such edict went forth as assured the inhabitants of the borough freedom from further annoyance. The old gaol building was purchased in 1811 by the government, and at that time refitted as a prison for debtors.

"The entrance gate fronts the High Street near St. George's Church, and a small area leads to the keeper's house. Behind it is a brick building, the ground floor of which contains fourteen rooms in a double row, and three upper stories, each with the same number. They are about ten and a half feet square by eight and a half feet high, and are with boarded floors, a glazed window, and fireplace in each, for male debtors. Nearly adjoining to this is a detached building called the 'Tap,' which has on the ground floor a wine and beer room. The upper story has three rooms for female debtors, similar to those for men. At the extremity of this prison is a small courtyard and building for admiralty prisoners, and a chapel."

The above description, taken from Allen's "History and Antiquities of Southwark," must synchronize with the appearance of the Marshalsea at the time of which Dickens wrote concerning it in "Little Dorrit," based, of course, upon his personal knowledge of the buildings and their functions when the elder Dickens was imprisoned therein in 1822, and the family were living in mean quarters in near-by Lant Street, whither they had removed from Gower Street, North, in order to be near the prison.

Until quite recently it is possible that certain portions of the old Marshalsea were still standing, though as a prison it was abolished in 1841, but, with the opening of one of those municipal pleasure grounds, — one cannot call them gardens, being merely a flagged courtyard, — the last vestiges are supposed to have disappeared from general view. Indeed, it appears that Dickens himself was not aware of any visible portions of the old building still remaining. This assertion is based on the following lines taken from the preface of "Little Dorrit:"

"I found the outer front courtyard metamorphosed into a butter-shop; and then I almost gave up every brick for lost.... I then came to Marshalsea Place; ... and whoever goes here will find his feet on the very paving-stones

of the extinct Marshalsea Gaol, — will see its narrow yard to the right and to the left but very little altered, if at all, except that the walls were lowered when the place got free.”

When the elder Dickens was carried to prison, like Mr. Dorrit, he was lodged in the top story but one, in the chamber afterward occupied by the Dorrits, when Charles, it was said, went often (before the family removed across the river) to visit him, crossing presumably the old picturesque London Bridge. In “David Copperfield,” it is evidently the same edifice which is disguised as the “King’s Bench Prison.”

In the immediate neighbourhood of the Marshalsea was St. George’s Vestry, where, on the cushions, with the church register for a pillow, slept Little Dorrit on the night on which she was shut out of the prison.

Opposite, on High Street, stood until recently the little pie-shop, where Flora read out her lecture to Little Dorrit. Near by, also, was Mr. Cripple’s dancing academy. (Deliciously Dickensque — that name.) Guy’s — reminiscent of Bob Sawyer — is but a stone’s throw away, as also Lant Street, where he had his lodgings. Said Sawyer, as he handed his card to Mr. Pickwick: “There’s my lodgings; it’s near Guy’s, and handy for me, you know, — a little distance after you’ve passed St. George’s Church; turns out of High Street on right-hand side the way.” Supposedly the same humble rooms — which looked out upon a pleasant prospect of a timber-yard — in which lived the Dickens family during the elder Dickens’ imprisonment.

In Horsemonger Lane, which runs out of the High Street, was the tobacco-shop of Mrs. Chivery. In the High Street, too, was the old “White Hart” of Sam Weller and even Jack Cade. “The George,” “The Spur,” “The Queen’s Head,” and “The King’s Head” — all reminiscent of Dickens — were also here in the immediate neighbourhood.

Crossing the river northward, one may retrace their steps toward St. Paul’s, near which, a quarter of a century back, might have been seen the arcaded entrance to Doctors’ Commons, an institution described by Sam Weller, and which, among other functions, formerly kept guard of all the wills probated in London. The building has since disappeared, and the erstwhile valuable documents removed to Somerset House.

Beyond the “Bank” is Leadenhall Street, where in St. Mary Axe, Dickens had located Pubsey and Co. The firm was domiciled in an “old, yellow, overhanging, plaster-fronted house,” and, if it ever existed out of Dickens’ imagination, has given way to a more modern and substantial structure.

Fenchurch Street and Mincing Lane are not far away. In the latter was “Chicksey, Veneering, and Stobbles” Counting-House, and still further on Trinity House and Tower Hill to remind one of the locale of certain scenes in “Our Mutual Friend.”

In the Minories, leading from Tower Hill, was until recently the “Little Wooden Midshipman” of “Dombey and Son,” standing over the door at Messrs. Norie and Wilson’s, the nautical publishers. From Tower Hill, whither would one go but through the Ratcliffe Highway, now St. George’s Street, whereby is suggested the nocturnal wanderings of “The Uncommercial Traveller.” Wapping, Shadwell, and Stepney, with its famous waterside church, are all redolent of the odours of the sea and reminiscence of Dickens’ characters.

Somewhere between here and Limehouse Hole was Brig Place, not discoverable to-day, where lived the genial one-armed “Cuttle.”

Limehouse, with its “Reach” and “foul and furtive boats,” is closely connected with the personality of Dickens himself, having been the residence of his godfather, one Huffam, a rigger employed in a waterside shipyard. What wonder then that the fascination of riverside London fell early upon the writer of novels?

At the gate of Limehouse Church, Rokesmith lay in wait, on murder intent, and all Limehouse is odorous with memories of riverside crime and such nefarious deeds as were instigated by Hexham and Riderhood, an incident suggested, it is said by Dickens’ biographer Forster, by the novelist having seen, in one of his walks in the neighbourhood, a placard on the hoardings announcing that a body of a person had been

FOUND DROWNED.

A neighbouring public house, “The Two Brewers,” is supposed to be the original of that referred to by Dickens as “The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters,” “a dropsical old house,” as he called it, like so many old-world houses, all but falling down, if judged by appearances, but actually not in the least danger of it.

One topic crops up in the notes and queries columns of the literary papers every once and again, viz., the location of the “filthy graveyard” of “Bleak House.” It has been variously placed in the churchyard of St. Dunstan’s-in-the-West, St. Bartholomew-the-Less, and again in Drury Lane Court, now disappeared. Most likely it was the latter, if any of these neighbourhoods, though it is all hearsay now, though formerly one of the “stock sights” of

the “Lady Guide Association,” who undertook to gratify any reasonable whim of the inquisitive American.

A recent foregathering of members of the “Boz Club” at Rochester, which celebrated the thirty-first anniversary of the novelist’s death on June 9, 1870, occurred in the homely “Bull Inn.” This little band of devoted “Dickensians” contained among them Mr. Henry Dickens, K. C., the son of the novelist; Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, who had the honour of being intimately associated with Dickens on *Household Words*; Mr. Luke Fildes, R. A., among whose many famous paintings is that pathetic story-telling canvas, “The Empty Chair,” being a reproduction of that portion of Dickens’ study at Gad’s Hill, wherein stood the writer’s desk and chair.

On such a day as that on which the immortal Pickwick “bent over the balustrades of Rochester Bridge contemplating nature and waiting for breakfast,” the club (in June, 1903) had journeyed to Rochester to do homage to the fame of their master. The mediæval, cramped High Street, “full of gables, with old beams and timbers carved into strange faces,” seems to bask and grow sleepier than ever in the glaring sunlight. It is all practically just as Dickens saw it for the last time three days before his death, as he stood against the wooden palings near the Restoration House contemplating the old Manor House — just the same even to “the queer old clock that projects over the pavement out of a grave red-brick building, as if Time carried on business there, and hung out his sign.” Those of the visitors so “disposed” had lunch in the coffee-room of the “Bull,” unchanged since the days of the original Pickwickians, but it is only in fancy and framed presentments that one now sees the “G. C. M. P. C.” and his disciples, Messrs. Tupman, Snodgrass, Winkle, and Jingle. So closely, however, do we follow in the footsteps of Mr. Pickwick (wrote a member of the party) that we look through the selfsame coffee-room blinds at the passengers in the High Street, in which entertaining occupation we were disturbed, as was Mr. Pickwick, by the coming of the waiter (perhaps one should say a waiter, not *the* waiter) to announce that the carriages are ready — “an announcement which the vehicles themselves confirm by forthwith appearing before the coffee-room blinds aforesaid.”

““Bless my soul!” said Mr. Pickwick, as they stood upon the pavement while the coats were being put in. ‘Bless my soul! who’s to drive? I never thought of that.’

““Oh! you, of course,’ said Mr. Tupman.

“‘I!’ exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

“‘Not the slightest fear, sir,’ interposed the hostler.

“‘He don’t shy, does he?’ inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“‘Shy, sir? — He wouldn’t shy if he was to meet a vaggin-load of monkeys with their tails burnt off.’“

The ruined castle and the cathedral are visited, the castle looking more than ever “as if the rooks and daws had picked its eyes out.” Before the cathedral, as Mr. Grewgious did before us, we stand for a contemplative five minutes at the great west door of the gray and venerable pile.

“‘Dear me,’ said Mr. Grewgious, peeping in, ‘it’s like looking down the throat of Old Time.’

“Old Time heaved a mouldy sigh from tomb and arch and vault; and gloomy shadows began to deepen in corners; and damp began to rise from green patches of stone; and jewels, cast upon the pavement of the nave from stained-glass by the declining sun, began to perish.”

Or, to quote the more genial Jingle:

“Old Cathedral, too — earthly smell — pilgrims’ feet worn away the old steps — little Saxon doors — confessionals like money takers’ boxes at theatres — queer customers those monks — Popes, and Lord Treasurers, and all sorts of old fellows, with great red faces, and broken noses, turning up every day — buff jerkins, too — matchlocks — sarcophagus — fine place — old legends too — strange stories, too; capital.”

DISAPPEARING LONDON

Place names are always of interesting origin, in fact, all proper names have a fascination for the historian and litterateur alike. Dickens himself was fond enough of the unusual, and doubtless he made good use of those by-gones of a former age, which seemed best to suit his purpose. On the other hand, where would one find in reality such names as Quilp, Cheeryble, Twist, Swiveller, Heep, Tulkinghorn, or Snodgrass? Where indeed! except in the Boston (U. S. A.) Directory? Here will be found Snodgrass and Twist and even a Heep, though he spells it Heap. It would be still further interesting to know the derivation of the names of these individuals; but inasmuch as it would probably throw no additional light on Dickens' own personality, it is passed by without further comment. It is not that these names are any more unusual than many that really do exist, and possibly they all may have had a real entity outside of the author's brain; still it does represent a deal of thought that each and every character throughout all of Dickens' works should seem so singularly appropriate and in keeping with their names.

With place names Dickens took another line. Occasionally he played upon a word, though often he did not disguise it greatly; nor did he intend to. In many more instances, he presented no counterfeit whatever. For picturesqueness and appropriateness, in conjunction with the lives of the individuals of which his novels abound, one could hardly improve on many actual places of which he wrote.

London street names, in general, may be divided into two classes: those named for distinguished, or, for that matter, notorious persons, as Duke Street, Wellington Street, George Street, Berkeley, Grosvenor, or Bridgewater Squares; or secondly, those named for topographical or architectural features, both classes of which, in the earlier times or immediately following the "Great Fire," underwent no inconsiderable evolution.

In a later day this will perhaps not prove equally true; remodelling and rearranging of streets and squares not only changes the topography, but — aside from the main arteries — names as well are often changed or suppressed altogether. Since Dickens' time many spots, which must have been dearly known and beloved of him, have disappeared, and the process is going on apace, until, with the advent of another century, it will doubtless

be difficult to recognize any of the localities of a hundred or more years before.

Some remarkable corruptions have been recorded from time to time, such as Candlewick Street into Cannon Street, Cannon Row to Channel Row, and Snore Hill to Snow Hill, all of which are easily enough followed. Strype's Court (after the historian's family) to Tripe Court, or Duck Lane into Duke Street, are not so easy.

Tavern signs, too, are supposed to have undergone similar perversions, not always with euphonious success, as witness the following: "The Bachnals" into "Bag of Nails," "The God Encompasseth Us" into "Goat and Compasses;" both of the former existed in Victorian days, as does the latter at the present time. Many of these old tavern signs are to be seen to-day in the museum at the Guild Hall.

The actual changes of street names are equally curious, when one attempts to follow the connection, which, for a fact, mostly cannot be done. Thus they stand in their modified form, either as an improvement or debasement. Hog Lane, St. Giles, is now Crown Street; Grub Street is now gloriously named Milton Street, and Shoreditch Lane becomes Worship Street.

The matter of street lighting is ever one which appeals to the visitor to a strange city. Curious customs there be, even to-day, in the city of London, which have come down from the age which knew not the gas-jet or the electric globe.

In Dickens' time, it is confident to say that the "linkman" was not the *rara avis* that he is to-day, though evidences are still to be noted in residential Mayfair and Belgravia, and even elsewhere, of the appurtenances of his trade, referring to the torch-extinguishers which were attached outside the doorways of the more pretentious houses.

As an established trade, link-carrying has been extinct for nearly a century, but the many extinguishers still to be seen indicate that the custom died but slowly from the days when the sturdy Briton, —

*"Round as a globe and liquored every chink,
Goodly and great, sailed behind his link."*

— *Dryden.*

The first street lighted with gas was Pall Mall, in 1807, and oil was solely used in many streets and squares as late as 1860.

The old London watchman — the progenitor of the modern policeman — used to cry out, “Light! Light! hang out your light.” Later came enclosed glass lamps or globes, replacing the candles of a former day. These endured variously, as is noted, until very near the time when electric refulgence was beginning to make itself known. On the whole, until recently, London could not have been an exceedingly well-lighted metropolis, and even now there is many a dark court and alley, which would form in itself a fitting haunt for many a lower-class ruffian of the type Dickens was wont to depict.

The mortality among the old inns of Holborn has been very high of late, and still they vanish. “The Black Bull,” known well to Dickens, is the last to come under sentence. Its sign, a veritable bull of Bashan, sculptured in black and gold, has been familiar to all who go down to the City in omnibuses. Until recently the old courtyard of the inn might still have been seen, though the galleried buildings which surrounded it were modern. Before Holborn Viaduct was built, the “Black Bull” stood just at the top of Holborn Hill, that difficult ascent which good citizens found too long, and bad ones too short. “Sirrah, you’ll be hanged; I shall live to see you go up Holborn Hill,” says Sir Sampson Legend to his thriftless son in Congreve’s “Love for Love.”

But the “Black Bull” has nearer associations for us. It was here that Mrs. Gamp and Betsy Prig nursed Mr. Lewsome through his fever at the expense of John Westlock. When Mrs. Gamp relieved Betsy in the sick-room, the following dialogue occurred: ““Anything to tell afore you goes, my dear?” asked Mrs. Gamp, setting her bundle down inside the door, and looking affectionately at her partner. ‘The pickled salmon,’ Mrs. Prig replied, ‘is quite delicious. I can partick’ler recommend it. Don’t have nothink to say to the cold meat, for it tastes of the stable. The drinks is all good.’“ To-day the cold meat is represented by the noble animal on the façade of the inn, and it will probably adorn the Guildhall collection of old shop and tavern signs, where the hideous “Bull and Mouth” and “Goose and Gridiron” still look down on the curious.

Of the matter-of-fact realities of London, which, though still existent, have changed since Dickens’ day, London Bridge is undergoing widening and rebuilding, which will somewhat change its general aspect, though its environment remains much the same.

Furnival’s Inn, where Dickens lived, has disappeared, and Clifford’s Inn has just been sold (1903) in the public auction mart, to be removed, with

some hideous and unquiet modern office building doubtless destined to take its place.

New transportation schemes, almost without number, are announced. Electric trams, "tubes," and underground subways are being projected in every direction. These perhaps do not change the surface aspect of things very much, but they are working a marvellous change in the life of the times. The old underground "District" and "Metropolitan" Railways are being "electrified" by the magnanimity (*sic*) of American capital, and St. Paul's Cathedral has been supplied with a costly electric-light plant at the expense of an American multi-millionaire.

The American invasion of typewriters, roll-top desks, and book printing and binding machinery, are marking an era of change and progress in the production of the printed word, and Continental-made motors and automobiles are driving the humble cart-horse from the city streets in no small way.

It now only remains for the development of the project which is to supplant the ungainly though convenient omnibus with an up-to-date service of motor stages, when, in truth, London will have taken on very much of a new aspect.

One of the most recent disappearances is old Holywell Street, of unsavoury reputation, the whilom Booksellers' Row of Dickens' day, a "narrow, dirty lane" which ran parallel with the Strand from St. Clement's-Danes to St. Mary-le-Strand, and was occupied chiefly by vendors of books of doubtful morality. Wych Street, too, in company with Holywell Street, has gone the same way, in favour of the new thoroughfare which is to connect Holborn and the Strand, an enterprise which also has made way with the Clare Market between Lincoln's Inn Fields and the Strand, a locality well known to, and made use of by, Dickens in "The Old Curiosity Shop."

The identical building referred to therein may be in doubt; probably it is, in that Dickens himself repudiated or at least passed a qualifying observation upon the "waste paper store," which popular tradition has ever connected therewith. But one critic — be he expert or not — has connected it somewhat closely with the literary life of the day, as being formerly occupied by one Tessayman, a bookbinder, who was well acquainted with Dickens, Thackeray, and Cruikshank. The literary pilgrim will give up this most sentimental Dickens *relique* with something of the serious pang that

one feels when his favourite idol is shattered, when the little overhanging corner building is finally demolished, as it soon will be, if “improvement” goes on at the pace of the last few years hereabouts.



THE (REPUTED) “OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.”

A drawing of this revered building has been included in the present volume, as suggestive of its recorded literary associations.

There is no question but what it is *the relique* of the first rank usually associated with Dickens’ London, as witness the fact that there appears always to be some numbers of persons gazing fondly at its crazy old walls.

The present proprietor appears to have met the demand which undoubtedly exists, and purveys souvenirs, prints, drawings, etc., to the Dickens admirers who throng his shop “in season” and out, and from all parts of the globe, with the balance, as usual, in favour of the Americans.

Rumour has it, and it has been said before, that some “collector” (from America, of course) has purchased this humble shrine, and intends to erect it again across the seas, but no verification of this is possible at this writing.

Whether it had any real being in Dickens’ story, the enthusiast, in view of the facts, must decide for him or herself.

*“And now at length he’s brought
Unto fair London City
Where, in Fleet Street,*

*All those many see't
That will not believe my ditty."*
— Butler.

A half-century ago Temple Bar might have been described as a gateway of stone separating the Strand from Fleet Street — the City from the shire.

This particular structure was erected from designs by Sir Christopher Wren in 1670, and from that day until long after Dickens' death, through it have passed countless throngs of all classes of society, and it has always figured in such ceremony of state as the comparatively infrequent visits of the sovereign to the City. The invariable custom was to close the gate whenever the sovereign had entered the City, "and at no other time."

The ceremony was simple, but formal: a herald sounds a trumpet — another herald knocks — a parley — the gates are thrown open and the lord mayor, *pro tempo.*, hands over the sword of the City to the sovereign. It was thus in Elizabeth's time, and it had changed but little throughout Victoria's reign.

The present structure is Temple Bar only in name, being a mere guide-post standing in the middle of the roadway; not very imposing, but it serves its purpose. The former structure was removed in the eighties, and now graces the private park of an estate at Walthamstow.

For long before it was taken down, its interior space was leased to "Childs," the bankers, as a repository or storage-place for their old ledgers. Thus does the pomp of state make way for the sordidness of trade, and even the wealthy corporation of the City of London was not above turning a penny or two as additional revenue.

The following details of Furnival's Inn, which since Dickens' time has disappeared, are pertinent at this time.

"Furnivalles Inn, now an Inn of Chancery, but some time belonging to Sir William Furnival, Knight," is the introduction to the description given by Stow in his "Annals." The greater part of the old inn was taken down in the time of Charles I., and the buildings remaining in Dickens' day, principally occupied as lawyers' offices, were of comparatively modern construction. Since, these too, have disappeared, and there is little to call it to mind but the location the inn once occupied.

The Gothic hall, with its timber roof, — part of the original structure (*tempo* Richard II.), — was standing as late as 1818, when the entire inn

was rebuilt by one Peto, who it is to be inferred built the row in which were the lodgings occupied by Dickens.

In the west end of London changes have been none the less rapid than in the east. The cutting through of Northumberland Avenue, from Trafalgar Square to the river, laid low the gardens and mansion of Northumberland House. Of this stately mansion it is said that it looked more like a nobleman's mansion than any other in London. It was built, in about 1600, by the Earl of Northampton, and came into the hands of the Percies in 1642. Stafford House is perhaps the most finely situated mansion in the metropolis, occupying the corner of St. James' and the Green Parks, and presenting four complete fronts, each having its own architectural character. The interior, too, is said to be the first of its kind in London. The mansion was built by the Duke of York, with money lent by the Marquis of Stafford, afterward Duke of Sutherland; but the Stafford family became owners of it, and have spent at least a quarter of a million sterling on the house and its decorations. Apsley House, at the corner of Piccadilly and Hyde Park, is the residence of the Dukes of Wellington, and is closely associated with the memory of *the* duke. The shell of the house, of brick, is old; but stone frontages, enlargements, and decorations were afterward made. The principal room facing Hyde Park, with seven windows, is that in which the Great Duke held the celebrated Waterloo Banquet, on the 18th of June in every year, from 1816 to 1852.

In the seventeenth century the Strand was a species of country road, connecting the city with Westminster; and on its southern side stood a number of noblemen's residences, with gardens toward the river. The pleasant days are long since past when mansions and personages, political events and holiday festivities, marked the spots now denoted by Essex, Norfolk, Howard, Arundel, Surrey, Cecil, Salisbury, Buckingham, Villiers, Craven, and Northumberland Streets — a very galaxy of aristocratic names.

Again it is reiterated: the names are, for the most part, actually those now given to great hotels which occupy the former sites of these noble mansions.

The residences of the nobility and gentry were chiefly in the western part of the metropolis. In this quarter there have been large additions of handsome streets, squares, and terraces within the last fifty years. First, the district around Belgrave Square, usually called Belgravia. Northeast from this, near Hyde Park, is the older, but still fashionable quarter,

comprehending Park Lane and Mayfair. Still farther north is the modern district, sometimes called Tyburnia, being built on the ground adjacent to what once was “Tyburn,” the place of public executions. This district, including Hyde Park Square and Westbourne Terrace, early became a favourite place of residence for city merchants. Lying north and northeast from Tyburnia are an extensive series of suburban rows of buildings and detached villas, which are ordinarily spoken of under the collective name, St. John’s Wood, Regent’s Park forming a kind of rural centre to the group.

New thoroughfares and the need thereof make a wholly new set of conditions, and such landmarks as have survived the stress of time and weather are thoroughly suggestive and reminiscent of the past, and are often the only guide-posts left by which one may construct the surroundings of a former day.

Of this the stranger is probably more observant than the Londoner born and bred. The gloomy, crowded streets — for they are gloomy, decidedly, most of the time during five months of the year — do not suggest to the native emotions as vivid as to the stranger, who, with a fund of reading for his guide, wanders through hallowed ground which is often neglected or ignored by the Londoner himself.

As for the general architectural effect of London as a type of a great city, it is heightened or lowered accordingly as one approves or disapproves of the artistic qualities of soot and smoke.

Fogs are the natural accompaniment of smoke, in the lower Thames valley, at least, and the “London particular” — the pea-soup variety — is a thing to be shuddered at when it draws its pall over the city. At such times, the Londoner, or such proportion of the species as can do so, hurries abroad, if only to the Surrey Hills, scarce a dozen miles away, but possessed of an atmosphere as different as day is from night.

Our own Nathaniel Hawthorne it was who wrote, “There cannot be anything else in its way so good in the world as this effect” (of fog and smoke) “on St. Paul’s in the very heart and densest tumult of London. It is much better than staring white; the edifice would not be nearly so grand without this drapery of black.” Since we are told that the cost of the building was defrayed by a tax on all coals brought into the port of London, it gets its blackness by right. This grime is at all events a well-established fact, which has to be accepted.

Mr. G. A. Sala, a friend and contemporary of Dickens, also wrote in favour of the smoky chimneys. He says about St. Paul's: "It is really the better for all the incense which all the chimneys since the time of Wren have offered at its shrine, and are still flinging up every day from their foul and grimy censers." As a flower of speech, this is good, but as criticism it is equivalent to saying the less seen of it the better. M. Taine, the French critic, evidently thought otherwise; he wrote of Somerset House:

"A frightful thing is the huge palace in the Strand which is called Somerset House. Massive and heavy piece of architecture, of which the hollows are inked, the porticoes blackened with soot, where in the cavity of the empty court is a sham fountain without water, pools of water on the pavement, long rows of closed windows. What can they possibly do in these catacombs? It seems as if the livid and sooty fog had even befouled the verdure of the parks. But what most offends the eyes are the colonnades, peristyles, Grecian ornaments, mouldings, and wreaths of the houses, all bathed in soot. Poor antique architecture — what is it doing in such a climate?"

To decide what style of architecture prevails in the medley of different periods constituting London is indeed difficult. One authority concludes that the "dark house in the long, unlovely street," of which Tennyson tells, and Mme. de Staël vituperates, covers the greater number of acres. The fact is, each of the districts constituting London as it now is, *i.e.*, Belgravia, Tyburnia, Bayswater, Kensington, Chelsea, etc., has the impress and character of the time of its greatest popularity and fashion and of the class by which it was principally inhabited. It has always been the city's fate to have its past overgrown and stifled by the enthralling energy and life of the present. It is as a hive that has never been emptied of its successive swarms. This is more or less the fate of all towns that live.

The first map of London was published in 1563 by Ralph Uggia; it shows the same main arteries as exist to-day — the Strand, "Chepe," and Fleet. In a later map of 1610, London and Westminster appear as small neighbouring towns with fields around them; Totten Court, a country village; Kensington and Marylebone secluded hamlets; Clerkenwell and St. Gyllis quite isolated from the main city while Chelsey was quite in the wilds.

Even the great devastating fires did not destroy the line of the public highways. After that of 1666 Sir Christopher Wren wished to remodel the town and make it regular, symmetrical, and convenient; but, although he

was the prevailing spirit in the rebuilding of London city, and no important building during forty years was erected without his judgment, his plan for regulating and straightening the streets did not take effect. Much of the picturesque quality of the city is owing to its irregularity and the remains of its past. Wren rebuilt no less than sixty churches, all showing great variety of design. St. Paul's, the third Christian church since early Saxon times on the same site, was his masterpiece.

Of his immediate predecessor, Inigo Jones, the Banqueting House in Whitehall, now used as a museum, remains a fragment of the splendid palace designed by him for James I. The classical revival began with Gibbs, when he built St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, whose Greek portico is the best and most perfect Greek example in London, if we except the caryatides of St. Pancras. The brothers Adam also flourished at this time, and introduced grace of line and much artistic skill in domestic establishments which they built in "The Adelphi" and elsewhere. Chambers with Somerset House, and Sir John Soane with the Bank of England, continued the classical traditions, but its full force came with Nash, "the apostle of plaster," who planned the Quadrant and Regent Street, from Carlton House to Regent's Park, and the terraces in that locality, in the tawdry pseudo-classic stuccoed style, applied indiscriminately to churches, shops, and what not. Not till the middle of the nineteenth century did the Gothic revival flourish. Pugin, Britton, and Sir John Barry then became prominent. The last named built the Houses of Parliament.

The demand for originality in street architecture is to be seen in the tall, important blocks of residential flats and new hotels now rising up in every quarter. Not beautiful and in many cases not even intelligible, they are unmistakable signs of the times, showing the process of transformation which is going on rapidly, sweeping away much that is beautiful to meet the requirements of modern life.

London is perhaps never to be doomed to the curse of the sky-scraper, as it is known in America; the results of such an innovation would be too dire to contemplate, but like every other large city, it is under the spell of twentieth century ideas of progress, and the results, a score or more years hence, will, beyond doubt, so change the general aspect and conditions of life that the spirit of the Victorian era in architecture and art will have been dissipated in air, or so leavened that it will be a glorified London that will be known and loved, even better than the rather depressing atmosphere

which has surrounded London and all in it during the thirty-five rapid years which have passed since Dickens' death.

Such, in brief, is a survey of the more noticeable architectural and topographical features of London, which are indicating in no mean fashion the effect of Mr. Whistler's dictum: "Other times, other lines."

Of no place perhaps more true than of London, yet, on the other hand, in no other place, perhaps, does the tendency make way so slowly.

THE COUNTY OF KENT

The country lying between London and the English Channel is one of the most varied and diversified in all England. The "men of Kent" and the "Kentish men" have gone down in history in legendary fashion. The Roman influences and remains are perhaps more vivid here to-day than elsewhere, while Chaucer has done perhaps more than all others to give the first impetus to our acquaintanceship with the pleasures of the road.

"The Pilgrim's Way," the old Roman Watling Street, and the "Dover Road" of later centuries bring one well on toward the coaching days, which had not yet departed ere Mr. Pickwick and his friends had set out from the present "Golden Cross" Hotel at Charing Cross for "The Bull" at Rochester.

One should not think of curtailing a pilgrimage to what may, for the want of a more expressive title, be termed "Dickens' Kent," without journeying from London to Gravesend, Cobham, Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Maidstone, Canterbury, and Broadstairs. Here one is immediately put into direct contact, from the early works of "Pickwick," "Copperfield," and "Chuzzlewit," to the last unfinished tale of "Edwin Drood."

No end of absorbing interest is to be found in the footsteps of Pickwick and Jingle, and Copperfield and his friend Steerforth.

To-day one journeys, by a not very progressive or up-to-date railway, by much the same route as did Mr. Pickwick and his friends, and reaches the Medway at Strood and Rochester through a grime and gloom which hardly existed in Dickens' time to the same compromising extent that it does to-day. Bricks, mortar, belching chimneys, and roaring furnaces line the route far into the land of hops.

Twenty miles have passed before those quiet scenes of Kentish life, which imagination has led one to expect, are in the least apparent. The route *via* the river towns of Woolwich, Erith, Gravesend, and Dartford, or *via* Lee, Eltham, and Bexley, is much the same, and it is only as the train

crosses the Medway at Strood — the insignificant and uninteresting suburb of Rochester — that any environment of a different species from that seen in London itself is to be recognized. The ancient city of Rochester, with its overgrown and significantly busy dockyard appendage of Chatham, is indicative of an altogether different *raison d'être* from what one has hitherto connected the scenes of Dickens' stories.

Kent as a whole, even the Kent of Dickens, would require much time to cover, as was taken by the "Canterbury" or even the "Pickwickian" pilgrims, but a mere following, more or less rapidly, of the Dover Road, debouching therefrom to Broadstairs, will give a vast and appreciative insight into the personal life of Dickens as well as the novels whose scenes are here laid.

The first shrine of moment *en route* would be the house at Chalk, where Dickens spent his honeymoon, and lived subsequently at the birth of his son, Charles Dickens, the younger. Gad's Hill follows closely, thence Rochester and Chatham. The pond on which the "Pickwickians" disported themselves on a certain occasion, when it was frozen, is still pointed out at Rochester, and "The Leather Bottle" at Cobham, where Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle made inquiries for "a gentleman by the name of Tupman," is a very apparent reality; and with this one is well into the midst of the Kent country, made famous by Charles Dickens.

Aside from Dickens' later connection with Rochester, or, rather, Gad's Hill Place, there is his early, and erstwhile happy, life at Chatham to be reckoned with. Here, his father being in employment at the dockyard, the boy first went to school, having been religiously and devotedly put through the early stages of the educative process by his mother.

His generally poor health and weakly disposition kept him from joining in the rough games of his schoolmates, and in consequence he found relaxation in the association of books. Indeed, it was at this time that the first seeds of literary ambition took root, with the result that a certain weedy thing, called "A Tragedy," grew up under the title of "Misnar, the Sultan of India," which at least gave the young author fame among his immediate juvenile circle.

At the age of nine, his father left Chatham, and Dickens was removed with the rest of the family to London, where his early pitiful struggles began, which are recorded elsewhere.

There is a peculiar fascination about both the locality and the old residence of Charles Dickens — Gad's Hill Place — which few can resist. Its lofty situation on a ridge between the Thames and the Medway gives Gad's Hill several commanding views, including the busy windings of the latter, where the Dutch fleet anchored in Elizabeth's reign.

The surroundings seem from all times to have been a kind of Mecca to tramps and petty showmen. That Dickens had an irresistible love for this spot would be clear from the following extract from his works:

“I have my eye on a piece of Kentish road, bordered on either side by a wood, and having, on one hand, between the road dust and the trees, a skirting patch of grass. Wild flowers grow in abundance on this spot, and it lies high and airy, with a distant river stealing steadily away to the ocean...”

Gad's Hill Place is a comfortable, old-fashioned, creeper-clad house, built about a century since, and is on the spot mentioned in Shakespeare's “Henry IV.” as the scene of the robbery of the travellers. The following extract from a mediæval record book is interesting:

“1586, September 29th daye, was a thiefe yt was slayne, buried.” Again “1590, Marche the 17th daie, was a thiefe yt was at Gadshill wounded to deathe, called Robert Writs, buried.”

The “Falstaff” Inn is nearly opposite Gad's Hill Place, and dates probably from Queen Anne's time. It formerly had an old-fashioned swinging sign, on one side of which was painted Falstaff and the Merry Wives of Windsor. In its long sanded room there was a copy of Shakespeare's monument in Westminster Abbey. Fifty years ago about ninety coaches passed this inn daily.

In the garden at Gad's Hill Place Dickens had erected a Swiss chalet presented to him by Fechter, the actor. Here he did his writing “up among the branches of the trees, where the birds and butterflies fly in and out.”

The occupiers of Gad's Hill Place since the novelist's death have been Charles Dickens, the younger, Major Budden, and latterly the Honourable F. W. Latham, who graciously opens certain of the apartments to visitors.

In the immediate neighbourhood of Rochester is Cobham, with its famous Pickwickian inn, “The Leather Bottle,” where Mr. Tupman sought retirement from the world after the elopement of Miss Wardle with Alfred Jingle.

Dickens himself was very fond of frequenting the inn in company with his friends.

The visitor will have no need to be told that the ancient hostelry opposite the village church is the “Leather Bottle” in question, so beloved of Mr. Pickwick, since the likeness of that gentleman, painted vividly and in the familiar picturesque attitude, on the sign-board, loudly proclaims the fact. It should be one of the fixed *formulae* of the true Dickensian faith that all admirers of his immortal hero should turn in at the “Leather Bottle” at Cobham, and do homage to Pickwick in the well-known parlour, with its magnificent collection of Dickens relics, too numerous to enumerate here, but of great and varied interest, the present proprietor being himself an ardent Dickens enthusiast.

Here is a shrine, at once worthy, and possessed of many votive offerings from all quarters.

Dickens’ personality, as evinced by many of his former belongings, which have found a place here, pervades the bar parlour. So, too, has the very spirit and sentiment of regard for the novelist made the “Leather Bottle’s” genial host a marked man. He will tell you many anecdotes of Dickens and his visits here in this very parlour, when he was living at Higham.

The “mild and bitter,” or the “arf and arf,” is to-day no less pungent and aromatic than when Dickens and his friends regaled themselves amid the same surroundings.

It should be a part of the personal experience of every Dickens enthusiast to journey to the “unspoilt” village of Cobham and spend a half-day beneath the welcoming roof of the celebrated “Leather Bottle.”

The great love of Dickens for Rochester, the sensitive clinging to the scenes of that happy, but all too short childhood at Chatham, forms an instance of the magnetic power of early associations.

“I have often heard him say,” said Forster, “that in leaving the neighbourhood of Rochester he was leaving everything that had given his early life its picturesqueness or sunshine.”

What the Lake District is to Wordsworthians, Melrose to lovers of Scott, and Ayr to Burns, Rochester and its neighbourhood is to Dickens enthusiasts throughout the English-speaking world.

The very subtlety of the spell in the former cases holds aloof many an average mortal who grasps at once the home thrusts, the lightly veiled satire, the poor human foibles, fads, and weaknesses in the characters of Dickens. The ordinary soul, in whom the “meanest flower that grows”

produces no tears, may possibly be conscious of a lump in his throat as he reads of the death of Jo or Little Nell. The deaths of Fagin and Bill Sikes are, after all, a more native topic to the masses than the final exit of Marmion.

Not only so, but the very atmosphere of the human abodes, to say nothing of minute and readily identified descriptions of English scenery, permeates the stories of Dickens.

Gad's Hill at Higham can, to be sure, hardly be reckoned as a London suburb, but on the other hand it was, in a way, merely a suburban residence near enough thereto to be easily accessible.

Even in his childhood days Dickens had set his heart upon the possession of this house, which was even then known as Gad's Hill Place. His father, who at that time had not fallen upon his unfortunate state, had encouraged him to think that it might be possible, "when he should have grown to a man," did he but work hard.

At any rate Dickens was able to purchase the estate in 1856, and from that date, until his death in 1870, it was occupied by him and his family. Writing to Forster at this time, Dickens stated that he had just "paid the purchase-money for Gad's Hill Place" (£1,790). How Dickens' possession of the house actually came about is told in his own words, in a letter written to his friend, M. De Cerjet, as follows:

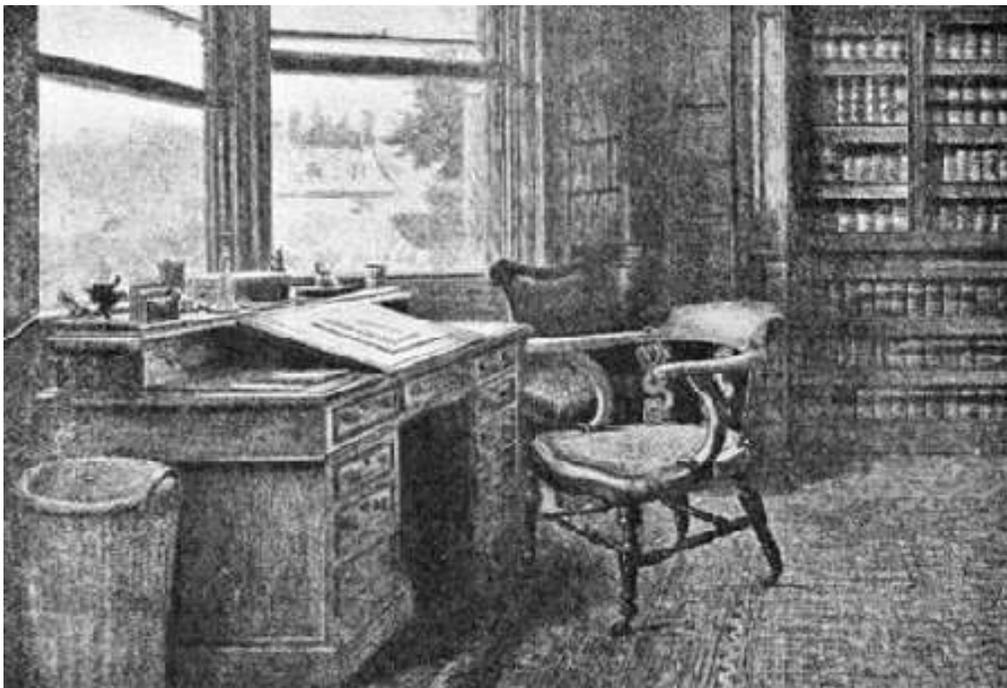
"I happened to be walking past (the house) a year or so ago, with my sub-editor of *Household Words* (Mr. W. H. Wills), when I said to him: 'You see that house? It has always a curious interest for me, because when I was a small boy down in these parts, I thought it the most beautiful house (I suppose because of its famous old cedar-trees) ever seen. And my poor father used to bring me to look at it, and used to say that if ever I grew up to be a clever man perhaps I might own that house, or such another house. In remembrance of which, I have always, in passing, looked to see if it was to be sold or let, and it has never been to me like any other house, and it has never changed at all.' We came back to town and my friend went out to dinner. Next morning he came to me in great excitement, and said, 'It is written that you are to have that house at Gad's Hill. The lady I had allotted to take down to dinner yesterday began to speak of that neighbourhood. "You know it?" I said; "I have been there to-day." "Oh, yes," she said, "I know it very well; I was a child there in the house they call Gad's Hill Place. My father was the rector, and lived there many years. He has just

died, has left it to me, and I want to sell it." So,' says the sub-editor, 'you must buy it, now or never!' I did, and hope to pass next summer there."

It is difficult to regard the numerous passages descriptive of places in Dickens' books without reverence and admiration. The very atmosphere appears, by his pen, to have been immortalized.

Even the incoherences of Jingle have cast a new cloak of fame over Rochester's Norman Cathedral and Castle!

"“Ah! fine place, glorious pile — frowning walls — tottering arches — dark nooks — crumbling staircases. Old Cathedral too — earthy smell — pilgrims' feet wore away the old steps — little Saxon doors — confessionals like money-takers' boxes at theatres — queer customers those monks — Popes and Lord Treasurers and all sorts of fellows, with great red faces and broken noses, turning up every day — buff jerkins too — matchlocks — sarcophagus — fine place — old legends too — strange stories: capital,' and the stranger continued to soliloquize until they reached the Bull Inn, in the High Street, where the coach stopped.”"



DICKENS' STUDY AT GAD'S HILL PLACE.

From a painting by Luke Fildes, R. A.

A further description of the Cathedral by Dickens is as follows:

“A certain awful hush pervades the ancient pile, the cloisters, and the churchyard, after dark, which not many people care to encounter. The cause of this is not to be found in any local superstition that attaches to the precincts, but it is to be sought in the innate shrinking of dust with the breath of life in it from dust out of which the breath of life has passed; also in the ... reflection, ‘If the dead do, under any circumstances, become visible to the living, these are such likely surroundings for the purpose that I, the living, will get out of them as soon as I can.’”

With Durdles and Jasper, from the pages of “Edwin Drood,” also, one can descend into the crypt of the earlier Norman church, the same they visited by moonlight, when Durdles kept tapping the wall “just where he expected to disinter a whole family of ‘old ‘uns.’”

In numerous passages Dickens has truly immortalized what perforce would otherwise have been very insignificant and unappealing structures. The Bull Inn, most interesting of all, is unattractive enough as a hostelry. It would be gloomy and foreboding in appearance indeed, and not at all suggestive of the cheerful house that it is, did it but lack the association of Dickens.

No. 17 in the inn is the now famous bedroom of Mr. Pickwick, and the present coffee-room now contains many relics of Dickens purchased at the sale held at Gad’s Hill Place after the author’s death.

Chatham Lines, the meadows, the Cathedral and Castle, “Eastgate House,” the Nuns’ House of “Edwin Drood,” “Restoration House,” the “Satis House” of “Great Expectations,” serve in a way to suggest in unquestionable manner the debt which Dickens laid upon Rochester and its surroundings.

“Eastgate House” is said to be the original of the home of Mr. Sapsea, the auctioneer and estate agent in “Edwin Drood.”

The date of Eastgate House, 1591, is carved on a beam in one of the upper rooms. Dickens, in “Edwin Drood,” alludes to Eastgate House as follows:

“In the midst of Cloisterham [Rochester] stands the ‘Nuns’ House,’ a venerable brick edifice, whose present appellation is doubtless derived from the legend of its conventual uses. On the trim gate enclosing its old courtyard is a resplendent brass plate, flashing forth the legend: ‘Seminary for young ladies: Miss Twinkleton.’ The house-front is so old and worn, and the brass plate is so shining and staring, that the general result has

reminded imaginative strangers of a battered old beau with a large modern eye-glass stuck in his left eye.”

To-day there is noticeable but little change, and the charm of Rochester in literary association, if only with respect to Dickens, is far greater than many another city greater and more comprehensive in its scope.

In the opening scenes of the earlier work Dickens treated of Rochester, but the whole plot of his last novel, “Edwin Drood,” is centred in the same city.

“For sufficient reasons, which this narrative [“Edwin Drood”] will itself unfold as it advances, a fictitious name must be bestowed upon the old Cathedral town. Let it stand in these pages as Cloisterham. It was once possibly known to the Druids by another name, and certainly to the Romans by another; and a name more or less in the course of many centuries can be of little moment in its dusty chronicles.” Dickens describes it thus:

“An ancient city, Cloisterham, and no meet dwelling-place for any one with hankerings after the noisy world. A monotonous, silent city, deriving an earthy flavour throughout from its cathedral crypt, and so abounding in vestiges of monastic graves that the Cloisterham children grow small salad in the dust of abbots and abbesses, and make dirt-pies of nuns and friars; while every ploughman in its outlying fields renders to once puissant Lord Treasurers, Archbishops, Bishops, and such like, the attention which the Ogre in the story-book desired to render to his unbidden visitor, and grinds their bones to make his bread.... In a word, a city of another and a bygone time is Cloisterham, with its hoarse Cathedral bell, its hoarse rooks hovering about the Cathedral tower, its hoarser and less distinct rooks in the stalls far beneath.”

For the Dickens pilgrim, the first landmark that will strike his eye will be the Corn Exchange, “with its queer old clock that projects over the pavement” (“Edwin Drood”). Watts’ Charity, a triple-gabled edifice in the High Street, has become world-famous through Dickens’ “Christmas Story.” “Strictly speaking,” he says, “there were only six poor travellers, but being a traveller myself, and being withal as poor as I hope to be, I brought the number up to seven.”

The building is to be recognized both by the roof angles and the inscriptions on the walls, the principal one of which runs thus:

Richard Watts Esq.,

*by his Will, dated 22 Aug. 1579,
founded this Charity
for Six poor Travellers,
who not being Rogues or Proctors
may receive gratis for one night,
Lodging, Entertainment,
and Fourpence each.*

Could good Richard Watts come forth some morning from his resting-place in the south transept over the way, he would have the pleasure of seeing how efficiently the trustees are carrying on their work.

The visitor, too, who desires to see the preparation for the coming evening's guests, may calculate on being no less "curtuoslie intreated" than the guests proper. In the little parlour to the left, as we enter from the street door, is the famous book containing the names and signatures of numerous celebrities whose curiosity has led them hither — Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and J. L. Toole amongst the number. From the kitchen is served out the meat for the supper, which consists of half a pound of beef, a pint of coffee, and half a loaf for each poor traveller.

In the south transept of Rochester Cathedral is a plain, almost mean, brass to Charles Dickens:

"Charles Dickens. Born at Portsmouth, seventh of February, 1812.

"Died at Gadshill Place, by Rochester, ninth of June, 1870.

"Buried in Westminster Abbey. To connect his memory with the scenes in which his earliest and latest years were passed, and with the associations of Rochester Cathedral and its neighbourhood, which extended over all his life, this tablet, with the sanction of the Dean and Chapter, is placed by his Executors."

This recalls the fact that the great novelist left special instructions in his will: "*I conjure my friends on no account to make me the subject of any monument, memorial, or testimonial whatever. I rest my claims to the remembrance of my country upon my published works.*"

It was in this transept that Charles Dickens was to have been laid to rest. The grave, in fact, had been dug, and all was ready, when a telegram came deciding that Westminster Abbey, and not Rochester, should be the long last home of the author.

Great interest attaches itself to Broadstairs, where Dickens lived upon returning from his journey abroad in company with his wife and “Phiz,” in 1851. “Bleak House” is still pointed out here, and is apparently revered with something akin to sentiment if not of awe.

As a matter of fact, it is not the original of “Bleak House” at all, that particular edifice being situate in Hertfordshire, near St. Albans.

This is an excellent illustration of the manner in which delusive legends grow up on the smallest foundations. On the cliff overlooking the little pier and close to the coast-guard station, stands Fort House, a tall and very conspicuous place which Charles Dickens rented during more than one summer. This is now known as Bleak House because, according to a tradition on which the natives positively insist, “Bleak House” was written there. Unfortunately for the legend, it is the fact that, although “Bleak House” was written in many places, — Dover, Brighton, Boulogne, London, and where not, — not a line of it was written at Broadstairs.

Dickens’ own description of Broadstairs was, in part, as follows:

“Half awake and half asleep, this idle morning in our sunny window on the edge of a chalk cliff in the old-fashioned watering-place to which we are a faithful resorter, we feel a lazy inclination to sketch its picture.

“The place seems to respond. Sky, sea, beach, and village, lie as still before us as if they were sitting for the picture. But the ocean lies winking in the sunlight like a drowsy lion — its glassy waters scarcely curve upon the shore — the fishing-boats in the tiny harbour are all stranded in the mud — our two colliers (our watering-place has a maritime trade employing that amount of shipping) have not an inch of water within a quarter of a mile of them, and turn, exhausted, on their sides, like faint fish of an antediluvian species. Rusty cables and chains, ropes and rings, undermost parts of posts and piles and confused timber defences against the waves, lie strewn about, in a brown litter of tangled seaweed and fallen cliff.

“In truth, our watering-place itself has been left somewhat high and dry by the tide of years. Concerned as we are for its honour, we must reluctantly admit that the time when this pretty little semi-circular sweep of houses tapering off at the end of the wooden pier into a point in the sea, was a gay place, and when the lighthouse overlooking it shone at daybreak on company dispersing from public balls, is but dimly traditional now. There is a ‘*bleak chamber*’ in our watering-place which is yet called the Assembly ‘Rooms.’...

“... We have a church, by the bye, of course — a hideous temple of flint, like a great petrified haystack....

“Other population than we have indicated, our watering-place has none. There are a few old used-up boatmen who creep about in the sunlight with the help of sticks, and there is a poor imbecile shoemaker who wanders his lonely life away among the rocks, as if he were looking for his reason — which he will never find. Sojourners in neighbouring watering-places come occasionally in flocks to stare at us, and drive away again.

“... And since I have been idling at the window here, the tide has risen. The boats are dancing on the bubbling water: the colliers are afloat again; the white-bordered waves rush in; the children —

“‘Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
When he comes back;’

the radiant sails are gliding past the shore, and shining on the far horizon; all the sea is sparkling, heaving, swelling up with life and beauty, this bright morning.” (“Our Watering-Place.”)

Another reference of Dickens to the Kent coast was in one of the *Household Words* articles, entitled “Out of Season.” The Watering-Place “out of season” was Dover, and the place without a cliff was Deal.

Writing to his wife of his stay there, he says:

“I did nothing at Dover (except for *Household Words*), and have not begun ‘Little Dorrit,’ No. 8, yet. But I took twenty-mile walks in the fresh air, and perhaps in the long run did better than if I had been at work.”

One can hardly think of Deal or Dover without calling to mind the French coast opposite, often, of a clear day, in plain view.

In spite of Dickens’ intimacies with the land of his birth, he had also a fondness for foreign shores, as one infers from following the scope of his writings.

Of Boulogne, he writes in “Our French Watering-Place” (*Household Words*, November 4, 1854):

“Once solely known to us as a town with a very long street, beginning with an abattoir and ending with a steamboat, which it seemed our fate to behold only at daybreak on winter mornings, when (in the days before continental railroads), just sufficiently awake to know that we were most uncomfortably asleep, it was our destiny always to clatter through it, in the coupé of the diligence from Paris, with a sea of mud behind, and a sea of tumbling waves before.”

An apt and true enough description that will be recognized by many. Continuing, he says, also truly enough:

“But our French watering-place, when it is once got into, is a very enjoyable place.”

To those to whom these racy descriptions appeal, it is suggested that they familiarize themselves with the “Reprinted Pieces,” edited by Charles Dickens the younger, and published in New York in 1896, a much more complete edition, with explanatory notes, than that which was issued in London.

THE RIVER THAMES

Glide gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river! come to me.
O glide, fair stream, for ever so,
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Wordsworth

Ever present in the minds and hearts of the true Londoner is the “majestic Thames;” though, in truth, while it is a noble stream, it is not so all-powerful and mighty a river as romance would have us believe.

From its source, down through the Shires, past Oxford, Berks, and Bucks, and finally between Middlesex, Surrey, and Essex, it ambles slowly but with dignity. From Oxford to Henley and Cookham, it is at its best and most charming stage. Passing Maidenhead, Windsor, Stains, Richmond, Twickenham, and Hammersmith, and reaching Putney Bridge, it comes into London proper, after having journeyed on its gladsome way through green fields and sylvan banks for a matter of some hundred and thirty miles.

At Putney Bridge and Hammersmith is the centre of the fishing section, and this was the background depicted by the artist who drew the wrapper for the first serial issue of “The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club.” Putney Church is seen in the distance, with its Henry VIII. Chapel, and in the foreground Mr. Pickwick is found dozing in his traditional punt, — that

curious box, or coffin-like, affair, which, as a pleasure craft, is apparently indigenous to the Thames.

Above this point the river is still:

... *"The gentle Thames*

And the green, silent pastures yet remain."

Poets have sung its praises, and painters extolled its charms. To cite Richmond alone, as a locality, is to call up memories of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Walpole, Pope, Thomson, and many others whose names are known and famed of letters and art.

Below, the work-a-day world has left its stains and its ineffaceable marks of industry and grime, though it is none the less a charming and fascinating river, even here in its lower reaches. And here, too, it has ever had its literary champions. Was not Taylor — "the water poet" — the Prince of Thames Watermen?"

If swans are characteristic of the upper reaches, the waterman or the bargeman, assuredly, is of the lower. With the advent of the railway, — which came into general use and effective development during Dickens' day, — it was popularly supposed that the traffic of the "silent highway" would be immeasurably curtailed. Doubtless it was, though the real fact is, that the interior water-ways of Britain, and possibly other lands, are far behind "*la belle France*" in the control and development of this means of intercommunication.

There was left on the Thames, however, a very considerable traffic which — with due regard for vested rights, archaic by-laws and traditions, "customs of the port," and other limitations without number — gave, until very late years, a livelihood to a vast riverside population.

The change in our day from what it was, even in the latter days of Dickens' life, is very marked. New bridges — at least a half-dozen — have been built, two or three new tunnels, steam ferries, — of a sort, — and four railway bridges; thus the aspect of the surface of the river has perforce changed considerably, opening up new vistas and *ensembles* formerly unthought of.

Coming to London proper, from "Westminster" to the "Tower," there is practically an inexhaustible store of reminiscence to be called upon, if one would seek to enumerate or picture the sights, scenes, and localities immortalized by even the authors contemporary with Dickens.

Not all have been fictionists, — a word which is used in its well meant sense, — some have been chroniclers, like the late Sir Walter Besant and Joseph Knight, whose contributions of historical résumé are of the utmost value. Others are mere “antiquarians” or, if you prefer, historians, as the author of “London Riverside Churches.” Poets there have been, too, who have done their part in limning its charms, from Wordsworth’s “Westminster Bridge,” on the west, written at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to “A White-Bait Dinner at Greenwich,” of Peacock, or “The Boy at the Nore,” of Tom Hood, on the east.

When, in the forties, the new Parliament Houses were approaching their completed form, a new feature came into the prospect.

As did Wren, the architect of St. Paul’s, so did Barry, the architect of the Parliament Buildings, come in for many rough attacks at the hands of statesmen or Parliamentarians, who set their sails chiefly to catch a passing breath of popular applause, in order that they might provide for themselves a niche or a chapter in the history of this grand building.

It was claimed that the flanking towers would mix inextricably with those of St. Margaret’s and the Abbey; that were they omitted, the structure would be dwarfed by the aforesaid churches, — and much more of the same sort. In its present completed form, it is a very satisfying “Tudor-Gothic,” or “Gothic-Tudor,” building, admirably characteristic of the dignity and power which should be possessed by a great national administrative capitol.

The worst defect, if such be noticeable among its vast array of excellencies, is the unfinished northerly, or up-river, façade.

To recall a reminiscence of Dickens’ acquaintance with the locality, it may be mentioned that in Milbank, hard by the Houses of Parliament, is Church Street, running to the river, where Copperfield and Peggotty followed Martha, bent upon throwing herself into the flood.

In Dickens’ time, that glorious thoroughfare, known of all present-day visitors to London, the Victoria Embankment, was in a way non-existent. In the forties there was some agitation for a new thoroughfare leading between the western and the eastern cities. Two there were already, one along Holborn, though the later improvement of the Holborn Viaduct more than trebled its efficiency, and the other, the “Royal Route,” — since the court gave up its annual state pageant by river, — *via* the Strand, Fleet Street, and Ludgate Hill.

As originally projected, the “Embankment” was to be but a mere causeway, or dyke, running parallel to the shore of the river from Westminster Bridge to Blackfriars, “with ornamental junctions at Hungerford and Waterloo Bridges.”

Whatever the virtues of such a plan may have been, practically or artistically, it was ultimately changed in favour of a solid filling which should extend from the fore-shore to somewhat approximating the original river-banks. This left the famous “Stairs” far inland, as stand York Stairs and Essex Stairs to-day.

The result has been that, while it has narrowed the river itself, it has made possible an ample roadway through the heart of a great city, the peer of which does not exist elsewhere. It is to be feared, though, that it is hardly appreciated. The London cabby appears to be fascinated with the glare and intricacy of the Strand, and mostly the drivers of brewers’ drays and parcel delivery vans the same. The result is that, but for a few earnest folk who are really desirous of getting to their destination quickly, it is hardly made use of to anything like the extent which it ought.

The Thames in London proper was, in 1850, crossed by but six bridges. Blackfriars Railway Bridge, Charing Cross Railway Bridge, and the Tower Bridge did not come into the *ensemble* till later, though the two former were built during Dickens’ lifetime.

Westminster Bridge, from whence the Embankment starts, was the second erected across the Thames. It appears that attempts were made to obtain another bridge over the Thames besides that known as “London Bridge,” in the several reigns of Elizabeth, James I., Charles I. and II., and George I.; but it was not until the year 1736 that Parliament authorized the building of a second bridge, namely, that at Westminster. Prior to this date, the only communication between Lambeth and Westminster was by ferry-boat, near Palace Gate, the property of the Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom it was granted by patent under a rent of £20, as an equivalent for the loss of which, on the opening of the bridge, the see received the sum of £2,205.

In 1739, amid great opposition from “The Most Worshipful Company of Watermen,” the first stone was laid, and in 1747 the structure was completed, the plans having been changed *interim* in favour of an entire stone structure.

As it then stood Westminster Bridge was 1,066 feet long, or 260 feet shorter than Waterloo Bridge; its width is 42 feet, height, 58 feet. The proportions of the bridge were stated by an antiquary, since departed this life, to be “so accurate that, if a person speak against the wall of any of the recesses on one side of the way, he may be distinctly heard on the opposite side; even a whisper is audible during the stillness of the night,” a circumstance of itself of little import, one would think, but which is perhaps worth recording, as indicating the preciseness of a certain class of historians of the time. To-day it is to be feared that such details are accepted, if not with credulity, at least with indifference.

This fine work not being equal to the demands which were made upon it, it gave way in 1865 to the present graceful and larger iron-spanned structure, which, while in no way a grand work of art, does not offend in any way.

As the “Embankment” passes Charing Cross Railway Bridge, we are reminded that this rather ugly structure, with its decidedly ungainly appendage in the form of a huge railway station, did not exist in Dickens’ day. Instead there was a more or less graceful suspension bridge, known as Hungerford Bridge, which crossed the river from the lower end of Hungerford Market, now alas replaced by the aforesaid crude railway station, which, in spite of the indication of progress which it suggests, can hardly be an improvement on what existed on the same site some fifty years ago.

Hungerford Market was a structure occupying much the same area as the present railway station; beside it was Warren’s Blacking Factory, where Dickens, as a boy, tied up the pots of the darksome fluid. Just below was “Hungerford Stairs,” another of those riverside landing-places, and one which was perhaps more made use of than any other between Blackfriars and Westminster, its aristocratic neighbour, “York Stairs,” being but seldom used at that time. The latter, one of the few existing works of Inigo Jones, remains to-day, set about with greensward in the “Embankment Gardens,” but Hungerford Stairs, like the Market, and old Hungerford Bridge, has disappeared for ever. The present railway bridge is often referred to as Hungerford Bridge, by reason of the fact that a foot-bridge runs along its side, a proviso made when the former structure was permitted to be pulled down. Of the old blacking factory, which must have stood on the present

Villiers Street, nothing remains, nor of its “crazy old wharf, abutting on the water when the tide was out, and literally overrun by rats.”

On the 1st of May, 1845, Hungerford Suspension Bridge was opened to the public without ceremony, but with much interest and curiosity, for between noon and midnight 36,254 persons passed over it. Hungerford was at that time the great focus of the Thames Steam Navigation, the embarkation and landing exceeding two millions per annum. The bridge was the work of Sir I. K. Brunel, and was a fine specimen of engineering skill. There were three spans, the central one between the piers being 676 feet, or 110 feet more than the Menai Bridge, and second only to the span of the wire suspension bridge at Fribourg, which is nearly 900 feet. It was built without any scaffolding, with only a few ropes, and without any impediment to the navigation of the river. The entire cost of the bridge was £110,000, raised by a public company.

The bridge was taken down in 1863, and the chains were carried to Clifton for the Suspension Bridge erecting there. The bridge of the South Eastern Railway at Charing Cross occupies the site of the old Hungerford Bridge.

Many novelists, philanthropists, and newspaper writers have dwelt largely upon the horrors of a series of subterranean chambers, extending beneath the Adelphi Terrace in the West Strand, and locally and popularly known as the “Adelphi Arches.” To this day they are a forbidding, cavernous black hole, suggestive of nothing if not the horrors of thievery, or even murder. They are, however, so well guarded by three policemen on “fixed point” duty that at night there is probably no more safe locality in all London than the former unsavoury neighbourhood, a statement that is herein confidently made by the writer, as based on a daily and nightly acquaintance with the locality of some years.

Coupled in association with Dickens’ reference to having played round about during his boyhood, while living in Lant Street, and working in Warren’s Blacking Factory, only two blocks away in Villiers Street, is also the memory of David Copperfield’s strange liking for these “dark arches.” Originally these yawning crevices were constructed as a foundation for the “Adelphi Terrace,” the home of the Savage Club, and of Garrick at one time, and now overlooking the “Embankment Gardens,” though formerly overhanging the actual river-bank itself.

What wonder that these catacomb-like vaults should have been so ghostly reminiscent and suggestive of the terrors associated with the “Jack Shepards” and “Jonathan Wilds,” whose successors lived in Dickens’ day. One very great reality in connection with its unsavoury reputation is the tunnel-like opening leading Strandward. Through this exit was the back door of a notorious “Coffee and Gambling House,” like enough the “little, dirty, tumble-down public house” hard by Hungerford Stairs, where the Micawbers located just before emigrating, and referred to by Dickens in “David Copperfield.” Through this door persons of too confiding a disposition were lured by thieves and blacklegs, drugged, swindled, and thrown out bodily into the darksome tunnel to recover, if they returned to consciousness before discovered by the police, their dazed and befuddled wits as best they might.

“The Adelphi” itself is one of those lovable backwaters of a London artery, which has only just escaped spoliation at the hands of the improver. A few months since it was proposed to raze and level off the whole neighbourhood as a site for the municipal offices of the Corporation of the County Council, but wire-pulling, influence, or what not, turned the current in another direction, and to-day there is left in all its original and winsome glory the famous Adelphi, planned and built by the brothers Adam, as a sort of acropolis as a site for institutions of learning and culture.

In Dickens’ time, though the “Embankment” was taking form, it lacked many of those adornments which to-day place it as one of the world’s great thoroughfares. Immediately opposite on the fore-shore of the river is the Egyptian obelisk, one of the trio of which another is in the Place de la Concord at Paris, and the other in Central Park, New York. Here it was transferred to a new environment, and since the seventies this pictured monolith of a former civilization has stood amid its uncontemporary surroundings, battered more sorely by thirty years of London’s wind and weather than by its ages of African sunshine.

“Billingsgate” was one of the earliest water-gates of London, the first on the site having been built in the year 400 B. C., and named after Belin, King of the Britons. The present “Billingsgate Market” is a structure completed in 1870. Since 1699 London’s only *entrepot* for the edible finny tribe has been here, with certain rights vested in the ancient “Guild of Fishmongers,” without cognizance of which it would not be possible to “obtain by purchase any fish for food.”



BILLINGSGATE.

A stage floats in the river off the market, beside which float all manner of craft, from the humble wherry to the ostentatious puffy little steamers who collect the cargoes of the North Sea fleet and rush them to market against all competitors. The market opens at five A. M., summer and winter. Moored to a buoy, a short distance from the shore, are always to be found one or more Dutch fishing-boats, certain inalienable rights permitting “no more than three” to be at any or all times tied up here. There is among the native watermen themselves a guarded jealousy and contempt for these “furriners,” and should the cable once be slipped, no other Dutchman would ever again be allowed to pick it up. Hence it is that by traditionary rights one or more of these curious stub-nosed, broad-beamed craft, like the Dutch *haus-vrouw* herself, are always to be seen.

The Londoner found amusement at Whitsun-tide in a visit to Greenwich Fair, then an expedition of far greater importance than in later years, the journey having to be made by road. The typical “fish dinner” of Greenwich, as it obtained in the middle of the last century, was an extraordinary affair, perhaps the most curious repast which ever existed in the minds of a culinary genius, or a swindling hotel-keeper, — for that is about what they amounted to in the latter days of this popular function now thankfully past.

Many and varied courses of fish, beginning with the famous “whitebait,” the “little silver stars” of the poet’s fancy, more or less skilfully prepared, were followed by such gastronomic unconventions as “Duck and Peas,” “Beans and Bacon,” and “Beef and Yorkshire,” all arranged with due regard for inculcating an insatiable and expensive thirst, which was only allayed at the highest prices known to the *bon vivant* of a world-wide experience. For many years after Dickens’ death in 1870, indeed, until quite recent years, with only occasional lapses, the “Ministers of the Crown” were wont to dine at Greenwich, as a fitting *Gargantuan* orgy to the labours of a brain-racking session.

As one who knows his London has said, you can get a much better fish dinner, as varied and much more attractive, in the neighbourhood of Billingsgate, for the modest sum of two shillings.

No mention of London riverside attractions can be made without enlarging somewhat upon the sordid and unsavoury (in more senses than one) Limehouse Hole and Limehouse Reach.

Redolent of much that is of the under world, these localities, with indeed those of all the waterside round about, have something of the fascination and glamour which surrounds a foreign clime itself. Here in “Brig Place,” evidently an imaginary neighbourhood, Dickens placed the genial hook-armed Cuttle, and he must not only have studied these types upon the spot, but must have been enamoured of the salty sentiment which pervades the whole region from the notorious Ratcliffe Highway on the north, now known by the more respectable name of St. George’s Street, made famous in the “Uncommercial Traveller,” to the “Stairs” near Marshalsea on the south, where Dickens used to stroll of a morning before he was allowed to visit his father in the prison, and imagine those “astonishing fictions about the wharves and the Tower.”

It was at Limehouse, too, that Dickens’ godfather, Huffam, a rigger and sailmaker, lived, and with whom Dickens was so fond, when a boy, of making excursions roundabout the “Hole” and the “Reach” with their “foul and furtive boats.”

Returning westward one finds, adjoining Somerset House, the famed Waterloo Bridge, great as to its utility and convenience, and splendid as to its appointments. “An exquisite combination of all that is most valuable in bridge architecture,” wrote Knight in 1842; called also by Canova, whom of late it is become the custom to decry, the finest bridge in Europe, and worth

coming from Rome to see. It is the masterwork of one John Rennie, a Scotch schoolmaster, and was completed in 1817, and named after the decisive event achieved by His Majesty's forces two years before. It has ever been the one short cut into South London from all the west central region, and is the continuation of the roadway across the Strand — Wellington Street — intimately associated with Dickens by the building which formerly contained the offices of *Household Words* and the London chambers of Dickens' later years.

Blackfriars Bridge follows immediately after the Temple Gardens, but, unlike Waterloo or the present London Bridge, is a work so altered and disfigured from what the architect originally intended, as to be but a slummy perversion of an inanimate thing, which ought really to be essentially beautiful and elegant as useful.

At this point was also the *embouchement* of the "Fleet," suggestive of irregular marriages and the Fleet Prison, wherein Mr. Pickwick "sat for his picture," and suffered other indignities.

As Dickens has said in the preface to "Pickwick," "legal reforms have pared the claws by which a former public had suffered." The laws of imprisonment for debt have been altered, and the Fleet Prison pulled down.

A little further on, up Ludgate Hill, though not really in the Thames district, is the "Old Bailey," leading to "Newgate," whereon was the attack of the Gordon Rioters so vividly described in Chapter LXIV. of "Barnaby Rudge." The doorway which was battered down at the time is now in the possession of a London collector, and various other relics are continually finding their way into the salesroom since the entire structure was razed in 1901.



LONDON BRIDGE.

Southwark Bridge, an ordinary enough structure of stone piers and iron arches, opened another thoroughfare to South London, between Blackfriars and the incongruous and ugly pillar known as the Monument, which marks the starting-point of the great fire of 1666, and is situated on the northerly end of the real and only “London Bridge” of the nursery rhyme.

As recorded, it actually did fall down, as the result of an unusually high tide in 1091. As the historian of London Bridge has said, “a magnificent bridge is a durable expression of an ideal in art, whether it be a simple arch across an humble brook, or a mighty structure across a noble river.”

The history of London Bridge is a lengthy account of itself, and the period with which we have to deal carries but a tithe of the lore which surrounds it from its birth.

It was said by Dion Cassius that a bridge stood here in the reign of Claudius, but so far into antiquity is this (44 A. D.), that historians in general do not confirm it. What is commonly known as “Old London Bridge,” with its houses, its shops, and its chapels, a good idea of which is obtained from the sixth plate of Hogarth’s “Marriage à la Mode,” was a wonderfully impressive thing in its day, and would be even now, did its like exist.

The structures which roofed the bridge over, as it were, were pulled down; and various reparations made from time to time preserved the old structure until, in 1824, was begun the present structure, from the designs of

Rennie, who, however, died before the work was begun. It was opened by William IV. and Queen Adelaide in 1831, and occupies a site two hundred or more feet further up the river than the structure which it replaced, the remains of which were left standing until 1832. Thus it is likely enough that Dickens crossed and recrossed this famous storied bridge, many times and oft, when his family was living in Lant Street, in Southwark, while the father of the family was languishing in the iron-barred Marshalsea.

As Laurence Sterne has truly said, "Matter grows under one's hands. Let no man say, 'Come, I'll write a duodecimo.'" And so with such a swift-flowing itinerary as would follow the course of a river, it is difficult to get, within a reasonably small compass, any full résumé of the bordering topography of the Thames. All is reminiscent, in one way or another, of any phase of London life in any era, and so having proceeded thus far on the voyage without foundering, one cannot but drop down with the tide, and so to open sea.

Below the metropolis of docks and moorings the river widens to meet the sea, so that any journey of observation must perforce be made upon its bosom rather than as a ramble along its banks.

Blackwall, with its iron-works; Woolwich, with its arsenal; and Greenwich, with its hospital and observatory, are all landmarks by which the traveller to London, by sea, takes his reckoning of *terra firma*.

The shipping of the Orient, the Baltic, the Continent, or the mere coaster, with that unique species of floating thing, the Thames barge, all combine in an apparently inextricable tangle which only opens out in the estuary below Gravesend, which, with its departed glory and general air of decay, is the real casting-off point of seagoing craft. Here the "mud-pilot," as the river pilot is locally known, is dropped, and the "channel pilot" takes charge, and here last leave-takings are said and last messages left behind.

Opposite Gravesend, from where Dickens first set sail for America, is Tilbury Fort, a reminder of the glories of England's arms in the days of Elizabeth. It may be said to be the real outpost of London. Here passing from the "Lower Hope" into "Sea Reach," we fairly enter upon the estuary of the Thames. Here the river has rapidly expanded into an arm of the sea, having widened from two hundred and ninety yards at London Bridge to perhaps four and a half miles at the "London Stone" by Yantlet Creek, where the jurisdiction of the Corporation of London ends.

To the north the Essex shore trends rapidly away toward Yarmouth; to the south straight to the eastern end of the English Channel, past the historic Medway, with Gad's Hill Place and Higham.

Beyond is Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Maidstone, Canterbury, and Broadstairs, and with the latter place one takes leave, as it were, of England, Dickens, and his personal and literary associations therewith.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

London is not a single city, but rather a sequence or confederation of cities. In its multifarious districts there is not only a division of labour, but a classification of society — grade rising above grade, separate yet blended — "a mighty maze, but not without a plan." Says one of her most able and observing historians, "were we not accustomed to the admirable order that prevails, we should wonder how it was preserved." The regular supply of the various food markets alone is a truly wonderful operation, including all the necessaries and, what the Londoner himself supposes to be, all the luxuries of life. The method of distribution is truly astonishing, and only becomes less so to the liver in the midst of it all by reason of his varying degree of familiarity therewith. As to the means of sustenance, no less than livelihood, of a great mass of its population, that is equally a mystery. All among the lower classes are not Fagins nor yet Micawbers. How do the poor live who rise in the morning without a penny in their pockets? How do they manage to sell their labour before they can earn the means of appeasing hunger? What are the contrivances on which they hit to carry on their humble traffic? These and similar questions are those which the economist and the city fathers not only have been obliged to heed, but have got still greater concern awaiting them ahead. Poverty and its allied crime, not necessarily brutalized inherent criminal instinct, but crime nevertheless, are the questions which have got to be met broadly, boldly, and on the most liberal lines by those who are responsible for London's welfare.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the economists will tell one that England's commercial industries stagnated, but perhaps the prodigious leaps which it was taking in the new competitive forces of the new world made this theory into a condition.

In general, however, the tastes of the people were improving, and with the freedom of the newspaper press, and the spread of general literature,

there came a desire for many elegancies and refinements hitherto disregarded.

The foundation of the British Museum in 1750, by the purchase of the library and collection of Sir Hans Sloane, and Montagu House, gave an early impetus to the movement, which was again furthered when, in 1801, George III. presented a collection of Egyptian antiquities, and in 1805 and 1806 were purchased the Townley and Elgin marbles respectively. The Museum continued to increase until, in 1823, when George IV. presented his father's library of sixty-five thousand volumes, Montagu House was found to be quite inadequate for its purpose, and the present building, designed by Sir Robert Smirke, and completed in 1827, was erected on its site. In making this gift, the king said, "for the purpose of advancing the literature of his country, and as a just tribute to the memory of a parent whose life was adorned with every public and private virtue."

The magnificent reading-room was not constructed until 1855-57, but it became a "felt want" from the time when George IV. made his valuable presentation to the Museum. The great "reading age" was then only in its infancy.

Early in 1830 George IV. fell ill, and on the 25th of June he died. During his regency, although he himself had little to do with the matter, his name was associated with many splendid triumphs, by the marvellous progress of intellect, and by remarkable improvements in the liberal arts. With fine abilities and charming manners, England might have been proud of such a king, but he squandered his talents for his own gratification; alienated himself from all right-minded men; lived a disgraceful life, and died the subject of almost universal contempt. His epitaph has been written thus: "He was a bad son, a bad husband, a bad father, a bad subject, a bad monarch, and a bad friend."

The memory of old London is in no way kept more lively than by the numerous City Companies or Guilds. Established with a good purpose, they rendered useful enough service in their day, but within the last half-century their power and influence has waned, until to-day but three, of the eighty or more, are actually considered as Trading Companies, — the Goldsmiths', the Apothecaries' and the Stationers'.

The first companies, or fraternities, of Anglo-Saxon times gradually evolved themselves into the positive forms in which they have endured till to-day. Just when this evolution came about is obscure. An extinct

“Knighthen Guild” was licensed by Edgar, a reminiscence of which is supposed to exist to-day in Nightingale Lane, where the Guild was known to have been located.

The oldest of the City Companies now existing is the Weavers’ Company, having received its charter from Henry II. Though licensed, these trade organizations were not incorporated until the reign of Edward III., who generously enrolled himself as a member of the Merchant Tailors.

At this time it was ordained that all artificers should choose their trade, and, having chosen it, should practise no other; hence it was that these “Guilds” grew to such a position of wealth and influence, the ancient prototype, doubtless, of the modern “labour unions.”

The twelve great City Companies, whose governors ride about in the lord mayor’s procession of the 9th of November of each year, are, in order of precedence, ranked as follows: Mercers, Grocers, Drapers, Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Skinners, Merchant Tailors, Haberdashers, Salters, Ironmongers, Vintners, Cloth-workers.

Allied with these are eighty odd other companies divided into three classes:

I. Those exercising a control over their trades: Goldsmiths, Apothecaries.

II. Those exercising the right of search or marking of wares: the Stationers, at whose “hall” must be entered all books for copyright; the Gunmakers, who “prove” all London-made guns; Saddlers, Pewterers, and Plumbers.

III. Companies into which persons carrying on certain occupations are compelled to enter: Apothecaries, Brewers, Builders, etc.

The “halls,” as they are called, are for the most part extensive quadrangular buildings with a courtyard in the centre.

The most pretentious, from an architectural point of view, are Goldsmiths’ Hall in Foster Lane, and Ironmongers’ Hall in Fenchurch Street.

Fishmongers’ Hall, at the northwest angle of London Bridge, built in 1831, is a handsome structure after the Greek order, with a fine dining-room. The Merchant Tailors’ Hall, in Threadneedle Street, has a wonderful banquet-room, with portraits of most of the Kings of England, since Henry VIII., adorning its walls.

Stationers’ Hall will perhaps be of the greatest interest to readers of this book. All who have to do with letters have a certain regard for the

mysticism which circles around the words, "Entered at Stationers' Hall."

The Stationers' Company was incorporated in 1557; it exercised a virtual monopoly of printing almanacs under a charter of James I. until 1775, when the judges of the Court of Common Pleas decided that their professed patent of monopoly was worthless, the Crown having no power to grant any such exclusive right. Doubtless many another archaic statute is of a like invalidity did but some protestful person choose to take issue therewith. The number of freemen of the company is about 1,100; that of the livery about 450. Printers were formerly obliged to be apprenticed to a member of the company, and all publications for copyright must be entered at their hall. The register of the works so entered for publication commenced from 1557, and is valuable for the light it throws on many points of literary history. The Copyright Act imposes on the company the additional duty of registering all assignments of copyrights. The charities of the company are numerous. In Dickens' time Almanac Day (November 22d) was a busy day at the hall, but the great interest in this species of astrological superstition has waned, and, generally speaking, this day, like all others, is of great quietude and repose in these noble halls, where bewhiskered functionaries amble slowly through the routine in which blue paper documents with bright orange coloured stamps form the only note of liveliness in the entire *ensemble*.

The Goldsmiths' Company assays all the gold and silver plate manufactured in the metropolis, and stamps it with the "hall-mark," which varies each year, so it is thus possible to tell exactly the year in which any piece of London plate was produced.

The out-of-door amusements of society were at this time, as now, made much of. The turf, cricket, and riding to hounds being those functions which took the Londoner far afield. Nearer at home were the charms of Richmond, with its river, and the Star and Garter, and the Great Regatta at Henley, distinctly an affair of the younger element.

Tea-gardens, once highly popular, had fallen into disrepute so far as "society" was concerned. Bagnigge Wells, Merlin's Cave, the London Spa, Marylebone Gardens, Cromwell's Gardens, Jenny's Whim, were all tea-gardens, with recesses, and avenues, and alcoves for love-making and tea-drinking, where an orchestra discoursed sweet music or an organ served as a substitute. An intelligent foreigner, who had published an account of his impressions of England, remarked: "The English take a great delight in the

public gardens, near the metropolis, where they assemble and drink tea together in the open air. The number of these in the capital is amazing, and the order, regularity, neatness, and even elegance of them are truly admirable. They are, however, very rarely frequented by people of fashion; but the middle and lower ranks go there often, and seem much delighted with the music of an organ, which is usually played in an adjoining building.”

Vauxhall, the *Arabia Felix* of the youth of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was still a fashionable resort, “a very pandemonium of society immorality,” says a historian. This can well be believed if the many stories current concerning “prince, duke, and noble, and much mob besides,” are accepted.

*“Here the ‘prentice from Aldgate may ogle a toast!
Here his Worship must elbow the knight of the post!
For the wicket is free to the great and the small; —
Sing Tantarara — Vauxhall! Vauxhall!”*

The first authentic notice of Vauxhall Gardens appears in the record of the Duchy of Cornwall in 1615, when for two hundred years, through the changes of successive ages, there was conducted a round of gaiety and abandon unlike any other Anglo-Saxon institution. Open, generally, only during the summer months, the entertainment varied from vocal and instrumental music to acrobats, “burlettas,” “promenades,” and other attractions of a more intellectual nature, and, it is to be feared, likewise of a lesser as well.

The exhibition usually wound up with a display of fireworks, set off at midnight. From 1830 to 1850 the gardens were at the very height of their later festivity, but during the next decade they finally sank into insignificance, and at last flickered out in favour of the more staid and sad amusements of the later Victorian period.

As for the indoor pleasures of society at this time, there were the theatre, the opera, and the concert-room. Dining at a popular restaurant or a gigantic hotel had not been thought of. There were, to be sure, the “assembly-rooms” and the “supper-rooms,” but there were many more establishments which catered to the pleasures of the masculine mind and taste than provided a fare of food and amusement which was acceptable to the feminine palate.

Of the men's clubs, Brookes' and White's had long been established, and, though of the proprietary order, were sufficiently attractive and exclusive to have become very popular and highly successful. The other class were those establishments which fulfil the true spirit and province of a club, — where an association of gentlemen join together in the expense of furnishing accommodation of refreshment and reading and lounging rooms. This was the basis on which the most ambitious clubs were founded; what they have degenerated into, in some instances, would defy even a rash man to attempt to diagnose, though many are still run on the conservative lines which do not open their doors to strangers, even on introduction, as with the famous Athenæum Club.

Other clubs, whose names were already familiar in the London of Dickens' day, were the Carleton, Conservative, Reform, University, and perhaps a score of others.

As is well known, Dickens was an inordinate lover of the drama, a patron of the theatre himself, and an amateur actor of no mean capabilities. As early as 1837 he had written an operetta, "The Village Coquettes," which he had dedicated to Harley. It was performed, for the first time, on December 6, 1836, at the St. James' Theatre. A London collector possesses the original "hand-bill," announcing a performance of "Used Up" and "Mr. Nightingale's Diary," at the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, in 1852, in which Dickens, Sir John Tenniel, and Mark Lemon took part; also a playbill of the performance of "The Frozen Deep," at the "Gallery of Illustration," on Regent Street, on July 4, 1857, "by Charles Dickens and his amateur company before Queen Victoria and the Royal Family."

The painting (1846) by C. R. Leslie, R. A., of Dickens as Captain Boabdil, in Ben Jonson's play of "Every Man in His Humour," is familiar to all Dickens lovers.

The theatres of London, during the later years of Dickens' life, may be divided into two classes: those which were under "royal patronage," and those more or less independent theatres which, if ever visited by royalty, were favoured with more or less unexpected and infrequent visits.

Of the first class, where the aristocracy, and the royal family as well, were pretty sure to be found at all important performances, the most notable were "Her Majesty's," "The Royal Italian Opera House," "The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane." Of the latter class, the most famous — and who shall

not say the most deservedly so — were the “Haymarket Theatre,” “The Adelphi,” “The Lyceum,” and the “St. James’ Theatre.”



“GOING TO THE PANTOMIME.”

From a drawing by John Leech.

“Her Majesty’s Theatre,” on the western side of the Haymarket, was the original of the two Italian opera-houses in London; it was built in 1790, on the site of an older theatre, burnt down in 1867, and rebuilt in 1869. The freehold of some of the boxes was sold for as much as £8,000 each. The opera season was generally from March to August; but the main attractions and the largest audiences were found from May to July. The “Royal Italian Opera House” occupied the site of the former Covent Garden Theatre, as it does to-day, and was built in 1858 on the ruins of one destroyed by fire. The building is very remarkable, both within and without. Italian opera was produced here with a completeness scarcely paralleled in Europe. When not required for Italian operas, the building was often occupied by an “English Opera Company,” or occasionally for miscellaneous concerts. The “Floral Hall” adjoins this theatre on the Covent Garden side. “Drury Lane Theatre,” the fourth on the same site, was built in 1812; its glories live in the past, for

the legitimate drama now alternates there with entertainments of a more spectacular and melodramatic character, and the Christmas pantomimes, that purely indigenous English institution. The "Haymarket Theatre," exactly opposite "Her Majesty's," was built in 1821; under Mr. Buckstone's management, comedy and farce were chiefly performed. The "Adelphi Theatre," in the Strand, near Southampton Street, was rebuilt in 1858, when it had for a quarter of a century been celebrated for melodramas, and for the attractiveness of its comic actors. The "Lyceum Theatre," or "English Opera House," at the corner of Wellington Street, Strand, was built in 1834 as an English opera-house, but its fortunes were fluctuating, and the performances not of a definite kind. This was the house latterly taken over by Sir Henry Irving. The "Princess' Theatre," on the north side of Oxford Street, was built in 1830; after a few years of opera and miscellaneous dramas, it became the scene of Mr. Charles Kean's Shakespearian revivals, and now resembles most of the other theatres. "St. James' Theatre," in King Street, St. James', was built for Braham, the celebrated singer. "The Olympic" was a small house in Wych Street, Drury Lane, now destroyed. "The Strand Theatre" was famous for its burlesque extravaganzas, a form of theatrical amusement which of late has become exceedingly popular. The "New Globe Theatre" (destroyed so late as 1902) and "The Gaiety" (at the stage entrance of which are the old offices of *Good Words*, so frequently made use of by Dickens in the later years of his life), and "The Vaudeville," were given over to musical comedy and farce. "The Adelphi," though newly constructed at that time, was then, as now, the home of melodrama.

Others still recognized as popular and prosperous houses were "The Court Theatre," Sloane Square; "The Royalty," in Soho; "The Queen's," in Longacre; "The Prince of Wales'," in Tottenham Street, formerly the Tottenham Theatre. Robertson's comedies of "Caste," "Our Boys," etc., were favourite pieces there. "Sadler's Wells," "Marylebone Theatre," "The Britannia," at Hoxton, "The Standard," in Shoreditch, and "The Pavilion," in Whitechapel, were all notable for size and popularity, albeit those latterly mentioned were of a cheaper class.

South of the river were "Astley's," an old amphitheatre, "The Surrey Theatre," and "The Victoria."

At this time (1870) it was estimated that four thousand persons were employed in London theatres, supporting twelve thousand persons. The public expenditure thereon was estimated at £350,000 annually.

Of “concert rooms,” there were “Exeter Hall,” “St. James’ Hall,” “Hanover Square Rooms,” “Floral Hall,” connected with the Covent Garden Opera, “Willis’ Rooms,” and the “Queen’s Concert Rooms,” connected with “Her Majesty’s Theatre.”

Here were given the performances of such organizations as “The Sacred Harmonic Society,” “The Philharmonic Society,” “The Musical Union,” and the “Glee and Madrigal Societies,” “The Beethoven Society,” and others.

“Entertainments,” an indefinite and mysterious word, something akin to the *olla podrida* of sunny Spain, abounded.

Usually they were a sort of musical or sketch entertainment, thoroughly innocuous, and, while attaining a certain amount of popularity and presumably success to their projectors, were of a nature only amusing to the completely ennuied or juvenile temperament. Readings by various persons, more or less celebrated, not forgetting the name of Dickens, attracted, properly enough, huge crowds, who were willing to pay high prices to hear a popular author interpret his works. A species of lion-taming, which, if not exactly exciting, is harmless and withal edifying. The last two varieties of entertainment usually took place in the “Egyptian Hall,” in Piccadilly, “St. James’ Hall,” or “The Gallery of Illustration” in Regent Street.

Of miscellaneous amusements, appealing rather more to the middle class than the actual society element, — if one really knows what species of human being actually makes up that vague body, — were such attractions as were offered by “Madame Tussaud’s Waxwork Exhibition,” which suggests at once to the lover of Dickens Mrs. Jarley’s similar establishment, and such industrial exhibitions as took place from time to time, the most important of the period of which this book treats being, of course, the first great International Exhibition, held in Hyde Park in 1851.

Further down the social scale the amusements were a variation only of degree, not of kind.

The lower classes had their coffee-shops and, supposedly, in some degree the gin-palaces, which however, mostly existed in the picturesque vocabulary of the “smug” reformer.

The tavern, the chop-house, and the dining-room were variants only of the “assembly-rooms,” the “clubs,” and the grand establishments of the upper circles, and in a way performed the same function, — provided entertainment for mankind.

As for amusements pure and simple, there was the “music-hall,” which, quoting a mid-Victorian writer, was a place where held forth a “*species of musical performance, a singular compound of poor foreign music, but indifferently executed, and interspersed with comic songs of a most extravagant kind, to which is added or interpolated what the performers please to term ‘nigger’ dances, athletic and rope-dancing feats, the whole accompanied by much drinking and smoking.*” Which will pass as a good enough description to apply to certain establishments of this class to-day, but which, in reality, loses considerable of its force by reason of its slurring resentment of what was in a way an invasion of a foreign custom which might be expected, sooner or later, to crowd out the conventional and sad amusements which in the main held forth, and which in a measure has since taken place. The only bearing that the matter has to the subject of this book is that some large numbers of the great public which, between sunset and its sleeping hours, must perforce be amused in some way, is to-day, as in days gone by, none too particular as to what means are taken to accomplish it.

There is a definite species of depravity which is supposed to be peculiarly the attribute of the lower classes. If it exists at all to-day, it probably does lie with the lower classes, but contemporary opinion points to the fact that it was not alone in those days the lower classes who sought enjoyment from the cockpit, the dog fight, the prize ring, or the more ancient bull-baiting, all of which existed to some degree in the early nineteenth century. Truly the influence of the Georges on society, of whatever class, must have been cruelly debasing, and it was not to be expected that the early years of Victoria’s reign should have been able to eradicate it thoroughly, and though such desires may never be entirely abolished, they are, in the main, not publicly recognized or openly permitted to-day, a fact which is greatly to the credit of the improved taste of the age in which we live.

Formerly it was said that there was but one class of hotels in and near London of which the charges could be stated with any degree of precision. The *old* hotels, both at the West End and in the City, kept no printed tariff, and were not accustomed even to be asked beforehand as to their charges. Most of the visitors were more or less *recommended* by guests who had already sojourned at these establishments, and who could give information as to what *they* had paid. Some of the hotels declined even to receive guests except by previous written application, or by direct introduction, and would rather be without those who would regard the bill with economical scrutiny.

Of these old-fashioned hotels, — barbarous relics of another day, — few are to be found now, and, though existing in reality, are being fast robbed of their *clientèle*, which demand something more in the way of conveniences — with no diminution of comforts — than it were possible to get in the two or three private houses thrown into one, and dubbed by the smugly respectable title of “Private Hotel.”

Other establishments did exist, it is true, in Dickens’ time: “The Golden Cross” and “Morley’s,” “Haxell’s,” and others of such class, from which coaches still ran to near-by towns, and which houses catered principally for the country visitor or the avowed commercially inclined. But aside from these, and the exclusive and presumably extravagant class of smaller houses, represented by such names as “Claridge’s,” “Fenton’s,” “Limner’s,” *et als.*, there was no other accommodation except the “taverns” of masculine propensities of Fleet Street and the City generally.

The great joint stock hotels, such as “The Metropole,” “The Savoy,” and “The Cecil,” did not come into being until well toward the end of Dickens’ life, if we except the excellent and convenient railway hotels, such as made their appearance a few years earlier, as “Euston,” “King’s Cross,” and “Victoria.” The first of the really great modern *caravanserais* are best represented by those now somewhat out-of-date establishments, the “Westminster Palace,” “Inns of Court,” “Alexandra,” and others of the same ilk, while such as the magnificently appointed group of hotels to be found in the West Strand, Northumberland Avenue, or in Pall Mall were unthought of.

The prevailing customs of an era, with respect to clubs, taverns, coffee-houses, etc., mark signally the spirit of the age. The taverns of London, properly so called, were, in the earliest days of their prime, distinguished, each, for its particular class of visitors. The wits and poets met at “Will’s” in Covent Garden, and the politicians at “St. James’ Coffee-House,” from which Steele often dated his *Tatler*. Later, in the forties, there were perhaps five hundred houses of entertainment, as distinguished from the ordinary “public house,” or the more ambitious hotel.

The “dining-rooms,” “à la mode beef shops,” and “chop-houses” abounded in the “City,” and with unvarying monotony served four, six, or ninepenny “plates” with astonishing rapidity, quite rivalling in a way the modern “quick lunch.” The waiter was usually servile, and in such places as the “Cheshire Cheese,” “Simpson’s,” and “Thomas’,” was and is still

active. He was a species of humanity chiefly distinguished for a cryptogrammatic system of reckoning your account, and the possessor of as choice a crop of beneath-the-chin whiskers as ever graced a Galway or a County Antrim squireen.

The London City waiter, as distinguished from his brethren of the West End, who are most Teutonic, is a unique character. Here is Leigh Hunt's picture of one:

“He has no feeling of noise; even a loaf with him is hardly a loaf; it is so many ‘breads.’ His longest speech is making out a bill *viva voce*, — ‘Two beefs, one potato, three ales, two wines, six and two pence.’”

A unique institution existed during the first quarter of the last century. Some of Dickens' characters, if not Dickens himself, must have known something of the sort. Charles Knight tells of more than one establishment in the vicinity of the “Royal Exchange,” where a sort of public *gridiron* was kept always at hand, for broiling a chop or steak which had been bought by the customer himself at a neighbouring butcher's. For this service, the small sum of a penny was charged, the profit to the house probably arising from the sale of potable refreshments.

The houses which were famous for “fine old cheese,” “baked potatoes,” “mutton or pork pies,” “sheep's trotters,” or “pig's faces,” were mostly found, or, at least, were at their best, in the “City,” though they formed an humble and non-fastidious method of purveying to the demands of hunger, in that the establishments catered, more particularly, to the economically inclined, or even the poorer element of city workers.

The rise from these City eating-houses to the more ambitiously expensive caterers of the “West End” was gradual. Prices and the appointments increased as one journeyed westward through Fleet Street, the Strand, to Piccadilly and Regent Street.

Another institution peculiar to London, in its plan and scope at least, was the “coffee-house” of 1840, evolved from those of an earlier generation, but performing, in a way, similar functions.

At this time a “House of Commons Committee of Inquiry into the Operation of Import Duties” — as was its stupendous title — elicited some remarkable facts concerning the fast increasing number of “coffee-houses,” which had grown from ten or twelve to eighteen hundred in twenty-five years. One Pamphilon, who appears to have been the most successful, catering to five hundred or more persons per day, gave evidence to the

effect that his house was frequented mostly by “lawyers, clerks, and commercial men, some of them managing clerks, many solicitors, and highly respectable gentlemen, who take coffee in the middle of the day in preference to a more stimulating drink ... at the present moment, besides a great number of newspapers every day, I am compelled to take in an increasing number of high-class periodicals.... *I find there is an increasing demand for a better class of reading.*”

And thus we see, at that day, even as before and since, a very intimate relation between good living and good reading. The practical person, the wary pedant, and the supercritical will scoff at this, but let it stand.

The “cigar divans” and “chess rooms” were modifications, in a way, of the “coffee-house,” though serving mainly evening refreshment, coffee and a “fine Havana” being ample for the needs of him who would ponder three or four hours over a game of chess.

Of the stilly night, there was another class of peripatetic caterers, the “sandwich man,” the “baked ‘tato man,” the old women who served “hot coffee” to coachmen, and the more ambitious “coffee-stall,” which must have been the progenitor of the “Owl Lunch” wagons of the United States.

The baked potato man was of Victorian growth, and speedily became a recognized and popular functionary of his kind. His apparatus was not cumbrous, and was gaudy with brightly polished copper, and a headlight that flared like that of a modern locomotive. He sprang into being somewhere in the neighbourhood of St. George’s Fields, near “Guy’s,” Lant Street, and Marshalsea of Dickensian renown, and soon spread his operations to every part of London.

The food supply of London and such social and economic problems as arise out of it are usually ignored by the mere guide-book, and, like enough, it will be assumed by many to have little to do with the purport of a volume such as the present. As a matter of fact, in one way or another, it has a great deal to do with the life of the day, using the word in its broadest sense.

England, as is well recognized by all, is wholly subservient to the conditions of trade, so far as edible commodities are concerned, throughout the world. Its beef, its corn, and its flour mainly come from America. Its teas, coffees, and spices mostly from other foreign nations, until latterly, when India and Ceylon have come to the fore with regard to the first named of these. Its mutton from New Zealand or Australia, and even potatoes from France, butter and eggs from Denmark and Brittany, until one is inclined to

wonder what species of food product is really indigenous to Britain. At any rate, London is a vast *caravanserai* which has daily to be fed and clothed with supplies brought from the outer world.

In spite of the world-wide fame of the great markets of “Covent Garden,” “Smithfield,” and “Billingsgate,” London is woefully deficient in those intermediaries between the wholesaler and the consumer, the public market, as it exists in most Continental cities and in America.

An article in the *Quarterly Review*, in Dickens’ day, — and it may be inferred things have only changed to a degree since that time, — illustrated, in a whimsical way, the vastness of the supply system. The following is described as the supply of meat, poultry, bread, and beer, for one year: 72 miles of oxen, 10 abreast; 120 miles of sheep, do.; 7 miles of calves, do.; 9 miles of pigs, do.; 50 acres of poultry, close together; 20 miles of hares and rabbits, 100 abreast; a pyramid of loaves of bread, 600 feet square, and thrice the height of St. Paul’s; 1,000 columns of hogsheads of beer, each 1 mile high. In mere bulk this perhaps does not convey the impression of large figures, but it is certainly very expressive to imagine, for instance, that one has to eat his way through 72 miles of oxen.

The *water* used in the metropolis was chiefly supplied by the Thames, and by an artificial channel called the New River, which entered on the north side of the metropolis. The water is naturally good and soft. The spots at which it is raised from the Thames used to be within the bounds of the metropolis, at no great distance from the mouths of common sewers; but it is now obtained from parts of the river much higher up, and undergoes a very extensive filtration, with which eight companies are concerned. The returns of the registrar-general showed that the average daily supply of water for all purposes to the London population, during August, 1870, was 127,649,728 gallons, of which it is estimated the supply for domestic purposes amounted to about 90,000,000 gallons. The total number of houses fed was 512,540. The metropolis draws its *coal* supplies principally from the neighbourhood of Newcastle, but largely also from certain inland counties, the import from the latter being by railway. Newcastle coal is preferred. It arrives in vessels devoted exclusively to the trade; and so many and so excessive are the duties and profits affecting the article, that a ton of coal, which can be purchased at Newcastle for 6s. or 7s., costs, to a consumer in London, from 28s. to 33s. The quantity of coal brought to

London annually much exceeds 6,000,000 tons, of which considerably more than 2,000,000 come by railway.



SMITHFIELD MARKET.

As for the markets themselves, “Billingsgate,” the great *depot* for the distribution of fish, is described in that section devoted to the Thames.

“Smithfield,” is the great wholesale cattle market, while “Leadenhall” Market, in the very heart of the business world of London, is headquarters for poultry.

A detailed description of “Covent Garden Market,” which deals with vegetables, fruits, and flowers only, must here suffice.

Covent Garden Market occupies a site which is exceedingly central to the metropolis. It was once the garden to the abbey and convent of Westminster: hence the name *Convent* or *Covent*. At the suppression of the religious houses in Henry VIII.’s reign, it devolved to the Crown. Edward VI. gave it to the Duke of Somerset; on his attainder it was granted to the Earl of Bedford, and in the Russell family it has since remained. From a design of Inigo Jones, who built the banqueting-room at Whitehall, the York Water Gate, and other architectural glories of London, it was intended to have surrounded it with a colonnade; but the north and a part of the east

sides only were completed. The fruit and vegetable markets were rebuilt in 1829-30. The west side is occupied by the parish church of St. Paul's, noticeable for its massive roof and portico. Butler, author of "Hudibras," lies in its graveyard, without a stone to mark the spot. In 1721, however, a cenotaph was erected in his honour in Westminster Abbey. The election of members to serve in Parliament for the city of Westminster was formerly held in front of this church, the hustings for receiving the votes being temporary buildings. The south side is occupied by a row of brick dwellings. Within this square thus enclosed the finest fruit and vegetables from home and foreign growers are exposed for sale, cabbages and carrots from Essex and Surrey, tomatoes and asparagus from France and Spain, oranges from Seville and Jaffa, pines from Singapore, and bananas from the West Indies, not forgetting the humble but necessary potato from Jersey, Guernsey, or Brittany. A large paved space surrounding the interior square is occupied by the market-gardeners, who, as early as four or five in the morning, have carted the produce of their grounds, and wait to dispose of it to dealers in fruit and vegetables residing in different parts of London; any remainder is sold to persons who have standings in the market. Within this paved space rows of shops are conveniently arranged for the display of the choicest fruits of the season: the productions of the forcing-house, and the results of horticultural skill, appear in all their beauty. There are also conservatories, in which every beauty of the flower-garden may be obtained, from the rare exotic to the simplest native flower. The Floral Hall, close to Covent Garden Opera House, has an entrance from the northeast corner of the market, to which it is a sort of appendage, and to the theatre. Balls, concerts, etc., are occasionally given here. The Farringdon, Borough, Portman, Spitalfields, and other vegetable markets, are small imitations of that at Covent Garden.

The greater part of the *corn*, meaning, in this case, *wheat*, as well as maize, as Indian corn is known throughout Great Britain, used for bread and other purposes in the metropolis, is sold by corn-factors at the Corn Exchange, Mark Lane; but the corn itself is not taken to that place. Enormous quantities of flour are also brought in, having been ground at mills in the country and in foreign parts.

The *beer* and *ale* consumed in the metropolis is, of course, vast in quantity, beyond comprehension to the layman. If one could obtain admission to one of the long-standing establishments of Messrs. Barclay &

Perkins or Truman & Hanbury, whose names are more than familiar to all who travel London streets, he would there see vessels and operations astonishing for their magnitude — bins that are filled with 2,000 quarters of malt every week; brewing-rooms nearly as large as Westminster Hall; fermenting vessels holding 1,500 barrels each; a beer-tank large enough to float an up-river steamer; vats containing 100,000 gallons each; and 60,000 casks.

PAST AND PRESENT

The American is keenly alive to all the natural and added beauties of English life, and even more so of London. He does not like to have his ideals dispelled, or to find that some shrine at which he would worship has disappeared for ever, like some “solemn vision and bright silver dream,” as becomes a minstrel. For him are the traditions and associations, the sights and sounds, which, as he justly says, have no meaning or no existence for the “fashionable lounge” and the “casual passenger.” “The Barbican does not to every one summon the austere memory of Milton; nor Holborn raise the melancholy shade of Chatterton; nor Tower Hill arouse the gloomy ghost of Otway; nor Hampstead lure forth the sunny figure of Steele and the passionate face of Keats; nor old Northumberland Street suggest the burly presence of ‘rare Ben Jonson;’ nor opulent Kensington revive the stately head of Addison; nor a certain window in Wellington Street reveal in fancy’s picture the rugged lineaments and splendid eyes of Dickens.” But to the true pilgrim London speaks like the diapason of a great organ. “He stands amid achievements that are finished, careers that are consummated, great deeds that are done, great memories that are immortal; he views and comprehends the sum of all that is possible to human thought, passion, and labour, and then — high over mighty London, above the dome of St. Paul’s Cathedral, piercing the clouds, greeting the sun, drawing unto itself all the tremendous life of the great city and all the meaning of its past and present — the golden cross of Christ.”

The regular old-fashioned coaches of London were from the first to third quarters of the nineteenth century supplanted by the ark-like omnibus, which even till to-day rumbles roughly through London streets. Most of the places within twenty miles of the metropolis, on every side, were thus supplied with the new means of transportation. The first omnibus was started by Mr. Shillibeer, from Paddington to the Bank, July 4, 1829. From

this time to 28th June, 1870, — the number of such vehicles licensed in the Metropolitan District was 1,218. Every omnibus and hackney-carriage within the Metropolitan District and the City of London, and the liberties thereof, has to take out a yearly license, in full force for one year, unless revoked or suspended; and all such licenses are to be granted by the Commissioners of Police, whose officers are constantly inspecting these public vehicles. Generally speaking, each omnibus travels over the same route, and exactly the same number of times, day after day, with the exception of some few of the omnibuses which go longer journeys than the rest, and run not quite so often in winter as in summer. Hence the former class of omnibus comes to be associated with a particular route. It is known to the passengers by its colour, the name of its owner, the name given to the omnibus itself, or the places to and from which it runs, according to circumstances. The greater portion are now the property of the London General Omnibus Company. The designations given to the omnibuses are generally given on the front in large letters.

At least so it is written in the guide-book. As a matter of fact, the stranger will be fortunate if he can figure out their destination from the mass of hoardings announcing the respective virtues of Venus Soap and Nestlé's Milk. To the Londoner this is probably obvious, in which case the virtues of this specific form of advertising might be expected to be considerably curtailed.

One who was curious of inspecting contrasting elements might have done worse than to take an outside "garden seat" on a Stratford and Bow omnibus, at Oxford Circus, and riding — for sixpence all the way — *via* Regent Street, Pall Mall, Trafalgar Square, Strand, Fleet Street, St. Paul's, past the Mansion House and the Bank, Royal Exchange, Cornhill, Leadenhall Street, Aldgate, Whitechapel Road, Mile End, to Stratford.

The convenient, if ungraceful, cab had completely superseded the old pair-horse hackney-coaches in London in general use previous to 1850. According to the returns of the day, there were 6,793 of the modern single-horse hackney-coaches in the metropolis altogether, of two different kinds, "four-wheelers" and "hansoms," which took their name from the patentee. The "four-wheelers" are the more numerous; they have two seats and two doors; they carry four persons, and are entirely enclosed. The "hansoms" have seating capacity for but two, and, though convenient and handy beyond any other wheeled thing until the coming of the automobile, the

gondola of London was undeniably dangerous to the occupant, and ugly withal, two strongly mitigating features.

Of the great event of Dickens' day, which took place in London, none was greater or more characteristic of the devotion of the British people to the memory of a popular hero than the grand military funeral of the Right Honourable Field Marshal Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (November, 1852). Certainly no military pageant of former times — save, possibly, the second funeral of Napoleon — was so immeasurably of, and for, the people. By this time most of the truly great of England's roll of fame had succumbed, died, and were buried with more or less ostentation or sincere display of emotion, but it remained for Wellington — a popular hero of fifty years' standing — to outrival all others in the love of the people for him and his works. He died at Walmer Castle on the Kent coast.



INTERIOR OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL DURING THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S FUNERAL.

His body lay there in state, at Chelsea Hospital and in St. Paul's Cathedral, before it was finally laid to rest in the marble sarcophagus which

is seen to-day in the same edifice. With Nelson, nay, more than Nelson, he shares the fervid admiration of the Briton for a great warrior.

Disraeli's eulogium in the House of Commons appears to have been the one false note of sincerity in all the pæan that went forth, and even this might perhaps have survived an explanation had Beaconsfield chosen to make one. Certainly racial opposition to this great statesman had a great deal to do with the cheap denunciation which was heaped upon his head because he had made use of the words of another eulogist, a Frenchman, upon the death of one of his own countrymen; "a second-rate French marshal," the press had called him, one Marshal de St. Cyr. It was unfortunate that such a forceful expression as this was given second-hand: *"A great general must not only think, but think with the rapidity of lightning, to be able to fulfil the highest duty of a minister of state, and to descend, if need be, to the humble office of a commissary and a clerk; must be able, too, to think with equal vigour, depth, and clearness, in the cabinet or amidst the noise of bullets. This is the loftiest exercise and most complete triumph of human faculties."*

All this, and much more, is absolutely authenticated as having been uttered by M. Thiers twenty years before the occasion referred to. It is perhaps true that the great Wellington deserved better than this second-hand eulogy, and perhaps right that there should have been resentment, but further comment thereon must be omitted here, save that the incident is recorded as one of those events of an age which may well be included when treating of their contemporary happenings.

No account of the London of any past era could ignore mention of those great civic events, occurring on the 9th November in each year, and locally known as "Lord Mayor's Day," being the occasion on which that functionary enters into his term of office. As a pageant, it is to-day somewhat out of date, and withal, tawdry, but as a memory of much splendour in the past, it is supposedly continued as one of those institutions which the Briton is wont to expect through tradition and custom. Perhaps the following glowing account of one of these gorgeous ceremonies, when the water pageant was still in vogue, written by an unknown journalist, or "pressman," as he is rather enigmatically called in London, in 1843, will serve to best describe the annually recurring event of pride and glory to your real Cockney.

LORD MAYOR'S DAY

““Oh! such a day
So renown’d and victorious,
Sure such a day was never seen —
City so gay,
And Cits so uproarious,
As tho’ such sight had never been!

““All hail! November —
Though no *hail* to-day
(At least that we remember),
Hath pav’d the way
His Civic Majesty hath will’d to go,
And swore he’d go it ‘spite hail, rain, or snow!
He takes to *water* for an *airing*,
Before perhaps he dines with Baring
Or sees the waiter, so alert,
Place the fav’rite *Patties-on*
The table near him — knave expert
To make the most of “what is on!”
By this we mean, what’s most in season,
To say no more we have a reason!’
— *Anon.*

“Since the first mayoralty procession, in the year 1215, probably there have been few finer pageants than that of Thursday last, when the November sun even gilded with his beams the somewhat tarnished splendour of the City state.

“According to annual custom, the new lord mayor (Alderman Magnay) was sworn into his office of Chief Magistrate of the City of London, at the Guildhall.

“Being a member of the Stationers’ Company, the master, wardens, and court of assistants of that company proceeded to Mansion House, where they were met by the new lord mayor and his sheriffs. After a sumptuous *déjeûner à la fourchette*, the whole of the civic dignitaries proceeded to the Guildhall.

“The next day the various officials assembled at the Guildhall, and, the procession being formed, proceeded thence through King Street, Cateaton Street, Moorgate Street, London Wall, Broad Street, Threadneedle Street,

Mansion House Street, Poultry, Cheapside, and Queen Street, to Southwark Bridge, where his lordship embarked at the Floating Pier for Westminster. This somewhat unusual arrangement arose from the new lord mayor being the alderman of Vintry Ward, wherein the bridge is situated, and his lordship being desirous that his constituents should witness the progress of the civic procession. The embarkation was a picturesque affair; the lord mayor's state barge, the watermen in their characteristic costume, and the lord mayor and his party were, in civic phrase, 'taking water.'

"The novelty of the point of embarkation drew clustering crowds upon the bridge and the adjoining river banks. There were the usual waterside rejoicings, as the firing of guns, streaming flags, and hearty cheers; and the water procession had all the festal gaiety with which we have been wont to associate it in the past. The scene was very animating, the river being thickly covered with boats of various descriptions, as well as with no less than seven state barges, filled inside and outside with the livery belonging to the City Companies, and all anxiously awaiting the word of command to proceed onward to Westminster. The sun shone resplendently upon the flags and banners studding the tops of the barges, and the wharfs near the spot all exhibited similar emblems. As the new lord mayor entered the City barge, and was recognized, the air was rent with the most deafening shouts of applause, which his lordship gracefully acknowledged by repeatedly bowing to the assembled thousands. The aquatic procession now left the pier, the City barge being accompanied by the Stationers, Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Wax Chandlers, and Ironmongers' Companies, in their respective state barges.

"On arrival at Westminster, the lord mayor and civic authorities having landed, they walked in procession to the Court of Exchequer, where a large number of ladies and gentlemen awaited their arrival. Having been introduced to the chief baron by the recorder, who briefly stated the qualifications of Alderman Magnay for his important office of chief magistrate, and the learned baron having eloquently replied, the new lord mayor invited his lordship to the inauguration dinner, and afterward proceeded to the other courts, inviting the judge of each court to the same.

"His lordship and the various officials then reëmbarked in the state barge for Blackfriars Bridge, where the procession was re-formed and joined by the ambassadors, her Majesty's ministers, the nobility, judges, members of Parliament, and various other persons of distinction. The whole then moved

through Ludgate Hill, St. Paul's Churchyard, Cheapside, and down King Street to the Guildhall, where the inaugural entertainment was to be given.



LORD MAYOR'S PROCESSION, ASCENDING LUDGATE HILL.

“The plate given herein shows the return of the procession, just as the gorgeous state coach is about to wend its way up Ludgate Hill. The coach is, doubtless, the most imposing feature of the modern show, and has thus played its part for nearly fourscore years and ten. It is a piece of cumbrous magnificence, better assorting with the leisurely progress of other days than the notions of these progressive times. Yet it is a sight which may have inspired many a City apprentice, and spurred him onward to become an ‘honourable of the land;’ it is, moreover, the very type of this ‘red-letter day’ in the City; and, costly as it is, with its disappearance, even portly aldermen will vanish into thin air.

“The foremost group shows the lord mayor seated in the coach, attended by his chaplain, and the sword and mace-bearers, the former carrying — which has to be held outside the coach, be it observed; its stature is too great for it to find shelter inside — the pearl sword presented to the City by Queen Elizabeth, upon opening the Royal Exchange; the latter supporting

the great gold mace given by Charles I. The coach is attended by the lord mayor's beadles in their gold-laced cloaks, and carrying small maces.

“Onward are seen the other leading features of the procession; the crowd is truly dense, for at this point is the great crush of the day; ‘the Hill’ is thronged, and the City police require all their good temper to ‘keep the line.’ The scene is exciting, and the good-humoured crowd presents many grotesque points for those who delight in studies of character. Altogether, the scene is as joyous, if rather gaudy, picture of a civic holiday as the times could present.”

Perhaps the greatest topographical change in the London of Dickens' day was the opening, on November 6, 1869, of the Holborn Viaduct. This improvement was nothing short of the actual demolition and reconstruction of a whole district, formerly either squalid, over-blocked, and dilapidated in some parts, or oversteep and dangerous to traffic in others. But a short time before that same Holborn Valley was one of the most heartbreaking impediments to horse traffic in London, with a gradient on one side of one in eighteen, while opposite it was one in twenty. Thus everything on wheels, and every foot-passenger entering the City by the Holborn route, had to descend twenty-six feet to the Valley of the Fleet, and then ascend a like number to Newgate. The new Viaduct levelled all this, and made the journey far easier than that by Ludgate Hill.

The greatest architectural work which took shape in London during Dickens' day was the construction of the new Houses of Parliament.

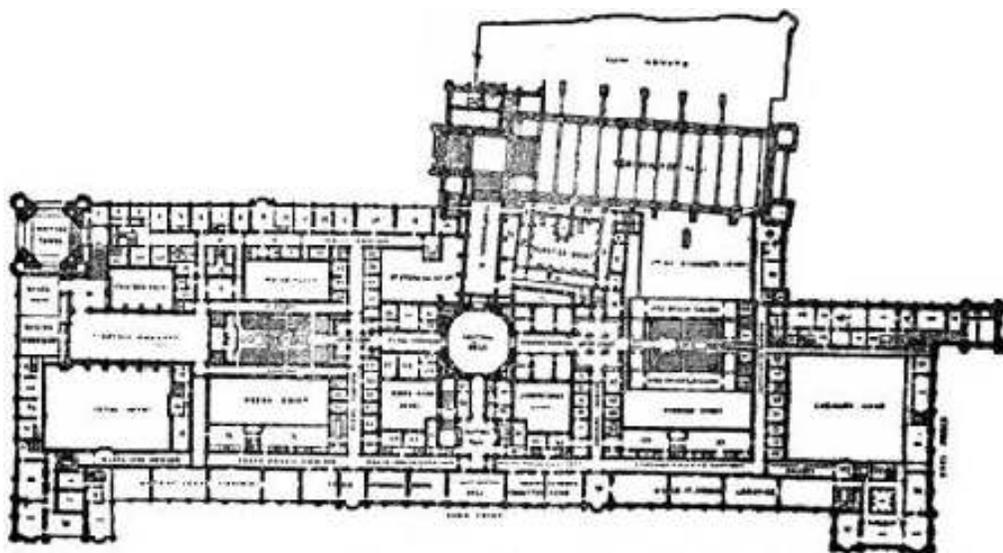
Associated intimately with Dickens' first steps to success were the old buildings, which were burned in 1834. Here he received his first regular journalistic employment, as reporter for the *True Sun*, an event which soon led to the acceptance of his writings elsewhere. Some discussion has recently been rife in London concerning the name of the paper with which Dickens had his first Parliamentary employment.

According to Forster, Dickens was in his twenty-third year when he became a reporter on the *Morning Chronicle*. At this time the *Chronicle* was edited by John Black, who had conducted it ever since Perry's death, and the office of the paper from June, 1834, until it died in 1862, was 332 Strand, opposite Somerset House, a building pulled down under the Strand improvement scheme. It had then been for nearly forty years — ever since the *Chronicle* vacated it, in fact — the office of another newspaper, the *Weekly Times and Echo*. It may be worth while to add that Dickens first

entered "The Gallery" at the age of nineteen, as reporter for the *True Sun*, and that he afterward reported during two sessions for the *Mirror of Parliament* before he joined the staff of the *Morning Chronicle*.

The new Houses of Parliament form one of the grandest administrative piles of any city in the world, built though, it is feared, of a stone too soon likely to decay, and with a minuteness of Gothic ornament which is perhaps somewhat out of keeping with a structure otherwise so massive.

The House of Peers is 97 feet long, 45 wide, and 45 high. It is so profusely painted and gilt, and the windows are so darkened by deep-tinted stained glass, that it is with difficulty that the details can be observed. At the southern end is the gorgeously gilt and canopied throne; near the centre is the woolsack, on which the lord chancellor sits; at the end and sides are galleries for peeresses, reporters, and strangers; and on the floor of the house are the cushioned benches for the peers. Two frescoes by David Maclise — "The Spirit of Justice" and "The Spirit of Chivalry" — are over the strangers' gallery, as well as a half-dozen others by famous hands elsewhere. In niches between the windows and at the ends are eighteen statues of barons who signed Magna Charta. The House of Commons, 62 feet long, 45 broad, and 45 high, is much less elaborate than the House of Peers. The Speaker's chair is at the north end, and there are galleries along the sides and ends. In a gallery behind the Speaker, the reporters for the newspapers sit. Over which is the ladies' gallery, where the view is ungallantly obstructed by a grating. The present ceiling is many feet below the original one, the room having been to this extent spoiled because the former proportions were bad for hearing.



Plan of the Houses of Parliament, 1844

On the side nearest to Westminster are St. Stephen's Porch, St. Stephen's Corridor, the Chancellor's Corridor, the Victoria Tower, the Royal Staircase, and numerous courts and corridors. At the south end, nearest Millbank, are the Guard Room, the Queen's Robing-Room, the Royal Gallery, the Royal Court, and the Prince's Chamber. The river front is mostly occupied by libraries and committee-rooms. The northern or Bridge Street end displays the Clock Tower and the Speaker's Residence. In the interior of the structure are vast numbers of lobbies, corridors, halls, and courts. The Victoria Tower, at the southwest angle of the entire structure, is a wonderfully fine and massive tower; it is 75 feet square and 340 feet high. The clock tower, at the north end, is 40 feet square and 320 feet high, profusely gilt near the top. After two attempts made to supply this tower with a bell of fourteen tons weight, and after both failed, one of the so-called "Big Bells," the weight of which is about eight tons (the official name being "St. Stephen"), now tells the hour in deep tones. There are, likewise, eight smaller bells to chime the quarters. The clock is by far the largest and finest in England. There are four dials on the four faces of the tower, each $22\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter; the hour figures are 2 feet high and 6 feet apart; the minute marks are 14 inches apart; the hands weigh more than 2 cwt. the pair; the minute hand is 16 feet long, and the hour hand 9 feet; the pendulum is 15 feet long and weighs 680 lbs. The central tower rises to a height of 300 feet.

Its rooms and staircases are almost inconceivably numerous. The river front is nine hundred feet in length, with an elaborately decorated façade

with carven statues and emblems. By 1860 the cost had exceeded by a considerable sum £2,000,000.

The growth of the British Museum and its ever increasing store of knowledge is treated elsewhere, but it is worth recording here, as one of the significant events of contemporary times, the opening of the present structure with its remarkable domed reading-room.

This great national establishment contains a vast and constantly increasing collection of books, maps, drawings, prints, sculptures, antiquities, and natural curiosities. It occupies a most extensive suite of buildings in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, commenced in 1823, and only finished during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It has cost a sum little less than £1,000,000. Sir Richard Smirke was the architect. The principal, or south front, 370 feet long, presents a range of forty-four columns, with a majestic central portico, with a sculptured pediment. Since its commencement, in 1755, the collection has been prodigiously increased by gifts, bequests, and purchases; and now it is, perhaps, the largest of the kind in the world. The library contains more than eight hundred thousand volumes, and is increasing enormously in extent every year. The magnificent reading-room is open only to persons who proceed thither for study, or for consulting authorities. It was opened in 1857, and built at a cost of £150,000, and is one of the finest and most novel apartments in the world; it is circular, 140 feet in diameter, and open to a dome-roof 106 feet high, supported entirely without pillars. This beautiful room, and the fire-proof galleries for books which surround it, were planned by Mr. Panizzi, an Italian and a former keeper of the printed books.

In connection with the library proper is an equally vast collection of antiquities, etc., of which all guide-books and those publications issued by the Museum authorities tell.

The building was complete by 1865, and for the last forty years has stood proudly in its commanding situation, the admiration of all who have come in contact therewith.

What Hampstead Heath is to the coster, the Crystal Palace is to the middle-class Londoner, who repairs there, or did in Dickens' time, on every possible auspicious occasion. This structure itself, though it can hardly be called beautiful by the most charitably disposed, is in many respects one of the most remarkable in the world, and owes its existence to the Great Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park. The materials of that building, being sold

to a new company toward the close of that year, were transferred to an elevated spot near Sydenham, seven miles from town, to the south. The intention was to found a palace and park for the exhibition of art and science on a paying basis. The original estimate was £500,000, but the expenditure was nearly £1,500,000, too great to assure a probable profitable return.

The palace and grounds were opened in 1854, the towers and fountains some time after.

The building itself is 1,600 feet long and 380 wide, and at the transept is nearly 200 feet in height. Exhibition-rooms, reading-rooms, restaurants, and a vast orchestral auditorium were included under one roof, with bazaars and small shops and stalls innumerable.

The parks and garden were laid out to cover some two hundred acres, with terraces and fountains galore, the idea being to produce somewhat the effect as at Versailles, with Les Grande and Petite Eaux, on "grand days" the fountains consuming over 6,000,000 gallons. Cricket, football, and sports of various kinds used to draw vast throngs to "the Palace," and the firework displays at night were, and are to-day, justly celebrated. In short, this "Cockney Arcadia," if rather a tawdry attraction, has had the benefit of much honest admiration of the Londoner, who perforce could not get farther afield for his holiday, and its like can hardly be said to exist elsewhere in Europe or America. Hence it must perforce rank in a way as something unique in present-day outdoor entertainment, as near as is left to us of those of the days of Ranelegh and Vauxhall. Beloved of the clerk and shopkeeper, and altogether an attraction which few of their class appear to be able to resist for long at a time.

London is no more the dread of the visitor who feared the ways that are dark and the tricks that are vain.

London tricks are old as London's history, and from the days of Chaucer the countryman's fear of London's vastness and the cheats practised by her nimble-witted rogues have passed into literature. In the year 1450 John Lydgate sang the sorrows of a simple Kentish wight, who found that, go where he would in London, he could not speed without money:

"To London once, my stepps I bent,
Where trouth in no wyse shoulf be faynt;
To Westmynster ward I forthwith went,
To a man of law to make complaynt.

I sayd, ‘for Mary’s love, that holy saynt!
Pity the poor that would proceede;
But for lack of mony I cold not spede.”

After going among the lawyers of King’s Bench, the Flemings of Westminster Hall with their hats and spectacles, the cloth men and drapers of Cheapside, and the butchers of Eastcheap, poor Lackpenny found that nowhere, without money, could he be sped in London. His final adventure and reflections were these:

“Then hyed I me to Belynsgate;
And one cryed ‘hoo, go we hence!’
I prayd a barge man for God’s sake,
That he wold spare me my expence.
‘Thou scapst not here,’ quod he, ‘under 2 pence,
I lyst not yet bestow my almes dede;’
Thus lacking mony I could not spede.

“Then I convayed me into Kent;
For of the law wold I meddle no more
Because no man to me tooke entent,
I dyght me to do as I dyd before.
Now Jesus that in Bethlem was bore,
Save London, and send trew lawyers there mede,
For who so wants mony with them shall not spede.”

Again one might quote that old Roxburghe ballad, “The Great Boobee,” in which a country yokel is made to tell how he was made to look foolish when he resolved to plough no more, but to see the fashions of London:

“Now as I went along the street,
I carried my hat in my hand,
And to every one that I did meet
I bravely bent my band.
Some did laugh, some did scoff,
And some did mock at me,
And some did say I was a woodcock,
And a great Boobee.

“Then I did walk in haste to Paul’s,
The steeple for to view,

Because I heard some people say
It should be builded new.
When I got up unto the top,
The city for to see,
It was so high, it made me cry,
Like a great Boobee.
.....

“Next day I through Pye-corner past,
The roast meat on the stall
Invited me to take a taste;
My money was but small:
The meat I pickt, the cook me kickt,
As I may tell to thee,
He beat me sore, and made me rore,
Like a great Boobee.”

It should be remembered, however, that the great classic of London every-day life, Gay's "Trivia," with its warnings against every danger of the street, from chairmen's poles to thimblerrigging, from the ingenious thefts of periwigs to the nuisances caused by dustmen and small coalmen, from the reckless horseplay of the Mohawks to the bewilderment which may overtake the stranger confronted by the problem of Seven Dials, was written for the warning of Londoners themselves. Those were the days when diamond cut diamond.

In the last fifty years the roving swindler has become rare in the streets. London now frightens the countryman more by its size than anything else. And yet the bigger London grows the more it must lose even this power to intimidate. Its greatest distances, its vast suburban wildernesses, are seen by him only through a railway carriage window. He is shot into the centre, and in the centre he remains, where help and convenience are increased every year. It was different in the old days, when the countryman rolled into London by coach, and was robbed on Hounslow Heath before he had seen more than the light of London in the sky. No one nowadays is in danger of being driven mad by the mere spectacle of London opening out before him, yet this was the fate of a West Country traveller who saw London for the first time from a coach early in the nineteenth century. Cyrus Redding tells the story in his entertaining "Fifty Years' Recollections." All went well as

far as Brentford. Seeing the lamps of that outlying village, the countryman imagined that he was at his journey's end, but as mile after mile of illumination went on, he asked, in alarm, "Are we not yet in London, and so many miles of lamps?" At last, at Hyde Park Corner, he was told that this was London; but still on went the lamps, on and on the streets, until the poor stranger subsided into a coma of astonishment. When at last they entered Lad Lane, the great Cheapside coaching centre, a travelling companion bade the West Countryman remain in the coffee-room while he made inquiries. On returning, he found no trace of him, nor heard any more of him for six weeks. He then learned that he was in custody at Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, as a lunatic. He was taken home, and after a brief return of his reason he died. He was able to explain that he had become more and more bewildered by the lights and by the never-ending streets, from which he thought he should never be able to escape. Somehow, he walked blindly westward, and at last emerged into the country, only to lose his memory and his wits.

Things are different to-day, and yet many people from the remoter parts of England are bewildered, distressed, and crazed by a visit to London. One meets them drifting wearily and anxiously toward King's Cross or St. Pancras at the end of their stay. They will be happy again when they see the utensils glitter on their old kitchen wall; when they have peeped into their best room and found the shade of stuffed squirrels resting undisturbed on the family Bible; and when the steam rises above their big blue teacups more proudly than ever the dome of St. Paul's soars above this howling Babylon, then they will acquiesce in all that is said in praise of the Abbey, the Bank of England, and Madam Tussaud's.

THE UNDER WORLD

As for the people of Dickens and the people he knew so well, they were mostly of the lower middle classes, though he himself had, by the time his career was well defined, been able to surround himself with the society of the leading literary lights of his time.

Surely, though, the Cockney *pur sang* never had so true a delineator as he who produced those pen-pictures ranging all the way from the vulgarities of a Sykes to the fastidiousness of a Skimpole. It is a question, wide open in the minds of many, as to whether society of any rank is improving or not; surely the world is quite as base as it ever was, and as worthily circumspect too. But while the improvement of the aristocracy in general, since mediæval times, in learning and accomplishments, was having its untold effect on the middle classes, it was long before the immense body of workers, or perhaps one should say skilled labourers, as the economists call them, partook in any degree of the general amendment. Certainly we have a right to assume, even with a twentieth-century standpoint to judge from, that there was a constantly increasing dissemination of knowledge, if not of culture, and that sooner or later it might be expected to have its desired, if unconscious, effect on the lower classes. That discerning, if not discreet, American, Nathaniel Parker Willis, was inclined to think not, and compared the English labourer to a tired donkey with no interest in things about him, and with scarce surplus energy enough to draw one leg after the other. He may have been wrong, but the fact is that there is a very large proportion of Dickens' characters made up of a shiftless, worthless, and even criminal class, as we all recognize, and these none the less than the other more worthy characters are nowhere to be found as a thoroughly indigenous type but in London itself.

There was an unmistakable class in Dickens' time, and there is to-day, whose only recourse, in their moments of ease, is to the public house, — great, strong, burly men, with "a good pair of hands," but no brain, or at least no development of it, and it is to this class that your successful middle-Victorian novelist turned when he wished to suggest something unknown in polite society. This is the individual who cares little for public improvements, ornamental parks. Omnibuses or trams, steamboats or flying-machines, it's all the same to him. He cares not for libraries, reading-rooms, or literature, cheap or otherwise, nothing, in fact, which will elevate or inspire self-respect; nothing but soul-destroying debauchery and vice, living and dying the life of the beast, and as careless of the future. This is a type, mark you, gentle reader, which is not overdrawn, as the writer has reason to know; it existed in London in the days of Dickens, and it exists to-day, with the qualification that many who ought, perforce of their instincts, to be classed therewith do just enough work of an incompetent kind to keep them well out from under the shadow of the law; these are the "Sykeses" of a former day, not the "Fagins", who are possessed of a certain amount of natural wit, if it be of a perverted kind.

An event which occurred in 1828, almost unparalleled in the annals of criminal atrocity, is significantly interesting with regard to Dickens' absorption of local and timely accessory, mostly of fact as against purely imaginative interpolation merely:

A man named Burke (an Irishman) and a woman named Helen M'Dougal, coalesced with one Hare in Edinburgh to murder persons by wholesale, and dispose of their bodies to the teachers of anatomy. According to the confession of the principal actor, sixteen persons, some in their sleep, others after intoxication, and several in a state of infirmity from disease, were suffocated. One of the men generally threw himself on the victim to hold him down, while the other "burked" him by forcibly pressing the nostrils and mouth, or the throat, with his hands. Hare being admitted as king's evidence, Burke and his other partner in guilt were arraigned on three counts. Helen M'Dougal was acquitted and Burke was executed.

This crime gave a new word to our language. To "burke" is given in our dictionaries as "to murder by suffocation so as to produce few signs of violence upon the victim." Or to bring it directly home to Dickens, the following quotation will serve:

"You don't mean to say he was "burked," Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick."

With no class of society did Dickens deal more successfully than with the sordidness of crime. He must have been an observer of the most acute perceptions, and while in many cases it was only minor crimes of which he dealt, the vagaries of his assassins are unequalled in fiction. He was generally satisfied with ordinary methods, as with the case of Lawyer Tulkinghorn's murder in Lincoln's Inn Fields, but even in this scene he does throw into crime something more than the ordinary methods of the English novelist. He had the power, one might almost say the Shakespearian power, of not only describing a crime, but also of making you feel the sensation of crime in the air. First and foremost one must place the murder of Montague Tigg.

The grinning Carker of "Dombey and Son" is ground to death under the wheels of a locomotive at a French railway station; Quilp, of "The Old Curiosity Shop," is dramatically drowned; Bill Sykes' neck is broken by the

rope meant for his escape; Bradley Headstone and his enemy go together to the bottom of the canal; while the mysterious Krook, of "Bleak House" is disposed of by spontaneous combustion.

Certainly such a gallery of horrors could not be invented purely out of an imaginative mind, and must admittedly have been the product of intimate first-hand knowledge of criminals and their ways.

Doubtless there was a tendency to improve moral conditions as things went on. Britain is not the dying nation which the calamity howlers would have us infer.

In the year 1800, there were — notwithstanding the comparative sparseness of population — eighteen prisons in London alone, whereas in 1850, when Dickens was in his prime and when population had enormously increased, that number had been reduced one-third.

In the early days the jailor in many prisons received no salary, but made his livelihood from the fees he could extort from the prisoners and their friends; and in some cases he paid for the privilege of holding office. Not only had a prisoner to pay for his food and for the straw on which he slept, but, if he failed to pay, he would be detained until he did so.

In Cold Bath Fields prison, men, women, and children were indiscriminately herded together, without employment or wholesome control; while smoking, gaming, singing, and every species of brutalizing conversation obtained.

At the Fleet Prison there was a grate or iron-barred window facing Farringdon Street, and above it was inscribed, "Pray remember the poor prisoners having no allowance," while a small box was placed on the window-sill to receive the charity of the passers-by, and a man ran to and fro, begging coins "for the poor prisoners in the Fleet."

At Newgate, the women usually numbered from a hundred to one hundred and thirty, and each had only eighteen inches breadth of sleeping-room, and all were "packed like slaves in the hold of a slave-ship."

And Marshalsea, which Dickens incorporated into "David Copperfield" and "Little Dorrit," was quite as sordid, to what extent probably none knew so well as Dickens, *père et fils*, for here it was that the father fretfully served out his sentence for debt.

Of all the prisons of that day it may be stated that they were hotbeds of immorality, where children herded with hoary criminals; where no sanitary laws were recognized; where vermin swarmed and disease held forth, and where robbery, tyranny, and cruelty, if not actually permitted, was at least winked at or ignored.

In 1829 Sir Robert Peel brought into force his new police establishment, an event which had not a little to do with the betterment of social life of the day.

"The whole metropolitan district was formed into five local divisions, each division into eight sections, and each section into eight beats, the limits of all being clearly defined and distinguished by letters and numbers; the force itself was divided into companies, each company having one superintendent, four inspectors, sixteen sergeants, and one hundred and forty-four police constables, being also sub-divided into sixteen parts, each consisting of a sergeant and nine men." Incalculable as the boon was in the repression of crime, the Corporation of the City of London could not be persuaded, until several years afterward, to follow such an example, and give up their vested interests in the old system of watchmen. The police system, as remodelled by Sir Robert Peel in 1829, was, of course, the foundation of the present admirable body of constabulary, of which the London "Bobby" must be admitted by all as ranking at the very head of his contemporaries throughout the civilized world. Certainly no more affable and painstaking servants of the public are anywhere to be found; they are truly the "refuge of the inquiring stranger and timid women."

The London policeman, then, is essentially a product of our own times; a vast advance over the peripatetic watchman of a former day, and quite unlike his brother on the Continent, who has not only to keep the peace, but act as a political spy as well. Perhaps it is for this reason that the London policeman is able to exhibit such devotion and affability in the conduct of his duties. Surely no writer or observer has ever had the temerity to assail the efficiency of the London "Peeler" or "Bobby," as he now exists.

No consideration or estimate of middle-class London would be complete without mention of that very important factor in its commissariat — beer, or its various species, mild or bitter, pale or stale. Your true Cockney East-End, however, likes his 'arf and 'arf, and further admonishes the cheery barmaid to "draw it mild." Brewers, it would seem, like their horses and draymen, are of a substantial race; many of the leading brewers of the middle nineteenth-century times, indeed, of our own day, are those who brewed in the reigns of the Georges.

By those who know, genuine London ale (presumably the "Genuine Stunning ale" of the "little public house in Westminster," mentioned in "Copperfield") alone is supposed to rival the ideal "berry-brown" and "nut-brown" ale of the old songs, or at least what passed for it in those days.

The increase of brewers has kept pace with London's increase in other respects. Twenty-six brewhouses in the age of Elizabeth became fifty-five in the middle of the eighteenth century, and one hundred and forty-eight in

1841; and in quantity from 284,145 barrels in 1782 to 2,119,447 in 1836. To-day, in the absence of any statistics to hand, the sum total must be something beyond the grasp of any but the statistician.

Without attempting to discuss the merits or demerits of temperance in general, or beer in particular, it can be safely said that the brewer's dray is a prominent and picturesque feature of London streets, without which certain names, with which even the stranger soon becomes familiar, would be meaningless; though they are, as it were, on everybody's tongue and on many a sign-board in nearly every thoroughfare. As a historian, who would have made an unexceptionable literary critic, has said: Beer overflows in almost every volume of Fielding and Smollett. Goldsmith was not averse to the "*parson's black champagne*;" Hogarth immortalized its domestic use, and Gilray its political history; and the "pot of porter" and "mug of bitter" will go down in the annals of the literature, art, and history of London, and indeed all Britain, along with the more aristocratic port and champagne.

LONDON TOPOGRAPHY

From Park Land to Wapping, by day and by night,
I've many a year been a roamer,
And find that no Lawyer can London indite,
Each street, every Lane's a misnomer.
I find Broad Street, St. Giles, a poor narrow nook,
Battle Bridge is unconscious of slaughter,
Duke's Place can not muster the ghost of a Duke,
And Brook Street is wanting in water.

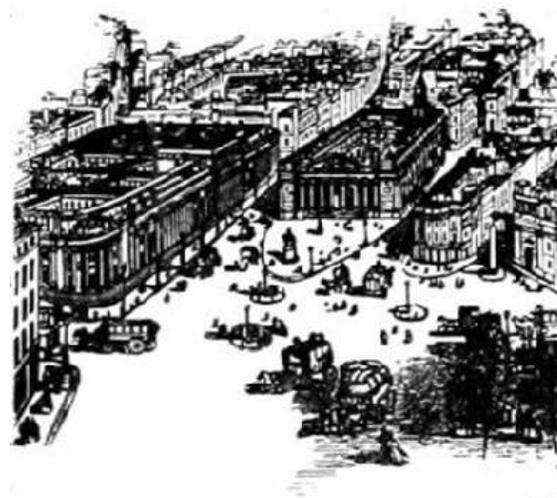
James Smith, *Comic Miscellanies*.

It is not easy to delimit the territorial confines of a great and growing city like London. The most that the most sanguine writer could hope to do would be to devote himself to recounting the facts and features, with more or less completeness, of an era, or an epoch, if the word be thought to confine the period of time more definitely.

There is no London of to-day; like "unborn to-morrow" and "dead yesterday," it does not exist. Some remains there may be of a former condition, and signs there assuredly are of still greater things to come, but the very face of the earth in the great world of London is constantly changing and being improved or disimproved, accordingly as its makers have acted wisely or not.



Billingsgate and the Custom House.



The Bank, Royal Exchange, and Mansion House.



General Post-Office.



King William Street and Gracechurch Street



St. Paul's, Cheapside, and Paternoster Row.



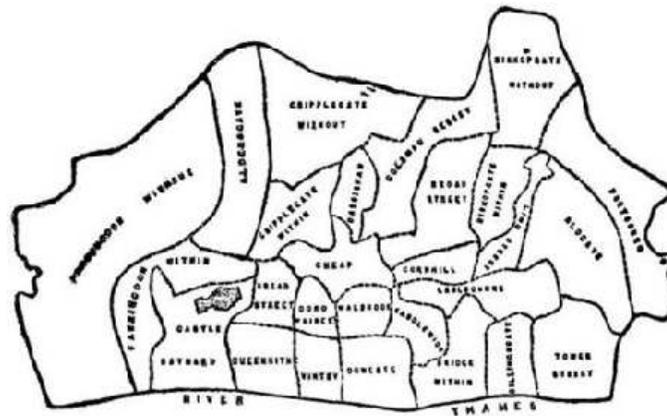
Fleet Street at Temple Bar.

"The City" — London.

The London of Dickens' time — the middle Victorian period — was undergoing, in some degree, at least, the rapid changes which were making themselves felt throughout the civilized world. New streets were being put through, old landmarks were being removed, and new and greater ones rising in their stead; roadways were being levelled, and hills were disappearing where they were previously known. How curious it is that this one topographical detail effects so great a change in the aspect of the buildings which border upon the streets. Take for instance the Strand as it exists to-day. Dickens might have to think twice before he would know which way to turn to reach the *Good Words* offices. This former narrow thoroughfare has been straightened, widened, and graded until about the only recognizable feature of a quarter of a century ago is the sky-line. Again, St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, a noble and imposing church, is manifestly made insignificant by the cutting down of the grade, and even removing the broad and gentle rising flight of steps which once graced its façade. Generally speaking, the reverse is the case, the level of the roadway being immeasurably raised, so that one actually steps down into a building which formerly was elevated a few steps. All this and much more is a condition which has worked a wondrous change in the topography of London, and doubtless many another great city.

As for grandeur and splendour, that can hardly be claimed for any city which does not make use of the natural features to heighten the effect of the embellishments which the hand of man has added to what nature has already given. London possesses these features to a remarkable degree, and she should make the best of them, even if to go so far as to form one of those twentieth-century innovations, known as an "Art Commission," which she lacks.

London would seem to be particularly fortunate in its situation, and that a large city should have grown up here was perhaps unavoidable: sufficiently far from the open sea to be well protected therefrom, yet sufficiently near thereto to have early become a powerful city and a great port.



The Wards of the City (E. C.)

Roman occupation, in spite of historians to the contrary, has with the later Norman leavened the Teutonic characteristics of the people of Britain perhaps more than is commonly credited. Cæsar's invasion was something more than a mere excursion, and his influence, at least afterward, developed the possibilities of the "mere collection of huts" with the Celtic name into the more magnificent city of Londinium.

It has been doubted if Cæsar really did know the London of the Britons, which historians have so assiduously tried to make a great and glorious city even before his time. More likely it was nothing of the sort, but was simply a hamlet, set down in a more or less likely spot, around which naturally gathered a slowly increasing population.

In a way, like the Celtic hill towns of Normandy and Brittany, it took Roman impulse to develop it into anything more beautiful and influential than the mere stockade or *zareba* of the aborigine. The first mention of London is supposed to be in the works of Tacitus, a century and a half after Cæsar's invasion. From this it would appear that by the year 62, in the reign of Nero, *Londinium* was already a place of "great importance."

Against the Roman domination the Britons finally rose at the call of the outraged Boadicea, who marched directly upon London as the chief centre of power and civilization. Though why the latter condition should have been resented it is still difficult to understand. Ptolemy, who, however, got much of his information second-hand, refers to London in his geography of the second century as *Londinion*, and locates it as being situate somewhere south of the Thames. All this is fully recounted in the books of reference, and is only mentioned as having more than a little to do with the modern city of London, which has grown up since the great fire in 1666.

As a British town it occupied a site probably co-extensive only with the later Billingsgate and the Tower on one hand, and Dowgate on the other. Lombard and Fenchurch Streets were its northerly limits, with the Wall-Brook and Sher-Bourne on the west. These limits, somewhat extended, formed the outlines of the Roman wall of the time of Theodosius (394).

Coming to a considerably later day, a matter of twelve hundred years or so, it is recalled that the period of the great fire is the time from which the building up of the present city dates, and from which all later reckoning is taken. London at that day (1666) was for the most part timber-built, and the flames swept unobstructed over an area very nearly approximating that formerly enclosed by London wall.

The Tower escaped; so did All-Hallows, Barking, Crosby Hall, and Austin Friars, but the fire was only checked on the west just before it reached the Temple Church and St. Dunstan's-in-the-West.

He who would know London well must be a pedestrian. Gay, who wrote one of the most exact and lively pictures of the external London of his time, has put it thus:

"Let others in the jolting coach confide,
Or in a leaky boat the Thames divide,
Or box'd within the chair, contemn the street,
And trust their safety to another's feet:
Still let me walk."

Such characteristic features as are properly applicable to the Thames have been dealt with in the chapter devoted thereto. With other localities and natural features it is hardly possible to more than make mention of the most

remarkable.

From Tower Hill to Hampstead Heath, and from the heights of Sydenham to Highgate is embraced the chief of those places which are continually referred to in the written or spoken word on London.

The Fleet and its ditch, with their unsavoury reputations, have been filled up. The Regent's Canal, which enters the Thames below Wapping, winds its way, now above ground and occasionally beneath, as a sort of northern boundary of London proper. Of other waterways, there are none on the north, while on the south there are but two minor streams, Beverly Brook and the River Wandle, which flow sluggishly from the Surrey downs into the Thames near Wandsworth.

As for elevations, the greatest are the four cardinal points before mentioned.

Tower Hill, with its rather ghastly romance, is first and foremost in the minds of the native and visitor alike. This particular locality has changed but little, if at all, since Dickens' day. The Minories, the Mint, Trinity House, the embattled "Tower" itself, with the central greensward enclosed by iron railings, and the great warehouses of St. Katherine's Dock, all remain as they must have been for years. The only new thing which has come into view is the garish and insincere Tower Bridge, undeniably fine as to its general effect when viewed from a distance down-river, with its historic background and the busy activities of the river at its feet. A sentiment which is speedily dispelled when one realizes that it is but a mere granite shell hung together by invisible iron girders. Something of the solidity of the Tower and the sincerity of a former day is lacking, which can but result in a natural contempt for the utilitarianism which sacrifices the true art expression in a city's monuments.

Of the great breathing-places of London, Hyde Park ranks easily the first, with Regent's Park, the Green Park, St. James' Park, Battersea Park, and Victoria Park in the order named. The famous Heath of Hampstead and Richmond Park should be included, but they are treated of elsewhere.

Hyde Park as an institution dates from the sixteenth century, and with Kensington Gardens — that portion which adjoins Kensington Palace — has undergone no great changes during the past hundred years.

At Hyde Park Corner is the famous Apsley House presented by the nation to the Duke of Wellington. At Cumberland Gate was Tyburn. The "Ring" near Grosvenor Gate was the scene of gallantries of the days of Charles II.; of late it has been devoted to the games of gamins and street urchins. The Serpentine is a rather suggestively and incongruously named serpentine body of water, which in a way serves to give a variety to an otherwise somewhat monotonous prospect.

The first Great International Exhibition was held in Hyde Park in 1851, and rank and fashion, in the mid-Victorian era, "church paraded" in a somewhat more exclusive manner than pursued by the participants in the present vulgar show. The Green Park and St. James's Park touch each other at the angles and, in a way, may be considered as a part of one general plan, though for a fact they vary somewhat as to their characteristics and functions, though under the same "Ranger," a functionary whose office is one of those sinecures which under a long-suffering, tax-burdened public are still permitted to abound.

The history of Regent's Park, London's other great open space, is brief. In 1812, the year of Dickens' birth, a writer called it "one of the most fashionable Sunday promenades about town." It certainly appears to have been quite as much the vogue for promenading as Hyde Park, though the latter retained its supremacy as a driving and riding place. The Zoological Gardens, founded in 1826, here situated, possess a perennial interest for young and old. The principal founders were Sir Humphrey Davy and Sir Stamford Raffles.

The rambler in old London, whether he be on foot or in a cab, or by the more humble and not inconvenient "bus," will, if he be in the proper spirit for that edifying occupation, be duly impressed by the mile-stones with which the main roads are set. Along the historic "Bath Road," the "Great North Road," the "Portsmouth Road," or the "Dover Road," throughout their entire length, are those silent though expressive monuments to the city's greatness.

In old coaching days the custom was perhaps more of a consolation than it proves to-day, and whether the Londoner was on pleasure bent, to the Derby or Epsom, or coaching it to Ipswich or Rochester, — as did Pickwick, — the mile-stones were always a cheerful link between two extremes.

To-day their functions are no less active; the advent of the bicycle and the motor-car makes it more necessary than ever that they should be there to mark distance and direction.

No more humorous aspect has ever been remarked than the anecdote recounted by a nineteenth-century historian of the hunt of one Jedediah Jones for the imaginary or long since departed "Hicks' Hall," from which the mile-stones, cryptographically, stated that "this stone was ten (nine, eight, etc.) miles from Hicks' Hall." The individual in question never was able to find the mythical "Hicks' Hall," nor the equally vague "Standard in Cornhill," the latter being referred to by an accommodating 'bus driver in this wise: "Put ye down at the 'Standard in Cornhill?' — that's a good one! I should like to know who ever seed the 'Standard in Cornhill.' Ve knows the

‘Svan wi’ Two Necks’ and the ‘Vite Horse’ in Piccadilly, but I never heerd of anybody that ever seed the ‘Standard in Cornhill.’ Ve simply reckons by it.”

The suburbs of London in Dickens’ time were full of such puzzling mile-stones. As late as 1831 a gate existed at Tyburn turnpike, and so, as if marking the distinction between London and the country, the mile-stones read from Tyburn.

Hyde Park Corner is still used in a similar way. Other stones read merely from London, but, as it would be difficult to know what part of London might best be taken to suit the purposes of the majority, the statement seems as vague as was Hicks’ Hall. Why not, as a writer of the day expressed it, measure from the G. P. O.? which to the stranger might prove quite as unintelligible, meaning in this case, however, General Post-Office.

The population return of 1831 shows a plan with a circle drawn eight miles from the centre, a region which then comprised 1,776,000 inhabitants. By 1841 the circle was reduced to a radius of one-half, and the population was still as great as that contained in the larger circle of a decade before. Thus the history of the growth of London shows that its greatest activities came with the beginning of the Victorian era.

By the census of 1861, the population of the City — the E. C. District — was only 112,247; while including that with the entire metropolis, the number was 2,803,034, or *twenty-five times* as great as the former. It may here be remarked that the non-resident, or, more properly, “non-sleeping” population of the City is becoming larger every year, on account of the substitution of public buildings, railway stations and viaducts, and large warehouses, in place of ordinary dwelling-houses. Fewer and fewer people *live* in the City. In 1851, the number was 127,869; it lessened by more than 15,000 between that year and 1861; while the population of the *whole* metropolis increased by as many as 440,000 in the same space of time.

In 1870, when Dickens was still living, the whole population was computed at 3,251,804, and the E. C. population was further reduced to 74,732.

In 1901 the “City” contained only 3,900 inhabited houses, and but 27,664 persons composed the night population.

The territorial limits or extent of London must vary greatly according as to whether one refers to “The City,” “London proper,” or “Greater London,” a phrase which is generally understood of the people as comprehending not only the contiguous suburbs of a city, but those residential communities closely allied thereto, and drawing, as it were, their support from it. If the latter, there seems no reason why London might not well be thought to include pretty much all of Kent and Surrey, — the home counties lying immediately south of the Thames, — though in reality one very soon gets into green fields in this direction, and but for the ominous signs of the builder and the enigmatic references of the native to the “city” or “town,” the stranger, at least, might think himself actually far from the madding throng.

For a fact this is not so, and local life centres, even now, as it did in days gone by, very much around the happenings of the day in London itself.

Taking it in its most restricted and confined literal sense, a circuit of London cannot be better expressed than by quoting the following passage from an author who wrote during the early Victorian period.

“I heard him relate that he had the curiosity to measure the circuit of London by a perambulation thereof. The account he gave was to this effect: He set out from his house in the Strand toward Chelsea, and, having reached the bridge beyond the water works, Battersea, he directed his course to Marylebone, from whence, pursuing an eastern direction, he skirted the town and crossed the Islington road at the ‘Angel.’ ... passing through Hoxton he got to Shoreditch, thence to Bethnal Green, and from thence to Stepney, where he recruited his steps with a glass of brandy. From Stepney he passed on to Limehouse, and took into his route the adjacent hamlet of Poplar, when he became sensible that to complete his design he must take in Southwark. This put him to a stand, but he soon determined on his course, for, taking a boat, he landed at the Red House at Deptford and made his way to Saye’s Court, where the wet dock is, and, keeping the houses along Rotherhithe to the right, he got to Bermondsey, thence by the south end of Kent Road to Newington, and over St. George’s Fields to Lambeth, and crossing over at Millbank, continued his way to Charing Cross and along the Strand to Norfolk Street, from whence he had set out. The whole excursion took him from nine in the morning to three in the afternoon, and, according to his rate of walking, he computed the circuit of London at about twenty miles.”

Since this was written, even these areas have probably extended considerably, until to-day the circuit is more nearly fifty miles than twenty, but in assuming that such an itinerary of twenty miles covers the ground specifically mentioned, it holds equally true to-day that this would be a stroll which would exhibit most of the distinguishing features and characteristics of the city.

Modes of conveyance have been improved. One finds the plebeian cab or “growler,” the more fastidious hansom, and the popular electric tram, which is fast replacing the omnibus in the outlying portions, to say nothing of the underground railways now being “electrified,” as the management put it.

These improvements have made not only distances seem less great, but have done much toward the speedy getting about from one place to another.

It matters not how the visitor enters London; he is bound to be duly impressed by the immensity of it. In olden times the ambassador to St. James' was met at Dover, where he first set foot upon English soil, by the Governor of the Castle and the local Mayor. From here he was passed on in state to the great cathedral city of Canterbury, sojourned for a space beneath the shadow of Rochester Castle, crossed the Medway, and finally reached Gravesend, reckoned the entry to the port of London. Here he was received by the Lord Mayor of London and the Lord Chamberlain, and "took to water in the royal galley-foist," or barge, when he was rowed toward London by the Royal Watermen, an institution of sturdy fellows which has survived to this day, even appearing occasionally in their picturesque costumes at some river fête or function at Windsor.

With a modern visitor it is somewhat different; he usually enters by one of the eight great gateways, London Bridge, Waterloo, Euston, Paddington, St. Pancras, King's Cross, Victoria or Charing Cross, unless by any chance he arrives by sea, which is seldom; the port of London, for the great ocean liner, is mostly a "home port," usually embarking or disembarking passengers at some place on the south or west coast, — Southampton, Plymouth, Liverpool, or Glasgow.

In either case, he is ushered instantly into a great, seething world, unlike, in many of its features, anything elsewhere, with its seemingly inextricable maze of streets and bustle of carriages, omnibuses, and foot-passengers.

He sees the noble dome of St. Paul's rising over all, possibly the massiveness of the Tower, or the twin towers of Westminster, of those of the "New Houses of Parliament," as they are still referred to.

From the south only, however, does the traveller obtain a really pleasing first impression. Here in crossing any one of the five central bridges he comes at once upon a prospect which is truly grand.

The true pilgrim — he who visits a shrine for the love of its patron — is the one individual who gets the best of life and incidentally of travel. London sightseeing appeals largely to the American, and it is to him that most of the sights and scenes of the London of to-day — and for that matter, of the past fifty years — most appeal. In the reign of James I. sights, of a sort, were even then patronized, presumably by the stranger. "The Londoner never goes anywhere or sees anything," as one has put it. In those days it cost two pence to ascend to the top of Old St. Paul's, and in the Georges' time, a penny to ascend the "Monument." To-day this latter treat costs three pence, which is probably an indication of the tendency of the times to raise prices.

With many it may be said it is merely a rush and a scramble, "personally conducted," or otherwise, to get over as large a space of ground in a given time as legs and lungs will carry one. Walpole remarked the same sad state of affairs when he wrote of the Houghton visitors.

"They come and ask what such a room is called ... write it down; admire a cabbage or a lobster in a market piece (picture?); dispute as to whether the last room was green or purple, and then hurry to the inn for fear the fish should be overdressed."

One who knows his London is amused at the disappointment that the visitor often feels when comparing his impression of London, as it really is, with the London of his imagination.

As they ride down Fleet Street they are surprised at the meanness of the buildings as compared with those which had existed in their mind's eye. This might not be the case were but their eyes directed to the right quarter. Often and often one has seen the stranger on a bus gazing at the houses in Fleet Street instead of looking, as he should, right ahead. In this way he misses the most sublime views in London: that of the "Highway of Letters" in its true relation to St. Paul's in the east and the Abbey in the west.

The long dip of the street and the opposite hill of Ludgate give an incomparable majesty to the Cathedral, crowning the populous hill, soaring serenely above the vista of houses, gables, chimneys, signals, and telegraph wires, —

"Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call town."

Coming by one of the existing modern gateways the railway termini, before mentioned, the visitor would be well advised to reënter London the next day *via* the "Uxbridge Road," upon an omnibus bound for the Bank, securing a front seat. He will then make his triumphal entry along five miles of straight roadway, flanked by magnificent streets, parks, and shops, until, crossing Holborn Viaduct, he is borne past the General Post-Office, under the shadow of St. Paul's, and along Cheapside to the portico of the Royal Exchange — the hub of the world. As Byron well knew, only time reveals London:

"The man who has stood on the Acropolis
And looked down over Attica; or he
Who has sailed where picturesque Constantinople is,
Or seen Timbuctoo, or hath taken tea

In small-eyed China's crockery-ware metropolis,
Or sat midst the bricks of Nineveh,
May not think much of London's first appearance;
But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence!"

As with society, so with certain localities of London; there are some features which need not be described; indeed they are not fit to be, and, while it cannot be said that Dickens ever expressed himself in manner aught but proper, there are details of the lives and haunts of the lower classes of which a discussion to any extent should be reserved for those economic works which treat solely of social questions. The "Hell's Kitchens" and "Devil's Furnaces," all are found in most every large city of Europe and America; and it cannot be said that the state of affairs, with regard thereto, is in any way improving, though an occasional slum is blotted out entirely.

Not alone from a false, or a prudish, refinement are these questions kept in the background, but more particularly are they diminished in view in order to confine the contents of this book to a résumé of the facts which are the most agreeable. Even in those localities where there is little else but crime and ignorance, suffering and sorrow, there is also, in some measure, propriety and elegance, comfort and pleasure.

If the old "Tabard" of Chaucer's day has given way to a garish and execrable modern "Public House," some of the sentiment still hangs over the locality, and so, too, with the riverside communities of Limehouse and Wapping. Sentiment as well as other emotions are unmistakably reminiscent, and the enthusiastic admirer of Dickens, none the less than the general lover of a historical past, will derive much pleasure from tracing itineraries for himself among the former sites and scenes of the time, not far gone, of which he wrote.

Eastcheap has lost some of its old-world atmosphere, and is now given over to the coster element. Finsbury and Islington are covered with long rows of dull-looking houses which have existed for a matter of fifty or seventy-five years, with but little change except an occasional new shop-front and a new street cut through here and there. Spring Gardens, near Trafalgar Square, is no longer a garden, and is as dull and gloomy a place as any flagged courtyard in a less aristocratic neighbourhood.

The old "Fleet Ditch" no longer runs its course across Holborn and into the Thames at Blackfriars. Churches, palaces, theatres, prisons, and even hospitals have, in a measure, given way to progressive change and improvement.

Guy's Hospital, identified with letters from the very foundation of its patron, — one Thomas Guy, a bookseller of Lombard Street, — dates only from the eighteenth century, and has to-day changed little from what it was in Dickens' time, when he lived in near-by Lant Street, and the fictional character of "Sawyer" gave his famous party to which "Mr. Pickwick" was invited. "It's near Guy's," said Sawyer, "and handy for me, you know."

On the whole, London is remarkably well preserved; its great aspects suffer but very little change, and the landmarks and monuments which met Dickens' gaze are sufficiently numerous and splendid to still be recognizable by any who possess any degree of familiarity with his life and works. Many well-known topographical features are still to be found within the sound of Bow Bells and Westminster. Those of the Strand and Fleet Street, of the Borough, Bermondsey, Southwark southward of the river, and Bloomsbury in the north, form that debatable ground which is ever busy with hurrying feet. The street-sweeper, though, has mostly disappeared, and the pavements of Whitehall are more evenly laid than were the Halls of Hampton Court in Wolsey's day.

Where streets run off from the great thoroughfares, they are often narrow and in a way ill kept, but this is due more to their confined area than to any carelessness or predisposition on the part of the authorities to ignore cleanliness.

London possesses a series of topographical divisions peculiar to itself, when one considers the number thereof, referring to the numerous squares which, in a way, correspond to the Continental place, platz, or plaza. It is, however, a thing quite different. It may be a residential square, like Bedford, Bloomsbury, or Belgrave Squares, or, like Covent Garden and Lincoln's Inn Fields, given over to business of a certain sedate kind. These latter two are the oldest of London squares. Or, like Trafalgar Square, of a frankly commercial aspect.

On the Continent they are generally more of architectural pretensions than in London, and their functions are quite different, having more of a public or ceremonial character; whereas here the more exclusive are surrounded with the houses of the nobility or aristocracy, or what passes for it in these days; or, as in the case of Trafalgar Square, — in itself of splendid architectural value, — little more than a point of crossing or meeting of streets, like Piccadilly and Oxford Circus.

In the "City," the open spaces are of great historical association; namely, Charterhouse, Bridgewater, Salisbury, Gough, and Warwick Squares. They show very few signs of life and humanity of a Sunday or a holiday, but are active enough at other times.

Further west are the quiet precincts of the Temple and Lincoln's Inn Fields, one of the most ancient and, on the whole, the most attractive of all, with its famous houses and institutions of a storied past.

While, if not actually to be counted as city squares, they perform in no small degree many of their functions.

Red Lion Square, to the north of Fleet Street, is gloomy enough, and reminiscent of the old "Red Lion" Inn, for long "the largest and best frequented inn in Holborn," and yet more worthily, as being the residence of Milton after his pardon from King Charles.

Soho Square and Golden Square are quiet and charming retreats, away from the bustle of the shoppers of Regent and Oxford Streets, though perhaps melancholy enough to the seeker after real architectural charm and beauty.

It is to Bloomsbury that the heart of the American most fondly turns, whether he takes residence there by reason of its being "so near to the British Museum, you know," or for motives of economy, either of which should be sufficient of itself, likewise commendable.

The museum itself, with its reading-room and collections, is the great attraction, it cannot be denied, of this section of London, and Bloomsbury Square, Torrington Square, Queen's Square, and Mecklenburgh Square, where Dickens lived and wrote much of "Pickwick" in 1837-39, are given over largely to "board-residence" establishments for the visitor, or he who for reasons good and true desires to make his abode in historic old Bloomsbury.

In Dickens' time the region had become the haunt of those who affected science, literature, or art, by reason of the proximity of the British Museum and the newly founded University of London.

The wealthy element, who were not desirous of being classed among the fashionables, were attracted here by its nearness to the open country and Regent's Park. Thus, clustering around Bloomsbury is a whole nucleus of squares; "some comely," says a writer, "some elegant," and all with a middle-class air about them.

Still further west are the aristocratic and exclusive St. James' Square, Berkley, Belgrave, Grosvenor, Manchester, Devonshire, and many more rectangles which are still the possession of the exclusives and pseudo-fashionables. Their histories and their goings-on are lengthy chronicles, and are not within the purpose of this book, hence may be dismissed with mere mention.

The flow of the Thames from west to east through the metropolis has given a general direction to the lines of street; the principal thoroughfares being, in some measure, parallel to the river, with the inferior, or at least shorter, streets branching from them. Intersecting the town lengthwise, or from east to west, are two great leading thoroughfares at a short distance from each other, but gradually diverging at their western extremity. One of these routes begins in the eastern environs, near Blackwall, and extends along Whitechapel, Leadenhall Street, Cornhill, the Poultry, Cheapside, Newgate Street, Holborn, and Oxford Street. The other may be considered as starting at London Bridge, and passing up King William Street into Cheapside, at the western end of which it makes a bend round St. Paul's Churchyard; thence proceeds down Ludgate Hill, along Fleet Street and the Strand to Charing Cross, where it sends a branch off to the left to Whitehall, and another diagonally to the right, up Cockspur Street; this leads forward into Pall Mall, and sends an offshoot up Waterloo Place into Piccadilly, which proceeds westward to Hyde Park Corner. These are the two main lines of the metropolis.

Of recent years two important new thoroughfares have been made, viz., New Cannon Street, extending from London Bridge to St. Paul's Churchyard, and Queen Victoria Street, which, leaving the Mansion House, crosses Cannon Street about its centre, and extends to Blackfriars Bridge. The third main route begins at the Bank, and passes through the City Road and the New Road to Paddington and Westbourne. The New Road here mentioned has been renamed in three sections, — Pentonville Road, from Islington to King's Cross; Euston Road, from King's Cross to Regent's Park; and Marylebone Road, from Regent's Park to Paddington. The main cross-branches in the metropolis are Farringdon Street, leading from Blackfriars Bridge to Holborn, and thence to King's Cross; the Haymarket, leading from Cockspur Street; and Regent Street, running northwesterly in the direction of Regent's Park. Others from the north of Holborn are Tottenham Court Road, parallel to Gower Street, where the Dickenses first lived when they came to London. Gray's Inn Road, near which is Gray's Inn, where Dickens himself was employed as a lawyer's clerk, and Doughty Street, where, at No. 48, can still be seen Dickens' house, as a sign-board on the door announces: "Dickens lived here in 1837." Aldersgate, continued as Goswell Road, connects with Islington and Whitechapel, and Mile End Road leads to Essex.

Such were the few main arteries of traffic in Dickens' day, and even unto the present; the complaint has been that there are not more direct thoroughfares of a suitable width, both lengthwise and crosswise, to cope with the immense and cumbersome traffic of 'bus and dray, to say nothing of carts and cabs.

Nothing is likely to give the stranger a just estimate of the magnitude of this more than will the observance of the excellent police control of the cross traffic, when, in some measure, its volume will be apparent.

It would perhaps be impossible in a work such as this that any one locality could be described with anything like adequate completeness. Certainly one would not hope to cover the ground entire, where every division and

subdivision partakes severally of widely different characteristics.

Southwark and the Borough, with its High Street, St. George's Church and Fields, the old Marshalsea — or the memory of it — "The King's Bench" Prison, and "Guy's," are something quite different with respect to manners and customs from Whitechapel or Limehouse.

So, too, are St. Giles' and Pimlico in the west, and Hampstead and Highgate in North London. Since all of these are dealt with elsewhere, to a greater or lesser degree, a few comments on the Whitechapel of Dickens' day must suffice here, and, truth to tell, it has not greatly changed since that time, save for a periodical cleaning up and broadening of the main thoroughfare. It is with more or less contempt and disgust that Whitechapel is commonly recalled to mind. Still, Whitechapel is neither more nor less disreputable than many other localities sustained by a similar strata of society. It serves, however, to illustrate the life of the east end, as contrasted with that of the west of London — the other pole of the social sphere — and is, moreover, peopled by that class which Dickens, in a large measure, incorporated into the novels.

In ancient times Northumberland, Throgmorton, and Crosby were noble names associated therewith. In Dickens' day butchers, it would seem, were the predominate species of humanity, while to-day Jewish "sweat-shops" are in the ascendant, a sufficiently fine distinction to render it recognizable to any dweller in a large city, whatever his nationality.

The fleur-de-lis and royal blazonings are no longer seen, and such good old Anglo-Saxon names as Stiles, Stiggins, and Stodges are effectually obliterated from shop signs. How changed this ancient neighbourhood is from what it must once have been! Crosby Hall, in Bishopsgate Street, not far distant, the *ci-devant* palace of Richard II., is now a mere eating-house, albeit a very good one. And as for the other noble houses, they have gone the way of all fanes when once encroached upon by the demands of business progress.

Baynard Castle, where Henry VII. received his ambassadors, and in which the crafty Cecil plotted against Lady Jane Grey, almost before the ink was dry with which he had solemnly registered his name to serve her, has long ago been numbered amongst the things that were. The archers of Mile-end, with their chains of gold, have departed: the spot on which the tent stood, where bluff Hal regaled himself after having witnessed their sports, is now covered with mean-looking houses: as one has said, "the poetry of ancient London is well-nigh dead."

The voice of the stream is for ever hushed that went murmuring before the dwellings of our forefathers, along Aldgate and down Fenchurch Street, and past the door of Sir Thomas Gresham's house, in Lombard Street, until it doubled round by the Mansion House and emptied itself into the river. There is still the sound of rushing waters by the Steam-Packet Wharf, at London Bridge; but how different to the "brawling brook" of former days is the "evil odour" which arises from the poisonous sewers of to-day.

And to what have these old-world splendours given place? Splendid gin-shops, plate-glass palaces, into which squalor and misery rush and drown the remembrance of their wretchedness in drowsy and poisonous potations of an inferior quality of liquor. Such splendour and squalor is the very contrast which makes thinking men pause, and pause again.



WHITECHAPEL.

The Whitechapel butcher was of the old school. He delighted in a blue livery, and wore his "steel" with as much satisfaction as a young ensign does his sword. He neither spurned the worsted leggins nor duck apron; but with bare muscular arms, and knife keen enough to sever the hamstring of a bull, took his stand proudly at the front of his shop, and looked "lovingly" on the well-fed joints above his head. The gutters before his door literally ran with blood: pass by whenever you would, there the crimson current constantly flowed; and the smell the passenger inhaled was not that of "Araby." A "Whitechapel bird" and a "Whitechapel butcher" were once synonymous phrases, used to denote a character the very reverse of a gentleman; but, says a writer of the fifties, "in the manners of the latter we believe there is a great improvement, and that more than one 'knight of the cleaver' who here in the daytime manufacture sheep into mutton chops, keeps his country house."

The viands offered for sale augur well for the strength of the stomachs of the Whitechapel populace. The sheep's trotters look as if they had scarcely had time enough to kick off the dirt before they were potted; and as for the ham, it appears bleached, instead of salted; and to look at the sandwiches, you would think they were anything except what they are called. As for the fried fish, it resembles coarse red sand-paper; and you would sooner think of purchasing a penny-worth to polish the handle of a cricket bat or racket, than of trying its qualities in any other way. The "black puddings" resemble great fossil ammonites, cut up lengthwise. What the "faggots" are made of, which form such a popular dish in this neighbourhood, we have yet to learn. We have heard rumours of chopped lights, liver, suet, and onions as being the components of these dusky dainties; but he must be a daring man who would convince himself by tasting: for our part, it would seem that there was a great mystery to be unravelled before the innumerable strata which form these smoking hillocks will ever be made known. The pork pies which you see in these windows contain no such effeminate morsels as lean meat, but have the appearance of good substantial bladders of lard shoved into a strong crust, and "done brown" in a superheated oven.

Such, crudely, is an impression of certain aspects of "trade" in Whitechapel, but its most characteristic feature outside of the innumerable hawkers of nearly everything under the sun, new or old, which can be sold at a relatively low price, is the famous "Rag Fair," a sort of "old clo's" mart, whose presiding geniuses are invariably of the Jewish persuasion, either male or female. Rags which may have clothed the fair person of a duchess have here so fallen as to be fit only for dusting cloths. The insistent vender will assure you that they have been worn but "werry leetle, werry leetle, indeed.... Vell, vot of it, look at the pryshe!"

Dank and fetid boxes and barrows, to say naught of the more ambitious shops, fill the Whitechapel Road and Petticoat Lane (now changed to Middlesex Street, but some measure of the old activities may still be seen of a Sunday morning).

A rummaging around will bring to light, likely enough, something that may once have been a court dress, a bridal costume, or a ball gown; a pair of small satin slippers, once white; a rusty crêpe, a "topper of a manifestly early vintage, or what not, all may be found here. One might almost fancy that Pride, in some material personification, might indeed be found buried beneath the mass of dross, or having shuffled off its last vestiges of respectability, its corpse might at least be found to have left its shroud behind; and such these tattered habiliments really are. Rag Fair to-day is still the great graveyard of Fashion; the last cemetery to which cast-off clothes are borne before they enter upon another state of existence, and are spirited into dusters and dish-cloths.

Of all modern cities, London, perhaps more than any other, is justly celebrated for the number and variety of its suburbs.

On the northwest are Hampstead, with its noble Heath reminiscent of "highwaymen and scoundrels," and its charming variety of landscape scenery; and Harrow, with its famous old school, associated with the memory of Byron, Peel, and many other eminent men, to the churchyard of which Byron was a frequent visitor. "There is," he wrote to a friend in after years, "a spot in the churchyard, near the footpath on the brow of the hill looking toward Windsor, and a tomb (bearing the name of Peachey) under a large tree, where I used to sit for hours and hours when a boy." Nearly northward are Highgate, with its fringe of woods, and its remarkable series of ponds; Finchley, also once celebrated for its highwaymen, but now for its cemeteries; Hornsey, with its ivy-clad church, and its pretty winding New River; and Barnet, with its great annual fair, still an institution attended largely by costers and horse-traders. On the northeast are Edmonton, with its tavern, which the readers of "John Gilpin" will of course never forget; Enfield, where the government manufactures rifles on a vast scale; Waltham, notable for its ancient abbey church; and Epping Forest, a boon to picnic parties from the east end of London.

South of the Thames, likewise, there are many pretty spots, quite distinct from those which border upon the river's bank. Wimbledon, with its furze-clad common and picturesque windmill; Mitcham, with its herb gardens; Norwood, a pleasant bit of high ground, from which a view of London from the south can be had; Lewisham and Bromley, surrounded by many pretty bits of scenery; Blackheath, a famous place for golf and other outdoor games; Eltham, where a bit of King John's palace is still left to view; the Crays, a string of picturesque villages on the banks of the River Cray, etc. Dulwich is a village about five miles south of London Bridge. Here Edward Alleyn,

or Allen, a distinguished actor in the reign of James I., founded and endowed an hospital or college, called Dulwich College, for the residence and support of poor persons, under certain limitations.
the end.

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF LONDON DURING THE LIFETIME OF CHARLES DICKENS.

- 1812 Oct. 10. Present Drury Lane Theatre opened.
- 1814 Nov. 29. The Times newspaper first printed by steam.
- 1816 Vauxhall Bridge opened.
- 1817 Waterloo Bridge opened.
- 1818 Furnival's Inn rebuilt.
- 1820 Jan. 29. George III. died.
Cabs came in.
- 1821 Bank of England completed by Sir John Soane.
- 1824 March 15. First pile of London Bridge driven.
First stone of new Post-office laid.
May 10. National Gallery first opened.
- 1825 Thames Tunnel commenced.
Toll-house at Hyde Park Corner removed.
- 1828 St. Katherine Docks opened.
Birdcage Walk made a public way.
- 1829 King's College in the Strand commenced.
New police service established by Sir Robert Peel.
- 1830 June 26. George IV. died.
Omnibuses first introduced by Shillibeer; the first ran between Paddington and the Bank.
Covent Garden Market rebuilt.
- 1831 Hungerford Market commenced.
The Hay Market in Pall Mall removed to Regent's Park.
Exeter Hall opened.
- 1834 Houses of Parliament burned down.
- 1835 Duke of York's Column completed.
- 1837 William IV. died. Accession of Queen Victoria.
Buckingham Palace first occupied.
- 1838 First Royal Academy Exhibition in Trafalgar Square.
- 1841 Great Fire at the Tower of London.
- 1843 Nelson Column placed in Trafalgar Square.
- 1845 Hungerford Bridge opened.
Lincoln's Inn New Hall opened by Queen Victoria.
- 1847 Covent Garden Theatre opened as Italian Opera House.
New House of Lords opened.
New Portico and Hall of British Museum opened.
- 1848 April 10. Great Chartist Demonstration.
- 1851 Great Exhibition in Hyde Park.
- 1852 Nov. 18. Duke of Wellington's Funeral.
- 1855 April 19. Visit of Emperor and Empress of French.
Nov. 30. Visit of King of Sardinia.
- 1858 Jan. 31. Steamship "Great Eastern" launched.
- 1860 Underground Railway begun.

- 1862 March 12. Mr. George Peabody, the American merchant, gives £150,000 to ameliorate the condition of London poor.
May 1. Second International Exhibition opened.
- 1863 Jan. 10. Underground Railway opened.
March 7. Princess Alexandra, of Denmark, enters London.
- 1864 Jan. 1. New street opened between Blackfriars' and London Bridge.
Feb. 29. First block of Peabody Buildings opened in Spitalfields.
April 21. Garibaldi receives the freedom of the city.
- 1866 Jan. 29. Mr. Peabody adds £100,000 to his gift to the London poor.
May 10. Black Friday, commercial panic.
July 24. Riots in Hyde Park.
Sept. 1. Cannon Street Railway Station opened.
- 1867 Jan. 15. Severe frost; forty lives lost by the breaking of the ice in Regent's Park.
June 3. First stone of Holborn Viaduct laid.
- 1868 May 13. The Queen lays foundation of St. Thomas' Hospital.
Dec. 5. George Peabody gives another £100,000 to the poor of London.
- 1869 July 23. Statue of George Peabody unveiled by the Prince of Wales.
Nov. 6. Opening of Holborn Viaduct by the Queen.
- 1870 July 13. Opening of the Victoria Embankment by the Prince of Wales.
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From: **Charles Dickens and Music**, by James T. Lightwood



Tom Pinch at the Organ.

Frontispiece.

CHARLES DICKENS AND MUSIC

BY

JAMES T. LIGHTWOOD

Author of

'Hymn-Tunes and their Story'

London

CHARLES H. KELLY

25-35 CITY ROAD, AND 26 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

First Edition, 1912

IN PLEASANT MEMORY

OF MANY HAPPY YEARS

AT PEMBROKE HOUSE, LYTHAM

PREFACE

For many years I have been interested in the various musical references in Dickens' works, and have had the impression that a careful examination

of his writings would reveal an aspect of his character hitherto unknown, and, I may add, unsuspected. The centenary of his birth hastened a work long contemplated, and a first reading (after many years) brought to light an amount of material far in excess of what I anticipated, while a second examination convinced me that there is, perhaps, no great writer who has made a more extensive use of music to illustrate character and create incident than Charles Dickens. From an historical point of view these references are of the utmost importance, for they reflect to a nicety the general condition of ordinary musical life in England during the middle of the last century. We do not, of course, look to Dickens for a history of classical music during the period — those who want this will find it in the newspapers and magazines; but for the story of music in the ordinary English home, for the popular songs of the period, for the average musical attainments of the middle and lower classes (music was not the correct thing amongst the ‘upper ten’), we must turn to the pages of Dickens’ novels. It is certainly strange that no one has hitherto thought of tapping this source of information. In and about 1887 the papers teemed with articles that outlined the history of music during the first fifty years of Victoria’s reign; but I have not seen one that attempted to derive first-hand information from the sources referred to, nor indeed does the subject of ‘Dickens and Music’ ever appear to have received the attention which, in my opinion, it deserves.

I do not profess to have chronicled *all* the musical references, nor has it been possible to identify every one of the numerous quotations from songs, although I have consulted such excellent authorities as Dr. Cummings, Mr. Worden (Preston), and Mr. J. Allanson Benson (Bromley). I have to thank Mr. Frank Kidson, who, I understand, had already planned a work of this description, for his kind advice and assistance. There is no living writer who has such a wonderful knowledge of old songs as Mr. Kidson, a knowledge which he is ever ready to put at the disposal of others. Even now there are some half-dozen songs which every attempt to run to earth has failed, though I have tried to ‘mole ‘em out’ (as Mr. Pancks would say) by searching through some hundreds of song-books and some thousands of separate songs.

Should any of my readers be able to throw light on dark places I shall be very glad to hear from them, with a view to making the information here presented as complete and correct as possible if another edition should be

called for. May I suggest to the Secretaries of our Literary Societies, Guilds, and similar organizations that a pleasant evening might be spent in rendering some of the music referred to by Dickens. The proceedings might be varied by readings from his works or by historical notes on the music. Many of the pieces are still in print, and I shall be glad to render assistance in tracing them. Perhaps this idea will also commend itself to the members of the Dickens Fellowship, an organization with which all lovers of the great novelist ought to associate themselves.

JAMES T. LIGHTWOOD.

Lytham,

October, 1912.

I truly love Dickens; and discern in the inner man of him a tone of real Music which struggles to express itself, as it may in these bewildered, stupefied and, indeed, very crusty and distracted days — better or worse!

Thomas Carlyle.

LIST OF WORKS REFERRED TO

With Abbreviations Used

<i>American Notes</i>	1842	<i>A.N.</i>
<i>Barnaby Rudge</i>	1841	<i>B.R.</i>
<i>Battle of Life</i>	1848	<i>B.L.</i>
<i>Bleak House</i>	1852–3	<i>B.H.</i>
<i>Chimes</i>	1844	<i>Ch.</i>
<i>Christmas Carol</i>	1843	<i>C.C.</i>
<i>Christmas Stories</i>	—	<i>C.S.</i>
<i>Christmas Stories</i> —		
Dr. Marigold's Prescription	1865	<i>Dr. M.</i>
Going into Society	1855	<i>G.S.</i>
Holly Tree	1855	<i>H.T.</i>
Mugby Junction	1866	<i>M.J.</i>
Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings	1863	—
No Thoroughfare	1867	<i>N.T.</i>
Somebody's Luggage	1862	<i>S.L.</i>
Wreck of the Golden Mary	1856	<i>G.M.</i>

<i>Collected Papers</i>	—	<i>C.P.</i>
<i>Cricket on the Hearth</i>	1845	<i>C.H.</i>
<i>Dombey & Son</i>	1847–8	<i>D. & S.</i>
<i>David Copperfield</i>	1849–50	<i>D.C.</i>
<i>Edwin Drood</i>	1870	<i>E.D.</i>
<i>Great Expectations</i>	1860–1	<i>G.E.</i>
<i>Hard Times</i>	1854	<i>H.T.</i>
<i>Haunted House</i>	1859	—
<i>Haunted Man</i>	1848	<i>H.M.</i>
<i>Holiday Romance</i>	—	<i>H.R.</i>
<i>Little Dorrit</i>	1855–6	<i>L.D.</i>
<i>Martin Chuzzlewit</i>	1843–4	<i>M.C.</i>
<i>Master Humphrey's Clock</i>	1840–1	<i>M.H.C.</i>
<i>Mystery of Edwin Drood</i>	1870	<i>E.D.</i>
<i>Nicholas Nickleby</i>	1838–9	<i>N.N.</i>
<i>Old Curiosity Shop</i>	1840	<i>O.C.S.</i>
<i>Oliver Twist</i>	1837–8	<i>O.T.</i>
<i>Our Mutual Friend</i>	1864	<i>O.M.F.</i>
<i>Pickwick Papers</i>	1836–7	<i>P.P.</i>
<i>Pictures from Italy</i>	1846	<i>It.</i>
<i>Reprinted Pieces</i> —		
Our Bore	1852	—
Our English Watering-Place	1851	—
Our French Watering-Place	1854	—
Our School	1851	—
Out of the Season	1856	—
<i>Sketches by Boz</i>	1835–6	<i>S.B.</i>
Characters	—	<i>S.B.C.</i>
Our Parish	—	—
Scenes	—	<i>S.B.S.</i>
Tales	—	<i>S.B.T.</i>
<i>Sunday under Three Heads</i>	1836	—

<i>Sketches of Young People</i>	1840	—
<i>Sketches of Young Gentlemen</i>	1838	—
<i>Tale of Two Cities, A</i>	1859	—
<i>Uncommercial Traveller</i>	1860–9	<i>U.T.</i>

CHARLES DICKENS AND MUSIC

CHAPTER I

DICKENS AS A MUSICIAN

The attempts to instil the elements of music into Charles Dickens when he was a small boy do not appear to have been attended with success. Mr. Kitton tells us that he learnt the piano during his school days, but his master gave him up in despair. Mr. Bowden, an old schoolfellow of the novelist's when he was at Wellington House Academy, in Hampstead Road, says that music used to be taught there, and that Dickens received lessons on the violin, but he made no progress, and soon relinquished it. It was not until many years after that he made his third and last attempt to become an instrumentalist. During his first transatlantic voyage he wrote to Forster telling him that he had bought an accordion.

The steward lent me one on the passage out, and I regaled the ladies' cabin with my performances. You can't think with what feelings I play 'Home, Sweet Home' every night, or how pleasantly sad it makes us.

On the voyage back he gives the following description of the musical talents of his fellow passengers:

One played the accordion, another the violin, and another (who usually began at six o'clock a.m.) the key bugle: the combined effect of which instruments, when they all played different tunes, in different parts of the ship, at the same time, and within hearing of each other, as they sometimes did (everybody being intensely satisfied with his own performance), was sublimely hideous.

He does not tell us whether he was one of the performers on these occasions.

But although he failed as an instrumentalist he took delight in hearing music, and was always an appreciative yet critical listener to what was good and tuneful. His favourite composers were Mendelssohn — whose *Lieder* he was specially fond of 1 — Chopin, and Mozart. He heard Gounod's *Faust* whilst he was in Paris, and confesses to having been quite overcome

with the beauty of the music. 'I couldn't bear it,' he says, in one of his letters, 'and gave in completely. The composer must be a very remarkable man indeed.' At the same time he became acquainted with Offenbach's music, and heard *Orphée aux enfers*. This was in February, 1863. Here also he made the acquaintance of Auber, 'a stolid little elderly man, rather petulant in manner.' He told Dickens that he had lived for a time at 'Stock Noonton' (Stoke Newington) in order to study English, but he had forgotten it all. In the description of a dinner in the *Sketches* we read that

The knives and forks form a pleasing accompaniment to Auber's music, and Auber's music would form a pleasing accompaniment to the dinner, if you could hear anything besides the cymbals.

He met Meyerbeer on one occasion at Lord John Russell's. The musician congratulated him on his outspoken language on Sunday observance, a subject in which Dickens was deeply interested, and on which he advocated his views at length in the papers entitled *Sunday under Three Heads*.

Dickens was acquainted with Jenny Lind, and he gives the following amusing story in a letter to Douglas Jerrold, dated Paris, February 14, 1847:

I am somehow reminded of a good story I heard the other night from a man who was a witness of it and an actor in it. At a certain German town last autumn there was a tremendous *furor* about Jenny Lind, who, after driving the whole place mad, left it, on her travels, early one morning. The moment her carriage was outside the gates, a party of rampant students who had escorted it rushed back to the inn, demanded to be shown to her bedroom, swept like a whirlwind upstairs into the room indicated to them, tore up the sheets, and wore them in strips as decorations. An hour or two afterwards a bald old gentleman of amiable appearance, an Englishman, who was staying in the hotel, came to breakfast at the *table d'hôte*, and was observed to be much disturbed in his mind, and to show great terror whenever a student came near him. At last he said, in a low voice, to some people who were near him at the table, 'You are English gentlemen, I observe. Most extraordinary people, these Germans. Students, as a body, raving mad, gentlemen!' 'Oh, no,' said somebody else: 'excitable, but very good fellows, and very sensible.' 'By God, sir!' returned the old gentleman, still more disturbed, 'then there's something political in it, and I'm a marked man. I went out for a little walk this morning after shaving, and while I was gone' — he fell into a terrible perspiration as he told it — 'they burst into my bedroom, tore up my sheets, and are now patrolling the town

in all directions with bits of ‘em in their button-holes.’ I needn’t wind up by adding that they had gone to the wrong chamber.

It was Dickens’ habit wherever he went on his Continental travels to avail himself of any opportunity of visiting the opera; and his criticisms, though brief, are always to the point. He tells us this interesting fact about Carrara:

There is a beautiful little theatre there, built of marble, and they had it illuminated that night in my honour. There was really a very fair opera, but it is curious that the chorus has been always, time out of mind, made up of labourers in the quarries, who don’t know a note of music, and sing entirely by ear.

But much as he loved music, Dickens could never bear the least sound or noise while he was studying or writing, and he ever waged a fierce war against church bells and itinerant musicians. Even when in Scotland his troubles did not cease, for he writes about ‘a most infernal piper practising under the window for a competition of pipers which is to come off shortly.’ Elsewhere he says that he found Dover ‘too bandy’ for him (he carefully explains he does not refer to its legs), while in a letter to Forster he complains bitterly of the vagrant musicians at Broadstairs, where he ‘cannot write half an hour without the most excruciating organs, fiddles, bells, or glee singers.’ The barrel-organ, which he somewhere calls an ‘Italian box of music,’ was one source of annoyance, but bells were his special aversion. ‘If you know anybody at St. Paul’s,’ he wrote to Forster, ‘I wish you’d send round and ask them not to ring the bell so. I can hardly hear my own ideas as they come into my head, and say what they mean.’ His bell experiences at Genoa are referred to elsewhere (p. 57).

How marvellously observant he was is manifest in the numerous references in his letters and works to the music he heard in the streets and squares of London and other places. Here is a description of Golden Square, London, W. (*N.N.*):

Two or three violins and a wind instrument from the Opera band reside within its precincts. Its boarding-houses are musical, and the notes of pianos and harps float in the evening time round the head of the mournful statue, the guardian genius of the little wilderness of shrubs, in the centre of the square.... Sounds of gruff voices practising vocal music invade the evening’s silence, and the fumes of choice tobacco scent the air. There, snuff and cigars and German pipes and flutes, and violins and violoncellos,

divide the supremacy between them. It is the region of song and smoke. Street bands are on their mettle in Golden Square, and itinerant glee singers quaver involuntarily as they raise their voices within its boundaries.

We have another picture in the description of Dombey's house, where — the summer sun was never on the street but in the morning, about breakfast-time.... It was soon gone again, to return no more that day, and the bands of music and the straggling Punch's shows going after it left it a prey to the most dismal of organs and white mice.

As a Singer

Most of the writers about Dickens, and especially his personal friends, bear testimony both to his vocal power and his love of songs and singing. As a small boy we read of him and his sister Fanny standing on a table singing songs, and acting them as they sang. One of his favourite recitations was Dr. Watts' 'The voice of the sluggard,' which he used to give with great effect. The memory of these words lingered long in his mind, and both Captain Cuttle and Mr. Pecksniff quote them with excellent appropriateness.

When he grew up he retained his love of vocal music, and showed a strong predilection for national airs and old songs. Moore's *Irish Melodies* had also a special attraction for him. In the early days of his readings his voice frequently used to fail him, and Mr. Kitton tells us that in trying to recover the lost power he would test it by singing these melodies to himself as he walked about. It is not surprising, therefore, to find numerous references to these songs, as well as to other works by Moore, in his writings.

From a humorous account of a concert on board ship we gather that Dickens possessed a tenor voice. Writing to his daughter from Boston in 1867, he says:

We had speech-making and singing in the saloon of the *Cuba* after the last dinner of the voyage. I think I have acquired a higher reputation from drawing out the captain, and getting him to take the second in 'All's Well' and likewise in 'There's not in the wide world' 2 (your parent taking the first), than from anything previously known of me on these shores.... We also sang (with a Chicago lady, and a strong-minded woman from I don't know where) 'Auld Lang Syne,' with a tender melancholy expressive of having all four been united from our cradles. The more dismal we were, the more delighted the company were. Once (when we paddled i' the burn) the

captain took a little cruise round the compass on his own account, touching at the Canadian Boat Song, 3 and taking in supplies at Jubilate, 'Seas between us braid ha' roared,' and roared like ourselves.

J.T. Field, in his *Yesterdays with Authors*, says: 'To hear him sing an old-time stage song, such as he used to enjoy in his youth at a cheap London theatre ... was to become acquainted with one of the most delightful and original companions in the world.'

When at home he was fond of having music in the evening. His daughter tells us that on one occasion a member of his family was singing a song while he was apparently deep in his book, when he suddenly got up and saying 'You don't make enough of that word,' he sat down by the piano and showed how it should be sung.

On another occasion his criticism was more pointed.

One night a gentleman visitor insisted on singing 'By the sad sea waves,' which he did vilely, and he wound up his performance by a most unexpected and misplaced embellishment, or 'turn.' Dickens found the whole ordeal very trying, but managed to preserve a decorous silence till this sound fell on his ear, when his neighbour said to him, 'Whatever did he mean by that extraneous effort of melody?' 'Oh,' said Dickens, 'that's quite in accordance with rule. When things are at their worst they always take a *turn*.'

Forster relates that while he was at work on the *Old Curiosity Shop* he used to discover specimens of old ballads in his country walks between Broadstairs and Ramsgate, which so aroused his interest that when he returned to town towards the end of 1840 he thoroughly explored the ballad literature of Seven Dials, 4 and would occasionally sing not a few of these wonderful discoveries with an effect that justified his reputation for comic singing in his childhood. We get a glimpse of his investigations in *Out of the Season*, where he tells us about that 'wonderful mystery, the music-shop,' with its assortment of polkas with coloured frontispieces, and also the book-shop, with its 'Little Warblers and Fairburn's Comic Songsters.'

Here too were ballads on the old ballad paper and in the old confusion of types, with an old man in a cocked hat, and an armchair, for the illustration to Will Watch the bold smuggler, and the Friar of Orders Grey, represented by a little girl in a hoop, with a ship in the distance. All these as of yore, when they were infinite delights to me.

On one of his explorations he met a landsman who told him about the running down of an emigrant ship, and how he heard a sound coming over the sea 'like a great sorrowful flute or Aeolian harp.' He makes another and very humorous reference to this instrument in a letter to Landor, in which he calls to mind

that steady snore of yours, which I once heard piercing the door of your bedroom ... reverberating along the bell-wire in the hall, so getting outside into the street, playing Aeolian harps among the area railings, and going down the New Road like the blast of a trumpet.

The deserted watering-place referred to in *Out of the Season* is Broadstairs, and he gives us a further insight into its musical resources in a letter to Miss Power written on July 2, 1847, in which he says that

a little tinkling box of music that stops at 'come' in the melody of the Buffalo Gals, and can't play 'out to-night,' and a white mouse, are the only amusements left at Broadstairs.

'Buffalo Gals' was a very popular song 'Sung with great applause by the Original Female American Serenaders.' (c. 1845.) The first verse will explain the above allusion:

As I went lum'rin' down de street, down de street, A 'ansom gal I chanc'd to meet, oh, she was fair to view. Buffalo gals, can't ye come out to-night, come out to-night, come out to-night; Buffalo gals, can't ye come out to-night, and dance by the light of the moon.

We find some interesting musical references and memories in the novelist's letters. Writing to Wilkie Collins in reference to his proposed sea voyage, he quotes Campbell's lines from 'Ye Mariners of England':

As I sweep Through the deep When the stormy winds do blow.

There are other references to this song in the novels. I have pointed out elsewhere that the last line also belongs to a seventeenth-century song.

Writing to Mark Lemon (June, 1849) he gives an amusing parody of
Lesbia hath a beaming eye,
beginning

Lemon is a little hipped.

In a letter to Maclise he says:

My foot is in the house, My bath is on the sea, And before I take a souse, Here's a single note to thee.

These lines are a reminiscence of Byron's ode to Tom Moore, written from Venice on July 10, 1817:

My boat is on the shore, And my bark is on the sea, But before I go, Tom Moore, Here's a double health to thee!

The words were set to music by Bishop. This first verse had a special attraction for Dickens, and he gives us two or three variations of it, including a very apt one from Dick Swiveller .

Henry F. Chorley, the musical critic, was an intimate friend of Dickens. On one occasion he went to hear Chorley lecture on 'The National Music of the World,' and subsequently wrote him a very friendly letter criticizing his delivery, but speaking in high terms of the way he treated his subject.

In one of his letters he makes special reference to the singing of the Hutchinson family. 5 Writing to the Countess of Blessington, he says:

I must have some talk with you about these American singers. They must never go back to their own country without your having heard them sing Hood's 'Bridge of Sighs.'

Amongst the distinguished visitors at Gad's Hill was Joachim, who was always a welcome guest, and of whom Dickens once said 'he is a noble fellow.' His daughter writes in reference to this visit:

I never remember seeing him so wrapt and absorbed as he was then, on hearing him play; and the wonderful simplicity and *un*-self-consciousness of the genius went straight to my father's heart, and made a fast bond of sympathy between those two great men.

In Music Drama

Much has been written about Dickens' undoubted powers as an actor, as well as his ability as a stage manager, and it is well known that it was little more than an accident that kept him from adopting the dramatic profession. He ever took a keen interest in all that pertained to the stage, and when he was superintending the production of a play he was always particular about the musical arrangements. There is in existence a play-bill of 1833 showing that he superintended a private performance of *Clari*. This was an opera by Bishop, and contains the first appearance of the celebrated 'Home, Sweet Home,' a melody which, as we have already said, he reproduced on the accordion some years after. He took the part of Rolano, but had no opportunity of showing off his singing abilities, unless he took a part in the famous glee 'Sleep, gentle lady,' which appears in the work as a quartet for alto, two tenors, and bass, though it is now arranged in other forms.

In his dealings with the drama Dickens was frequently his own bandmaster and director of the music. For instance, in *No Thoroughfare* we

find this direction: ‘Boys enter and sing “God Save the Queen” (or any school devotional hymn).’ At Obenreizer’s entrance a ‘mysterious theme is directed to be played,’ that gentleman being ‘well informed, clever, and a good musician.’

Dickens was concerned in the production of one operetta — *The Village Coquettes* — for which he wrote the words, and John Hullah composed the music. It consists of songs, duets, and concerted pieces, and was first produced at St. James’s Theatre, London, on December 6, 1836. The following year it was being performed at Edinburgh when a fire broke out in the theatre, and the instrumental scores together with the music of the concerted pieces were destroyed. No fresh copy was ever made, but the songs are still to be obtained. Mr. Kitton, in his biography of the novelist, says, ‘The play was well received, and duly praised by prominent musical journals.’

The same writer gives us to understand that Hullah originally composed the music for an opera called *The Gondolier*, but used the material for *The Village Coquettes*. Braham, the celebrated tenor, had a part in it. Dickens says in a letter to Hullah that he had had some conversation with Braham about the work. The singer thought very highly of it, and Dickens adds:

His only remaining suggestion is that Miss Rainforth⁶ will want another song when the piece is in rehearsal — ‘a bravura — something in “The soldier tired” way.’

We have here a reference to a song which had a long run of popularity. It is one of the airs in Arne’s *Artaxerxes*, an opera which was produced in 1761, and which held the stage for many years. There is a reference to this song in *Sketches by Boz*, when Miss Evans and her friends visited the Eagle. During the concert ‘Miss Somebody in white satin’ sang this air, much to the satisfaction of her audience.

Dickens wrote a few songs and ballads, and in most cases he fell in with the custom of his time, and suggested the tune (if any) to which they were to be sung. In addition to those that appear in the various novels, there are others which deserve mention here.

In 1841 he contributed three political squibs in verse to the *Examiner*, one being the ‘Quack Doctor’s Proclamation,’ to the tune of ‘A Cobbler there was,’ and another called ‘The fine old English Gentleman.’

For the *Daily News* (of which he was the first editor) he wrote ‘The British Lion, a new song but an old story,’ which was to be sung to the tune

of the 'Great Sea Snake.' This was a very popular comic song of the period, which described a sea monster of wondrous size:

One morning from his head we bore
With every stitch of sail, And going
at ten knots an hour
In six months came to his tail.

Three of the songs in the *Pickwick Papers* (referred to elsewhere) are original, while Blandois' song in *Little Dorrit*, 'Who passes by this road so late,' is a translation from the French. This was set to music by R.S. Dalton.

In addition to these we find here and there impromptu lines which have no connexion with any song. Perhaps the best known are those which 'my lady Bowley' quotes in *The Chimes*, and which she had 'set to music on the new system':

Oh let us love our occupations,
Bless the squire and his relations,
Live upon our daily rations,
And always know our proper stations.

The reference to the 'new system' is not quite obvious. Dickens may have been thinking of the 'Wilhem' method of teaching singing which his friend Hullah introduced into England, or it may be a reference to the Tonic Sol-fa system, which had already begun to make progress when *The Chimes* was written in 1844. 7

There are some well-known lines which owners of books were fond of writing on the fly-leaf in order that there might be no mistake as to the name of the possessor. The general form was something like this:

John Wigglesworth is my name,
And England is my nation;
London is my dwelling-place,
And Christ is my salvation.

(See *Choir*, Jan., 1912, p. 5.) Dickens gives us at least two variants of this. In *Edwin Drood*, Durdles says of the Mayor of Cloisterham:

Mister Sapsea is his name,
England is his nation,
Cloisterham's his dwelling-place,
Aukshneer's his occupation.

And Captain Cuttle thus describes himself, ascribing the authorship of the words to Job — but then literary accuracy was not the Captain's strong point:

Cap'en Cuttle is my name,
And England is my nation,
This here is my dwelling-place,
And blessed be creation.

It is said that there appeared in the *London Singer's Magazine* for 1839 'The Teetotal Excursion, an original Comic Song by Boz, sung at the London Concerts,' but it is not in my copy of this song-book, nor have I ever seen it.

Dickens was always very careful in his choice of names and titles, and the evolution of some of the latter is very interesting. One of the many he conceived for the magazine which was to succeed *Household Words* was *Household Harmony*, while another was *Home Music*. Considering his dislike of bells in general, it is rather surprising that two other suggestions were *English Bells* and *Weekly Bells*, but the final choice was *All the Year Round*. Only once does he make use of a musician's name in his novels, and that is in *Great Expectations*. Philip, otherwise known as Pip, the hero, becomes friendly with Herbert Pocket. The latter objects to the name Philip, 'it sounds like a moral boy out of a spelling-book,' and as Pip had been a blacksmith and the two youngsters were 'harmonious,' Pocket asks him:

'Would you mind Handel for a familiar name? There's a charming piece of music, by Handel, called the "Harmonious Blacksmith."'

'I should like it very much.'

Dickens' only contribution to hymnology appeared in the *Daily News* February 14, 1846, with the title 'Hymn of the Wiltshire Labourers.' It was written after reading a speech at one of the night meetings of the wives of agricultural labourers in Wiltshire, held with the object of petitioning for Free Trade. This is the first verse:

O God, who by Thy Prophet's hand
Did'st smite the rocky brake,
Whence water came at Thy command
Thy people's thirst to slake,
Strike, now, upon this granite wall,
Stern, obdurate, and high;
And let some drop of pity fall
For us who starve and die!

We find the fondness for Italian names shown by vocalists and pianists humorously parodied in such self-evident forms as Jacksonini, Signora Marra Boni, and Billsmethi. Banjo Bones is a self-evident *nom d'occasion*, and the high-sounding name of Rinaldo di Velasco ill befits the giant Pickleson (*Dr. M.*), who had a little head and less in it. As it was essential that the Miss Crumptions of Minerva House should have an Italian master for their pupils, we find Signer Lobskini introduced, while the modern rage for Russian musicians is to some extent anticipated in Major Tpschoffki of the Imperial Bulgraderian Brigade (*G.S.*). His real name, if he ever had one, is said to have been Stakes.

Dickens has little to say about the music of his time, but in the reprinted paper called *Old Lamps for New Ones* (written in 1850), which is a strong condemnation of pre-Raphaelism in art, he attacks a similar movement in

regard to music, and makes much fun of the Brotherhood. He detects their influence in things musical, and writes thus:

In Music a retrogressive step in which there is much hope, has been taken. The P.A.B., or pre-Agincourt Brotherhood, has arisen, nobly devoted to consign to oblivion Mozart, Beethoven, Handel, and every other such ridiculous reputation, and to fix its Millennium (as its name implies) before the date of the first regular musical composition known to have been achieved in England. As this institution has not yet commenced active operations, it remains to be seen whether the Royal Academy of Music will be a worthy sister of the Royal Academy of Art, and admit this enterprising body to its orchestra. We have it, on the best authority, that its compositions will be quite as rough and discordant as the real old original.

Fourteen years later he makes use of a well-known phrase in writing to his friend Wills (October 8, 1864) in reference to the proofs of an article.

I have gone through the number carefully, and have been down upon Chorley's paper in particular, which was a 'little bit' too personal. It is all right now and good, and them's my sentiments too of the Music of the Future. 8

Although there was little movement in this direction when Dickens wrote this, the paragraph makes interesting reading nowadays in view of some musical tendencies in certain quarters.

1 In his speech at Birmingham on 'Literature and Art' (1853) he makes special reference to the 'great music of Mendelssohn.'

2 Moore's *Irish Melodies*.

3 Moore.

4 'Seven Dials! the region of song and poetry — first effusions and last dying speeches: hallowed by the names of Catnac and of Pitts, names that will entwine themselves with costermongers and barrel-organs, when penny magazines shall have superseded penny yards of song, and capital punishment be unknown!' (*S.B.S.* 5.)

5 The 'Hutchinson family' was a musical troupe composed of three sons and two daughters selected from the 'Tribe of Jesse,' a name given to the sixteen children of Jesse and Mary Hutchinson, of Milford, N.H. They toured in England in 1845 and 1846, and were received with great enthusiasm. Their songs were on subjects connected with Temperance and Anti-Slavery. On one occasion Judson, one of the number, was singing the

‘Humbled Husband,’ which he used to accompany with the fiddle, and he had just sung the line ‘I’m sadly taken in,’ when the stage where he was standing gave way and he nearly disappeared from view. The audience at first took this as part of the performance.

6 Miss Rainforth was the soloist at the first production of Mendelssohn’s ‘Hear my Prayer.’ (See *The Choir*, March, 1911.)

7 John Curwen published his *Grammar of Vocal Music* in 1842.

8 Quoted in Mr. R.C. Lehmann’s *Dickens as an Editor* (1912).

CHAPTER II

INSTRUMENTAL COMBINATIONS

VIOLIN, VIOLONCELLO, HARP, PIANO

Dickens’ orchestras are limited, both in resources and in the number of performers; in fact, it would be more correct to call them combinations of instruments. Some of them are of a kind not found in modern works on instrumentation, as, for instance, at the party at Trotty Veck’s (*Ch.*) when a ‘band of music’ burst into the good man’s room, consisting of a drum, marrow-bones and cleavers, and bells, ‘not *the* bells but a portable collection on a frame.’ We gather from Leech’s picture that other instrumentalists were also present. Sad to relate, the drummer was not quite sober, an unfortunate state of things, certainly, but not always confined to the drumming fraternity, since in the account of the Party at Minerva House (*S.B.T.*) we read that amongst the numerous arrivals were ‘the pianoforte player and the violins: the harp in a state of intoxication.’

We have an occasional mention of a theatre orchestra, as, for instance, when the Phenomenon was performing at Portsmouth (*N.N.*):

‘Ring in the orchestra, Grudden.’

That useful lady did as she was requested, and shortly afterwards the tuning of three fiddles was heard, which process, having been protracted as long as it was supposed that the patience of the orchestra could possibly bear it, was put a stop to by another jerk of the bell, which, being the signal to begin in earnest, set the orchestra playing a variety of popular airs with involuntary variations.

On one occasion Dickens visited Vauxhall Gardens by day, where ‘a small party of dismal men in cocked hats were “executing” the overture to *Tancredi*,’ but he does not, unfortunately, give us any details about the number or kind of instruments employed. This would be in 1836, when the

experiment of day entertainments was given a trial, and a series of balloon ascents became the principal attraction. Forster tells us that Dickens was a frequent visitor at the numerous gardens and places of entertainment which abounded in London, and which he knew better than any other man. References will be found elsewhere to the music at the Eagle (p. 47) and the White Conduit Gardens (p. 93).

Violin and Kit

We meet with but few players on the violin, and it is usually mentioned in connexion with other instruments, though it was to the strains of a solitary fiddle that Simon Tappetit danced a hornpipe for the delectation of his followers, while the same instrument supplied the music at the Fezziwig's ball.

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches.

The orchestra at the 'singing-house' provided for Jack's amusement when ashore (*U.T.* 5) consisted of a fiddle and tambourine; while at dances the instruments were fiddles and harps. It was the harps that first aroused Mr. Jingle's curiosity, as he met them being carried up the staircase of The Bull at Rochester, while, shortly after, the tuning of both harps and fiddles inspired Mr. Tupman with a strong desire to go to the ball. Sometimes the orchestra is a little more varied. At the private theatricals which took place at Mrs. Gattleton's (*S.B.T.* 9), the selected instruments were a piano, flute, and violoncello, but there seems to have been a want of proper rehearsal.

Ting, ting, ting! went the prompter's bell at eight o'clock precisely, and dash went the orchestra into the overture to the *Men of Prometheus*. The pianoforte player hammered away with laudable perseverance, and the violoncello, which struck in at intervals, sounded very well, considering. The unfortunate individual, however, who had undertaken to play the flute accompaniment 'at sight' found, from fatal experience, the perfect truth of the old adage, 'Out of sight, out of mind'; for being very near-sighted, and being placed at a considerable distance from his music-book, all he had an opportunity of doing was to play a bar now and then in the wrong place, and put the other performers out. It is, however, but justice to Mr. Brown to say that he did this to admiration. The overture, in fact, was not unlike a race between the different instruments; the piano came in first by several bars, and the violoncello next, quite distancing the poor flute; for the deaf

gentleman *too-too* 'd away, quite unconscious that he was at all wrong, until apprised, by the applause of the audience, that the overture was concluded.

It was probably after this that the pianoforte player fainted away, owing to the heat, and left the music of *Masaniello* to the other two. There were differences between these remaining musicians and Mr. Harleigh, who played the title rôle, the orchestra complaining that 'Mr. Harleigh put them out, while the hero declared that the orchestra prevented his singing a note.'

It was to the strains of a wandering harp and fiddle that Marion and Grace Jeddler danced 'a trifle in the Spanish style,' much to their father's astonishment as he came bustling out to see who 'played music on his property before breakfast.'

The little fiddle commonly known as a 'kit' that dancing-masters used to carry in their capacious tail coat pockets was much more in evidence in the middle of last century than it is now. Caddy Jellyby (*B.H.*), after her marriage to a dancing-master, found a knowledge of the piano and the kit essential, and so she used to practise them assiduously. When Sampson Brass hears Kit's name for the first time he says to Swiveller:

'Strange name — name of a dancing-master's fiddle, eh, Mr. Richard?'

We must not forget the story of a fine young Irish gentleman, as told by the one-eyed bagman to Mr. Pickwick and his friends, who,

being asked if he could play the fiddle, replied he had no doubt he could, but he couldn't exactly say for certain, because he had never tried.

Violoncello

Mr. Morfin (*D. & S.*), 'a cheerful-looking, hazel-eyed elderly bachelor,' was

a great musical amateur — in his way — after business, and had a paternal affection for his violoncello, which was once in every week transported from Islington, his place of abode, to a certain club-room hard by the Bank, where quartets of the most tormenting and excruciating nature were executed every Wednesday evening by a private party.

His habit of humming his musical recollections of these evenings was a source of great annoyance to Mr. James Carker, who devoutly wished 'that he would make a bonfire of his violoncello, and burn his books with it.' There was only a thin partition between the rooms which these two gentlemen occupied, and on another occasion Mr. Morfin performed an extraordinary feat in order to warn the manager of his presence.

I have whistled, hummed tunes, gone accurately through the whole of Beethoven's Sonata in B, to let him know that I was within hearing, but he never heeded me.

This particular sonata has not hitherto been identified.

It is comforting to know that the fall of the House of Dombey made no difference to Mr. Morfin, who continued to solace himself by producing 'the most dismal and forlorn sounds out of his violoncello before going to bed,' a proceeding which had no effect on his deaf landlady, beyond producing 'a sensation of something rumbling in her bones.'

Nor were the quartet parties interfered with. They came round regularly, his violoncello was in good tune, and there was nothing wrong in *his* world. Happy Mr. Morfin!

Another 'cellist was the Rev. Charles Timson, who, when practising his instrument in his bedroom, used to give strict orders that he was on no account to be disturbed.

It was under the pretence of buying 'a second-hand wiolinceller' that Bucket visited the house of the dealer in musical instruments in order to effect the arrest of Mr. George (*B.H.*).

Harp

The harp was a fashionable drawing-room instrument in the early Victorian period, although the re-introduction of the guitar temporarily detracted from its glory. It was also indispensable in providing music for dancing-parties and concerts. When Esther Summerson went to call on the Turveydrops (*B.H.*) she found the hall blocked up with a grand piano, a harp, and various other instruments which had been used at a concert. As already stated, it was the sight of these instruments being carried up the stairs at The Bull in Rochester that aroused Mr. Jingle's curiosity (*P.P.*) and led to the discovery that a ball was in prospect.

We must not forget the eldest Miss Larkins, one of David Copperfield's early, fleeting loves. He used to wander up and down outside the home of his beloved and watch the officers going in to hear Miss L. play the harp. On hearing of her engagement to one of these he mourned for a very brief period, and then went forth and gloriously defeated his old enemy the butcher boy. What a contrast between this humour and the strange scene in the drawing-room at James Steerforth's home after Rosa Dartle had sung the strange weird Irish song to the accompaniment of her harp! And how

different, again, the scene in the home of Scrooge's nephew (C.C.) when, after tea, 'they had some music.'

Scrooge's niece played well upon the harp; and played, among other things, a simple little air.

It reminded Scrooge of a time long past.

He softened more and more; and thought that if he could have listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated the kindnesses of life for his own happiness with his own hand.

Little Paul Dombey told Lady Skettles at the breaking-up party that he was very fond of music, and he was very, very proud of his sister's accomplishments both as player and singer. Did they inherit this love from their father? 'You are fond of music,' said the Hon. Mrs. Skewton to Mr. Dombey during an interval in a game of picquet. 'Eminently so,' was the reply. But the reader must not take him at his word. When Edith (the future Mrs. Dombey) entered the room and sat down to her harp,

Mr. Dombey rose and stood beside her, listening. He had little taste for music, and no knowledge of the strain she played; but he saw her bending over it, and perhaps he heard among the sounding strings some distant music of his own.

Yet when she went to the piano and commenced to sing Mr. Dombey did not know that it was 'the air that his neglected daughter sang to his dead son'!

Piano

Lady musicians are numerous, and of very varied degrees of excellence. Amongst the pianists is Miss Teresa Malderton, who nearly fell a prey to that gay deceiver Mr. Horatio Sparkins (*S.B.T.* 5). Her contribution to a musical evening was 'The Fall of Paris,' played, as Mr. Sparkins declared, in a masterly manner.

There was a song called 'The Fall of Paris,' but it is most probable that Dickens was thinking of a very popular piece which he must have often heard in his young days, of which the full title was

The Surrender of Paris. A characteristic Divertimento for the Pianoforte, including the events from the Duke of Wellington and Prince Blucher's marching to that capital to the evacuation by the French troops and taking possession by the Allies, composed by Louis Jansen, 1816.

Not the least curious section of this piece of early programme music is a *moderato* recording the various articles of the capitulation. These are

eighteen in number, and each has its own 'theme.' The interspersion of some discords seems to imply serious differences of opinion between the parties to the treaty.

There was also a song called 'The Downfall of Paris,' the first verse of which was

Great news I have to tell you all, Of Bonaparte and a' that; How Paris it has got a fall, He's lost his plans and a' that.

Chorus.

Rise up, John Bull, rise up and sing, Your chanter loudly blaw that; Lang live our auld and worthy king, Success to Britain, a' that.

The instrument beloved of Miss Tox (*D. & S.*) was the harpsichord, and her favourite piece was the 'Bird Waltz,' while the 'Copenhagen Waltz' was also in her repertoire. Two notes of the instrument were dumb from disuse, but their silence did not impoverish the rendering. Caddy Jellyby found it necessary to know something of the piano, in order that she might instruct the 'apprentices' at her husband's dancing-school. Another performer was Mrs. Namby, who entertained Mr. Pickwick with solos on a square piano while breakfast was being prepared. When questioned by David Copperfield as to the gifts of Miss Sophy Crewler, Traddles explained that she knew enough of the piano to teach it to her little sisters, and she also sang ballads to freshen up her family a little when they were out of spirits, but 'nothing scientific.' The guitar was quite beyond her. David noted with much satisfaction (though he did not say so) that his Dora was much more gifted musically.

When Dickens wrote his earlier works it was not considered the correct thing for a gentleman to play the piano, though it might be all very well for the lower classes and the music teacher. Consequently we read of few male performers on the instrument. Mr. Skimpole could play the piano, and of course Jasper had a 'grand' in his room at Cloisterham.

At one time, if we may believe the turnkey at the Marshalsea prison, William Dorrit had been a pianist, a fact which raised him greatly in the turnkey's opinion.

Brought up as a gentleman, he was, if ever a man was. Educated at no end of expense. Went into the Marshal's house once to try a new piano for him. Played it, I understand, like one o'clock — beautiful.

In the *Collected Papers* we have a picture of the 'throwing off young gentleman,' who strikes a note or two upon the piano, and accompanies it

correctly (by dint of laborious practice) with his voice. He assures a circle of wondering listeners that so acute was his ear that he was wholly unable to sing out of tune, let him try as he would.

Mr. Weller senior laid a deep plot in which a piano was to take a prominent part. His object was to effect Mr. Pickwick's escape from the Fleet.

Me and a cab'net-maker has dewised a plan for gettin' him out. 'A pianner, Samivel, a pianner,' said Mr. Weller, striking his son on the chest with the back of his hand, and falling back a step or two.

'Wot do you mean?' said Sam.

'A pianner-forty, Samivel,' rejoined Mr. Weller, in a still more mysterious manner, 'as he can have on hire; vun as von't play, Sammy.'

'And wot 'ud be the good of that?' said Sam.

'There ain't no vurks in it,' whispered his father. 'It 'ull hold him easy, vith his hat and shoes on; and breathe through the legs, vich is holler.'

But the usually dutiful Sam showed so little enthusiasm for his father's scheme that nothing more was heard of it.

CHAPTER III

VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS

FLUTE, ORGAN, GUITAR (AND SOME HUMMERS)

Flute

We find several references to the flute, and Dickens contrives to get much innocent fun out of it. First comes Mr. Mell, who used to carry his instrument about with him and who, in response to his mother's invitation to 'have a blow at it' while David Copperfield was having his breakfast, made, said David, 'the most dismal sounds I have ever heard produced by any means, natural or artificial.' After he had finished he unscrewed his flute into three pieces, and deposited them underneath the skirts of his coat.

Dickens' schoolmasters seem to have been partial to the flute. Mr. Squeers, it is true, was not a flautist, but Mr. Feeder, B.A., was, or rather he was going to be. When little Paul Dombey visited his tutor's room he saw 'a flute which Mr. Feeder couldn't play yet, but was going to make a point of learning, he said, hanging up over the fireplace.'

He also had a beautiful little curly second-hand 'key bugle,' which was also on the list of things to be accomplished on some future occasion, in fact he has unlimited confidence in the power and influence of music. Here is his advice to the love-stricken Mr. Toots, whom he recommends to learn the guitar, or at least the flute; for women like music when you are paying your addresses to 'em, and he has found the advantage of it himself.

The flute was the instrument that Mr. Richard Swiveller took to when he heard that Sophy Wackles was lost to him for ever, thinking that it was a good, sound, dismal occupation, not only in unison with his own sad thoughts, but calculated to awaken a fellow feeling in the bosoms of his neighbours.

So he got out his flute, arranged the light and a small oblong music-book to the best advantage, and began to play 'most mournfully.'

The air was 'Away with Melancholy,' a composition which, when it is played very slowly on the flute, in bed, with the further disadvantage of being performed by a gentleman but imperfectly acquainted with the instrument, who repeats one note a great many times before he can find the next, has not a lively effect.

So Mr. Swiveller spent half the night or more over this pleasing exercise, merely stopping now and then to take breath and soliloquize about the Marchioness; and it was only after he 'had nearly maddened the people of the house, and at both the next doors, and over the way,' that he shut up the book and went to sleep. The result of this was that the next morning he got a notice to quit from his landlady, who had been in waiting on the stairs for that purpose since the dawn of day.

Jack Redburn, too (*M.H.C.*), seems to have found consolation in this instrument, spending his wet Sundays in 'blowing a very slow tune on the flute.'

There is one, and only one, recorded instance of this very meek instrument suddenly asserting itself by going on strike, and that is in the sketch entitled *Private Theatres* (*S.B.S.* 13), where the amateurs take so long to dress for their parts that 'the flute says he'll be blowed if he plays any more.'

We must on no account forget the serenade with which the gentlemen boarders proposed to honour the Miss Pecksniffs. The performance was both vocal and instrumental, and the description of the flute-player is delightful.

It was very affecting, very. Nothing more dismal could have been desired by the most fastidious taste.... The youngest gentleman blew his melancholy into a flute. He didn't blow much out of it, but that was all the better.

After a description of the singing we have more about the flute.

The flute of the youngest gentleman was wild and fitful. It came and went in gusts, like the wind. For a long time together he seemed to have left off, and when it was quite settled by Mrs. Todgers and the young ladies that, overcome by his feelings, he had retired in tears, he unexpectedly turned up again at the very top of the tune, gasping for breath. He was a tremendous performer. There was no knowing where to have him; and exactly when you thought he was doing nothing at all, then was he doing the very thing that ought to astonish you most.

Yet another performer is the domestic young gentleman (*C.P.*) who holds skeins of silk for the ladies to wind, and who then brings down his flute in compliance with a request from the youngest Miss Gray, and plays divers tunes out of a very small book till supper-time.

When Nancy went to the prison to look for Oliver Twist, she found nobody in durance vile except a man who had been taken up for playing the flute, and who was bewailing the loss of the same, which had been confiscated for the use of the county.

The gentleman who played the violoncello at Mrs. Gattleton's party has already been referred to, and it only remains to mention Mr. Evans, who 'had such lovely whiskers' and who played the flute on the same occasion, to bring the list of players to an end.

Hummers

We meet with a remarkable musician in *Dombey and Son* in the person of Harriet Carker's visitor, a scientific one, according to the description:

A certain skilful action of his fingers as he hummed some bars, and beat time on the seat beside him, seemed to denote the musician; and the extraordinary satisfaction he derived from humming something very slow and long, which had no recognizable tune, seemed to denote that he was a scientific one.

A less capable performer was Sampson Brass, who hummed in a voice that was anything but musical certain vocal snatches which appeared to have reference to the union between Church and State, inasmuch as they were compounded of the Evening Hymn and 'God Save the King.'

Musicians of various degrees abound in the *Sketches*. Here is Mr. Wisbottle, whistling 'The Light Guitar' at five o'clock in the morning, to the intense disgust of Mr. John Evenson, a fellow boarder at Mrs. Tibbs'. Subsequently he came down to breakfast in blue slippers and a shawl dressing-gown, whistling 'Di piacer.' Mr. Evenson can no longer control his feelings, and threatens to start the triangle if his enemy will not stop his early matutinal music. A suggested name for this whistler is the 'humming-top,' from his habit of describing semi-circles on the piano stool, and 'humming most melodiously.' There are a number of characters who indulge in the humming habit either to cover their confusion, or as a sign of light-heartedness and contentment. Prominent amongst these are Pecksniff, who, like Morfin, hums melodiously, and Micawber, who can both sing and hum. Nor must we omit to mention Miss Petowker, who 'hummed a tune' as her contribution to the entertainment at Mrs. Kenwigs' party. Many of the characters resort to humming to conceal their temporary discomfiture, and perhaps no one ever hummed under more harassing circumstances than when Mr. Pecksniff had to go to the door to let in some very unwelcome guests, who had already knocked several times. But he was a past master in the art of dissimulation. He is particularly anxious to conceal from his visitors the fact that Jonas Chuzzlewit is in the house. So he says to the latter —

'This may be a professional call. Indeed I am pretty sure it is. Thank you.' Then Mr. Pecksniff, gently warbling a rustic stave, put on his garden hat, seized a spade, and opened the street door; calmly appearing on the threshold as if he thought he had, from his vineyard, heard a modest rap, but was not quite certain.

Then he tells his visitors 'I do a little bit of Adam still.' He certainly had a good deal of the old Adam in him.

Clarionet

The clarionet is associated with the fortunes of Mr. Frederick Dorrit, who played the instrument at the theatre where his elder niece was a dancer, and where Little Dorrit sought an engagement. After the rehearsal was over she and her sister went to take him home.

He had been in that place six nights a week for many years, but had never been observed to raise his eyes above his music-book.... The carpenters had a joke that he was dead without being aware of it.

At the theatre he had no part in what was going on except the part written for the clarionet. In his young days his house had been the resort of singers and players. When the fortunes of the family changed his clarionet was taken away from him, on the ground that it was a 'low instrument.' It was subsequently restored to him, but he never played it again.

Of quite a different stamp was one of the characters in *Going into Society*, who played the clarionet in a band at a Wild Beast Show, and played it all wrong. He was somewhat eccentric in dress, as he had on 'a white Roman shirt and a bishop's mitre covered with leopard skin.' We are told nothing about him, except that he refused to know his old friends. In his story of the *Seven Poor Travellers* Dickens found the clarionet-player of the Rochester Waits so communicative that he accompanied the party across an open green called the Vines, and assisted — in the French sense — at the performance of two waltzes, two polkas, and three Irish melodies.

Bassoon

A notable bassoon player was Mr. Bagnet, who had a voice somewhat resembling his instrument. The ex-artilleryman kept a little music shop in a street near the Elephant and Castle. There were a few fiddles in the window, and some Pan's pipes and a tambourine, and a triangle, and certain elongated scraps of music.

It was to this shop that Bucket the detective came under the pretence of wanting a second-hand 'wiolinceller'. In the course of conversation it turns out that Master Bagnet (otherwise 'Woolwich') 'plays the fife beautiful,' and he performs some popular airs for the benefit of his audience. Mr. Bucket also claims to have played the fife himself when a boy, 'not in a scientific way, but by ear.'

Bagpipes

Two references to the bagpipes deserve notice. One is in *David Copperfield*, where the novelist refers to his own early experiences as a shorthand reporter. He has no high opinion of the speeches he used to take down.

One joyful night, therefore, I noted down the music of the parliamentary bagpipes for the last time, and I have never heard it since; though I still recognize the old drone in the newspapers.

In *O.M.F.* (II.) we read of Charley Hexam's fellow pupils keeping themselves awake by maintaining a monotonous droning noise, as if they

were performing, out of time and tune, on a ruder sort of bagpipe.

The peculiar subdued noise caused by a lot of children in a school is certainly suggestive of the instrument.

Trombone

Little is said about the trombone. We are told, in reference to the party at Dr. Strong's (*D.C.*), that the good Doctor knew as much about playing cards as he did about 'playing the trombone.' In 'Our School' (*R.P.*) we are told a good deal about the usher who 'made out the bills, mended the pens, and did all sorts of things.'

He was rather musical, and on some remote quarter-day had bought an old trombone; but a bit of it was lost, and it made the most extraordinary sounds when he sometimes tried to play it of an evening.

In a similarly dismembered state was the flute which Dickens once saw in a broker's shop. It was 'complete with the exception of the middle joint.'

This naturally calls to mind the story of the choir librarian who was putting away the vocal parts of a certain funeral anthem. After searching in vain for two missing numbers he was obliged to label the parcel

'His body is buried in peace.' Two parts missing.

Organ

The references to the organ are both numerous and interesting, and it is pretty evident that this instrument had a great attraction for Dickens. The gentle Tom Pinch (*M.C.*), whom Gissing calls 'a gentleman who derives his patent of gentility direct from God Almighty,' first claims our attention. He used to play the organ at the village church 'for nothing.' It was a simple instrument, 'the sweetest little organ you ever heard,' provided with wind by the action of the musician's feet, and thus Tom was independent of a blower, though he was so beloved that there was not a man or boy in all the village and away to the turnpike (tollman included) but would have blown away for him till he was black in the face.

What a delight it must have been to him to avail himself of the opportunity to play the organ in the cathedral when he went to meet Martin!

As the grand tones resounded through the church they seemed, to Tom, to find an echo in the depth of every ancient tomb, no less than in the deep mystery of his own heart.

And he would have gone on playing till midnight 'but for a very earthy verger,' who insisted on locking up the cathedral and turning him out.

On one occasion, while he was practising at the church, the miserable Pecksniff entered the building and, hiding behind a pew, heard the conversation between Tom and Mary that led to the former being dismissed from the architect's office, so he had to leave his beloved organ, and mightily did the poor fellow miss it when he went to London! Being an early riser, he had been accustomed to practise every morning, and now he was reduced to taking long walks about London, a poor substitute indeed!

Nor was the organ the only instrument that he could play, for we read how he would spend half his nights poring over the 'jingling anatomy of that inscrutable old harpsichord in the back parlour,' and amongst the household treasures that he took to London were his music and an old fiddle.

The picture which forms our frontispiece shows Tom Pinch playing his favourite instrument. At the sale of the original drawings executed by 'Phiz' for *Martin Chuzzlewit* this frontispiece, which is an epitome of the salient characters and scenes in the novel, was sold for £35.

We read in *Christmas Stories* that

Silas Jorgan Played the organ, but we are not told the name of the artist who at the concert at the Eagle (*S.B.C.* 4) accompanied a comic song on the organ — and such an organ!

Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man whispered it had cost 'four hundred pound,' which Mr. Samuel Wilkins said was 'not dear neither.'

The singer was probably either Howell or Glindon. Dickens appears to have visited the Eagle Tavern in 1835 or 1836. It was then a notable place of entertainment consisting of gardens with an orchestra, and the 'Grecian Saloon,' which was furnished with an organ and a 'self-acting piano.' Here concerts were given every evening, which in Lent took a sacred turn, and consisted of selections from Handel and Mozart. In 1837 the organ was removed, and a new one erected by Parsons.

The Eagle gained a wide reputation through its being introduced into a once popular song.

Up and down the City Road, In and out the Eagle, That's the way the money goes, Pop goes the weasel.

This verse was subsequently modified (for nursery purposes) thus:

Half a pound of tuppenny rice, Half a pound of treacle, That's the way the money goes, 9 Pop goes the weasel.

Many explanations have been given of ‘weasel.’ Some say it was a purse made of weasel skin; others that it was a tailor’s flat-iron which used to be pawned (or ‘popped’) to procure the needful for admission to the tavern. A third (and more intelligible) suggestion is that the line is simply a catch phrase, without any meaning.

There is a notable reference to the organ in *Little Dorrit*. Arthur Clennam goes to call on old Frederick Dorrit, the clarionet player, and is directed to the house where he lived. ‘There were so many lodgers in this house that the door-post seemed to be as full of bell handles as a cathedral organ is of stops,’ and Clennam hesitates for a time, ‘doubtful which might be the clarionet stop.’

Further on in the same novel we are told that it was the organ that Mrs. Finching was desirous of learning.

I have said ever since I began to recover the blow of Mr. F’s death that I would learn the organ of which I am extremely fond but of which I am ashamed to say I do not yet know a note.

The following fine description of the tones of an organ occurs in *The Chimes*:

The organ sounded faintly in the church below. Swelling by degrees the melody ascended to the roof, and filled the choir and nave. Expanding more and more, it rose up, up; up, up; higher, higher, higher up; awakening agitated hearts within the burly piles of oak, the hollow bells, the iron-bound doors, the stairs of solid stone; until the tower walls were insufficient to contain it, and it soared into the sky.

The effect of this on Trotty Veck was very different from that which another organ had on the benevolent old lady we read of in *Our Parish*. She subscribed £20 towards a new instrument for the parish church, and was so overcome when she first heard it that she had to be carried out by the pew-opener.

There are various references to the organs in the City churches, and probably the description of one of them given in *Dombey and Son* would suit most instruments of the period.

The organ rumbled and rolled as if it had got the colic, for want of a congregation to keep the wind and damp out.

Barrel-Organ

In real life the barrel-organ was a frequent source of annoyance to Dickens, who found its ceaseless strains very trying when he was busy

writing, and who had as much trouble in evicting the grinders as David Copperfield's aunt had with the donkeys.

However, he takes a very mild revenge on this deservedly maligned instrument in his works, and the references are, as usual, of a humorous character. A barrel-organ formed a part of the procession to celebrate the election of Mr. Tulrumbler 10 as Mayor of Mudfog, but the player put on the wrong stop, and played one tune while the band played another.

This instrument had an extraordinary effect on Major Tpschoffki, familiarly and more easily known as 'Chops,' the dwarf, 'spirited but not proud,' who was desirous of 'Going into Society' (*G.S.*), and who had got it into his head that he was entitled to property:

His ideas respectin' his property never come upon him so strong as when he sat upon a barrel-organ, and had the handle turned. Arter the wibration had run through him a little time he would screech out, 'Toby, I feel my property coming — grind away! I'm counting my guineas by thousands, Toby — grind away! Toby, I shall be a man of fortun! I feel the Mint a-jingling in me, Toby, and I'm swelling out into the Bank of England.' Such is the influence of music on a poetic mind.

Dickens found the streets in New York very different from those in London, and specially remarks how quiet they were — no itinerant musicians or showmen of any kind. He could only remember hearing one barrel-organ with a dancing-monkey. 'Beyond that, nothing lively, no, not so much as a white mouse in a twirling cage.'

We must not forget that he has two references to pipe organs in his *American Notes*. When he visited the Blind School at Boston he heard a voluntary played on the organ by one of the pupils, while at St. Louis he was informed that the Jesuit College was to be supplied with an organ sent from Belgium.

The barrel-organ brings to mind Jerry and his troupe of dancing-dogs (*O.C.S.*), especially the unfortunate animal who had lost a halfpenny during the day, and consequently had to go without his supper. In fact, his master made the punishment fit the crime; for, having set the stop, he made the dog play the organ while the rest had their evening meal.

When the knives and forks rattled very much, or any of his fellows got an unusually large piece of fat, he accompanied the music with a short howl; but he immediately checked it on his master looking round and applied himself with increased diligence to the Old Hundredth.

In *Dombey and Son* there is a very apt comparison of Mr. Feeder, B.A., to this instrument. He was Doctor Blimber's assistant master, and was entrusted with the education of little Paul.

Mr. Feeder, B.A. ... was a kind of human barrel-organ with a little list of tunes at which he was continually working, over and over again, without any variation. He might have been fitted up with a change of barrels, perhaps, in early life, if his destiny had been favourable, but it had not been.

So he had only one barrel, his sole occupation being to 'bewilder the young ideas of Dr. Blimber's young gentlemen.' Sometimes he had his Virgil stop on, and at other times his Herodotus stop. In trying to keep up the comparison, however, Dickens makes a curious mistake. In the above quotation Feeder is assigned one barrel only, while in Chapter XLI we are told that he had 'his other barrels on a shelf behind him.'

We find another comparison in *Little Dorrit*, when the long-suffering Pancks turns round on Casby, his employer, and exposes his hypocrisy. Pancks, who has had much difficulty in getting his master's rents from the tenants, makes up his mind to leave him; and before doing so he tells the whole truth about Casby to the inhabitants of Bleeding Heart Yard. 'Here's the Stop,' said Pancks, 'that sets the tune to be ground. And there is but one tune, and its name is "Grind! Grind! Grind!"'

Guitar

Although the guitar was a fashionable instrument sixty years ago, there are but few references to it. This was the instrument that enabled the three Miss Briggses, each of them performers, to eclipse the glory of the Miss Tauntons, who could only manage a harp. On the eventful day of 'The Steam Excursion' (*S.B.*) the three sisters brought their instruments, carefully packed up in dark green cases, which were carefully stowed away in the bottom of the boat, accompanied by two immense portfolios of music, which it would take at least a week's incessant playing to get through.

At a subsequent stage of the proceedings they were asked to play, and after replacing a broken string, and a vast deal of screwing and tightening, they gave 'a new Spanish composition, for three voices and three guitars,' and secured an encore, thus completely overwhelming their rivals. In the account of the *French Watering-Place* (*R.P.*) we read about a guitar on the pier, 'to which a boy or woman sings without any voice little songs without any tune.'

On one of his night excursions in the guise of an ‘Uncommercial Traveller’ Dickens discovered a stranded Spaniard, named Antonio. In response to a general invitation ‘the swarthy youth’ takes up his cracked guitar and gives them the ‘feeblest ghost of a tune,’ while the inmates of the miserable den kept time with their heads.

Dora used to delight David Copperfield by singing enchanting ballads in the French language and accompanying herself ‘on a glorified instrument, resembling a guitar,’ though subsequent references show it was that instrument and none other.

We read in *Little Dorrit* that Young John Chivery wore ‘pantaloon so highly decorated with side stripes, that each leg was a three-stringed lute.’ This appears to be the only reference to this instrument, and a lute of three strings is the novelist’s own conception, the usual number being about nine.

⁹ Or, ‘Mix it up and make it nice.’

¹⁰ *The Public Life of Mr. Tulrubble*, 1837.

CHAPTER IV

VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS (continued)

Many musical instruments and terms are mentioned by way of illustration. Blathers, the Bow Street officer (*O.T.*), plays carelessly with his handcuffs as if they were a pair of castanets. Miss Miggs (*B.R.*) clanks her pattens as if they were a pair of cymbals. Mr. Bounderby (*H.T.*), during his conversation with Harthouse, with his hat in his hand, gave a beat upon the crown at every division of his sentences, as if it were a tambourine; and in the same work the electric wires rule ‘a colossal strip of music-paper out of the evening sky.’

Perhaps the most extraordinary comparison is that instituted by Mrs. Lirriper in reference to her late husband.

My poor Lirriper was a handsome figure of a man, with a beaming eye and a voice as mellow as a musical instrument made of honey and steel.

What a vivid imagination the good woman had! Her descriptive powers remind us of those possessed by Mrs. Gamp in speaking of the father of the mysterious Mrs. Harris.

As pleasant a singer, Mr. Chuzzlewit, as ever you heard, with a voice like a Jew’s-harp in the bass notes.

There are many humorous references to remarkable performances on various instruments more or less musical in their nature. During the election at Eatanswill the crier performed two concertos on his bell, and shortly afterwards followed them up with a fantasia on the same instrument. Dickens suffered much from church bells, and gives vent to his feelings about them in *Little Dorrit*, where he says that

Maddening church bells of all degrees of dissonance, sharp and flat, cracked and clear, fast and slow, made the brick-and-mortar echoes hideous.

In his *Pictures from Italy* he wrote thus:

At Genoa the bells of the church ring incessantly, not in peals, or any known form of sound, but in horrible, irregular, jerking dingle, dingle, dingle; with a sudden stop at every fifteenth dingle or so, which is maddening.... The noise is supposed to be particularly obnoxious to evil spirits.

But it was these same bells, which he found so maddening, that inspired him with the title of a well-known story. He had chosen a subject, but was at a loss for a name. As he sat working one morning there suddenly rose up from Genoa

the clang and clash of all its steeples, pouring into his ears, again and again, in a tuneless, grating, discordant jerking, hideous vibration that made his ideas spin round and round till they lost themselves in a whirl of vexation and giddiness, and dropped down dead.... Only two days later came a letter in which not a syllable was written but 'We have heard The Chimes at midnight, Master Shallow,' and I knew he had discovered what he wanted. 11

Yet, in spite of all this, Dickens shows — through his characters — a deep interest in bells and bell-lore. Little Paul Dombey finds a man mending the clocks at Dr. Blimber's Academy, and asks a multitude of questions about chimes and clocks; as, whether people watched up in the lonely church steeples by night to make them strike, and how the bells were rung when people died, and whether those were different bells from wedding-bells, or only sounded dismal in the fancies of the living; and then the precocious small boy proceeds to give the astonished clockmaker some useful information about King Alfred's candles and curfew-bells.

As Smike and Nicholas tramp their long journey to Portsmouth they hear the sheep-bells tinkling on the downs. To Tom Pinch journeying

Londonwards ‘the brass work on the harness was a complete orchestra of little bells.’

What a terror the bells are to Jonas Chuzzlewit just before he starts on his evil journey! He hears the ringers practising in a neighbouring church, and the clashing of their bells was almost maddening. Curse the clamouring bells! they seemed to know that he was listening at the door, and to proclaim it in a crowd of voices to all the town! Would they never be still? They ceased at last, and then the silence was so new and terrible that it seemed the prelude to some dreadful noise.

The boom of the bell is associated with many of the villains of the novels. Fagin hears it when under sentence of death. Blackpool and Carker hear the accusing bells when in the midst of planning their evil deeds.

We can read the characters of some by the way they ring a bell. The important little Mr. Bailey, when he goes to see his friend Poll Sweedlepipe (*M.C.*) ‘came in at the door with a lunge, to get as much sound out of the bell as possible,’ while Bob Sawyer gives a pull as if he would bring it up by the roots. Mr. Clennam pulls the rope with a hasty jerk, and Mr. Watkins Tottle with a faltering jerk, while Tom Pinch gives a gentle pull. And how angry Mr. Mantalini is with Newman Noggs because he keeps him ‘ringing at this confounded old cracked tea-kettle of a bell, every tinkle of which is enough to throw a strong man into convulsions, upon my life and soul, — oh demmit.’

The introduction of electric bells has been a great trial to those who used to vent their wrath on the wire-pulled article or the earlier bell-rope, which used not infrequently to add unnecessary fuel by coming incontinently down on the head of the aggrieved one. What a pull the fierce gentleman must have given whose acquaintance Mr. Pickwick made when he was going to Bath! He had been kept waiting for his buttered toast, so he (Captain Dowler) rang the bell with great violence, and told the waiter he’d better bring the toast in five seconds, or he’d know the reason why.

Dickens rang far more changes on the bells than there is space to enumerate; but I have shown to what extent he makes their sound a commentary on innumerable phases of life. A slight technical knowledge of bell phraseology is found in *Barnaby Rudge* (7), where he mentions the variations known as a ‘triple bob major.’ Finally there is an interesting reference in *Master Humphrey’s Clock* to a use of the bell which has now passed into history. Belinda says in a postscript to a letter to Master

Humphrey, 'The bellman, rendered impatient by delay, is ringing dreadfully in the passage'; while in a second PS. she says, 'I open this to say the bellman is gone, and that you must not expect it till the next post.'

In the old days it was the custom for the letter-carriers to collect letters by ringing a bell.

There is no doubt that a most extraordinary, certainly a most original, musical effect is that secured by Mr. George (*B.H.*), who had just finished smoking.

'Do you know what that tune is, Mr. Smallweed?' he adds, after breaking off to whistle one, accompanied on the table with the empty pipe.

'Tune,' replies the old man. 'No, we never have tunes here.'

'That's the "Dead March" in *Saul*. They bury soldiers to it, so it's the natural end of the subject.'

Surely a highly original way of bringing a conversation to a close!

This march is referred to in *Our Mutual Friend*, where Mr. Wilfer suggests that going through life with Mrs. Wilfer is like keeping time to the 'Dead March' in *Saul*, from which singular simile we may gather that this lady was not the liveliest of companions.

Several other instruments are casually mentioned. Mr. Hardy (*S.B.T.* 7) was a master of many accomplishments.

He could sing comic songs, imitate hackney coachmen and fowls, play airs on his chin, and execute concertos on the Jew's harp.

The champion 'chin' performer of the early Victorian period was Michael Boai, 'The celebrated chin melodist,' who was announced to perform 'some of his admired pieces' at many of the places of entertainment. There is another reference to this extraordinary way of producing music in *Sketches by Boz*, where Mrs. Tippin performed an air with variations on the guitar, 'accompanied on the chin by Master Tippin.' To return to Mr. Hardy, this gentleman was evidently deeply interested in all sorts and degrees of music, but he got out of his depth in a conversation with the much-travelled Captain Helves. After the three Miss Briggses had finished their guitar performances, Mr. Hardy approached the Captain with the question, 'Did you ever hear a Portuguese tambourine?'

'Did *you* ever hear a tom-tom, sir?' sternly inquired the Captain, who lost no opportunity of showing off his travels, real or pretended.

'A what?' asked Hardy, rather taken aback.

'A tom-tom.'

‘Never.’

‘Nor a gum-gum?’

‘Never.’

‘What *is* a gum-gum?’ eagerly inquired several young ladies.

The question is unanswered to this day, though Hardy afterwards suggests it is another name for a humbug.

When Dickens visited the school where the half-time system was in force, he found the boys undergoing military and naval drill. A small boy played the fife while the others went through their exercises. After that a boys’ band appeared, the youngsters being dressed in a neat uniform. Then came a choral class, who sang ‘the praises of a summer’s day to a harmonium.’ In the arithmetical exercises the small piper excels (*U.T.* 29).

Wise as the serpent is the four feet of performer on the nearest approach to that instrument.

This was written when the serpent was practically extinct, but Dickens would be very familiar with the name of the instrument, and may have seen and heard it in churches in his younger days.

In referring to another boy’s attempt at solving the arithmetical puzzles, he mentions the cymbals, combined with a faint memory of St. Paul.

I observe the player of the cymbals to dash at a sounding answer now and then rather than not cut in at all; but I take that to be in the way of his instrument.

In *Great Expectations* Mr. Wopsle, who is a parish clerk by profession, had an ambition not only to tread the boards, but to start off as Hamlet. His appearance was not a success, and the audience was derisive.

On his taking the recorders — very like a little black flute that had just been played in the orchestra and handed out at the door — he was called upon unanimously for ‘Rule Britannia.’

Reference has already been made to Bucket’s music-shop, so we must not forget to visit Caleb Plummer’s little room, where there were scores of melancholy little carts which, when the wheels went round, performed most doleful music. Many small fiddles, drums, and other instruments of torture.

The old man made a rude kind of harp specially for his poor blind daughter, and on which Dot used to play when she visited the toy-maker’s. Caleb’s musical contribution would be ‘a Bacchanalian song, something about a sparkling bowl,’ which much annoyed his grumpy employer.

‘What! you’re singing, are you?’ said Tackleton, putting his head in at the door. ‘Go it, *I can’t sing.*’

Nobody would have suspected him of it. He hadn’t what is generally termed a singing face, by any means.

The wonderful duet between the cricket and the kettle at the commencement of *The Cricket on the Hearth* certainly deserves mention, though it is rather difficult to know whether to class the performers as instrumentalists or singers. The kettle began it with a series of short vocal snorts, which at first it checked in the bud, but finally it burst into a stream of song, ‘while the lid performed a sort of jig, and clattered like a deaf and dumb cymbal that had never known the use of its twin brother.’ Then the cricket came in with its chirp, chirp, chirp, and at it they went in fierce rivalry until ‘the kettle, being dead beat, boiled over, and was taken off the fire.’

Dickens was certainly partial to the cricket, for elsewhere (*M.H.C.*) we read of the clock that makes cheerful music, like one of those chirping insects who delight in the warm hearth.

There are two or three references to the key bugle, which also used to be known as the Kent bugle. It was a popular instrument half a century ago, as the addition of keys gave it a much greater range of notes than the ordinary bugle possessed. A notable though inefficient performer was the driver who took Martin Chuzzlewit up to London.

He was musical, besides, and had a little key bugle in his pocket on which, whenever the conversation flagged, he played the first part of a great many tunes, and regularly broke down in the second.

This instrument was on Mr. Feeder’s *agenda*.

Two more instruments demand our attention. At the marriage of Tackleton and May Fielding (*C.H.*) there were to be marrow-bones and cleavers, while to celebrate the union of Trotty Veck’s daughter Meg and Richard they had a band including the aforesaid instruments and also the drum and the bells. It was formerly the custom for butchers’ assistants to provide themselves with marrow-bones and cleavers for musical effects. Each cleaver was ground so that when it was struck with the bone it emitted a certain note.¹² A complete band would consist of eight men, with their cleavers so tuned as to give an octave of notes. After more or less practice they would offer their services as bandsmen on the occasion of marriage ceremonies, which they had a wonderful faculty for locating, and they

would provide music (of a kind) *ad libitum* until the requisite fee was forthcoming. If their services were declined the butchers would turn up all the same, and make things very unpleasant for the marriage party. The custom dates from the eighteenth century, and though it has gradually fallen into disuse a marrow-bone and cleaver band is still available in London for those who want it. A band took part in a wedding ceremony at Clapham as recently as the autumn of 1911.

The following extract, referring to the second marriage of Mr. Dombey, shows what bridal parties had to put up with in the good old days:

The men who play the bells have got scent of the marriage; and the marrow-bones and cleavers too; and a brass band too. The first are practising in a back settlement near Battle-bridge 13; the second put themselves in communication, through their chief, with Mr. Tomlinson, to whom they offer terms to be bought off; and the third, in the person of an artful trombone, lurks and dodges round the corner, waiting for some traitor-tradesman to reveal the place and hour of breakfast, for a bribe.

Other instruments casually referred to are the Pan's pipes, which in one place is also called a mouth-organ (*S.B.S.* 20), the flageolet, and the triangle. It is difficult to classify the walking-stick on which Mr. Jennings Rudolph played tunes before he went behind the parlour door and gave his celebrated imitations of actors, edgetools, and animals (*S.B.C.* 8).

11 Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*.

12 This is rather a modern development.

13 Near King's Cross Station (G.N.R.).

CHAPTER V

CHURCH MUSIC

Dickens has not much to say about church music as such, but the references are interesting, inasmuch as they throw some light upon it during the earlier years of his life. In *Our Parish* (S.B.) we read about the old naval officer who finds fault with the sermon every Sunday, says that the organist ought to be ashamed of himself, and offers to back himself for any amount to sing the psalms better than all the children put together.

This reminds us that during the first half of last century, and indeed later in many places, the church choir as we know it did not exist, and the leading of the singing was entrusted to the children of the charity school under the direction of the clerk, a custom which had existed since the seventeenth century. The chancel was never used for the choir, and the children sat up in the gallery at the west end, on either side of the organ. In a City church that Dickens attended the choir was limited to two girls. The organ was so out of order that he could 'hear more of the rusty working of the stops than of any music.' When the service began he was so depressed that, as he says,

I gave but little heed to our dull manner of ambling through the service; to the brisk clerk's manner of encouraging us to try a note or two at psalm time; to the gallery congregation's manner of enjoying a shrill duet, without a notion of time or tune; to the whity-brown man's manner of shutting the minister into the pulpit, and being very particular with the lock of the door, as if he were a dangerous animal.

Elsewhere he found in the choir gallery an 'exhausted charity school' of four boys and two girls. The congregations were small, a state of things which at any rate satisfied Mrs. Lirriper, who had a pew at St. Clement Danes and was 'partial to the evening service not too crowded.'

In *Sunday under Three Heads* we have a vivid picture of the state of things at a fashionable church. Carriages roll up, richly dressed people take their places and inspect each other through their glasses.

The organ peals forth, the hired singers commence a short hymn, and the congregation condescendingly rise, stare about them and converse in whispers.

Dickens passes from church to chapel. Here, he says, the hymn is sung — not by paid singers, but by the whole assembly at the loudest pitch of their voices, unaccompanied by any musical instrument, the words being given out, two lines at a time, by the clerk.

It cannot be said that, as far as the music is concerned, either of these descriptions is exaggerated when we remember the time at which they were written (1838). Very few chapels in London had organs, or indeed instruments of any kind, and there is no doubt that the congregations, as a rule, *did* sing at the tops of their voices, a proceeding known under the more euphonious title of ‘hearty congregational singing.’

He gives a far more favourable account of the music in the village church. In the essay just referred to he mentions the fact that he attended a service in a West of England church where the service ‘was spoken — not merely read — by a grey-headed minister.’

The psalms were accompanied by a few instrumental performers, who were stationed in a small gallery extending across the church at the lower end; and the voices were led by the clerk, who, it was evident, derived no slight pride and gratification from this portion of the service.

But if the church music in England was not of a very high quality when Dickens wrote the above, it was, according to his own account, far superior to what he heard in certain churches in Italy. When in Rome he visited St. Peter’s, where he was quite unimpressed by the music.

I have been infinitely more affected in many English cathedrals when the organ has been playing, and in many English country churches when the congregation have been singing.

On another occasion he attended church at Genoa on a feast day, and he writes thus about the music:

The organ played away lustily, and a full band did the like; while a conductor, in a little gallery opposite the band, hammered away on the desk before him, with a scroll, and a tenor, without any voice, sang. The band played one way, the organ played another, the singer went a third, and the unfortunate conductor banged and banged, and flourished his scroll on some principle of his own; apparently well satisfied with the whole performance. I never did hear such a discordant din.

Parish Clerks

We have but few references to parish clerks in the novels. Mr. Wopsle (*G.E.*) — whom Mr. Andrew Lang calls ‘one of the best of Dickens’ minor characters’ — ‘punished the Amens tremendously,’ 14 and when he gave out the psalms — always giving the whole verse — he looked all round the congregation first, as much as to say ‘You have heard our friend overhead; oblige me with your opinion of this style.’ This gentleman subsequently became a ‘play-actor,’ but failed to achieve the success he desired. Solomon Daisy (*B.R.*) is bell-ringer and parish clerk of Chigwell, though we hear nothing of his exploits in these capacities. However, he must have been a familiar figure to the villagers as he stood in his little desk on the Sunday, giving out the psalms and leading the singing, because when in the rifled and dismantled Maypole he appeals to the poor witless old Willet as to whether he did not know him —

‘You know us, don’t you, Johnny?’ said the little clerk, rapping himself on the breast. ‘Daisy, you know — Chigwell Church — bell-ringer — little desk on Sundays — eh, Johnny?’

Mr. Willet reflected for a few moments, and then muttered as it were mechanically: ‘Let us sing to the praise and glory of — ’

‘Yes, to be sure,’ cried the little man hastily, ‘that’s it, that’s me, Johnny.’

Besides the numerous body of more or less distinguished artists whom the novelist introduces to us and whose achievements are duly set forth in these pages, there are two others whose connexion with Cloisterham gives them a prominent position in our list. One of these is the Rev. Mr. Crisparkle (*E.D.*), Minor Canon of Cloisterham: early riser, musical, classical, cheerful, kind, good-natured, social, contented, and boy-like.

What a contrast to the Stiggins and Chadband type! He is a member of the ‘Alternate Musical Wednesdays’ Society, and amongst his lesser duties is that of corrector-in-chief of the un-Dean-like English of the cathedral verger.

It is Mr. Crisparkle’s custom to sit up last of the early household, very softly touching his piano and practising his parts in concerted vocal music.

Over a closet in his dining-room, where occasional refreshments were kept, a portrait of Handel in a flowing wig beamed down at the spectator, with a knowing air of being up to the contents of the closet, and a musical air of intending to combine all its harmonies in one delicious fugue.

The Minor Canon is a warm admirer of Jasper's musical talents, and on one occasion in particular is much impressed with his singing.

I must thank you, Jasper, for the pleasure with which I have heard you today. Beautiful! Delightful!

And thus we are introduced to the other musician, whose position at Cloisterham Cathedral is almost as much a mystery as that of Edwin Drood himself. He was the lay precentor or lay clerk, and he was also a good choirmaster. It is unnecessary to criticize or examine too closely the exact position that Jasper held. In answer to a question on this subject, Mr. B. Luard-Selby, the present organist of Rochester Cathedral, writes thus:

We have never had in the choir of Rochester Cathedral such a musical functionary as Dickens describes in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The only person approaching Jasper in the choir is one of the lay clerks who looks after the music, but who of course has nothing to do with *setting* the music for the month. I don't think Dickens had much idea of church order or of cathedral worship, though he may have gone over the cathedral with a vergier on occasions. The music of a cathedral is always in the hands of the precentor, assisted by the organist.

It is Edwin Drood himself who says that Jasper was lay precentor or lay clerk at the cathedral. He had a great reputation as a choir-trainer and teacher of music, but he is already weary of his position and takes little notice of words of eulogy. He was well acquainted with the old melodies, and on one occasion we find him sitting at the piano singing brave songs to Mr. Sapsea.

No kickshaw ditties, favourites with national enemies, but ... genuine George the Third home brewed, exhorting him (as 'my brave boys') to reduce to a smashed condition all other islands but this island, and all continents, peninsulas, isthmuses, promontories, and other geographical forms of land soever, besides sweeping the sea in all directions. In short he rendered it pretty clear that Providence made a distinct mistake in originating so small a nation of hearts of oak, and so many other verminous peoples.

We have a different picture of him on another occasion, as he sits 'chanting choir music in a low and beautiful voice, for two or three hours' — a somewhat unusual exercise even for the most enthusiastic choirmaster. But this was before the strange journey with Durdles, and we can only

guess at the weird thoughts which were passing through the musician's mind as he sat in his lonely room.

We have only a brief reference to the choir of Cloisterham Cathedral. Towards the end we read of them 'struggling into their nightgowns' before the service, while they subsequently are 'as much in a hurry to get their bedgowns off as they were but now to get them on' — and these were almost the last words that came from the Master's pen.

Anthems

There is an interesting reference to anthems in connexion with the Foundling Hospital, 15 an institution which Dickens mentions several times. Mr. Wilding (*N.T.*), after he had been pumped on by his lawyer in order to clear his head, names the composers of the anthems he had been accustomed to sing at the Foundling.

Handel, Mozart, Haydn, Kent, Purcell, Doctor Arne, Greene, Mendelssohn. I know the choruses to those anthems by heart. Foundling Chapel collection.

Mr. Wilding had a scheme of forming his household retainers and dependents into a singing-class in the warehouse, and a choir in the neighbouring church. Only one member, Joey Ladle, refused to join, for fear he should 'muddle the 'armony,' and his remark that

Handel must have been down in some of them foreign cellars pretty much for to go and say the same thing so many times over is certainly not lacking in originality.

Hymns and Hymn-Tunes

There are many purists in church music who object to adaptations of any kind, and we do not know what their feelings are on reading the account of the meeting of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association. In order to vary the proceedings Mr. Anthony Humm announced that

Brother Mordlin had adapted the beautiful words of 'Who hasn't heard of a Jolly Young Waterman' to the tune of the Old Hundredth, which he would request them to join in singing. (Great applause.) And so the song commenced, the chairman giving out two lines at a time, in proper orthodox fashion.

It was this air that Mr. Jerry's dog, as already related, ground out of the barrel-organ, but, besides this particular melody, we do not find that

Dickens mentions any other hymn-tune. The hymns referred to are rather more in number. In *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* Mrs. Atherfield sang Little Lucy to sleep with the Evening Hymn. There is a veiled reference to Ken's Morning Hymn in *O.C.S.*, where Sampson Brass says:

'Here we are, Mr. Richard, rising with the sun to run our little course — our course of duty, sir.'

Dr. Watts makes several appearances, Dickens made the acquaintance of this noted hymnist in early youth, and makes good use of his knowledge. In *The Cricket on the Hearth* Mrs. Peerybingle asks John if he ever learnt 'How doth the little' when he went to school. 'Not to quite know it,' John returned. 'I was very near it once.' Another of the Doctor's hymns is suggested by the behaviour of the Young Tetterbys (*H.M.*).

The contentions between the Tetterbys' children for the milk and water jug, common to all, which stood upon the table, presented so lamentable an instance of angry passions risen very high indeed, that it was an outrage on the memory of Dr. Watts.

The pages of history abound with instances of misguided amateurs who have amended the hymns (and tunes) of others in order to bring them into their way of thinking, and a prominent place in their ranks must be assigned to Miss Monflathers (*O.C.S.*), who managed to parody the good Doctor's meaning to an alarming extent and to insist that

In books, or work or healthful play 16 is only applicable to *genteel* children, while all poor people's children, such as Little Nell, should spend their time.

In work, work, work. In work alway, Let my first years be passed, That I may give for ev'ry day Some good account at last, which is far from the good Doctor's meaning.

Dr. Strong, David Copperfield's second schoolmaster, was fond of quoting this great authority on mischief, but Mr. Wickfield suggests that Dr. Watts, had he known mankind well, would also have written 'Satan finds some mischief still for busy hands to do.'

Some years ago a question was raised in *Notes and Queries* as to the identity of the 'No. 4 Collection' of hymns which appeared to afford consolation to Job Trotter. No answer was vouchsafed, the fact being that the title is a pure invention, and no such collection has ever existed. It is scarcely necessary to add that history is silent as to the identity of the

hymn-book which Uriah Heep was reading when David Copperfield and others visited him in prison.

We are indebted to Dickens for the introduction to the literary world of Adelaide Procter, many of whose sacred verses have found their way into our hymnals. The novelist wrote an introduction to her *Legends and Lyrics*, in which he tells the story of how, as editor of *Household Words*, he accepted verses sent him from time to time by a Miss Mary Berwick, and only discovered, some months later, that his contributor was the daughter of his friend Procter, who was known under the *nom de plume* of Barry Cornwall.

There seems to be some difficulty in regard to the authorship of the hymn

Hear my prayer, O Heavenly Father, Ere I lay me down to sleep; Bid Thy angels, pure and holy, Round my bed their vigil keep.

It has already been pointed out (see *Choir*, February, 1912) that this hymn appeared in the Christmas number of *Household Words* for 1856, in a story entitled *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*. The chief authorities on the works of Dickens claim it as his composition, and include it in his collected works. On the other hand, Miller, in his *Our Hymns* (1866), states that Miss Harriet Parr informed him that the hymn, and the story of *Poor Dick*, in which it occurs, were both her own. We may add that when Dr. Allon applied for permission to include it in his new hymn-book Dickens referred him to the authoress.

Dr. Julian takes this as authoritative, and has no hesitation in ascribing the hymn to Miss Parr. On the other hand, Forster records in his *Life of Dickens* that a clergyman, the Rev. R.H. Davies, had been struck by this hymn when it appeared in *Household Words*, and wrote to thank him for it. 'I beg to thank you,' Dickens answered (Christmas Eve, 1856), 'for your very acceptable letter, not the less because I am myself the writer you refer to.' Here Dickens seems to claim the authorship, but it is possible he was referring to something else in the magazine when he wrote these words, and not to the hymn.

¹⁴ Dickens frequently uses the word in this sense. Tom Pinch says, 'I shall punish the Boar's Head tremendously.' It is also interesting to note that Dickens uses the phrase 'I don't think' in its modern slang meaning on at least two occasions. Tom Pinch remarks 'I'm a nice man, I don't think, as John used to say' (*M.C.* 6), and Sam Weller (*P.P.* 38) says to Mr. Winkle

‘you’re a amiably-disposed young man, sir, I don’t think.’ Mark Tapley uses the expression ‘a pious fraud’ (*M.C.* 13).

15 ‘Pet’ (*L.D.* 2) was a frequent visitor to the Hospital.

16 From the poem on *Industry*.

CHAPTER VI

SONGS AND SOME SINGERS

The numerous songs and vocal works referred to by Dickens in his novels and other writings furnish perhaps the most interesting, certainly the most instructive, branch of this subject. His knowledge of song and ballad literature was extraordinary, and he did not fail to make good use of it. Not only are the quotations always well chosen and to the point, but the use of them has greatly added to the interest of such characters as Swiveller, Micawber, Cuttle, and many others, all of whom are of a very musical turn of mind. These songs may be conveniently divided into three classes, the first containing the national and popular airs of the eighteenth century, of which ‘Rule Britannia’ and ‘Sally in our Alley’ are notable examples. Many of these are referred to in the following pages, while a full list will be found on pp. 135–163.

I. — *National Songs*

There are numerous references to ‘Rule Britannia.’ Besides those mentioned elsewhere we have the picture of little David Copperfield in his dismal home.

What evenings when the candles came, and I was expected to employ myself, but not daring to read an entertaining book, pored over some hard-headed, harder-hearted treatise on arithmetic; when the tables of weights and measures set themselves to tunes as ‘Rule Britannia,’ or ‘Away with Melancholy’!

No wonder he finally went to sleep over them!

In *Dombey and Son* Old Sol has a wonderful story of the *Charming Sally* being wrecked in the Baltic, while the crew sang ‘Rule Britannia’ as the ship went down, ‘ending with one awful scream in chorus.’ Walter gives the date of the tragedy as 1749. (The song was written in 1740.)

Captain Cuttle had a theory that ‘Rule Britannia,’ ‘which the garden angels sang about so many times over,’ embodied the outlines of the British Constitution. It is perhaps unnecessary to explain that the Captain’s ‘garden angels’ appear in the song as ‘guardian angels.’

Mark Tapley, when in America, entertained a grey-haired black man by whistling this tune with all his might and main. The entry of Martin Chuzzlewit caused him to stop the tune at that point where Britons generally are supposed to declare (when it is whistled) that they never, never, never —

In the article on ‘Wapping Workhouse’ (*U.T.*) Dickens introduces the first verse of the song in criticizing the workhouse system and its treatment of old people, and in the *American Notes* he tells us that he left Canada with ‘Rule Britannia’ sounding in his ears.

‘British Grenadiers,’ said Mr. Bucket to Mr. Bagnet, ‘there’s a tune to warm an Englishman up! *Could* you give us “British Grenadiers,” my fine fellow?’ And the ‘fine fellow,’ who was none other than Bagnet junior (also known as ‘Woolwich’), promptly

fetches his fife and performs the stirring melody, during which performance Mr. Bucket, much enlivened, beats time, and never fails to come in sharp with the burden ‘Brit Ish Gra-a-anadeers.’

Our national anthem is frequently referred to. In the description of the public dinner (*S.B.S.* 19) —

‘God Save the Queen’ is sung by the professional gentlemen, the unprofessional gentlemen joining in the chorus, and giving the national anthem an effect which the newspapers, with great justice, describe as ‘perfectly electrical.’

On another occasion we are told the company, sang the national anthem with national independence, each one singing it according to his own ideas of time and tune. This is the usual way of singing it at the present day.

In addition to those above mentioned we find references to ‘The Marseillaise’ and ‘Ça ira,’ both of which Dickens says he heard in Paris. In *Little Dorrit* Mr. Meagles says:

As to Marseilles, we know what Marseilles is. It sent the most insurrectionary tune into the world that was ever composed.

Without disputing the decided opinion expressed by the speaker, there is no doubt that some would give the palm to ‘Ça ira,’ which the novelist refers to in one of his letters. The words of this song were adapted in 1790 to the tune of ‘Carillon National.’ This was a favourite air of Marie Antoinette, and she frequently played it on the harpsichord. After her downfall she heard it as a cry of hatred against herself — it followed her

from Versailles to the capital, and she would hear it from her prison and even when going to her death.

When Martin Chuzzlewit and Mark Tapley were on their way to America, one of their fellow travellers was an English gentleman who was strongly suspected of having run away from a bank, with something in his possession belonging to its strong-box besides the key [and who] grew eloquent upon the subject of the rights of man, and hummed the Marseillaise Hymn constantly.

In an article on this tune in the *Choir* (Nov., 1911) it is stated that it was composed in 1792 at Strasburg, but received its name from the fact that a band of soldiers going from Marseilles to Paris made the new melody their marching tune. A casual note about it appears to be the only musical reference in *A Tale of Two Cities*.

From America we have 'Hail Columbia' and 'Yankee Doodle.' In *Martin Chuzzlewit* we meet the musical coach-driver who played snatches of tunes on the key bugle. A friend of his went to America, and wrote home saying he was always singing 'Ale Columbia.' In his *American Notes* Dickens tells about a Cleveland newspaper which announced that America had 'whipped England twice, and that soon they would sing "Yankee Doodle" in Hyde Park and "Hail Columbia" in the scarlet courts of Westminster.'

II. — *Songs from 1780–1840*

We then come to a group of songs dating, roughly, from 1780. This includes several popular sea songs by Charles Dibdin and others, some ballad opera airs, the *Irish Melodies* and other songs by Thomas Moore, and a few sentimental ditties. Following these we have the songs of the early Victorian period, consisting of more sentimental ditties of a somewhat feebler type, with a few comic and nigger minstrel songs. The task of identifying the numerous songs referred to has been interesting, but by no means easy. No one who has not had occasion to refer to them can have any idea of the hundreds, nay, of the thousands, of song-books that were turned out from the various presses under an infinitude of titles during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There is nothing like them at the present day, and the reasons for their publication have long ceased to exist. It should be explained that the great majority of these books contained the words only, very few of them being furnished with the musical notes. Dickens has made use of considerably over a hundred different songs. In some cases the references are somewhat obscure, but their elucidation is

necessary to a proper understanding of the text. An example of this occurs in Chapter IX of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, where we are told the history of the various names given to the young red-haired boy at Mrs. Todgers' commercial boarding-house. When the Pecksniffs visited the house he was generally known among the gentlemen as Bailey Junior, a name bestowed upon him in contradistinction perhaps to Old Bailey, and possibly as involving the recollection of an unfortunate lady of the same name, who perished by her own hand early in life and has been immortalized in a ballad.

The song referred to here is 'Unfortunate Miss Bailey,' by George Colman, and sung by Mr. Mathews in the comic opera of *Love Laughs at Locksmiths*. It tells the story of a maid who hung herself, while her persecutor took to drinking ratafia.

Dickens often refers to these old song-books, either under real or imaginary names. Captain Cuttle gives 'Stanfell's Budget' as the authority for one of his songs, and this was probably the song-book that formed one of the ornaments which he placed in the room he was preparing for Florence Dombey. Other common titles are the 'Prentice's Warbler,' which Simon Tappertit used, 'Fairburn's Comic Songster,' and the 'Little Warbler,' which is mentioned two or three times. Of the songs belonging to this second period, some are embedded in ballad operas and plays, popular enough in their day, but long since forgotten. An example is Mr. Jingle's quotation when he tells the blushing Rachel that he is going

In hurry, post haste for a licence, In hurry, ding dong I come back,
though he omitted the last two lines:

For that you shan't need bid me twice hence, I'll be here and there in a crack.

This verse is sung by Lord Grizzle in Fielding's *Tom Thumb*, as arranged by Kane O'Hara.

Paul and Virginia is mentioned by Mrs. Flora Finching (*L.D.*) as being one of the things that ought to have been returned to Arthur Clennam when their engagement was broken off. This was a ballad opera by Reeve and Mazzinghi, and the opening number is the popular duet 'See from ocean rising,' concerning which there is a humorous passage in 'The Steam Excursion' (*S.B.*), where it is sung by one of the Miss Tauntons and Captain Helves. The last-named, 'after a great deal of preparatory crowing and humming,' began in that grunting tone in which a man gets down, heaven

knows where, without the remotest chance of ever getting up again. This in private circles is frequently designated a 'bass voice.'



See from o - cean ris - ing Bright flame, the orb of day;
 From yon grove the var - ied song Shall slum - ber from Vir - gin - ia
 chase, chase a - way, Slum - ber from Vir - gin - ia chase, chase a - way.

Dickens is not quite correct in this description, as the part of Paul was created by Incledon, the celebrated tenor, but there are still to be found basses who insist on singing tenor when they think that part wants their assistance.

III. — *Contemporary Comic Songs*

When Dickens visited Vauxhall (*S.B.S.* 14) in 1836, he heard a variety of entertainment, to which some reference has already been made. Amongst the performers was a comic singer who bore the name of one of the English counties, and who sang a very good song about the seven ages, the first half hour of which afforded the assembly the purest delight.

The name of this singer was Mr. Bedford, though there was also a Mr. Buckingham in the Vauxhall programmes of those days. There are at least four songs, all of them lengthy, though not to the extent Dickens suggests, which bear on the subject. They are:

1. — 'All the World's a Stage,' a popular medley written by Mr. L. Rede, and sung by Mrs. Kelley in the *Frolic of the Fairies*.

2. — 'Paddy McShane's Seven Ages,' sung by Mr. Johnstone at Drury Lane.

3. — 'The Seven Ages,' as sung by Mr. Fuller (eight very long verses).

4. — 'The Seven Ages of Woman,' as sung by Mr. Harley.

You've heard the seven ages of great Mister Man, And now Mistress Woman's I'll chaunt, if I can.

This was also a very long song, each verse being sung to a different tune.

Some of these songs are found in a scarce book called *London Oddities* (1822), which also contains 'Time of Day,' probably the comic duet referred to in *The Mistaken Milliner* (S.B.). This sketch was written in 1835 for *Bell's Life in London*, the original title being *The Vocal Dressmaker*, and contains an account of a concert (real or imaginary) at the White Conduit House. This place of entertainment was situated in Penton Street, Islington, near the top of Pentonville Road, and when Dickens wrote his sketch the place had been in existence nearly a hundred years. Early in the nineteenth century it became a place of varied amusements, from balloon ascents to comic songs. Dickens visited the place about 1835. The titles of some of the pieces he mentions as having been sung there are real, while others (such as 'Red Ruffian, retire') appear to be invented.

Of a different kind is the one sung by the giant Pickleson, known in the profession as Rinaldo di Vasco, a character introduced to us by Dr. Marigold.

I gave him sixpence (for he was kept as short as he was long), and he laid it out on two three penn'orths of gin-and-water, which so brisked him up that he sang the favourite comic of 'Shivery Shakey, ain't it cold?'

Perhaps in no direction does the taste of the British public change so rapidly and so completely as in their idea of humour as depicted in the comic song, and it is unlikely that what passed for humour sixty years ago would appeal to an audience of the present day. The song here referred to had a great though brief popularity. This is the first verse:

THE MAN THAT COULDN'T GET WARM.

Words by J. Beuler.

Accompaniment by J. Clinton.

All you who're fond in spite of price
Of pastry, cream and jellies nice
Be cautious how you take an ice
Whenever you're overwarm.
A merchant who from India came,
And Shiver and Shakey was his name,
A pastrycook's did once entice
To take a cooling, luscious ice,
The weather, hot enough to kill,
Kept tempting him to eat, until
It gave his corpus such a chill
He never again felt warm.
Shiver and Shakey O, O, O, Criminy Crikey!
Isn't it cold, Woo, woo, woo, oo, oo,
Behold the man that couldn't get warm.

Some people affect to despise a comic song, but there are instances where a good specimen has helped to make history, or has added a popular phrase to our language. An instance of the latter is MacDermott's 'Jingo' song 'We don't want to fight but by Jingo if we do.' An illustration of the former

comes from the coal strike of March, 1912, during which period the price of that commodity only once passed the figure it reached in 1875, as we gather from the old song 'Look at the price of coals.'

We don't know what's to be done, They're forty-two shillings a ton.

There are two interesting references in a song which Mrs. Jarley's poet adapted to the purposes of the Waxwork Exhibition, 'If I'd a donkey as wouldn't go.' The first verse of the song is as follows:

If I'd a donkey wot wouldn't go, D'ye think I'd wollop him? No, no, no; But gentle means I'd try, d'ye see, Because I hate all cruelty. If all had been like me in fact, There'd ha' been no occasion for Martin's Act Dumb animals to prevent getting crackt On the head, for — If I had a donkey wot wouldn't go, I never would wollop him, no, no, no; I'd give him some hay, and cry gee O, And come up Neddy.

The singer then meets 'Bill Burns,' who, 'while crying out his greens,' is ill-treating his donkey. On being interfered with, Bill Burns says,

'You're one of these Mr. Martin chaps.'

Then there was a fight, when the 'New Police' came up and 'hiked' them off before the magistrate. There is a satisfactory ending, and 'Bill got fin'd.' Here is a reminder that we are indebted to Mr. Martin, M.P., for initiating the movement which resulted in the 'Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' being established in 1824. Two years previously Parliament had passed what is known as Martin's Act (1822), which was the first step taken by this or any other country for the protection of animals. In Scene 7 of *Sketches by Boz* there is a mention of 'the renowned Mr. Martin, of costermonger notoriety.' The reference to the New Police Act reminds us that the London police force was remodelled by Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Peel in 1829. Hence the date of the song will be within a year or two of this.

Mr. Reginald Wilfer (*O.M.F.*) owed his nickname to the conventional chorus of some of the comic songs of the period. Being a modest man, he felt unable to live up to the grandeur of his Christian name, so he always signed himself 'R. Wilfer.' Hence his neighbours provided him with all sorts of fancy names beginning with R, but his popular name was Rumty, which a 'gentleman of convivial habits connected with the drug market' had bestowed upon him, and which was derived from the burden —

Rumty iddity, row dow dow, Sing toodlely teedlely, bow wow wow.

The third decade of the nineteenth century saw the coming of the Christy Minstrels. One of the earliest of the so-called 'negro' impersonators was T.D. Rice, whose song 'Jim Crow' (*A.N.*) took England by storm. It is useless to attempt to account for the remarkable popularity of this and many another favourite, but the fact remains that the song sold by thousands. In this case it may have been due to the extraordinary antics of the singer, for the words certainly do not carry weight .

Rice made his first appearance at the Surrey Theatre in 1836, when he played in a sketch entitled *Bone Squash Diabolo*, in which he took the part of 'Jim Crow.' The song soon went all over England, and 'Jim Crow' hats and pipes were all the rage, while *Punch* caricatured a statesman who changed his opinions on some question of the day as the political 'Jim Crow.' To this class also belongs the song 'Buffalo Gals' .

Amongst the contents of the shop window at the watering-place referred to in *Out of the Season* was

every polka with a coloured frontispiece that ever was published; from the original one, where a smooth male or female Pole of high rank are coming at the observer with their arms akimbo, to the 'Ratcatcher's Daughter.'

This last piece is of some slight interest from the fact that certain people have claimed that the hymn-tune 'Belmont' is derived therefrom. We give the first four lines, and leave our readers to draw their own conclusions. It is worth while stating that the first appearance of the hymn-tune took place soon after the song became popular. 17

The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter).
- Staff 2: B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter).
- Staff 3: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter).

The lyrics are: In West - min - ster, not long a - go, There lived a ra: - catch - er's daugh - te; She was not born in West - min - ster But on t'o - ther side of the wa - ter.

Some Singers

In the *Pickwick Papers* we have at least three original poems. Wardle's carol —

I care not for Spring; on his fickle wing
Let the blossoms and buds be borne —

has been set to music, but Dickens always preferred that it should be sung to the tune of 'Old King Cole,' though a little ingenuity is required to make it fit in. The 'wild and beautiful legend,'

Bold Turpin vunce, on Hounslow Heath
His bold mare Bess bestrode —
er, with which Sam Weller favoured a small but select company on a memorable occasion appears to have been overlooked by composers until Sir Frederick Bridge set it to excellent music. It will be remembered that Sam intimated that he was not wery much in the habit o' singin' without the instrument; but anythin' for a quiet life, as the man said wen he took the sitivation at the lighthouse.

Sam was certainly more obliging than another member of the company, the 'mottled-faced' gentleman, who, when asked to sing, sturdily and somewhat offensively declined to do so. We also find references to other crusty individuals who flatly refuse to exercise their talents, as, for instance, after the accident to the coach which was conveying Nicholas Nickleby and Squeers to Yorkshire. In response to the call for a song to pass the time away, some protest they cannot, others wish they could, others can do nothing without the book, while the 'very fastidious lady entirely ignored the invitation to give them some little Italian thing out of the last opera.' A somewhat original plea for refusing to sing when asked is given by the chairman of the musical gathering at the Magpie and Stump (*P.P.*). When asked why he won't enliven the company he replies, 'I only know one song, and I have sung it already, and it's a fine of glasses round to sing the same song twice in one night.' Doubtless he was deeply thankful to Mr. Pickwick for changing the subject. At another gathering of a similar nature, we are told about a man who knew a song of seven verses, but he couldn't recall them at the moment, so he sang the first verse seven times.

There is no record as to what the comic duets were that Sam Weller and Bob Sawyer sang in the dickey of the coach that was taking the party to Birmingham, and this suggests what a number of singers of all kinds are referred to, though no mention is made of their songs. What was Little Nell's repertoire? It must have been an extensive one according to the man in the boat (*O.C.S.* 43).

‘You’ve got a very pretty voice’ ... said this gentleman ... ‘Let me hear a song this minute.’

‘I don’t think I know one, sir,’ returned Nell.

‘You know forty-seven songs,’ said the man, with a gravity which admitted of no altercation on the subject. ‘Forty-seven’s your number.’

And so the poor little maid had to keep her rough companions in good humour all through the night.

Then Tiny Tim had a song about a lost child travelling in the snow; the miner sang a Christmas song — ‘it had been a very old song when he was a boy,’ while the man in the lighthouse (*C.C.*) consoled himself in his solitude with a ‘sturdy’ ditty. What was John Browdie’s north-country song? (*N.N.*). All we are told is that he took some time to consider the words, in which operation his wife assisted him, and then began to roar a meek sentiment (supposed to be uttered by a gentle swain fast pining away with love and despair) in a voice of thunder.

The Miss Pecksniffs used to come singing into the room, but their songs are unrecorded, as well as those that Florence Dombey used to sing to Paul, to his great delight. What was the song Miss Mills sang to David Copperfield and Dora about the slumbering echoes in the cavern of Memory; as if she was a hundred years old.

When we first meet Mark Tapley he is singing merrily, and there are dozens of others who sing either for their own delight or to please others. Even old Fips, of Austin Friars, the dry-as-dust lawyer, sang songs to the delight of the company gathered round the festive board in Martin Chuzzlewit’s rooms in the Temple. Truly Dickens must have loved music greatly himself to have distributed such a love of it amongst his characters.

It is not to be expected that Sampson Brass would be musical, and we are not surprised when on an occasion already referred to we find him humming in a voice that was anything but musical certain vocal snatches which appeared to have reference to the union between Church and State, inasmuch as they were compounded of the Evening Hymn and ‘God Save the King.’

Whatever music he had in him must have been of a sub-conscious nature, for shortly afterwards he affirms that the still small voice is a-singing comic songs within me, and all is happiness and joy.

His sister Sally is not a songster, nor is Quilp, though he quotes ‘Sally in our Alley’ in reference to the former. All we know about his musical

attainments is that he occasionally entertained himself with a melodious howl, intended for a song but bearing not the faintest resemblance to any scrap of any piece of music, vocal or instrumental, ever invented by man.

Bass singers, and especially the Basso Profundos, will be glad to know that Dickens pays more attention to them than to the other voices, though it must be acknowledged that the references are of a humorous nature. 'Bass!' as the young gentleman in one of the *Sketches* remarks to his companion about the little man in the chair, 'bass! I believe you. He can go down lower than any man; so low sometimes that you can't hear him.'

And so he does. To hear him growling away, gradually lower and lower down, till he can't get back again, is the most delightful thing in the world.

Of similar calibre is the voice of Captain Helves, already referred to on p. 62.

Topper, who had his eye on one of Scrooge's niece's sisters (*C.C.*), could growl away in the bass like a good one, and never swell the large veins in his forehead or get red in the face over it.

Dickens must certainly have had much experience of basses, as he seems to know their habits and eccentricities so thoroughly. In fact it seems to suggest that at some unknown period of his career, hitherto unchronicled by his biographers, he must have been a choirmaster.

He also shows a knowledge of the style of song the basses delighted in at the harmony meetings in which the collegians at the Marshalsea 18 used to indulge. Occasionally a vocal strain more sonorous than the generality informed the listener that some boastful bass was in blue water or the hunting field, or with the reindeer, or on the mountain, or among the heather, but the Marshal of the Marshalsea knew better, and had got him hard and fast.

We are not told what the duet was that Dickens heard at Vauxhall, but the description is certainly vivid enough:

It was a beautiful duet; first the small gentleman asked a question and then the tall lady answered it; then the small gentleman and the tall lady sang together most melodiously; then the small gentleman went through a little piece of vehemence by himself, and got very tenor indeed, in the excitement of his feelings, to which the tall lady responded in a similar manner; then the small gentleman had a shake or two, after which the tall lady had the same, and then they both merged imperceptibly into the original air.

Our author is quite impartial in his distribution of his voices. In *P.P.* we read of a boy of fourteen who was a tenor (not the fat boy), while the quality of the female voices is usually left to the imagination.

If Mrs. Plornish (*L.D.*) is to be believed, her father, Mr. John Edward Nandy, was a remarkable singer. He was a poor little reedy piping old gentleman, like a worn-out bird, who had been in what he called the music-binding business.

But Mrs. P. was very proud of her father's talents, and in response to her invitation, 'Sing us a song, father,'

Then would he give them Chloe, and if he were in pretty good spirits, Phyllis also — Strephon he had hardly been up to since he went into retirement — and then would Mrs. Plornish declare she did believe there never was such a singer as father, and wipe her eyes.

Old Nandy evidently favoured the eighteenth-century songs, in which the characters here referred to were constantly occurring. At a subsequent period of his history Nandy's vocal efforts surprised even his daughter.

'You never heard father in such voice as he is at present,' said Mrs. Plornish, her own voice quavering, she was so proud and pleased. 'He gave us Strephon last night, to that degree that Plornish gets up and makes him this speech across the table, "John Edward Nandy," says Plornish to father, "I never heard you come the warbles as I have heard you come the warbles this night." Ain't it gratifying, Mr. Pancks, though; really.'

The Mr. Pancks here referred to did not mind taking his part in a bit of singing. He says, in reference to a 'Harmony evening' at the Marshalsea:

'I am spending the evening with the rest of 'em,' said Pancks. 'I've been singing. I've been taking a part in "White Sand and Grey Sand." I don't know anything about it. Never mind. I'll take part in anything, it's all the same, if you're loud enough.'

Here we have a round of considerable antiquity, though the date and author are alike unknown.

White sand and grey sand: Who'll buy my

white sand? Who'll buy my grey sand?

Or— Who'll buy my grey sand?

Glee-Singing

A feature of the Harmonic Meetings at the ‘Sol’ (*B.H.*) was the performance of Little Swills, who, after entertaining the company with comic songs, took the ‘gruff line’ in a concerted piece, and adjured ‘his friends to listen, listen, listen to the wa-ter-fall!’ Little Swills was also an adept at ‘patter and gags.’ Glee and catch singing was a feature at the Christmas party given by Scrooge’s nephew, for ‘they were a musical family, and knew what they were about.’ This remark can scarcely be applied to the Malderton family, who, assisted by the redoubtable Mr. Horatio Sparkins, tried over glees and trios without number; they having made the pleasing discovery that their voices harmonized beautifully. To be sure, they all sang the first part; and Horatio, in addition to the slight drawback of having no ear, was perfectly innocent of knowing a note of music; still, they passed the time very agreeably.

Glee-singing seems to have been a feature in the social life of Cloisterham (*E.D.*).

‘We shall miss you, Jasper’ (said Mr. Crisparkle), ‘at the “Alternate Musical Wednesdays” to-night; but no doubt you are best at home. Good-night, God bless you. “Tell me shepherds te-e-ell me: tell me-e-e have you seen (have you seen, have you seen, have you seen) my-y-y Flo-o-ora-a pass this way!”’

It was a different kind of glee party that left the Blue Boar after the festivities in connexion with Pip’s indentures (*G.E.*).

They were all in excellent spirits on the road home, and sang ‘O Lady Fair,’ Mr. Wopsle taking the bass, and assisting with a tremendously strong voice (in reply to the inquisitive bore who leads that piece of music in a most impertinent manner by wanting to know all about everybody’s private

affairs) that *he* was the man with his white locks flowing, and that he was upon the whole the weakest pilgrim going.

Perhaps the most remarkable glee party that Dickens gives us is the one organized by the male boarders at Mrs. Todgers', with a view to serenading the two Miss Pecksniffs.

It was very affecting, very. Nothing more dismal could have been desired by the most fastidious taste. The gentleman of a vocal turn was head mute, or chief mourner; Jinkins took the bass, and the rest took anything they could get.... If the two Miss Pecksniffs and Mrs. Todgers had perished by spontaneous combustion, and the serenade had been in honour of their ashes, it would have been impossible to surpass the unutterable despair expressed in that one chorus: 'Go where glory waits thee.' It was a requiem, a dirge, a moan, a howl, a wail, a lament, an abstract of everything that is sorrowful and hideous in sound.

The song which the literary boarder had written for the occasion, 'All hail to the vessel of Pecksniff, the sire,' is a parody of Scott's 'All hail to the chief who in triumph advances,' from the *Lady of the Lake*.

Two words that by themselves have a musical meaning are 'Chaunter' and 'Drums'; but the Chaunter referred to is one of Edward Dorrit's creditors, and the word means 'not a singer of anthems, but a seller of horses.' To this profession also Simpson belonged, on whom Mr. Pickwick was 'chummed' in the Fleet prison. A 'drum' is referred to in the description of the London streets at night in *Barnaby Rudge*, and signifies a rout or evening party for cards; while one where stakes ran high and much noise accompanied the play was known as a 'drum major.'

In *Our Bore* (R.P.) this sentence occurs:

He was at the Norwich musical festival when the extraordinary echo, for which science has been wholly unable to account, was heard for the first and last time. He and the bishop heard it at the same moment, and caught each other's eye.

Dr. A.H. Mann, who knows as much about Norwich and its festivals as any one, is quite unable to throw any light on this mystic remark. There were complaints about the acoustics of the St. Andrew's Hall many years ago, but there appears to be no historic foundation for Dickens' reference. It would certainly be interesting to know what suggested the idea to him.

There is a curious incident connected with Uncle Dick, whose great ambition was 'to beat the drum.' It was only by a mere chance that his

celebrated reference to King Charles's head got into the story. Dickens originally wrote as follows (in Chapter 14, *D.C.*):

'Do you recollect the date,' said Mr. Dick, looking earnestly at me, and taking up his pen to note it down, 'when the bull got into the china warehouse and did so much mischief?'

In the proof Dickens struck out all the words after 'when,' and inserted in their place the following:

'King Charles the First had his head cut off?'

I said I believed it happened in the year sixteen hundred and forty-nine.

'Well,' returned Mr. Dick, scratching his ear with his pen and looking dubiously at me, 'so the books say, but I don't see how that can be. Because if it was so long ago, how could the people about him have made that mistake of putting some of the trouble out of his head, after it was taken off, into mine?'

The whole of the substituted passage is inserted in the margin at the bottom of the page. Again, when Mr. Dick shows David Copperfield his kite covered with manuscript, David was made to say in the proof: 'I thought I saw some allusion to the bull again in one or two places.' Here Dickens has struck through the words, 'the bull,' and replaced them with 'King Charles the First's head.'

The original reference was to a very popular song of the period called 'The Bull in the China Shop,' words by C. Dibdin, Junior, and music by W. Reeve. Produced about 1808, it was popularized by the celebrated clown Grimaldi. The first verse is:

You've heard of a frog in an opera hat, 'Tis a very old tale of a mouse and a rat, I could sing you another as pleasant, mayhap, Of a kitten that wore a high caul cap; But my muse on a far nobler subject shall drop, Of a bull who got into a china shop, With his right leg, left leg, upper leg, under leg, St. Patrick's day in the morning.

17 Mr. Alfred Payne writes thus: 'Some time ago an old friend told me that he had heard from a Hertfordshire organist that Dr. W.H. Monk (editor of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*) adapted "Belmont" from the highly classical melody of which a few bars are given above. Monk showed this gentleman the notes, being the actual arrangement he had made from this once popular song, back in the fifties. This certainly coincides with its

appearance in Severn's *Islington Collection*, 1854.' — See *Hymn-Tunes and their Story*, p. 354.

18 The Marshalsea was a debtors' prison formerly situated in Southwark. It was closed about the middle of the last century, and demolished in 1856.

CHAPTER VII

SOME NOTED SINGERS

The Micawbers

Dickens presents us with such an array of characters who reckon singing amongst their various accomplishments that it is difficult to know where to begin. Perhaps the marvellous talents of the Micawber family entitle them to first place. Mrs. Micawber was famous for her interpretation of 'The Dashing White Sergeant' and 'Little Taffline' when she lived at home with her papa and mamma, and it was her rendering of these songs that gained her a spouse, for, as Mr. Micawber told Copperfield,

when he heard her sing the first one, on the first occasion of his seeing her beneath the parental roof, she had attracted his attention in an extraordinary degree, but that when it came to 'Little Tafflin,' he had resolved to win that woman or perish in the attempt.

It will be remembered that Mr. Bucket (*B.H.*) gained a wife by a similar display of vocal talent. After singing 'Believe me, if all those endearing young charms,' he informs his friend Mrs. Bagnet that this ballad was his most powerful ally in moving the heart of Mrs. Bucket when a maiden, and inducing her to approach the altar. Mr. Bucket's own words are 'to come up to the scratch.'

Mrs. Micawber's 'Little Taffline' was a song in Storace's ballad opera *Three and the Deuce*, words by Prince Hoare. It will be interesting to see what the song which helped to mould Micawber's fate was like.

LITTLE TAFFLINE.

Should e'er the for - tune be my lot To be made a wealth-y
bride, I'll glad my par - ents' low - ly .cot, All their plea-sure and their
pride: And when I'm drest all in my best, I'll trip a - way like
la - dy gay, I'll trip, I'll trip a - way. And the
lads will say, Dear heart, what a flash! Look at lit-tle Taf-fine with a
silk - en sash, And the lads will say, Dear heart, what a flash! And the
lads will say, Dear heart, what a flash! look at lit-tle Taf-fine, look at
lit-tle Taf-fine, Oh, look at lit-tle Taf-fine with the silk - en sash!

There was also a character called Little Taffline in T. Dibdin's *St. David's Day*, the music for which was compiled and composed by Thomas Attwood, organist of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Her other song, 'The Dashing White Sergeant,' was a martial and very popular setting of some words by General Burgoyne.

Micawber could both sing and hum, and when music failed him he fell back on quotations. As he was subject to extremes of depression and elevation it was nothing unusual for him to commence a Saturday evening in tears and finish up with singing 'about Jack's delight being his lovely Nan' towards the end of it. Here we gather that one of his favourite songs was C. Dibdin's 'Lovely Nan,' containing these two lines:

But oh, much sweeter than all these Is Jack's delight, his lovely Nan.

His musical powers made him useful at the club-room in the King's Bench, where David discovered him leading the chorus of 'Gee up, Dobbin.' This would be 'Mr. Doggett's Comical Song' in the farce *The Stage Coach*, containing the lines —

With a hey gee up, gee up, hay ho; With a hay gee, Dobbin, hey ho!

'Auld Lang Syne' was another of Mr. Micawber's favourites, and when David joined the worthy pair in their lodgings at Canterbury they sang it with much energy. To use Micawber's words —

When we came to 'Here's a hand, my trusty frere' we all joined hands round the table; and when we declared we would 'take a right gude willie waught,' and hadn't the least idea what it meant, we were really affected.

The memory of this joyous evening recurred to Mr. M. at a later date, after the feast in David's rooms, and he calls to mind how they had sung

We twa had run about the braes
And pu'd the gowans fine.

He confesses his ignorance as to what gowans are, but I have no doubt that Copperfield and myself would frequently have taken a pull at them, if it had been feasible.

In the last letter he writes he makes a further quotation from the song. On another occasion, however, under the stress of adverse circumstances he finds consolation in a verse from 'Scots, wha hae', while at the end of the long epistle in which he disclosed the infamy of Uriah Heep, he claims to have it said of him, 'as of a gallant and eminent naval Hero,' that what he has done, he did

For England, home, and beauty.

'The Death of Nelson,' from which this line comes, had a long run of popularity. Braham, the composer, was one of the leading tenors of the day, and thus had the advantage of being able to introduce his own songs to the public. The novelist's dictum that 'composers can very seldom sing their own music or anybody else's either' (*P.P.* 15) may be true in the main, but scarcely applies to Braham, who holds very high rank amongst English tenors. Another song which he wrote with the title 'The Victory and Death of Lord Viscount Nelson' met with no success. The one quoted by Micawber was naturally one of Captain Cuttle's favourites, and it is also made use of by Silas Wegg.

The musical gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Micawber descended to their son Wilkins, who had 'a remarkable head voice,' but having failed to get into the cathedral choir at Canterbury, he had to take to singing in public-houses instead of in sacred edifices. His great song appears to have been 'The Woodpecker Tapping.' When the family emigrated Mr. M. expressed the hope that 'the melody of my son will be acceptable at the galley fire' on board ship. The final glimpse we get of him is at Port Middlebay, where he delights a large assembly by his rendering of 'Non Nobis', and by his dancing with the fourth daughter of Mr. Mell.

The 'Woodpecker' song is referred to in an illustrative way by Mrs. Finching (*L.D.*), who says that her papa is sitting prosily breaking his new-

laid egg in the back parlour like the woodpecker tapping.

Captain Cuttle

Captain Cuttle is almost as full of melody as Micawber, though his repertoire is chiefly confined to naval ditties. His great song is 'Lovely Peg,' and his admiration for Florence Dombey induces him to substitute her name in the song, though the best he can accomplish is 'Lovely Fleg.'

There are at least three eighteenth-century ballads with Peg, or Lovely Peg, for the subject, and it is not certain which of these the Captain favoured. This is one of them:

Once more I'll tune the vocal shell, To Hills and Dales my passion tell, A flame which time can never quell, That burns for lovely Peggy.

Then comes this tuneful refrain:

The image shows a musical score for a refrain in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff is marked 'Flute.' and contains the melody. The lyrics are: 'Love-ly Peg-gy, love-ly Peg-gy, Love-ly, love-ly.' The second staff continues the melody with lyrics: 'love - ly Peg - gy; The heav'n's should sound with'. The third staff concludes the refrain with lyrics: 'e - choes rung in praise of love - ly Peg - gy.' The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and a final double bar line.

The two others of this period that I have seen are called 'Peggy' and 'Lovely Peggy, an imitation.' However, it is most probable that the one that the Captain favoured — in spite of the mixture of names — was C. Dibdin's 'Lovely Polly.'

LOVELY POLLY

A sea - man's love is void of art, Plain sail - ing to his
port the heart; He knows no jea - lous fol - ly, He
knows no jea - lous fol - ly. Tis hard e - nough at
sea to war With bois-t'rous el - e - ments that jar- All's
peace with love-ly Pol-ly, All's peace with love-ly Pol-ly, with
love-ly Pol-ly, love-ly Pol-ly, All's peace with love-ly Pol-ly.

Dickens was very familiar with Dibdin's songs, while the eighteenth-century ones referred to he probably never heard of, as they are very rarely found.

The worthy Captain enjoys a good rollicking song, preferably of a patriotic turn, but is very unreliable as to the sources of his ditties.

'Wal'r, my boy,' replied the Captain, 'in the Proverbs of Solomon you will find the following words, "May we never want a friend in need, nor a bottle to give him!" When found, made a note of.'

This is taken from a song by J. Davy, known as 'Since the first dawn of reason,' and was sung by Incledon.

Since the first dawn of reason that beam'd on my mind, And taught me how favoured by fortune my lot, To share that good fortune I still am inclined, And impart to who wanted what I wanted not. It's a maxim entitled to every one's praise, When a man feels distress, like a man to relieve him; And my motto, though simple, means more than it says, 'May we ne'er want a friend or a bottle to give him.'

He is equally unreliable as to the source of a still more famous song. When Florence Dombey goes to see him the Captain intimates his intention of standing by old Sol Gills,

‘and not desert until death do us part, and when the stormy winds do blow, do blow, do blow — overhaul the Catechism,’ said the Captain parenthetically, ‘and there you’ll find these expressions.’

I have not heard of any church that has found it necessary to include this old refrain in its Catechism, nor even to mix it up with the Wedding Service.

A further mixture of quotations occurs when he is talking of Florence on another occasion. Speaking of the supposed death of Walter he says,

Though lost to sight, to memory dear, and England, home, and beauty.

The first part — which is one of Cuttle’s favourite quotations — is the first line of a song by G. Linley. He composed a large number of operas and songs, many of which were very popular. The second part of the quotation is from Braham’s ‘Death of Nelson’ .

In conversation with his friend Bunsby, Cuttle says —

Give me the lad with the tarry trousers as shines to me like di’monds bright, for which you’ll overhaul the ‘Stanfell’s Budget,’ and when found make a note.

Elsewhere he mentions Fairburn’s ‘Comic Songster’ and the ‘Little Warbler’ as his song authorities.

The song referred to here is classed by Dr. Vaughan Williams amongst Essex folk-songs, but it is by no means confined to that county. It tells of a mother who wants her daughter to marry a tailor, and not wait for her sailor bold.

My mother wants me to wed with a tailor
And not give me my heart’s delight;
But give me the man with the tarry trousers,
That shines to me like diamonds bright.

After the firm of Dombey has decided to send Walter to Barbados, the boy discusses his prospects with his friend the Captain, and finally bursts into song —

How does that tune go that the sailors sing?

For the port of Barbados, Boys! Cheerily!
Leaving old England behind us,
Boys! Cheerily!

Here the Captain roared in chorus,

Oh cheerily, cheerily! Oh cheer-i-ly!

All efforts to trace this song have failed, and for various reasons I am inclined to think that Dickens made up the lines to fit the occasion; while the words ‘Oh cheerily, cheerily’ are a variant of a refrain common in sea

songs, and the Captain teaches Rob the Grinder to sing it at a later period of the story. The arguments against the existence of such a song are: first, that the Dombey firm have already decided to send the boy to Barbados, and as there is no song suitable, the novelist invents one; and in the second place there has never been a time in the history of Barbados to give rise to such a song as this, and no naval expedition of any consequence has ever been sent there. It is perhaps unnecessary to urge that there is no such place as the 'Port of Barbados.'

Dick Swiveller

None of Dickens' characters has such a wealth of poetical illustration at command as Mr. Richard Swiveller. He lights up the Brass office 'with scraps of song and merriment,' and when he is taking Kit's mother home in a depressed state after the trial he does his best to entertain her with 'astonishing absurdities in the way of quotation from song and poem.' From the time of his introduction, when he 'obliged the company with a few bars of an intensely dismal air,' to when he expresses his gratitude to the Marchioness —

And she shall walk in silk attire, And siller have to spare —

there is scarcely a scene in which he is present when he does not illumine his remarks by quotations of some kind or other, though there are certainly a few occasions when his listeners are not always able to appreciate their aptness. For instance in the scene between Swiveller and the single gentleman, after the latter has been aroused from his slumbers, and has intimated he is not to be disturbed again.

'I beg your pardon,' said Dick, halting in his passage to the door, which the lodger prepared to open, 'when he who adores thee has left but the name —'

'What do you mean?'

'But the name,' said Dick, 'has left but the name — in case of letters or parcels —'

'I never have any,' said the lodger.

'Or in case anybody should call.'

'Nobody ever calls on me.'

'If any mistake should arise from not having the name, don't say it was my fault, sir,' added Dick, still lingering; 'oh, blame not the bard —'

'I'll blame nobody,' said the lodger.

But that Mr. Swiveller's knowledge of songs should be both 'extensive and peculiar' is only to be expected from one who held the distinguished office of 'Perpetual Grand Master of the Glorious Apollers,' although he seems to have been more in the habit of quoting extracts from them than of giving vocal illustrations. On one occasion, however, we find him associated with Mr. Chuckster 'in a fragment of the popular duet of "All's Well" with a long shake at the end.'

The following extract illustrates the 'shake':

ALL'S WELL (Duet).

Sung by Mr. Braham and Mr. Charles Braham.

Music by Mr. Braham.

Adagio.

All's well; A - bove,

All's well, All's well;

All, all's well.

be - low, All, all's well.

Although most of Swiveller's quotations are from songs, he does not always confine himself to them, as for instance, when he sticks his fork into a large carbuncular potato and reflects that 'Man wants but little here below,' which seems to show that in his quieter moments he had studied Goldsmith's *Hermit*.

Mr. Swiveller's quotations are largely connected with his love-passages with Sophy Wackles, and they are so carefully and delicately graded that they practically cover the whole ground in the rise and decline of his affections. He begins by suggesting that 'she's all my fancy painted her.'

From this he passes to

She's like the red, red rose, That's newly sprung in June. She's also like a melody, That's sweetly played in tune.

then

When the heart of a man is depressed with fears, The mist is dispelled when Miss Wackles appears,

which is his own variant of

If the heart of a man is depressed with care, The mist is dispelled when a woman appears.

But at the party given by the Wackleses Dick finds he is cut out by Mr. Cheggs, and so makes his escape saying, as he goes —

My boat is on the shore, and my bark is on the sea; but before I pass this door, I will say farewell to thee,

and he subsequently adds —

Miss Wackles, I believed you true, and I was blessed in so believing; but now I mourn that e'er I knew a girl so fair, yet so deceiving.

The *dénouement* occurs some time after, when, in the course of an interview with Quilp, he takes from his pocket a small and very greasy parcel, slowly unfolding it, and displaying a little slab of plum cake, extremely indigestible in appearance and bordered with a paste of sugar an inch and a half deep.

‘What should you say this was?’ demanded Mr. Swiveller.

‘It looks like bride-cake,’ replied the dwarf, grinning.

‘And whose should you say it was?’ inquired Mr. Swiveller, rubbing the pastry against his nose with dreadful calmness. ‘Whose?’

‘Not — ’

‘Yes,’ said Dick, ‘the same. You needn’t mention her name. There’s no such name now. Her name is Cheggs now, Sophy Cheggs. Yet loved I as man never loved that hadn’t wooden legs, and my heart, my heart is breaking for the love of Sophy Cheggs.’

With this extemporaneous adaptation of a popular ballad to the distressing circumstances of his own case, Mr. Swiveller folded up the parcel again, beat it very flat upon the palms of his hands, thrust it into his breast, buttoned his coat over it, and folded his arms upon the whole.

And then he signifies his grief by pinning a piece of crape on his hat, saying as he did so,

‘Twas ever thus: from childhood’s hour I’ve seen my fondest hopes decay; I never loved a tree or flower But ‘twas the first to fade away; I never

nursed a dear gazelle, To glad me with its soft black eye, But when it came to know me well, And love me, it was sure to marry a market gardener.

He is full of song when entertaining the Marchioness. ‘Do they often go where glory waits ‘em?’ he asks, on hearing that Sampson and Sally Brass have gone out for the evening. He accepts the statement that Miss Brass thinks him a ‘funny chap’ by affirming that ‘Old King Cole was a merry old soul’; and on taking his leave of the little slavey he says,

‘Good night, Marchioness. Fare thee well, and if for ever then for ever fare thee well — and put up the chain, Marchioness, in case of accidents.

Since life like a river is flowing, I care not how fast it rolls on, ma’am, While such purl on the bank still is growing, And such eyes light the waves as they run.’

On a later occasion, after enjoying some games of cards he retires to rest in a deeply contemplative mood.

‘These rubbers,’ said Mr. Swiveller, putting on his nightcap in exactly the same style as he wore his hat, ‘remind me of the matrimonial fireside. Cheggs’s wife plays cribbage; all-fours likewise. She rings the changes on ‘em now. From sport to sport they hurry her, to banish her regrets; and when they win a smile from her they think that she forgets — but she don’t.’

Many of Mr. Swiveller’s quotations are from Moore’s *Irish Melodies*, though he has certainly omitted one which, coming from him, would not have been out of place, viz. ‘The time I’ve lost in wooing’!

On another occasion Swiveller recalls some well-known lines when talking to Kit. ‘An excellent woman, that mother of yours, Christopher,’ said Mr. Swiveller; “‘Who ran to catch me when I fell, and kissed the place to make it well? My mother.’”

This is from Ann Taylor’s nursery song, which has probably been more parodied than any other poem in existence. There is a French version by Madame à Taslie, and it has most likely been translated into other languages.

Dick gives us another touching reference to his mother. He is overcome with curiosity to know in what part of the Brass establishment the Marchioness has her abode.

My mother must have been a very inquisitive woman; I have no doubt I’m marked with a note of interrogation somewhere. My feelings I smother, but thou hast been the cause of this anguish, my —

This last remark is a memory of T.H. Bayly's celebrated song 'We met,' which tells in somewhat incoherent language the story of a maiden who left her true love at the command of her mother, and married for money.

The world may think me gay,For my feelings I smother; Oh *thou* hast been the causeOf this anguish — my mother.

T. Haynes Bayly was a prominent song-writer some seventy years ago (1797–1839). His most popular ballad was 'I'd be a Butterfly.' It came out with a coloured title-page, and at once became the rage, in fact, as John Hullah said, 'half musical England was smitten with an overpowering, resistless rage for metempsychosis.' There were many imitations, such as 'I'd be a Nightingale' and 'I'd be an Antelope.'

Teachers and Composers

Although we read so much about singers, the singing-master is rarely introduced, in fact Mr. M'Choakumchild (*H.T.*), who 'could teach everything from vocal music to general cosmography,' almost stands alone. However, in view of the complaints of certain adjudicators about the facial distortions they beheld at musical competitions, it may be well to record Mrs. General's recipe for giving 'a pretty form to the lips' (*L.D.*).

Papa, potatoes, poultry, prunes, and prism are all very good words for the lips, especially prunes and prism. You will find it serviceable in the formation of a demeanour.

Nor do composers receive much attention, but amongst the characters we may mention Mr. Skimpole (*B.H.*), who composed half an opera, and the lamp porter at Mugby Junction, who composed 'Little comic songs-like.' In this category we can scarcely include Mrs. Kenwigs, who 'invented and composed' her eldest daughter's name, the result being 'Morleena.' Mr. Skimpole, however, has a further claim upon our attention, as he 'played what he composed with taste,' and was also a performer on the violoncello. He had his lighter moments, too, as when he went to the piano one evening at 11 p.m. and rattled hilariously

That the best of all ways to lengthen our days
Was to steal a few hours
from Night, my dear!

It is evident that his song was 'The Young May Moon,' one of Moore's *Irish Melodies*.

The young May moon is beaming, love,
The glow-worm's lamp is gleaming, love,
How sweet to rove
Through Morna's grove
While the drowsy world is dreaming, love!

Then awake — the heavens look bright, my dear! 'Tis never too late for delight, my dear! And the best of all ways To lengthen our days Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear!

Silas Wegg's Effusions

We first meet Silas Wegg in the fifth chapter of *Our Mutual Friend*, where he is introduced to us as a ballad-monger. His intercourse with his employer, Mr. Boffin, is a frequent cause of his dropping into poetry, and most of his efforts are adaptations of popular songs. His character is not one that arouses any sympathetic enthusiasm, and probably no one is sorry when towards the end of the story Sloppy seizes hold of the mean little creature, carries him out of the house, and deposits him in a scavenger's cart 'with a prodigious splash.'

The following are Wegg's poetical effusions, with their sources and original forms.

Book I, Ch. 5.

'Beside that cottage door, Mr. Boffin,' from 'The Soldier's Tear'

Alexander Lee

Beside that cottage porch A girl was on her knees; She held aloft a snowy scarf Which fluttered in the breeze. She breath'd a prayer for him, A prayer he could not hear; But he paused to bless her as she knelt, And wip'd away a tear.

Book I, Ch. 15.

The gay, the gay and festive scene, I'll tell thee how the maiden wept, Mrs. Boffin.

From 'The Light Guitar.'

Book I, Ch. 15.

'Thrown on the wide world, doomed to wander and roam.' From 'The Peasant Boy'

J. Parry

Thrown on the wide world, doom'd to wander and roam, Bereft of his parents, bereft of his home, A stranger to pleasure, to comfort and joy, Behold little Edmund, the poor Peasant Boy.

Book I, Ch. 15.

'Weep for the hour.' From 'Eveleen's Bower'

T. Moore

Oh! weep for the hour When to Eveleen's bower The lord of the valley with false vows came.

Book I, Ch. 15.

‘Then farewell, my trim-built wherry.’ From ‘The Waterman’
C. Dibdin

Book II, Ch. 7.

‘Helm a-weather, now lay her close.’ From ‘The Tar for all Weathers’
Unknown

Book III, Ch. 6.

‘No malice to dread, sir.’ From verse 3 of ‘My Ain Fireside.’
Words by *Mrs. E. Hamilton*

Nae falsehood to dread, nae malice to fear, But truth to delight me, and kindness to cheer; O’ a’ roads to pleasure that ever were tried, There’s nane half so sure as one’s own fireside. My ain fireside, my ain fireside, Oh sweet is the blink o’ my ain fireside.

Book III, Ch. 6.

And you needn’t, Mr. Venus, be your black bottle, For surely I’ll be mine, And we’ll take a glass with a slice of lemon in it, to which you’re partial, For auld lang syne.

A much altered version of verse 5 of Burns’ celebrated song.

Book III, Ch. 6.

Charge, Chester, charge, On Mr. Venus, on.
From Scott’s *Marmion*.

Book IV, Ch. 3.

‘If you’ll come to the bower I’ve shaded for you.’ From ‘Will you Come to the Bower’
T. Moore

Will you come to the Bower I’ve shaded for you, Our bed shall be roses, all spangled with dew. Will you, will you, will you, will you come to the Bower? Will you, will you, will you, will you come to the Bower?

A LIST OF SONGS AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC MENTIONED BY DICKENS WITH HISTORICAL NOTES

The figures in brackets denote the chapter in the novel referred to

A Cobbler There Was (D. & S. 2)

A cobbler there was, and he lived in a stall, Which serv’d him for parlour, for kitchen and hall, No coin in his pocket, nor care in his pate, No ambition had he, nor no duns at his gate, Derry down, down, down, derry down.

The melody appeared in *Beggar's Opera*, 1728, and *Fashionable Lady*, 1730.

A Frog He Would (P.P. 32)

The theme of the ballad belongs to the late sixteenth century.

A frog he would a-wooning go, Heigho! said Rowley, Whether his mother would let him or no, With his rowly powly, Gammon and spinnage, O heigh! said Anthony Rowley.

We are told that Jack Hopkins sang 'The King, God Bless Him,' to a novel air, compounded of 'The Bay of Biscay' and 'A Frog He Would.' The latter was evidently the modern setting by C.E. Horn.

Alice Gray

See 'Yet Lov'd I.'

All Hail to the Vessel of Pecksniff the Sire (M.C. 11)

Perhaps a parody on 'All Hail to the Chief.'

All in the Downs (P.P. 3)

See 'Black-Eyed Susan.'

All's Well (O.C.S. 56).

See p. 125.

Duet in *The English Fleet*.

(*T. Dibdin*)

J. Braham.

Deserted by the waning moon, When skies proclaim night's cheerless gloom, On tower, fort, or tented ground, The sentry walks his lonely round; And should a footstep haply stray Where caution marks the guarded way, Who goes there? Stranger, quickly tell, A friend. The word? Good-night. All's well.

And She Shall Walk (O.C.S. 66)

Words by *Susan Blamire*.

And ye shall walk in silk attire, And siller ha'e to spare, Gin ye'll consent to be my bride, Nor think on Donald mair.

Susan Blamire was born at Carden Hall, near Carlisle. Very few of her poems were published under her own name, as well-born ladies of those days disliked seeing their names published as authors. 'The Siller Crown,' from which this verse is taken, is in the Cumberland dialect. It first

appeared anonymously in the *Scots Musical Museum*, 1790, and the authorship was subsequently settled by members of the family.

And You Needn't, Mr. Venus, be Your Black Bottle (O.M.F.).

See p. 134.

A Stiff Nor'-Wester's Blowing, Bill (D. & S. 49)

From 'The Sailor's Consolation.'

One night came on a hurricane, The seas were mountains rolling, When Barney Buntline turned his quid, And said to Billy Bowling, A stiff Nor'-Wester's blowing, Bill, Hark, don't you hear it roar now? Lord help 'em! how I pity's all Unhappy folk ashore now.

Mr. Kidson says in reference to this: 'I do not know that it was ever written to music, though I fancy more than one popular tune has been set to the words, which are by a person named Pitt.'

Auld Lang Syne ('Holly Tree,' D.C. 17, 28)

Words by *Burns*.

A version of the melody occurs at the end of the overture to Shield's *Rosina*, 1783, and is either his own composition or an imitation of some Scotch melody. As, however, such melody has not hitherto been discovered, no great importance can be attached to this theory. *Rosina* was performed in Edinburgh.

Some maintain that the tune is taken from a Scotch reel known as the 'Miller's Wedding,' found in Bremner's *Reels* (1757–1761).

Away With Melancholy (O.C.S. 58, O.M.F. ii. 6, P.P. 44, D.C. 8)

The melody is from Mozart's *Magic Flute*, 'Das klinget so herrlich' — a chorus with glockenspiel accompaniment. The writer of the words is unknown.

The air was introduced into an arrangement of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, and set to the words 'To moments so delighting!' sung by Miss Stephens. Also found as a duet 'composed by Sigr. Mozart, arranged by F.A. Hyde.'

Bay of Biscay (U.T. 31, D. & S. 39, P.P. 32)

Words by *Andrew Cherry*.

J. Davy.

Also see under 'A Frog He Would.'

Beethoven's Sonata in B.

See p. 28.

Begone, Dull Care (O.C.S. 7, E.D. 2)

Author unknown. The words occur in various song-books of the eighteenth century. The tune is seventeenth century, possibly derived from the 'Queen's Jigg' in the *Dancing Master*.

Begone, dull care, I prithee begone from me; Begone, dull care, you and I can never agree.

The words were set as a glee by John Sale, and this may be the music that Dickens knew.

Believe Me, if All Jarley's Waxworks so Rare (O.C.S. 27)

A parody on the following.

Believe Me, if all Those Endearing Young Charms (B.H. 55)

Words by *T. Moore*.

Set to the old melody 'My Lodging is on the Cold Ground.' This appears to have come into existence about the middle of the eighteenth century. It is found in *Vocal Music, or the Songster's Companion*, 1775, and it was claimed by Moore to be an Irish melody, but some authorities deny this. It has also been claimed as Scotch, but the balance of opinion is in favour of its English origin (F. Kidson).

Beside that Cottage Door, Mr. Boffin (O.M.F.)

See p. 133.

Bid Me Discourse (S.B.T. 4)

Words adapted from Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*.

H.R. Bishop.

Bird Waltz (D. & S. 29, 38)

Panormo.

A very popular piano piece of the pre-Victorian period.

Black-eyed Susan (A.N.), or All in the Downs (P.P. 3)

Words by *John Gay*.

R. Leveridge.

This song was printed in sheet form previous to 1730, in which year it appeared in Watts' *Musical Miscellany*, Vol. IV., and was also inserted about that time in several ballad operas.

Bold Turpin Vunce (P.P. 43)

Mr. Frank Kidson has pointed out that Sam Weller's song is founded upon a ballad entitled 'Turpin and the Bishop,' which appears in *Gaieties and Gravities*, by one of the authors of *Rejected Addresses*. The author is said to be Horatio Smith. There is a good four-part setting of the words by Sir F. Bridge.

Brave Lodgings for One (P.P. 29)

Original.

British Grenadiers (B.H. 49)

The tune as we know it now is the growth of centuries, the foundation probably being a tune in *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*. The Grenadiers were founded in 1678. The second verse refers to 'hand grenades,' and the regiment ceased to use these in the reign of Queen Anne. The author is unknown.

Britons, Strike Home (S.L.)

The well-known song in Purcell's *Bonduca* gave its name to an opera by Charles Dibdin, published in 1803. This work probably suggested the phrase to Dickens. It was written with a view to arousing a patriotic feeling. The following verse occurs in the work:

When Dryden wrote and Purcell sung
Britons, strike home, The patriot-
sounds re-echoing rung
The vaulted dome.

Buffalo Gals (Letters)

See p. 10.

By the Sad Sea Waves (Letters)

Julius Benedict.

A once popular song from the opera *The Brides of Venice*.

Cheer, Boys, Cheer (U.T. 29)

Words by *Charles Mackay.*

Henry Russell.

Cheer! boys, cheer! no more of idle sorrow — Courage! true hearts shall bear us on our way, Hope points before, and shows the bright to-morrow, Let us forget the darkness of to-day.

One of Russell's most popular songs. He sold the copyright for £3, and shortly afterwards learnt that the publisher had to keep thirty-nine presses at work on it night and day to meet the demand.

Copenhagen Waltz (D. & S. 7)

Also known as the *Danish Waltz*.

Dead March.

From the oratorio *Saul*.

Handel.

See p. 61.

Death of Nelson (D.C. 52, D. & S. 48, O.M.F. iv. 3)

See p. 116.

J. Braham.

Too well the gallant hero fought, For England, home, and beauty.

Di Piacer (S.B.T. 1)

Rossini.

A favourite air from the opera *La Gazza Ladra*.

Downfall of Paris

See p. 31.

Dragon of Wantley (D.C. 38)

An eighteenth-century popular burlesque opera.

Words by *H. Carey*, music by *Lampe*.

Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes (O.M.F. iii. 14)

Words by *Ben Jonson*.

The composer is unknown. The air was originally issued as a glee for three voices.

Dumbledumdeary (S.B.S. 10)

A refrain rarely found in old songs. It occurs in 'Richard of Taunton Dean.' Also (as in the reference) the name of a dance.

Evening Bells (D.C. 38)

Duet by *G. Alexander Lee*.

Come away, come away, evening bells are ringing, Sweetly, sweetly; 'tis the vesper hour.

Fare Thee Well, and if For Ever (O.C.S. 58)

Words by *Byron*.

Included in 'Domestic Pieces.'

Fare thee well, and if for ever, Still for ever, fare thee well; Even though unforgiving, never 'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

About 1825 the words were set to an air from Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*. There are original settings by Parke, S. Webbe, and six other composers.

Fill the Bumper Fair (N.T.)

Moore's *Irish Melodies*, air 'Bob and Joan.'

Flow On, Thou Shining River (S.B.T. 1)

Moore's *National Melodies*.

Said to be a 'Portuguese Air.' The melody has been utilized as a hymn-tune.

Fly, Fly from the World, My Bessy, With Me (S.B.S. 2)

Words and music by *T. Moore*.

For England

See 'Death of Nelson.'

For England, Home, and Beauty

See 'Death of Nelson.'

For the Port of Barbados, Boys (D. & S. 15)

Original (?) See p. 122.

From Sport to Sport (O.C.S. 58)

From 'Oh no, we never mention her.'

Words by *T.H. Bayly*.

H.R. Bishop.

From sport to sport they hurry me, To banish my regret; And when they win a smile from me, They think that I forget.

Gee Up, Dobbin (D.C. 12)

In the Burney Collection is a tune 'Gee Ho, Dobbin.' Also in *Apollo's Cabinet*, 1757, Vol. II, and *Love in a Village*, 1762. The tune was frequently used for ephemeral songs.

It is doubtful if Dickens would know this song, the title of which has passed into a common phrase.

Glorious Apollo (O.C.S. 13, 56)

S. Webbe.

The title of this glee probably suggested the name of the ‘Glorious Apollers.’ See p. 124.

Go Where Glory Waits Thee (M.C. 11)

(‘Do they often go where glory waits ‘em?’ *O.C.S.* 58)

Moore’s *Irish Melodies*, set to the air ‘Maid of the Valley.’

God Bless the Prince of Wales (U.T. 29)

Words by *J. Ceiriog Hughes.*

Trans, by G. Linley.

H. Brinley Richards, 1862.

God Bless You, Merry Gentlemen (C.C.)

Origin unknown. The second word should be ‘rest,’ and the correct reading is

God rest you merry, gentlemen.

God Save the King (S.B.S. 19, &c.) God Save the Queen (M.C. 29)

It is unnecessary here to discuss the origin and sources of this air. The form in which we know it is probably due to Henry Carey, and the first recorded public performance was on September 28, 1745.

Had I a Heart for Falsehood Framed (D. & S. 14)

Words by *R.B. Sheridan.*

Sung by Mr. Leoni (see *Choir*, May, 1912).

In the *Duenna*, 1775. Set to the air now known as ‘The Harp that once through Tara’s Halls.’

Moore, in his *Irish Melodies*, calls the melody ‘Gramachree.’

Hail Columbia (M.C. 13, A.N.)

Mr. Elson (*National Music of America*) says that the music was originally known as the ‘President’s March,’ probably by a German composer. The words were subsequently adapted to the air by Dr. Joseph Hopkinson.

Harmonious Blacksmith (G.E. 21)

From Handel’s *Suite de Pieces pour le Clavecin*, Set I.

See p. 19.

Has She Then Failed in Her Truth (N.N. 49)

Anon.

H.R. Bishop.

And has she then failed in her truth, The beautiful maid I adore? Shall I
never again hear her voice, Nor see her lov'd form any more?

Heart of Oak (B.R. 7, E.D. 12, U.T. 20, parody)

Words by *D. Garrick.*

W. Boyce.

It is important to notice that the correct title is as given, and not 'Hearts
of Oak.'

Helm a Weather, Now Lay Her Close (O.M.F.)

See p. 133.

How Doth the Little — (Ch.)

Dr. Watts.

See p. 79.

**I am a Friar of Orders Grey (S.B.S. 8) (Out of
Season)**

Words by *John O'Keefe.*

Wm. Reeve.

Appeared in *Merry Sherwood*, 1795.

I Care Not For Spring

See p. 99.

I'd Crowns Resign, To Call Her Mine (D.C. 25)

'Lass of Richmond Hill.'

Words by *L. MacNally.*

J. Hook.

I'd crowns resign, to call her mine, Sweet lass of Richmond Hill.

For a long time there was a dispute between the partisans of Surrey and
Yorkshire as to which 'Richmond Hill' was referred to. The former county
was the favourite for a long time, till a communication in *Notes and
Queries* (10th series iii. p. 290) pulverized its hopes and definitely placed
the locality in Yorkshire.

If I Had a Donkey (O.C.S. 27)

See p. 95.

If You'll Come to the Bower (O.M.F.)

See p. 134.

I'll Tell Thee How the Maiden Wept (*O.M.F.*)

See p. 133.

In Hurry, Post Haste for a Licence (*P.P.* 10)

See p. 90.

I Saw Her at the Fancy Fair (*S.B.T.* 11)

I Saw Thy Show in Youthful Prime (*O.C.S.* 27)

Moore's *Irish Melodies*, air 'Domhnall.'

I saw thy form in youthful prime, Nor thought that pale decay Would steal
before the steps of time, And waste its bloom away, Mary.

Isle of the Brave and Land of the Free (*M.J.*)

Original.

It May Lighten and Storm (*M.C.* 42)

Possibly from some old ballad opera, but more probably original.

Jack's Delight (to) His Lovely Nan (*D.C.* 11)

Words and music by *C. Dibdin*.

From 'Lovely Nan.' Last two lines:

But oh, much sweeter than all these, Is Jack's delight, his lovely Nan.

Jim Crow (*A.N.*)

Unknown.

See p. 97.

I come from old Kentucky, A long time ago, Where I first larn to wheel
about, And jump Jim Crow; Wheel about and turn about, And do jis so,
Eb'ry time I wheel about, I jump Jim Crow.

Jolly Young Waterman (*It., P.P.* 33)

Words and music by *C. Dibdin* in *The Waterman*.

King Death (*B.H.* 33)

Words by *Barry Cornwall*.

Neukomm.

King Death was a rare old fellow, He sat where no sun could shine, And
he lifted his hand so yellow, And pour'd out his coal-black wine. Hurrah for
the coal-black wine!

John Leech used to sing 'King Death,' and it was of his voice that Jerrold
once remarked, 'I say, Leech, if you had the same opportunity of exercising
your voice as you have of using your pencil, how it would *draw!*'

Lesbia Hath a Beaming Eye (*Letter to Lemon*)

Words by *Moore*.

Set to the delightfully gay air 'Nora Creina.'

Lesbia hath a beaming eye, But no one knows for whom it beameth, Right
and left its arrows fly, But what they aim at no one dreameth!

Listen to the Waterfall (*B.H. 32*)

Lord Mornington.

From the glee 'Here in cool grot.'

Little Taffline (*D.C. 28*)

Words by *Prince Hoare*.

S. Storace.

In the opera *Three and The Deuce*, produced in 1806.

See pp. 112, 113.

There is a character 'Little Taffline' in T. Dibdin's *St. David's Day*, music composed and compiled by Attwood. There is another setting said to be 'composed by J. Parry,' but it is merely an altered form of the original.

Lovely Peg (*D. & S. 10*)

See pp. 117–119.

Marseillaise (*M.C. 15, E.D. 2, L.D. 2*)

Rouget de Lisle.

For brief history see *The Choir* (Nov., 1911)

Masaniello (*S.B.T. 9*)

Opera by *Auber*.

See p. 26.

May We Ne'er Want a Friend (*D. & S. 15*)

See 'Since the first dawn of reason.'

Men of Prometheus (*S.B.T. 9*)

See p. 26.

This was the name given to the first edition of Beethoven's ballet music to *Prometheus*, composed in 1800.

Miss Wackles, I Believed You True (*O.C.S. 8*)

'Mary, I believed thee true,' *Moore* (one of his 'Juvenile Poems').

Mary, I believed thee true, And I was blest in so believing, But now I
mourn that e'er I knew A girl so fair and so deceiving!

It has been suggested that these words were adapted and sung to the Scotch air 'Gala Water.'

My Boat is on the Shore (G.S.) (D.C. 54, Letters)

Words by *Lord Byron*.

Bishop.

See p. 12.

Also set by W. Cratherne.

My Feelings I Smother (O.C.S. 36)

See 'We met.'

My Heart's in the Highlands (O.C.S. 2, S.B.S. 2)

Words partly by *Burns*.

In Captain Fraser's *Airs Peculiar to the Scottish Highlands*, 1816.

There is a parody by Dickens (see Forster's *Life*, ch. 8).

Never Leave off Dancing (D.C. 41)

Said to be the subject of a French song.

No Malice to Dread, Sir (O.M.F.)

See p. 134.

Non Nobis (S.B.S. 19)

This celebrated canon, by Byrd, has been performed at public dinners from time immemorial. It also used to be performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

Now's the Day, and Now's the Hour (D.C. 54)

Verse 2 of 'Scots, Wha Hae' (*Burns*).

Now's the day, and now's the hour, See the front o' battle lour, See approach proud Edward's power, Chains and slaverie.

Of All the Girls That Are so Smart (O.C.S. 50)

Words and music by *Henry Carey*.

Carey composed his melody in 1715. It soon became popular, but owing to the similarity of certain phrases to those of an older tune known as 'The Country Lass,' the two gradually got mixed up, with the result that the latter became the recognized setting.

Off She Goes (S.B.T. 7)

A once popular dance air.

Oft in the Stilly Night (S.B.S. 13)

From T. Moore's *National Airs*, set to an air possibly of Scotch origin. There are also settings by Stevenson and Hullah.

Oh Blame Not the Bard (O.C.S. 35)

Words by *T. Moore*.

In *Irish Melodies*. Set to the tune 'Kitty Tyrrel.'

Oh Give Me But My Arab Steed (O.C.S. 21)

Words by *T.H. Bayly*.

G.A. Hodson.

Written in 1828. Sung by Braham.

Oh give me but my Arab steed, My prince defends his right, And I will to the battle speed, To guard him in the fight.

Oh Cheerily, Cheerily (D. & S. 32)

Original, but a refrain similar to this is not uncommon in old sea songs.

Oh Lady Fair (G.E. 13)

Trio by *Moore*.

See 'Strew then, Oh strew.'

Oh Let us Love Our Occupations (Ch.)

Original lines by Dickens. 'Set to music on the new system,' probably refers to Hullah's method (c. 1841), or possibly the Tonic Sol-fa (c. 1843), see p. 17.

Oh Landsmen are Folly (H.R.)

Original.

Old Clem (G.E. 12, 15)

A custom prevailed at Chatham of holding a procession on St. Clement's day, and the saint, who was irreverently designated 'Old Clem,' was personated by a young smith disguised for the occasion.

Dickens frequently writes a verse in the form of prose, and this is an example. Written out properly, it reads thus:

Hammer boys round — Old Clem, With a thump and a sound — Old Clem, Beat it out, beat it out — Old Clem, With a cluck for the stout — Old Clem, Blow the fire, blow the fire — Old Clem, Roaring drier, soaring higher — Old Clem.

Old King Cole (O.C.S. 58, P.P. 36)

The personality of this gentleman has never been settled. Chappell suggests he was 'Old Cole,' a cloth-maker of Reading *temp.* Henry I. Wardle's carol 'I care not for spring' (*P.P.* 36) was adapted to this air, and printed in How's *Illustrated Book of British Song*.

Over the Hills and Far Away (*Dr. M., M.C.* 36)

An old saying, both in song and as a phrase. It occurs in two songs in D'Urfey's *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1709, one of which is,

Tom he was a piper's son, He learned to play when he was young; But all the tune that he could play Was over the hills and far away.

(Vol. iv.)

Doctor Marigold's version is probably original:

North and South and West and East, Winds liked best and winds liked least, Here and there and gone astray, Over the hills and far away.

Over the Water to Charlie (*O.C.S.* 27)

Tune in Johnson's *Musical Museum*, Vol. II, 1788.

Come boat me o'er, come row me o'er, Come boat me o'er to Charlie, I'll gie John Brown another half-crown, To boat me o'er to Charlie; We'll o'er the water, we'll o'er the sea, We'll o'er the water to Charlie, Come weal, come woe, we'll gather and go, And live or die wi' Charlie.

Another Jacobite song was the cause of an amusing incident at Edinburgh. On the occasion of one of his visits there Dickens went to the theatre, and he and his friends were much amazed and amused by the orchestra playing 'Charlie is my darling' amid tumultuous shouts of delight.

Paul and Virginia (*S.B.T.* 7, *L.D.* 13)

J. Mazzinghi.

The popular duet from this opera 'See from ocean rising' was sung by Mr. Johnstone and Mr. Incledon. See p. 91.

Polly Put the Kettle On (*B.R.* 24)

An old country dance.

Red Ruffian, Retire! (*S.B.C.* 8)

Probably an imaginary title, invented by Dickens.

Rule Britannia (*D. & S.* 4, 39, *U.T.* 2, *M.C.* 11, 17, *A.N., D.C.* 8)

Words by *Thomson* or *Mallet*.

Arne.

First appeared in print at the end of the masque *The Judgement of Paris*, but it was composed for the masque of *Alfred*, which was first performed on August 1, 1740. See *Musical Times*, April, 1900.

Sally in Our Alley

See 'Of all the girls.'

Satan Finds Some Mischief Still (D.C. 16)

See p. 80.

Dr. Watts.

See from Ocean Rising (S.B.T. 7)

See *Paul and Virginia*.

She's All My Fancy Painted Her (O.C.S. 7)

('Alice Gray.')

See 'Yet lov'd I.'

She's Like the Red, Red Rose (O.C.S. 8)

Burns revised the words from an old song.

The music is in *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, Bk. VII, 1754, under the name 'Low Down in the Broom.'

Shivery Shakey, Ain't It Cold (Dr. M.)

See p. 94.

Since Laws Were Made for Every Degree (O.C.S. 66, L.D. ii. 12)

Tyburn Tree.

Since laws were made for ev'ry degree To curb vice in others as well as me, I wonder we han't better company Upon Tyburn Tree.

From *Beggar's Opera*. Words by *Gay*.

Set to the tune of 'Greensleeves,' which dates from 1580. This tune is twice mentioned by Shakespeare in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. An earlier 'Tyburn' version is a song entitled 'A Warning to False Traitors,' which refers to the execution of six people at 'Tyborne' on August 30, 1588.

Since the First Dawn of Reason

J. Davy.

See p. 120.

Song About a Sparkling Bowl (Ch.)

There are several songs of this nature, such as ‘The Flowing Bowl’ (‘Fill the bowl with sparkling nectar’). Another began ‘Fill, fill the bowl with sparkling wine.’

Song About the Slumbering Echoes in the Cavern of Memory (*D.C.* 33)

Not at present traced.

Strew Then, Oh Strew a Bed of Rushes (*O.C.S.* 65)

Words and music by *Moore*.

From the glee ‘Holy be the Pilgrim’s Sleep,’ which is a sequel to ‘Oh Lady Fair’ (q.v.).

Moore wrote two inane songs, entitled ‘Holy be the Pilgrim’s Sleep’ and ‘Oh Lady Fair.’ For both pilgrim and lady arrangements are made for spending the night somewhere, and in each song occur the words

Strew then, oh strew his [our] bed of rushes, Here he shall [we must] rest till morning blushes.

Tamaroo (*M.C.* 32)

Said to be taken from an English ballad in which it is supposed to express the bold and fiery nature of a certain hackney coachman.

According to *Notes and Queries* (x. 1), this was sung at Winchester School some seventy or eighty years ago. The following is quoted as the first verse:

Ben he was a coachman rare (‘Jarvey! Jarvey!’ ‘Here I am, yer honour’), Crikey! how he used to swear! How he’d swear, and how he’d drive, Number two hundred and sixty-five. Tamaroo! Tamaroo! Tamaroo!

Dr. Sweeting, the present music-master at Winchester, says, ‘The song “Tamaroo” is quite unknown here now, and if it was sung here seventy or eighty years ago, I should imagine that that was only because it was generally well known. Dickens’ allusion to it seems to suggest that it was a song he had heard, and he utilized its character to label one of his characters in his own fanciful way.’

Tarry Trousers (*D. & S.* 39)

An old folk-song. A mother wants her daughter to marry a tailor, and not wait for her sailor bold, telling her that it is quite time she was a bride. The daughter says:

My mother wants me to wed with a tailor,And not give me my heart's
delight, But give me the man with the tarry trousers,That shine to me like
diamonds bright.

Tell Me, Shepherds (E.D. 2)

Mazzinghi.

Glee. 'Ye Shepherds, tell me' (or 'The Wreath').

The Brave Old Oak (S.B.S. 2.)

Words by *H.F. Chorley.*

E.J. Loder.

A song for the oak, the brave old oak,Who hath ruled in the greenwood
long; Here's health and renown to his broad green crown,And his fifty arms
so strong!

The Bull in the China Shop

See p. 111.

The Cherub That Sits Up Aloft (U.T. 5)

From 'Poor Jack.'

C. Dibdin.

For d'ye see, there's a cherub sits smiling aloft To keep watch for the life
of Poor Jack.

(Last two lines of verse 3.)

The Cordial That Sparkled for Helen (O.C.S. 61)

Moore's *Irish Melodies.*

The Dashing White Sergeant (D.C. 28)

Words by *General Burgoyne.*

H.R. Bishop.

If I had a beau, for a soldier who'd go, Do you think I'd say no? No, no,
not I.

The Gay, the Gay and Festive Season (O.M.F.)

See 'The Light Guitar.'

The Great Sea Snake

Set to the air 'Rampant Moll.'

Perhaps you have all of you heard of a yarnOf a famous large sea snake,
That once was seen off the Isle PitcairnAnd caught by Admiral Blake.

See p. 16.

The Ivy Green (P.P. 6.)

Words by *Dickens*. The most popular musical setting is that by *Henry Russell*.

The Light Guitar (S.B.T. 1, O.C.S.)

Barnett.

Oh leave the gay and festive scene, The halls of dazzling light, And rove
with me through forests green Beneath the silent night.

The Miller of the Dee (O.M.F. ii. 1)

Words, c. 1762.

Tune, 1728.

Referring to a disused boiler and a great iron wheel, Dickens says they
are

Like the Miller of questionable jollity in the song. They cared for
Nobody, no not they, and Nobody cared for them.

The air is found in *The Quaker's Opera*, 1728.

The Ratcatcher's Daughter (Out of Season)

See p. 98.

The Seven Ages (S.B.S. 14)

See pp. 91, 92.

The Soldier, Tired (S.B.C. 4)

Arne.

Dr. Arne translated the words from the *Artaserse* of Metastasio. This
song was the great 'show song' for sopranos for many years. It was
originally sung by Miss Brent.

The soldier, tired of war's alarms, Forswears the clang of hostile
arms, And scorns the spear and shield; But if the brazen trumpet sound, He
burns with conquest to be crowned, And dares again the field.

The Woodpecker Tapping (D.C. 36, L.D. 35, S.B.T. 1, M.C. 25)

Words by *Moore*.

M. Kelly.

Every leaf was at rest, and I heard not a sound But the woodpecker
tapping the hollow beech-tree.

The Young May Moon

See p. 131.

Then Farewell, My Trim-Built Wherry (O.M.F.)

See p. 133.

There Let 'em Be, Merry and Free, Toor-rul-lal-la (O.C.S. 56)

Probably original.

Though Lost to Sight, to Memory Dear (D. & S. 48)

Words and music by *G. Linley*.

Tho' lost to sight, to mem'ry dear Thou ever wilt remain, One only hope
my heart can cheer: The hope to meet again.

Thrown on the Wide World (O.M.F.)

See p. 133.

Time of Day (S.B.C. 8)

See p. 92.

'Tis the Voice of the Sluggard (M.C. 9)

Dr. Watts.

'Twas Ever Thus From Childhood's Hour (O.C.S. 56, D.C. 38)

('Oh ever,' &c.)

Words by *Moore*.

From 'Lalla Rookh.' Has been set to music by S. Glover, E. Souper, and Verini.

Villikens and His Dinah

Sung by Mr. Robson and by S. Cowell.

Composer unknown.

A very popular song 1850–1860.

It's of a liquor merchant who in London did dwell, He had but one darter,
a beautiful gal. Her name it was Dinah, just sixteen years old, And she had
a large fortune in silver and gold. To my too-ral-lal loo-ral-li loo-ral-li-day.

Wapping Old Stairs (U.T. 3)

J. Percy.

Weep for the Hour (O.M.F.)

See p. 133.

We Met (O.C.S. 36, S.B.T. 11)

T.H. Bayly.

The story of a girl who was compelled by her mother to jilt her true love and marry some one else. The story ends with the words misquoted by Swiveller:

The world may think me gay, For my feelings I smother — Oh! *thou* hast been the cause Of this anguish, my mother!

We're a'Noddin' (B.H. 39)

Anonymous.

A once popular Scotch song.

O we're a' noddin, nid nid noddin, O we're a' noddin at our house at home; How's o' wi' ye, kimmer? And how do ye thrive, And how many bairns hae ye now? Bairns I hae five.

We Won't Go Home Till Morning (P.P. 7)

Said in the *London Singer's Magazine* (c. 1839) to be written and composed by C. Blondel ('adapted and arranged' might be more correct). The tune is founded on an air known as Malbrough, or Malbrook, which originated during the Duke of Marlborough's campaign, 1704–1709, known as 'The War of the Spanish Succession.'

What Are the Wild Waves Saying?

Words by *J.E. Carpenter.*

Stephen Glover.

This duet was founded upon the question little Paul Dombey asks his sister:

I want to know what it says — the sea, Floy, what is it that it keeps on saying?

When He Who Adores Thee (O.C.S. 35)

Words by *Moore.*

In *Irish Melodies* to the air 'The Fox's Sleep.'

When I Went to Lunnon Town, Sirs (G.E. 15)

Probably original. The nearest I have found to it is —

The Astonished Countryman, or, a Bustling Picture of London.

When first I came to London Town, How great was my surprise, Thought I, the world's turned upside down, Such wonders met my eyes.

And in *The Universal Songster* —

When I arrived in London Town, I got my lesson pat, &c.

When in Death I Shall Calm Recline

Moore's *Irish Melodies*.

In 1833 Dickens wrote a travesty called *O' Thello*, in which is a humorous solo of eight lines, to be sung to the air to which the above is set.

When Lovely Woman Stoops to Folly (O.C.S. 56)

'Do my pretty Olivia,' cried she, 'let us have that little melancholy air your papa was so fond of; your sister Sophy has already obliged us. Do, child, it will please your old father.' She complied in a manner so exquisitely pathetic, as moved me.

When lovely woman stoops to folly, And finds, too late, that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy? What art can wash her guilt away?

(Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, ch. xxiv.)

When the Heart of a Man (D.C. 24, O.M.F. iii. 14)

Words by *Gay* (*Beggar's Opera*). Set to a seventeenth-century air.

If the heart of a man is depressed with care,
The mist is dispelled when a woman appears,
Like the notes of a fiddle she sweetly, sweetly
Raises our spirits and charms our ears.

When the Stormy Winds (D.C. 21, D. & S. 23)

Words by *Campbell*, who may have taken them from an earlier source. See 'You Gentlemen of England.'

White Sand (L.D. i. 32)

An old glee. See p. 106.

Who Passes by This Road so Late (L.D. i. 1)

(Blandois' Song.)

Words by *C. Dickens*.

H.R.S. Dalton.

An old French children's singing game. Dickens' words are a literal translation. See *Eighty Singing Games* (Kidson and Moffat).

Who Ran to Catch Me When I Fell (O.C.S. 38)

From Ann Taylor's nursery song 'My Mother.'

Wife Shall Dance and I Will Sing, so Merrily Pass the Day

From 'Begone, dull care' (q.v.).

Will Watch, the Bold Smuggler (*Out of Season*)

John Davy.

Yankee Doodle (*U.T., A.N.*)

Mr. F. Kidson has traced this to 'A selection of Scotch, English, Irish, and Foreign Airs,' published in Glasgow by James Aird, c. 1775 or 1776.

Yet Lov'd I as Man Ne'er Loved (*O.C.S. 50*)

Words by *William Mee.*

Millard.

From 'Alice Gray.'

She's all my fancy painted her, She's lovely, she's divine, But her heart it is another's, It never can be mine. Yet lov'd I as ne'er man loved, A love without decay, Oh my heart, my heart is breaking, For the love of *Alice Gray!*

'Alice Gray.' A ballad, sung by Miss Stephens, Miss Palon, and Miss Grant. Composed and inscribed to Mr. A. Pettet by Mrs. Philip Millard.

Published by A. Pettet, Hanway Street.

You Gentlemen of England (*D. & S. 23*)

Old English Ballad.

A seventeenth-century song, the last line of each verse being 'When the stormy winds do blow.'

Young Love Lived Once (*S.B.S. 20*)

In *Sketches by Boz* this sentence occurs:

'When we say a "shed" we do not mean the conservatory kind of building which, according to the old song, Love frequented when a young man.'

The song referred to is by T. Moore.

Young love lived once in a humble shed, Where roses breathing, And woodbines wreathing, Around the lattice their tendrils spread, As wild and sweet as the life he led.

It is one of the songs in *M.P., or The Blue-Stocking*, a comic opera in three acts.

A LIST OF VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ASSOCIATED WITH DICKENS AND WITH THE CHARACTERS IN HIS NOVELS

All these pieces are in the possession of Mr. W. Miller, Librarian of the Dickens Fellowship

Songs in the Village Coquettes. Words by *Charles Dickens*. Music by *Hullah*.

The Ivy Green. Song. Words by *Charles Dickens*. Music by *Mrs. Henry Dale*.

The Ivy Green. Song. Music by *A. De Belfer*.

The Ivy Green. Song. Music by *W. Lovell Phillips*.

The Ivy Green. Song. Music by *Henry Russell*.

(This song has been published by almost every music publisher in London and America.)

Introduction and familiar variations on The Ivy Green arranged for the pianoforte by *Ricardo Linter*.

Russell's Song The Ivy Green, with introduction and variations for the pianoforte by *Stephen Glover*.

The Ivy Green as a vocal duet. Music by *Henry Russell*.

A Christmas Carol. Words by *Charles Dickens*. Music by *Henry Russell*.

A Christmas Carol. Words by *Charles Dickens*. Music by *Henry Russell* to the tune of Old King Cole.

Bold Turpin. Words by *Charles Dickens*. Music by *Sir J.F. Bridge*.

Pickwick. Set to Music by *George L. Jeune*. Words by *George Soane*.

The Wery Last Observations of Weller senior to Boz on his Departure from London. Written and sung by *J.M. Field, Esq.* Adapted to an old air. Boston, 1842.

The Original Set of Pickwick Quadrilles. Edited by 'Boz' Junior.

Sam Weller's Adventures. Reprinted in *The Life and Times of James Catnach*.

Gabriel Grub. Cantata Seria Buffa. Adapted by *Frederick Wood*. Music by *George Fox*.

Pickwick Tarantelle.

Mr. Stiggins. Song. Maliciously written and composed by 'Tony Weller.'

The Pickwick Quadrille. Composed by *Fred Revallin*.

The Pickwick Lancers. Composed by *Camille D'Aubert*.

Pickwick. Songs and Dances by *Edward Solomon*. Words of songs by *Sir F.C. Burnand*.

Oliver Twist. Written by *H. Copeland* from a song by *W.T. Townsend*.

The Artful Dodger. Written by *Charles Sloman* and *Sam Cowell*. Music by *Fred Bridgeman*. Sung by *Sam Cowell*.

Nicholas Nickleby Quadrille and Nickleby Galop. By *Sydney Vernon*.

Master Humphrey's Clock, 'Did You Hear Anything Knock?' Song by *Beuler*.

Master Humphrey's Quadrilles. Music by '*Boz*' *Junior*.

The Chimes of Master Humphrey's Clock. Arranged for the pianoforte by *Charles Arnold*.

The Ghost of the Baron of Grog-swig. Written by *John Major*. Arranged by *J. Monro*.

Little Nell. Words by *Miss Charlotte Young*. Music by *George Linley*.

Little Nell. Composed by *George Linley*. Arranged for the pianoforte by *Carlo Totti*.

Nell. Song. Composed by *H.L. Winter*.

Little Nell. By *Miss Hawley*.

Little Nell. Waltz by *Dan Godfrey*.

Nell. Words by *Edward Oxenford*. Music by *Alfred J. Caldicott*.

Little Nellie's Polka. Composed by *J. Pridham*.

Barnaby Rudge Tarantelle. By *Clementine Ward*.

Dolly Varden. Ballad. Words and Music by *Cotsford Dick*.

G.W. Hunt's Popular Song Dolly Varden.

Dolly Varden. Comic Song. Words by *Frank W. Green*. Music *Alfred Lee*.

Vance's Dolly Varden. Written, composed, and sung by *Alfred G. Vance*.

G.W. Moore's Great Song Dressed as a Dolly Varden. Written, composed, and sung by *G.W. Moore*.

Dolly Varden's Wedding. Comic Song. Written, composed, and arranged by *T.R. Tebley*.

Dolly Varden Waltz. By *Henry Parker*.

Dolly Varden Valse. Composed by *Sara Leumas*.

The Dolly Varden Polka. By *Brinley Richards*.

The Dolly Varden Polka. By *W.C. Levey*.

Dolly Varden Polka. By *Henry Parker*.

The Dolly Varden Polka. Arranged by *T.C. Lewis*. Composed by *G. Discongi*.

Dolly Varden Polka. By *George Gough*.

Dolly Varden Galop. By *Charles Coote, jun.*

Dolly Varden Schottische. By *Helene*.

The Dolly Varden Schottische. By *H. King*.
Dolly Varden Gavotte. By *Clementine Ward*.
Dolly Varden Quadrille. By *Henry Parker*.
Dolly Varden Quadrille, on old English Tunes. By *C.H.R. Marriott*.
Maypole Hugh. Song. Words by *Charles Bradberry*. Music by *George Fox*.

Yankee Notes for English Circulation; or Boz in A-Merry-Key. Comic Song. Written by *James Briton*. Music arranged to an American Air by *Geo. Loder*.

The Christmas Carol Quadrilles. By *Edwin Merriott*.

Tiny Tim. Words by *Edward Oxenford*. Music by *Alfred J. Caldicott*.

Tiny Tim. Words by *Harry Lynn*. Music by *W. Knowles*.

The Song of Christmas. Song sung in *A Christmas Carol* at the Theatre Royal, Adelphi. Composed by *C. Herbert Rodwell*.

Tiny Tim. Written and composed by *Arthur Wingham*.

‘God Bless us Every One.’ Words by *Geo. Cooper*. Music by *Herbert Foster*.

The Chimes. Song. Written by *J.E. Carpenter*. Music composed by *F. Nicholls Crouch*.

The Chimes. By *Jullien*.

The Chimes Quadrilles. By *Henry Oakey*.

The Chimes Quadrilles. By *Lancelott*.

The Chimes Gavotte. For the pianoforte, with bell accompaniment (ad lib.). Composed by *Wm. West*, Organist and Choirmaster of St. Margaret Pattens (Rood Lane, E.C.).

Lillian. Ballad from *The Chimes*. The Poetry by *Fanny E. Lacey*. Music by *Edward L. Hime*.

The Spirit of the Chimes. Written and composed by *Fanny E. Lacey*.

The Cricket on the Hearth. Song. By *James E. Stewart*, Cincinnati, U.S.A.

The Cricket on the Hearth. A Domestic Ballad. Written by *Edward J. Gill*. Music by *J. Blewitt*.

The Cricket Polka.

The Cricket Polka. Composed by *Jullien*.

The Cricket on the Hearth Quadrilles. Composed by *S.D. Saunders*.

The Cricket on the Hearth. A set of Quadrilles. By *T.L. Rowbotham*.

The Cricket on the Hearth. A new Christmas Quadrille. By *F. Lancelott*.

The New Cricket Polka. Composed by *Johann Lupeski*.

The Battle of Life. Song. Words by *O.C. Lynn*. Music by *R. Graylott*.
Published in *The Illustrated London News*, March 20, 1847.

The Fruit Gatherers' Song ('The Battle of Life'). Written by *Fanny E. Lacey*. Composed by *Edwin Flood*.

The Haunted Man Quadrilles. By *Wm. West*.

What are the Wild Waves Saying? Written by *J.E. Carpenter*. Music by *Stephen Glover*.

What are the Wild Waves Saying? (*Stephen Glover*). Arranged for the pianoforte by *Brinley Richards*.

A Voice from the Waves (an answer to the above). Words by *R. Ryan*.
Music by *Stephen Glover*.

Little Paul Ballad. Poetry by *Miss C. Young*. Music by *W.T. Wrighton*.

Paul. Song. Words by *Edward Oxenford*. Music by *Alfred J. Caldicott*.

Florence. Song. Written by *Charles Jeffrey*.

Poor Florence. Song. Music composed by *W.T. Wrighton*.

Walter and Florence. Song. Written by *Johanna Chandler*. Music by *Stephen Glover*.

Dombey and Son Quadrille. By *Miss Harriet Frances Brown*.

The David Copperfield Polka. Composed by *W. Wilson*.

The Micawber Quadrille (played in the drama of *Little Em'ly*, at the Olympic Theatre, in 1869). Composed by *J. Winterbottom*.

Little Em'ly Valses. By *John Winterbottom*. (Played in the drama of *Little Em'ly*, at the Olympic Theatre, in 1869.)

The Little Em'ly Polka. Composed by *W.G. Severn*.

Agnes; or I Have Loved You all My Life. Ballad. Written by *Ger Vere Irving*. Composed by *Gerald Stanley*.

Dora; or The Child-Wife's Farewell. Ballad. Written by *George Linley*.
Composed by *Gerald Stanley*.

Peggotty the Wanderer. Ballad. Written by *William Martin*. Music by *James William Etherington*.

Dora to Agnes. Song. Words by *Charles Jeffrey*. Music by *J.H. Tully*.

Little Blossom. Ballad by *Stephen Glover*. Words by *Charlotte Young*.

Household Words. Duet. Written by *Charlotte Young*. Composed by *John Blockley*.

Songs and Ballads from *Bleak House*:

(1) The Song of Esther Summerson, 'Farewell to the Old Home.' Written by *Charles Jeffrey*. Music by *Charles W. Glover*.

(2) Ada Clare. Written by *Charles Jeffrey*. Set to Music by *Charles W. Glover*.

Poor Jo! Ballad. Written by *H.B. Farnie*. Composed by *C.F.R. Marriott*.

Poor Jo! Song and Chorus. Written by *W.R. Gordon*. Composed by *Alfred Lee*.

'Jo.' Galop for the pianoforte upon airs from the celebrated drama, by *Edward Solomon*.

'He was Wery Good to Me.' Poor Jo's song. Written and composed by *Alfred Allen*.

The Token Flowers. Song founded on 'Caddy's Flowers' in *Bleak House*. Written by *Joseph Edward Carpenter*. Music by *B. Moline*.

Hard Times. Polka. By *C.W.*

Little Dorrit. Ballad. Written and composed by *John Caulfield*.

Little Dorrit. Song. Written by *Henry Abrahams*. Music by *C. Stanley*.

Little Dorrit's Polka. Composed by *Jules Norman*.

As You Like It; or Little Dorrit's Polka. By *W.H. Montgomery*.

Little Dorrit's Vigil. By the composer of Little Nell.

Little Dorrit's Schottische. Composed by *W.M. Parker*.

Little Dorrit Serenade. By *Clementine Ward*.

'My Dear Old Home.' Ballad. Written by *J.E. Carpenter*. Composed by *John Blockley*.

Who Passes by this Road so Late? Blandois' song from *Little Dorrit*. Words by *Charles Dickens*. Music by *H.R.S. Dalton*. (This song was suggested to Dickens by the French song entitled 'Le Chevalier du guet'.)

Floating Away Ballad. Written by *J.E. Carpenter*. Music by *John Blockley*.

All the Year Round; or The Search for Happiness. Song. Written by *W.S. Passmore*. Composed by *John Blockley*.

All the Year Round Quadrilles. By *E. Frewin*.

All the Year Round Varsoviana. By *W.H. Montgomery*.

The Two Cities Quadrilles. By *W.H. Montgomery*.

Tom Tiddler's Polka. Composed by *W. Wilson*.

Great Expectations. Ballad.

Coote's Lancers, 'Somebody's Luggage.'

Mrs. Lirriper's Quadrille. Written by *Adrian Victor*.

Jenny Wren (The Doll's Dressmaker). Song. Words by *Edward Oxenford*.
Music by *Alfred J. Caldicott*.

Jenny Wren Quadrilles. Arranged by *Rosabel*.

Mugby Junction Galop. By *Charles Coote, jun.*

No Thoroughfare Galop. Composed by *Charles Coote, jun.*

[From an edition:]

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A WEEK'S TRAMP IN DICKENS-LAND by William R.

Hughes



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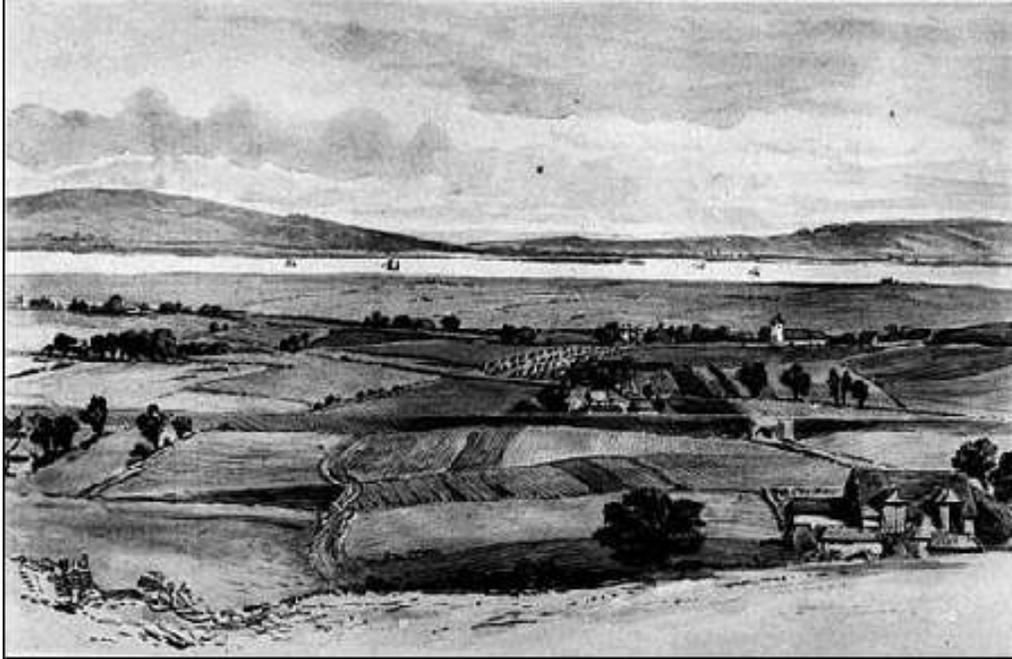
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A WEEK'S TRAMP IN DICKENS-LAND



The Marshes, Cooling.

TO
MY WIFE AND DAUGHTERS,
EMILY AND EDITH,
I DEDICATE
THIS RECORD OF "A WEEK'S TRAMP,"
TO REMIND THEM OF
THE MANY PLEASANT READINGS FROM DICKENS
WE HAVE ENJOYED TOGETHER
AT HOME.

PREFACE.

“I should like to show you a series of eight articles, Sir, that have appeared in the Eatanswill Gazette. I think I may venture to say that you would not be long in establishing your opinions on a firm and solid basis, Sir.’

“I dare say I should turn very blue long before I got to the end of them,’ responded Bob.

“Mr. Pott looked dubiously at Bob Sawyer for some seconds, and turning to Mr. Pickwick said: —

““You have seen the literary articles which have appeared at intervals in the Eatanswill Gazette in the course of the last three months, and which have excited such general — I may say such universal — attention and admiration?”

““Why,’ replied Mr. Pickwick, slightly embarrassed by the question, ‘the fact is, I have been so much engaged in other ways, that I really have not had an opportunity of perusing them.’

““You should do so, Sir,’ said Pott with a severe countenance.

““I will,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

““They appeared in the form of a copious review of a work on Chinese metaphysics, Sir,’ said Pott.

““Oh,’ observed Mr. Pickwick — ‘from your pen I hope?’

““From the pen of my critic, Sir,’ rejoined Pott with dignity.

““An abstruse subject I should conceive,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

““Very, Sir,’ responded Pott, looking intensely sage. ‘He *crammed* for it, to use a technical but expressive term; he read up for the subject, at my desire, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.’

““Indeed!’ said Mr. Pickwick; ‘I was not aware that that valuable work contained any information respecting Chinese metaphysics.’

““He read, Sir,’ rejoined Mr. Pott, laying his hand on Mr. Pickwick’s knee, and looking round with a smile of intellectual superiority, ‘he read for metaphysics under the letter M, and for China under the letter C; and combined his information, Sir!’

“Mr. Pott’s features assumed so much additional grandeur at the recollection of the power and research displayed in the learned effusions in

question, that some minutes elapsed before Mr. Pickwick felt emboldened to renew the conversation.”

The above perennial extract from the immortal *Pickwick Papers* suggests to some extent the nature of the contents of this Volume. It is the record of a pilgrimage made by two enthusiastic Dickensians during the late summer of 1888, together with “combined information,” — not indeed “crammed” from the ninth edition just completed of the valuable work above referred to, but gathered mostly from original sources, — respecting the places visited, the characters alluded to in some of the novels, personal reminiscences of their Author, appropriate passages from his works (for which acknowledgments are due to Messrs. Chapman and Hall), and some little mention of the thoughts developed by the associations of “Dickens-Land.”

Although the pilgrimage only extended to a week, and every spot referred to (save one) was actually visited during that time, it is but right to state that on three subsequent occasions the author has gone over the greater part of the same ground — once in the early winter, when the blue clematis and the aster had given place to the yellow jasmine and the chrysanthemum; once in the early spring, when those had been succeeded by the almond-blossom and the crocus; and again in the following year, when the beautiful county of Kent was rehabilitated in summer clothing, thus enabling him to verify observations, to correct possible errors arising from first impressions, and to gain new experiences.

As our head-quarters were at Rochester, and most of the city and other parts were taken at odd times, it has not been found practicable to preserve in consecutive chapters a perfect sequence of the records of each day’s tramp, although they appear in fairly chronological order throughout the work. “A preliminary tramp in London” will possibly be dull to those familiar with the great Metropolis, but it may be useful to foreign tramps in “Dickens-Land.”

Availing myself of the privilege adopted by most travellers at home and abroad, I have made occasional references to the weather. This is perhaps excusable when it is remembered that the year 1888 was a very remarkable one in that respect, so much so indeed, that the writer of a leading article in *The Times* of January 18th, 1889, in commenting on Mr. G. J. Symons’ report of the British rainfall of the previous year, remarked that “seldom

within living memory had there been a twelve-month with more unpleasantness in it and less of genial sunshine." We were specially favoured, however, in getting more "sunshine" than "unpleasantness," thus adding to the enjoyment of our never-to-be-forgotten tramp.

Upwards of three years have elapsed since this book was commenced, and the limited holiday leisure of a hard-working official life has necessarily prevented its completion for such a lengthened period, that it has come to be pleasantly referred to by my many Dickensian friends as the "Dictionary," in allusion to the important work of that nature contemplated by Dr. Strong, respecting which (says David Copperfield) "Adams, our head-boy, who had a turn for mathematics, had made a calculation, I was informed, of the time this Dictionary would take in completing, on the Doctor's plan, and at the Doctor's rate of going. He considered that it might be done in one thousand six hundred and forty-nine years, counting from the Doctor's last, or sixty-second, birthday."

My hearty and sincere acknowledgments are due to the publishers, Messrs. Chapman and Hall, not only for the very handsome manner in which they have allowed my book to be got up as regards print, paper, and execution (to follow the model of their Victoria Edition of *Pickwick* is indeed an honour to me), but especially for their great liberality in the matter of the Illustrations, which number more than a hundred. These were selected in conference by Mr. Fred Chapman, Mr. Kitton, and myself, and include about fifty original drawings by Mr. Kitton, from sketches specially made by him for this work. Of the remainder, six are from Forster's *Life of Dickens*, fifteen from Langton's *Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens*, seven from *Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil*, ten from the Jubilee Edition of *Pickwick*, and five from Rimmer's *About England with Dickens*. A few interesting fac-similes of handwriting, etc., have also been introduced. Surely such an eclectic series of Dickens Illustrations has never before been presented in one volume.

To Messrs. Chapman and Hall, Mr. Robert Langton, F.R.H.S., Messrs. Frank T. Sabin and John F. Dexter, Messrs. Macmillan and Co., and Messrs. Chatto and Windus (the proprietors of the above-mentioned works), the author's acknowledgments are also due, and are hereby tendered. Mr. Stephen T. Aveling has kindly supplied an illustration of Restoration House as it appeared in Dickens's time, and Mr. William Ball, J.P., generously commissioned a local artist to make a sketch of the Marshes, which forms

the frontispiece to the book, and gives a good idea of the “long stretches of flat lands” on the Kent and Essex coasts.

To those friends whom we then met for the first time, and from whom we subsequently received help, the author’s most cordial acknowledgments are due, and are also tendered, for kind information and assistance. They are a goodly number, and include Mr. A. A. Arnold, Mr. Stephen T. Aveling, Mr. William Ball, J.P., Mr. James Baird, Mr. Charles Bird, F.G.S., Major and Mrs. Budden, Mr. W. J. Budden, Mr. R. L. Cobb, Mr. J. Couchman, The Misses Drage, Mrs. Easedown, Mr. Franklin Homan, Mr. James Hulkes, J.P., and Mrs. Hulkes, Mr. Apsley Kennette, Mrs. Latter, Mr. J. Lawrence, Mr. C. D. Levy, Mr. B. Lillie, Mr. J. E. Littlewood, Mr. J. N. Malleson, Rev. J. J. Marsham, M.A., Mrs. Masters, Mr. Miles, Mr. W. Millen, Mr. Geo. Payne, F.S.A., Mr. William Pearce, Mr. George Robinson, Mr. T. B. Rosseter, F.R.M.S., Dr. Sheppard, Mr. Henry Smetham, Dr. Steele, M.R.C.S., Mr. William Syms, Mrs. Taylor, Miss Taylor, Mr. W. S. Trood, Major Trousdell, Rev. Robert Whiston, M.A., Mr. W. T. Wildish, Mr. Humphrey Wood, Mr. C. K. Worsfold, and Mrs. Henry Wright. The late Mr. Roach Smith, F.S.A., took much interest in my work and gave valuable assistance. Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A., and Mrs. Lynn Linton generously contributed very interesting information. The Right Honourable the Earl of Darnley, Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens, Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A., and Lady Head, also kindly answered enquiries.

Miss Hogarth has at my request very kindly consented to the publication of the original letters of the Novelist — about a dozen — now printed for the first time.

My sincere thanks are due to Mr. E. W. Badger, F.R.H.S., the friend of many years, for valuable help.

To my old friend and fellow-tramp, Mr. F. G. Kitton, with whose memory this delightful excursion will ever be pleasantly connected, my warmest thanks are due for reading proofs and for much kind help in many ways. “He wos werry good to me, he wos.” As Pip wrote to another “Jo,” “woT larX” we did have.

Last, but not least, my cordial thanks are due to Mr. Charles Dickens for much kind information and valuable criticism.

So long as readers continue to be, so long will our great English trilogy of cognate authors, Shakespeare, Scott, and Dickens, continue to be read. Indeed as regards Dickens, a writer in *Blackwood*, June, 1871 (and

Blackwood was not always a sympathetic critic), said: — "We may apply to him, without doubt, the surest test to which the maker can be subject: were all his books swept by some intellectual catastrophe out of the world, there would still exist in the world some score at least of people, with all whose ways and sayings we are more intimately acquainted than with those of our brothers and sisters, who would owe to him their being. While we live Sam Weller and Dick Swiveller, Mr. Pecksniff and Mrs. Gamp, the Micawbers and the Squeerses, can never die. . . . They are more real than we are ourselves, and will outlive and outlast us, as they have outlived their creator. This is the one proof of genius which no critic, not the most carping or dissatisfied, can gainsay."

So long also, the author ventures to think, will pilgrimages continue to be made to the shrines of Stratford-on-Avon, Abbotsford, and Gad's Hill Place, and to their vicinities. The modest aim of this Volume is, that it may add a humble unit in helping to keep *his* memory green, and that it may be a useful and acceptable companion to pilgrims, not only of our own country, but also from that still "Greater Britain," where "All the Year Round" the name of Charles Dickens is almost a dearer "Household Word" than it is with us.

William R. Hughes.

Wood House, Handsworth Wood,
near Birmingham.

30th September, 1891.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

“So wishing you well in the way you go, we now conclude with the observation, that perhaps you’ll go it.” — *Our Mutual Friend*.

Among the many interesting books that have been published relating to Charles Dickens since his death, more than twenty years ago (it seems but yesterday to some of his admirers), there are at least half a dozen that describe the “country” peopled by the deathless characters created by his genius.

Probably the pioneer in this class of literature was that comprehensive work, *Dickens’s London, or London in the Works of Charles Dickens*, by my friend, that thorough Dickensian, Mr. T. Edgar Pemberton, 1876; this was followed by a very readable volume, *In Kent with Charles Dickens*, by Thomas Frost, 1880; then came a dainty tome from Boston, U.S.A., entitled, *A Pickwickian Pilgrimage*, by John R. G. Hassard, 1881. Afterwards appeared *The Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens*, by Robert Langton, 1883, beautifully illustrated by the late William Hull of Manchester, the author, and others — a work developed from the *brochure* by the same author, *Charles Dickens and Rochester*, 1880, which has passed through five editions. Next to Forster’s *Life of Dickens*, Mr. Robert Langton’s larger work undoubtedly ranks — especially from the richness of the illustrations — as a very valuable original contribution to the biography of the great novelist. Another handsome volume, containing the illustrations to a series of papers in *Scribner’s Monthly* — written by B. E. Martin — entitled *About England with Dickens*, came from the pen of Mr. Alfred Rimmer, 1883, and included additional illustrations drawn by the author, C. A. Vanderhoof, and others. Yet another little *brochure* recently appeared, called *London Rambles en zigzag with Charles Dickens*, by Robert Allbut, 1886. Lastly, there was published in the Christmas Number of *Scribner’s Magazine*, 1887, an article, “In Dickens-Land,” by Edward Percy Whipple, in which this veteran and appreciative critic of the eminent English writer’s works points out that, “In addition to the practical life that men and women

lead, constantly vexed as it is by obstructive facts, there is an interior life which they *imagine*, in which facts smoothly give way to sentiments, ideas, and aspirations. Dickens has, in short, discovered and colonized one of the waste districts of 'Imagination,' which we may call 'Dickens-Land,' or 'Dickens-Ville,' . . . better known than such geographical countries as Canada and Australia, . . . and confirming us in the belief of the *reality* of a population which has no *actual* existence."

It must not be assumed that the above list exhausts the literature on the subject of "Dickens-Land," many references to which are made in such high-class works as Augustus J. C. Hare's *Walks in London*, and Lawrence Hutton's *Literary Landmarks of London*.

Since the above was written, a very interesting and prettily illustrated article has appeared in the *English Illustrated Magazine* for October, 1888, entitled "Charles Dickens and Southwark," by Mr. J. Ashby-Sterry, who is second to none as an enthusiastic admirer and loyal student of Dickens. There is also a paper in *Longman's Magazine* for the same month, by the delightful essayist A. K. H. B., called "That Longest Day," in which there are several allusions to Dickens and "Dickens-Land." It, however, lacks the freshness of his earlier writings. Surely he must have lost his old love for Dickens, or things must have gone wrong at the Ecclesiastical Conference which took place at Gravesend on "That Longest Day." Altogether it is pitched in a minor key.

None of these contributions (with the exception of Mr. Langton's book), interesting as they are, and indispensable to the collector, attempt in any way to give personal reminiscences of Charles Dickens from friends or others, nor do they in any way help to throw light on his everyday life at home, beyond what was known before.

The circumstances narrated in this work do not concern the imaginary "Dickens-Land" of Mr. Whipple, but refer to the actual country in which the imaginary characters played their parts, and to that still more interesting actual country in which Dickens lived long and loved most — the county of Kent.

On Friday, 24th August, 1888, two friends met in London — one of them, the writer of these lines, a Dickens collector of some years' experience; the other, Mr. F. G. Kitton, author of that sumptuous work, *Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil*; both ardent admirers of "the inimitable 'Boz,'" and lovers of nature and art.

We were a sort of self-constituted roving commission, to carry into effect a long-projected intention to make a week's tramp in "Dickens-Land," for purposes of health and recreation; to visit Gad's Hill, Rochester, Chatham, and neighbouring classical ground; to go over and verify some of the most important localities rendered famous in the novels; to identify, if possible, doubtful spots; and to glean, under whatever circumstances naturally developed in the progress of our tramp, additions in any form to the many interesting memorials already published, and still ever growing, relating to the renowned novelist. The idea of recording our reminiscences was not a primary consideration. It grew out of our experiences, generating a desire for others to become acquainted with the results of our enjoyable peregrinations; and the labour therein involved has been somewhat of the kind described by Lewis Morris: —

"For this of old is sure,
That change of toil is toil's sufficient cure."

We mixed with representatives of the classes of domestics, labourers, artisans, traders, professional men, and scientists. Many of those whom we met were advanced in years, — several were octogenarians, — and there is no doubt that we have been the means of placing on record here and there an interesting item from the past generation (mostly told in the exact words of the narrators) that might otherwise have perished. This is a special feature of this work, which makes it different from all the preceding. In every instance we were received with very great kindness, courtesy, and attention. The replies to our questions were frank and generous, and in several cases permission was accorded us to make copies of original documents not hitherto made public.

Considering that almost every inch of ground connected with Dickens has been so thoroughly explored, we were, on the whole, quite satisfied with our excursion: "the results were equal to the appliances."

By a coincidence, the month which we selected (August) was Dickens's favourite month, if we may judge from the opening sentences of the sixteenth chapter of *Pickwick*: —

"There is no month in the whole year, in which nature wears a more beautiful appearance than in the month of August. Spring has many beauties, and May is a fresh and blooming month, but the charms of this time of year are enhanced by their contrast with the winter season. August has no such advantage. It comes when we remember nothing but clear

skies, green fields, and sweet-smelling flowers — when the recollection of snow, and ice, and bleak winds, has faded from our minds as completely as they have disappeared from the earth, — and yet what a pleasant time it is. Orchards and cornfields ring with the hum of labour; trees bend beneath the thick clusters of rich fruit which bow their branches to the ground; and the corn, piled in graceful sheaves, or waving in every light breath that sweeps above it, as if it wooed the sickle, tinges the landscape with a golden hue. A mellow softness appears to hang over the whole earth; the influence of the season seems to extend itself to the very wagon, whose slow motion across the well-reaped field, is perceptible only to the eye, but strikes with no harsh sound upon the ear.”

By another coincidence, the day which we selected to commence our tramp was Friday — the day upon which most of the important incidents of Dickens’s life happened, as appears from frequent references in Forster’s *Life* to the subject.

Provided with a selection of books inseparably connected with the subject of our tour, including, of course, copies of *Pickwick*, *Great Expectations*, *Edwin Drood*, *The Uncommercial Traveller*, Bevan’s *Tourist’s Guide to Kent*, one or two local Handbooks, one of Bacon’s useful cycling maps, with a sketch map of the geology of the district (which greatly helped us to understand many of its picturesque effects, and was kindly furnished by Professor Lapworth, LL.D., F.R.S., of the Mason College, Birmingham), and with a pocket aneroid barometer, which every traveller should possess himself with if he wishes to make convenient arrangements as regards weather, we make a preliminary tramp in London.

CHAPTER II.

A PRELIMINARY TRAMP IN LONDON.

“We Britons had at that time particularly settled that it was treasonable to doubt our having and our being the best of everything: otherwise, while I was scared by the immensity of London, I think I might have had some faint doubts whether it was not rather ugly, crooked, narrow, and dirty.” — *Great Expectations*.

Some sixty or seventy years must have elapsed since Dickens (through the mouthpiece of Pip, as above) recorded his first impressions of London; and although he lived in it many years, and in after life he loved to study its people in every stratum of society and every phase of their existence, it seems doubtful, apart from these studies, whether he ever really liked London itself, for in the *Uncommercial Traveller*, on “The Boiled Beef of New England,” in describing London as it existed subsequently, he contrasts it unfavourably in some respects, not only with such continental cities as Paris, Bordeaux, Frankfort, Milan, Geneva, and Rome, but also with such British cities as Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Exeter, and Liverpool, with such American cities as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, and with “a bright little town like Bury St. Edmunds.” Nevertheless, it is indubitable that his writings, beyond those of any other author, have done wonders to popularize our knowledge of London, — more particularly the London of the latter half of the last and the first half of the present century, — and that those writings have given it a hold on our affections which it might not otherwise have acquired. In almost all his works we are introduced to a fresh spot in the Metropolis, perhaps previously known to us, but to which the fidelity of his descriptions and the reality of the characters peopling it, certainly give a historical value never before understood or appreciated. In *The Life of Charles Dickens*, written by his devoted friend, John Forster, may be found a corroboration of this view: —

“There seemed,” says this biographer, “to be not much to add to our knowledge of London until his books came upon us, but each in this respect outstripped the other in its marvels. In *Nickleby*, the old city reappears

under every aspect; and whether warmth and light are playing over what is good and cheerful in it, or the veil is uplifted from its darker scenes, it is at all times our privilege to see and feel it as it absolutely is. Its interior hidden life becomes familiar as its commonest outward forms, and we discover that we hardly knew anything of the places we supposed that we knew the best.”

What Scott did for Edinburgh and the Trossachs, Dickens did for London and the county of Kent. His fascination for the London streets has been dwelt on by many an author. Mr. Frank T. Marzials says in his interesting *Life of Charles Dickens*: —

“London remained the walking-ground of his heart. As he liked best to walk in London, so he liked best to walk at night. The darkness of the great city had a strange fascination for him. He never grew tired of it.”

Mr. Sala records that he had been encountered “in the oddest places and in the most inclement weather: in Ratcliff Highway, on Haverstock Hill, on Camberwell Green, in Gray’s Inn Lane, in the Wandsworth Road, at Hammersmith Broadway, in Norton Folgate, and at Kensal New Town. A hansom whirled you by the ‘Bell and Horns’ at Brompton, and there was Charles Dickens striding as with seven-leagued boots, seemingly in the direction of North End, Fulham. The Metropolitan Railway disgorged you at Lisson Grove, and you met Charles Dickens plodding sturdily towards the ‘Yorkshire Stingo.’ He was to be met rapidly skirting the grim brick wall of the prison in Coldbath Fields, or trudging along the Seven Sisters’ Road at Holloway, or bearing under a steady press of sail through Highgate Archway, or pursuing the even tenor of his way up the Vauxhall Bridge Road.”

That his feelings were intensely sympathetic with all classes of humanity there is amply evidenced in the following lines, written so far back as 1841, which Master Humphrey, “from his clock side in the chimney corner,” speaks in the last page before the opening of *Barnaby Rudge*: —

“Heart of London, there is a moral in thy every stroke! as I look on at thy indomitable working, which neither death, nor press of life, nor grief, nor gladness out of doors will influence one jot, I seem to hear a voice within thee which sinks into my heart, bidding me, as I elbow my way among the crowd, have some thought for the meanest wretch that passes, and, being a man, to turn away with scorn and pride from none that bear the human shape.”

On a sultry day, such as this of Friday, the 24th August, 1888, with the thermometer at nearly 80 degrees in the shade, one needs some enthusiasm to undertake a tramp for a few hours over the hot and dusty streets of London, that we may glance at a few of the memorable spots that we have visited over and over again before. This preliminary tramp is therefore necessarily limited to visiting the houses where Dickens lived, from the year 1836 until he finally left it in 1860, on disposing of Tavistock House, and took up his residence at Gad's Hill Place. In our way we shall take a few of the places rendered famous in the novels, but it would require a "knowledge of London" as "extensive and peculiar" as that of Mr. Weller, and would occupy a week at least, to exhaust the interest of all these associations.



Our temporary quarters are at our favourite "Morley's," in Trafalgar Square, one of those old-fashioned, comfortable hotels of the last generation, where the guest is still known as "Mr. H.," and not as "Number 497." And what is very relevant to our present purpose, Morley's revives associations of the hotels, or "Inns," as they were more generally called in Charles Dickens's early days. Strolling from Morley's eastward along the Strand, to which busy thoroughfare there are numerous references in the works of Dickens, we pass on our left the Golden Cross Hotel, a great

coaching-house half a century ago, from whence the Pickwickians and Mr. Jingle started, on the 13th of May, 1827, by the “Commodore” coach for Rochester. “The low archway,” against which Mr. Jingle thus prudently cautioned the passengers, — ”Heads! Heads! Take care of your heads!” with the addition of a very tragic reference to the head of a family, was removed in 1851, and the hotel has the same appearance now that it presented after that alteration. The house was a favourite with David Copperfield, who stayed there with his friend Steerforth on his arrival “outside the Canterbury coach;” and it was in one of the public rooms here, approached by “a side entrance to the stable-yard,” that the affecting interview took place with his humble friend Mr. Peggotty, as touchingly recorded in the fortieth chapter of *David Copperfield*. The two famous “pudding shops” in the Strand, so minutely described in connection with David’s early days, have of course long been removed: —

“One was in a court close to St. Martin’s Church — at the back of the Church, — which is now removed altogether. The pudding at that shop was made of currants, and was rather a special pudding, but was dear, two pennyworth not being larger than a pennyworth of more ordinary pudding. A good shop for the latter was in the Strand, — somewhere in that part which has been rebuilt since. It was a stout pale pudding, heavy and flabby, and with great flat raisins in it, stuck in whole at wide distances apart. It came up hot at about my time every day, and many a day did I dine off it.”



Young Dickens at the Blacking Warehouse.

Nearly opposite the Golden Cross Hotel is Craven Street, where (says Mr. Allbut), at No. 39, Mr. Brownlow in *Oliver Twist* resided after removing from Pentonville, and where the villain Monks was confronted, and made a full confession of his guilt.

“Ruminating on the strange mutability of human affairs,” after the manner of Mr. Pickwick, we call to mind, on the same side of the way, Hungerford Stairs, Market, and Bridge, all well remembered in the days of our youth, but now swept away to make room for the commodious railway terminus at Charing Cross. Here poor David Copperfield “served as a labouring hind,” and acquired his grim experience with poverty in Murdstone and Grinby’s (*alias* Lamert’s) Blacking Warehouse. Hungerford Suspension Bridge many years ago was removed to Clifton, and we never pass by it on the Great Western line without recalling recollections of poor David’s sorrows.

Next in order comes Buckingham Street, at the end house of which, on the east side (No. 15), lived Mrs. Crupp, who let apartments to David Copperfield in happier days. Here he had his “first dissipation,” and entertained Steerforth and his two friends, Mrs. Crupp imposing on him frightfully as regards the dinner; “the handy young man” and the “young

gal” being equally troublesome as regards the waiting. The description of “my set of chambers” in *David Copperfield* seems to point to the possibility of Dickens having resided here, but there is no evidence to prove it. At Osborn’s Hotel, now the Adelphi, in John Street, Mr. Wardle and his daughter Emily stayed on their visit to London, after Mr. Pickwick was released from the Fleet Prison.

Durham Street, a little further to the right, leads to the “dark arches,” which had attractions for David Copperfield, who “was fond of wandering about the Adelphi, because it was a mysterious place with those dark arches.” He says: — “I see myself emerging one evening from out of these arches, on a little public-house, close to the river, with a space before it, where some coal-heavers were dancing.” Nearly opposite is the Adelphi Theatre, notable as having been the stage whereon most of the dramas founded on Dickens’s works were first produced, from *Nicholas Nickleby* in 1838, in which Mrs. Keeley, John Webster, and O. Smith took part, down to 1867, when *No Thoroughfare* was performed, “the only story,” says Mr. Forster, “Dickens himself ever helped to dramatize,” and which was rendered with such fine effect by Fechter, Benjamin Webster, Mrs. Alfred Mellon, and other important actors. He certainly assisted in Madame Celeste’s production of *A Tale of Two Cities*, even if he had no actual part in the writing of the piece.

Mr. Allbut thinks that the residence of Miss La Creevy, the good-natured miniature painter (whose prototype was Miss Barrow, Dickens’s aunt on his mother’s side) in *Nicholas Nickleby*, was probably at No. 111, Strand. It was “a private door about half-way down that crowded thoroughfare.”

We proceed onwards, passing Wellington Street North, where at No. 16, the office of the famous *Household Words* formerly stood; *All the Year Round*, its successor, conducted by Mr. Charles Dickens, the novelist’s eldest son, now being at No. 26 in the same street.

A little further on, on the same side of the way, and almost facing Somerset House, at No. 332, was the office of the once celebrated *Morning Chronicle*, on the staff of which Dickens in early life worked as a reporter. The *Chronicle* was a great power in its day, when Mr. John Black (“Dear old Black!” Dickens calls him, “my first hearty out-and-out appreciator, . . . with never-forgotten compliments . . . coming in the broadest of Scotch from the broadest of hearts I ever knew,”) was editor, and Mr. J. Campbell,

afterwards Lord Chief-Justice Campbell, its chief literary critic. The *Chronicle* died in 1862.

The west corner of Arundel Street (No. 186, Strand, where now stand the extensive premises of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son) was formerly the office of Messrs. Chapman and Hall, the publishers of almost all the original works of Charles Dickens. After 1850 the firm removed to 193, Piccadilly, their present house being at 11, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. They own the copyright, and publish all Dickens's works; and they estimate that two million copies of *Pickwick* have been sold in England alone, exclusive of the almost innumerable popular editions, from one penny upwards, published by other firms, the copyright of this work having expired. The penny edition was sold by hundreds of thousands in the streets of London some years ago.

This statement will probably be surprising to the remarkable class of readers thus described by that staunch admirer of Dickens, Mr. Andrew Lang, in "Phiz," one of his charming *Lost Leaders*. He says: —

"It is a singular and gloomy feature in the character of young ladies and gentlemen of a particular type, that they have ceased to care for Dickens, as they have ceased to care for Scott. They say they cannot read Dickens. When Mr. Pickwick's adventures are presented to the modern maid, she behaves like the Cambridge freshman. 'Euclide viso, cohorrui et evasis.' When he was shown Euclid he evinced dismay, and sneaked off. Even so do most young people act when they are expected to read *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. They call these master-pieces 'too gutterly gutter'; they cannot sympathize with this honest humour and conscious pathos. Consequently the innumerable references to Sam Weller, and Mrs. Gamp, and Mr. Pecksniff, and Mr. Winkle, which fill our ephemeral literature, are written for these persons in an unknown tongue. The number of people who could take a good pass in Mr. Calverley's *Pickwick Examination Paper* is said to be diminishing. Pathetic questions are sometimes put. Are we not too much cultivated? Can this fastidiousness be anything but a casual passing phase of taste? Are all people over thirty who cling to their Dickens and their Scott old fogies? Are we wrong in preferring them to *Bootles' Baby*, and *The Quick or the Dead*, and the novels of M. Paul Bourget?"



Fountain Court, Temple.

But this by the way. Turning down Essex Street, we visit the Temple, celebrated in several of Dickens's novels — *Barnaby Rudge*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, and *Our Mutual Friend*, — but in none more graphically than in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, in which is described the fountain in Fountain Court, where Ruth Pinch goes to meet her lover, “coming briskly up, with the best little laugh upon her face that ever played in opposition to the fountain; and beat it all to nothing.” And when John Westlock came at last, “merrily the fountain leaped and danced, and merrily the smiling dimples twinkled and expanded more and more, until they broke into a laugh against the basin's rim, and vanished.” As we saw the fountain on the bright August morning of our tramp, the few shrubs, flowers, and ferns planted round it gave it quite a rural effect, and we wished long life to the solitary specimen of eucalyptus, whose glaucous-green leaves and tender shoots seemed ill-fitted to bear the nipping frosts of our variable climate.

Coming out of the Temple by Middle Temple Lane, we pass on our left Child's Bank, the “Tellson's Bank” of *A Tale of Two Cities*, “which was an old-fashioned place even in the year 1780,” but was replaced in 1878 by the handsome building suitable to its imposing neighbours, the Law Courts. Temple Bar, which adjoined the Old Bank, and was one of the relics of

Dickens's London, has passed away, having since been re-erected on "Theobalds," near Waltham Cross.

"A walk down Fleet Street" — one of Dr. Johnson's enjoyments — leads us to Whitefriars Street, on the east side of which, at No. 67, is the office of *The Daily News*, edited by Dickens from 21 Jany. to 9 Feby., 1846, and for which he wrote the original prospectus, and subsequently, in a series of letters descriptive of his Italian travel, his delightful *Pictures from Italy*. St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street is supposed to have been that immortalized in *The Chimes*.

It was in this street many years before (in the year 1833, when he was only twenty-one), as recorded in Forster's *Life*, that Dickens describes himself as dropping his first literary sketch, *Mrs. Joseph Porter over the Way*, "stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, into a dark letter-box in a dark office up a dark court in Fleet Street; and he has told his agitation when it appeared in all the glory of print: — 'On which occasion I walked down to Westminster Hall, and turned into it for half an hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride, that they could not bear the street, and were not fit to be seen there.'" The "dark court" referred to was no doubt Johnson's Court, as the printers of the *Monthly Magazine*, Messrs. Baylis and Leighton, had their offices here. This contribution appeared in the January number 1834 of this magazine, published by Messrs. Cochrane and Macrone of 11 Waterloo Place.

Turning up Chancery Lane, also celebrated in many of Charles Dickens's novels, we leave on our left Bell Yard, where lodged the ruined suitor in Chancery, poor Gridley, "the man from Shropshire" in *Bleak House*, but the yard has, through part of it being required for the New Law Courts and other modern improvements, almost lost its identity.

On our right is Old Serjeant's Inn, which leads into Clifford's Inn, where the conference took place between John Rokesmith and Mr. Boffin, when the former, to the latter's amazement, said: — "If you would try me as your Secretary." The place is thus referred to in the eighth chapter of *Our Mutual Friend*: —

"Not very well knowing how to get rid of this applicant, and feeling the more embarrassed because his manner and appearance claimed a delicacy in which the worthy Mr. Boffin feared he himself might be deficient, that gentleman glanced into the mouldy little plantation or cat preserve, of Clifford's Inn, as it was that day, in search of a suggestion. Sparrows were

there, dry-rot and wet-rot were there, but it was not otherwise a suggestive spot.”

Symond’s Inn, described as “a little, pale, wall-eyed, woebegone inn, like a large dust-bin of two compartments and a sifter,” — where Mr. Vholes had his chambers, and where Ada Clare came to live after her marriage, there tending lovingly the blighted life of the suitor in Jarndyce and Jarndyce, poor Richard Carstone, — exists no more. It formerly stood on the site of Nos. 25, 26, and 27, now handsome suites of offices.

Lincoln’s Inn, a little higher up on the opposite side of the way, claims our attention, in the Hall of which was formerly the Lord High Chancellor’s Court, wherein the wire-drawn Chancery suit of Jarndyce and Jarndyce in *Bleak House* dragged its course wearily along. The offices of Messrs. Kenge and Carboy, of Old Square, Solicitors in the famous suit, were visited by Esther Summerson, who says: — ”We passed into sudden quietude, under an old gallery, and drove on through a silent square, until we came to an old nook in a corner, where there was an entrance up a steep broad flight of stairs like an entrance to a church.” Mr. Serjeant Snubbin, Mr. Pickwick’s counsel in the notorious cause of Bardell *v.* Pickwick, also had his chambers in this square. We then enter Lincoln’s Inn Fields, and pay a visit to No. 58, on the furthest or west side near Portsmouth Street. This ancient mansion was the residence of Dickens’s friend and biographer, John Forster, before he went to live at Palace Gate. It is minutely described in the tenth chapter of *Bleak House* as the residence of Mr. Tulkinghorn, “a large house, formerly a house of state, . . . let off in sets of chambers now; and in those shrunken fragments of its greatness lawyers lie like maggots in nuts.” The “foreshortened allegory in the person of one impossible Roman upside down,” who afterwards points to the “new meaning” (*i. e.* the murder of Mr. Tulkinghorn) has, it is to be regretted, since been whitewashed. On the 30th November, 1844, here Dickens read *The Chimes* to a few intimate friends, an event immortalized by Maclise’s pencil, and, as appreciative of the feelings of the audience, Forster alludes “to the grave attention of Carlyle, the eager interest of Stanfield and Maclise, the keen look of poor Laman Blanchard, Fox’s rapt solemnity, Jerrold’s skyward gaze, and the tears of Harness and Dyce.”

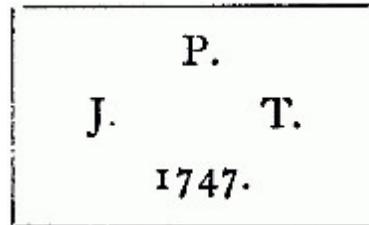


Staple Inn, Holborn.

That celebrated tavern called the “Magpie and Stump,” referred to in the twenty-first chapter of *Pickwick*, — where that hero spent an interesting evening on the invitation of Lowten (Mr. Perker’s clerk), and heard “the old man’s tale about the queer client,” — is supposed to have been “The old George the IVth” in Clare Market, close by. Retracing our steps through Bishop’s Court (where lived Krook the marine-store dealer, and in whose house lodged poor Miss Flite and Captain Hawdon, *alias* Nemo) into Chancery Lane, we arrive at the point from whence we diverged, and turn into Cursitor Street. Like other places adjacent, this street has been subjected to “improvements,” and it is scarcely possible to trace “Coavinses,” so well known to Mr. Harold Skimpole, or indeed the place of business and residence of Mr. Snagsby, the good-natured law stationer, and his jealous “little woman.” It will be remembered that it was here the Reverend Mr. Chadband more than once “improved a tough subject”: — “toe your advantage, toe your profit, toe your gain, toe your welfare, toe your enrichment,” — and refreshed his own. Thackeray was partial to this neighbourhood, and Rawdon Crawley had some painful experiences in Cursitor Street.

Bearing round by Southampton Buildings, we reach Staple Inn, — behind the most ancient part of Holborn, — originally a hostelry of the merchants of the Wool-staple, who were removed to Westminster by

Richard II. in 1378. At No. 10 in the first court, opposite the pleasant little garden and picturesque hall, resided the “angular” but kindly Mr. Grewgious, attended by his “gloomy” clerk, Mr. Bazzard, and on the front of the house over the door still remains the tablet with the mysterious initials: —



but our enquiries fail to discover their meaning. Dickens humorously suggests “Perhaps John Thomas,” “Perhaps Joe Tyler,” and under hilarious circumstances, “Pretty Jolly too,” and “Possibly jabbered thus!” They are understood to be the initials of the treasurer of the Inn at the date above-mentioned. It is interesting to state that the Inn has been most appropriately restored by the enterprising Prudential Assurance Company, who have recently purchased it; and on the seat in the centre of the second Court (facing Holborn), under the plane trees which adorn it, were resting a few wayfarers, who seemed to enjoy this thoughtful provision made by the present owners. We can picture in one of the rooms on the first floor of P. J. T.’s house (very memorable to the writer of these lines, some brief part of his early life having been passed there), the conference described in the twentieth chapter of *Edwin Drood*, between Mr. Grewgious and his charming ward, — so aptly portrayed by Mr. Luke Fildes in his beautiful drawing, “Mr. Grewgious experiences a new sensation,” — as well as all the other scenes which took place here.



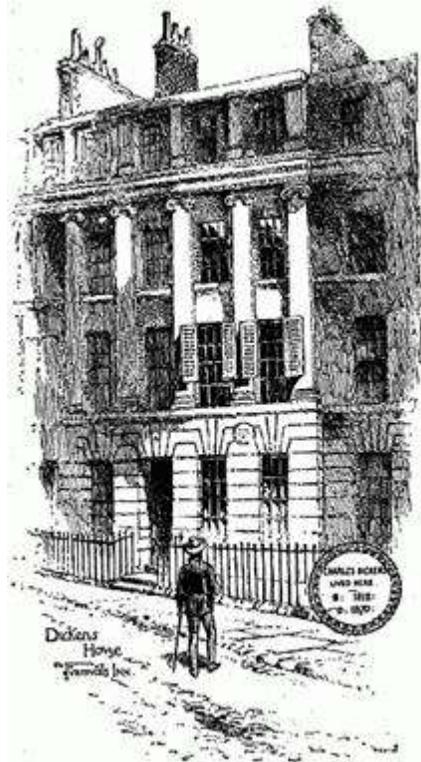
Turning into Holborn through the Archway of Staple Inn, and stopping for a minute to admire the fine effect of the recently restored fourteenth-century old-timbered houses of the Inn which face that thoroughfare, a few steps lower down take us to Barnard's Inn, where Pip in *Great Expectations* lodged with his friend Herbert Pocket when he came to London. Dickens calls it, "the dingiest collection of shabby buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner as a club for tom-cats." Simple-minded Joe Gargery, who visited Pip here, persisted for a time in calling it an "hotel," and after his visit thus recorded his impressions of the place: —

"The present may be a werry good inn, and I believe its character do stand i; but I wouldn't keep a pig in it myself — not in the case that I wished him to fatten wholesome and to eat with a meller flavour on him."

A few plane trees — the glory of all squares and open spaces in London, where they thrive so luxuriantly — give a rural appearance to this crowded place, while the sparrows tenanting them enjoy the sunbeams passing through the scanty branches.

Our next halting-place, Furnival's Inn, is one of profound interest to all pious pilgrims in "Dickens-Land," for there the genius of the young author was first recognized, not only by the novel-reading world, but also by his contemporaries in literature. Thackeray generously spoke of him as "the

young man who came and took his place calmly at the head of the whole tribe, and who has kept it.”



Furnival’s Inn in Holborn, which stands midway between Barnard’s Inn and Staple Inn on the opposite side of the way, is famous as having been the residence of Charles Dickens in his bachelor days, when a reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*. He removed here from his father’s lodgings at No. 18, Bentinck Street, and had chambers, first the “three pair back” (rather gloomy rooms) of No. 13 from Christmas 1834 until Christmas 1835, when he removed to the “three pair floor south” (bright little rooms) of No. 15, the house on the right-hand side of the square having Ionic ornamentations, which he occupied from 1835 until his removal to No. 48, Doughty Street, in March 1837. The brass-bound iron rail still remains, and the sixty stone steps which lead from the ground-floor to the top of each house are no doubt the same over which the eager feet of the youthful “Boz” often trod. He was married from Furnival’s Inn on 2nd April, 1836, to Catherine, eldest daughter of Mr. George Hogarth, his old colleague on the *Morning Chronicle*, the wedding taking place at St. Luke’s Church, Chelsea, and doubtless lived here in his early matrimonial days much in the same way probably as Tommy Traddles did, as described in *David Copperfield*. Here the *Sketches by Boz* were written, and most of the numbers of the immortal

Pickwick Papers, as also the lesser works: *Sunday under Three Heads*, *The Strange Gentleman*, and *The Village Coquettes*. The quietude of this retired spot in the midst of a busy thoroughfare, and its accessibility to the *Chronicle* offices in the Strand, must have been very attractive to the young author. His eldest son, the present Mr. Charles Dickens, was born here on the 6th January, 1837.

It was in Furnival's Inn, probably in the year 1836, that Thackeray paid a visit to Dickens, and thus described the meeting: —

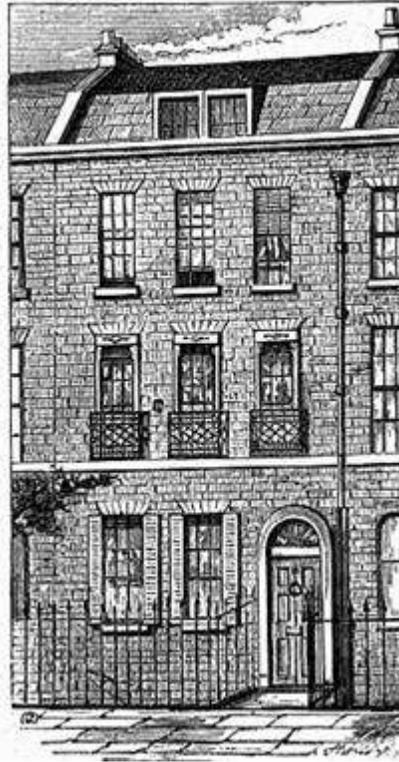
“I can remember, when Mr. Dickens was a very young man, and had commenced delighting the world with some charming humorous works in covers which were coloured light green and came out once a month, that this young man wanted an artist to illustrate his writings; and I remember walking up to his chambers in Furnival's Inn, with two or three drawings in my hand, which, strange to say, he did not find suitable.”

How wonderfully interesting these “two or three drawings” would be now if they could be discovered! Of the score or so of “Extra Illustrations” to *Pickwick* which have appeared, surely these (if they were such) which Dickens “did not find suitable,” combining as they did the genius of Dickens and Thackeray, whatever their merits or defects may have been, would be most highly prized.

John Westlock, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, had apartments in Furnival's Inn, and was there visited by Tom Pinch. Wood's Hotel occupies a large portion of the square, and is mentioned in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* as having been the Inn where Mr. Grewgious took rooms for his charming ward Rosa Bud, from whence he ordered for her refreshment, soon after her arrival at Staple Inn to escape Jasper's importunities, “a nice jumble of all meals,” to which it is to be feared she did not do justice, and where “at the hotel door he afterwards confided her to the Unlimited head chamber-maid.”

The Society of Arts have considerately put up on the house No. 15 one of their neat terra-cotta memorial tablets with the following inscription: —

CHARLES
DICKENS,
Novelist,
Lived here.
B. 1812,
D. 1870.



No. 48, Doughty Street, Mecklenburgh Square.

Dickens's Residence 1837-9.

We proceed along Holborn, and go up Kingsgate Street, where "Poll Sweedlepipe, Barber and Bird Fancier," lived, "next door but one to the celebrated mutton-pie shop, and directly opposite the original cats'-meat warehouse." The immortal Sairey Gamp lodged on the first floor, where doubtless she helped herself from the "chimley-piece" whenever she felt "dispoged." Here also the quarrel took place between that old lady and her friend Betsey Prig anent that mythical personage, "Mrs. Harris." We pass through Red Lion Square and up Bedford Row, and after proceeding along Theobald's Road for a short distance, turn up John Street, which leads into Doughty Street, where, at No. 48, Charles Dickens lived from 1837 to 1839. The house, situated on the east side of the street, has twelve rooms, is single-fronted, three-storied, and not unlike No. 2, Ordnance Terrace, Chatham. A tiny little room on the ground-floor, with a bolt inside in addition to the usual fastening, is pointed out as having been the novelist's study. It has an outlook into a garden, but of late years this has been much reduced in size. A bill in the front window announces "Apartments to let," and they look very comfortable. Doughty Street, now a somewhat noisy thoroughfare, must have been in Charles Dickens's time a quiet, retired

spot. A large pair of iron gates reach across the street, guarded by a gate-keeper in livery. "It was," says Mr. Marzials in his *Life of Dickens*, "while living at Doughty Street that he seems, in great measure, to have formed those habits of work and relaxation which every artist fashions so as to suit his own special needs and idiosyncrasies. His favourite time for work was the morning between the hours of breakfast and lunch; . . . he was essentially a day worker and not a night worker. . . . And for relaxation and sedative when he had thoroughly worn himself with mental toil, he would have recourse to the hardest bodily exercise. . . . At first riding seems to have contented him, . . . but soon walking took the place of riding, and he became an indefatigable pedestrian. He would think nothing of a walk of twenty or thirty miles, and that not merely in the vigorous hey-day of youth, but afterwards to the very last. . . ."

It was at Doughty Street that he experienced a bereavement which darkened his life for many years, and to which Forster thus alludes: —

"His wife's next younger sister Mary, who lived with them, and by sweetness of nature even more than by graces of person had made herself the ideal of his life, died with a terrible suddenness that for a time completely bore him down. His grief and suffering were intense, and affected him . . . through many after years." *Pickwick* was temporarily suspended, and he sought change of scene at Hampstead. Forster visited him there, and to him he opened his heart. He says: — "I left him as much his friend, and as entirely in his confidence, as if I had known him for years."



Tavistock House, Tavistock Square.

Dickens's Residence 1851-60.

Some time afterwards, we find him inviting Forster "to join him at 11 a.m. in a fifteen-mile ride out and ditto in, lunch on the road, with a six o'clock dinner in Doughty Street."

Charles Dickens's residence in Doughty Street was but of short duration — from 1837 to 1840 only; but there he completed *Pickwick*, and wrote *Oliver Twist*, *Memoirs of Grimaldi*, *Sketches of Young Gentlemen*, *Sketches of Young Couples*, and *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*. His eldest daughter Mary was born here.

In proper sequence we ought to proceed to Dickens's third London residence, No. 1, Devonshire Terrace, but it will be more convenient to take his fourth residence on our way. We therefore retrace our steps into Theobald's Road, pass through Red Lion and Bloomsbury Squares, and along Great Russell Street as far as the British Museum, where Dickens is still remembered as "a reader" (merely remarking that it of course contains a splendid collection of the original impressions of the novelist's works, and "Dickensiana," as is evidenced by the comprehensive Bibliography furnished by Mr. John P. Anderson, one of the librarians, to Mr. Marzials' *Life of Dickens*), which we leave on our left, and turn up Montague Street,

go along Upper Montague Street, Woburn Square, Gordon Square, and reach Tavistock Square, at the upper end of which, on the east side, Gordon Place leads us into a retired spot cut off as it were from communication with the rest of this quiet neighbourhood. Three houses adjoin each other — handsome commodious houses, having stone porticos at entrance — and in the first of these, Tavistock House, Dickens lived from 1851 until 1860, with intervals at Gad's Hill Place. This beautiful house, which has eighteen rooms in it, is now the Jews' College. The drawing-room on the first floor still contains a dais at one end, and it is said that at a recent public meeting held here, three hundred and fifty people were accommodated in it, which serves to show what ample quarters Dickens had to entertain his friends.

Hans Christian Andersen, who visited Dickens here in 1857, thus describes this fine mansion: —

“In Tavistock Square stands Tavistock House. This and the strip of garden in front are shut out from the thoroughfare by an iron railing. A large garden with a grass-plat and high trees stretches behind the house, and gives it a countrified look, in the midst of this coal and gas steaming London. In the passage from street to garden hung pictures and engravings. Here stood a marble bust of Dickens, so like him, so youthful and handsome; and over a bedroom door were inserted the bas-reliefs of Night and Day, after Thorwaldsen. On the first floor was a rich library, with a fireplace and a writing-table, looking out on the garden; and here it was that in winter Dickens and his friends acted plays to the satisfaction of all parties. The kitchen was underground, and at the top of the house were the bedrooms.”

It appears that Andersen was wrong about the plays being acted in the “rich library,” as I am informed by Mr. Charles Dickens that “the stage was in the school-room at the back of the ground-floor, with a platform built outside the window for scenic purposes.”

With reference to the private theatricals (or “plays,” as Andersen calls them, including *The Frozen Deep*, by Wilkie Collins, in which Dickens, the author, Mark Lemon, and others performed, and for which in the matter of the scenery “the priceless help of Stanfield had again been secured”), on a temporary difficulty arising as to the arrangements, Dickens applied to Mr. Cooke of Astley's, “who drove up in an open phaeton drawn by two white ponies with black spots all over them (evidently stencilled), who came in at the gate with a little jolt and a rattle exactly as they come into the ring when

they draw anything, and went round and round the centre bed (lilacs and evergreens) of the front court, apparently looking for the clown. A multitude of boys, who felt them to be no common ponies, rushed up in a breathless state — twined themselves like ivy about the railings, and were only deterred from storming the enclosure by the Inimitable's eye." Mr. Cooke was not, however, able to render any assistance.

Mrs. Arthur Ryland of The Linthurst, near Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, who was present at Tavistock House on the occasion of the performance of *The Frozen Deep*, informs me that when Dickens returned to the drawing-room after the play was over, the constrained expression of face which he had assumed in presenting the character of Richard Wardour remained for some time afterwards, so strongly did he seem to realize the presentment. The other plays performed were *Tom Thumb*, 1854, and *The Lighthouse* and *Fortunus*, 1855.

The following copy of a play-bill — in my collection — of one of these performances is certainly worth preserving in a permanent form, for the double reason that it is extremely rare, and contains one of Dickens's few poetical contributions, *The Song of the Wreck*, which was written specially for the occasion.

The smallest Theatre in the World!

TAVISTOCK HOUSE.

Lessee and Manager — — — Mr. Crummles.

On Tuesday evening, June 19th, 1855, will be presented, at exactly eight o'clock,
An entirely New and Original
Domestic Melo-drama, in Two Acts, by Mr. Wilkie Collins,
now first performed, called

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

The Scenery painted by Mr. Stanfield, R.A.

Aaron Gurnock, the head Light-keeper

Mr. Crummles.

Martin Gurnock, his son; the second Light-

Mr. Wilkie Collins.

keeper

Jacob Dale, the third Light-keeper

Samuel Furley, a Pilot

The Relief of Light-keepers, by

The Shipwrecked Lady

Phœbe

Who will sing a new Ballad, the music by Mr. Linley, the words
by Mr. Crummles, entitled

Mr. Mark Lemon.

Mr. Augustus Egg,
A.R.A.

Mr. Charles Dickens,
Junior,

Mr. Edward Hogarth,

Mr. Alfred Ainger, and

Mr. William Webster.

Miss Hogarth.

Miss Dickens,

THE SONG OF THE WRECK.

I.

“The wind blew high, the waters raved,
A Ship drove on the land,
A hundred human creatures saved,
Kneeled down upon the sand.
Three-score were drowned, three-score were thrown
Upon the black rocks wild;
And thus among them left alone,
They found one helpless child.

II.

A Seaman rough, to shipwreck bred,
Stood out from all the rest,
And gently laid the lonely head
Upon his honest breast.
And trav’ling o’er the Desert wide,
It was a solemn joy,
To see them, ever side by side,
The sailor and the boy.

III.

In famine, sickness, hunger, thirst,
The two were still but one,
Until the strong man drooped the first,
And felt his labours done.
Then to a trusty friend he spake:
‘Across this Desert wide,
O take the poor boy for my sake!’
And kissed the child, and died.

IV.

Toiling along in weary plight,
Through heavy jungle-mire,
These two came later every night
To warm them at the fire,
Until the Captain said one day:
‘O seaman good and kind,
To save thyself now come away
And leave the boy behind!’

V.

The child was slumb’ring near the blaze:
‘O Captain let him rest
Until it sinks, when God’s own ways
Shall teach us what is best!’
They watched the whiten’d ashey heap,
They touched the child in vain,
They did not leave him there asleep,
He never woke again.”

Half an hour for Refreshment.

To conclude with
The Guild Amateur Company's Farce, in one act, by Mr. Crummles
and Mr. Mark Lemon;

Mr. NIGHTINGALE'S DIARY.

Mr. Nightingale	Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A.
Mr. Gabblewig, of the Middle Temple	} Mr. Crummles.
Charley Bit, a Boots	
Mr. Poulter, a Pedestrian and cold water drinker	
Captain Blower, an invalid	
A Respectable Female	
A Deaf Sexton	} Mr Augustus Egg, A.R.A.
Tip, Mr. Gabblewig's Tiger	
Christopher, a Charity Boy	
Slap, Professionally Mr. Flormiville, a country actors	} Mr. Mark Lemon.
Mr. Tickle, Inventor of the Celebrated Compounds	
A Virtuous Young Person in the confidence of Maria	
Lithers, Landlord of the Water-lily	Mr. Wilkie Collins.
Rosina, Mr. Nightingale's niece	Miss Kate Dickens.
Susan her Maid	Miss Hogarth.

Composer and Director of the music, Mr. Francesco Berger, who
will preside at the pianoforte.

Costume makers, Messrs. Nathan of Titchbourne Street, Haymarket.

Perruquier, Mr. Wilson, of the Strand.

Machinery and Properties by Mr. Ireland, of the Theatre Royal,
Adelphi.

Doors open at half-past seven. Carriages may be ordered at a quarter

past eleven.

It was from Tavistock House that Dickens received this startling message from a confidential servant: —

“The gas-fitter says, sir, that he can’t alter the fitting of your gas in your bedroom without taking up almost the ole of your bedroom floor, and pulling your room to pieces. He says of course you can have it done if you wish, and he’ll do it for you and make a good job of it, but he would have to destroy your room first, and go entirely under the jistes.”

The same female, in allusion to Dickens’s wardrobe, also said, “Well, sir, your clothes is all shabby, and your boots is all burst.”



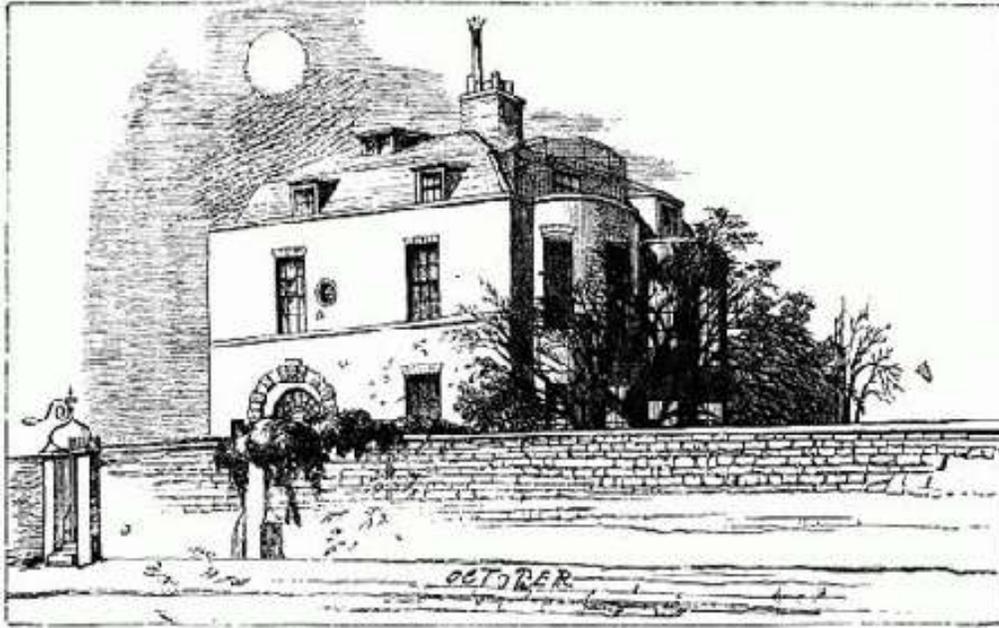
No. 141, Bayham Street, Camden Town,
where the Dickens Family lived in 1823.

Among the important works of Charles Dickens which were wholly or partly written at Tavistock House are: — *Bleak House*, *A Child’s History of England*, *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Uncommercial Traveller*, and *Great Expectations*. *All the Year Round* was also determined upon while he lived here, and the first number was dated 30th April, 1859.

Tavistock House is the nearest point to Camden Town, interesting as being the place where, in 1823, at No. 16 (now No. 141) Bayham Street, the Dickens family resided for a short time on leaving Chatham. There is an exquisite sketch of the humble little house by Mr. Kitton in his *Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil*, and it is spoken of as being “in one of the then poorest parts of the London suburbs.” We therefore proceed along Gordon Square, and reach Gower Street. At No. 147, Gower Street, formerly No. 4, Gower Street North, on the west side, was once the elder Mr. Dickens’s establishment. The house, now occupied by Mr. Müller, an artificial human eye-maker (“human eyes various,” says Mr. Venus), has six rooms, with kitchens in basement. The rooms are rather small, each front room having two windows, which in the case of the first floor reach from floor to ceiling. It seems to be a comfortable house, but has no garden. There is an old-fashioned brass knocker on the front door, probably the original one, and there is a dancing academy next door. (Query, Mr. Turveydrop’s?) The family of the novelist, which had removed from Bayham Street, were at this time (1823) in such indifferent circumstances that poor Mrs. Dickens had to exert herself in adding to the finances by trying to teach, and a school was opened for young children at this house, which was decorated with a brass-plate on the door, lettered Mrs. Dickens’s Establishment, a faint description of which occurs in the fourth chapter of *Our Mutual Friend*, and of its abrupt removal “for the interests of all parties.” These facts, and also that of young Charles Dickens’s own efforts to obtain pupils for his mother, are alluded to in a letter written by Dickens to Forster in later life: —

“I left, at a great many other doors, a great many circulars calling attention to the merits of the establishment. Yet nobody ever came to school, nor do I ever recollect that anybody ever proposed to come, or that the least preparation was made to receive anybody. But I know that we got on very badly with the butcher and baker; that very often we had not too much for dinner; and that at last my father was arrested.”

This period, subsequently most graphically described in *David Copperfield* as the “blacking bottle period,” was the darkest in young Charles’s existence; but happier times and brighter prospects soon came to drown the recollections of that bitter experience.



No. 1,

Devonshire Terrace, Regent's Park. — Dickens's Residence 1839-50.

Walking up Euston Road from Gower Street, we see St. Pancras Church (not the old church of "Saint Pancriddle" in the Fields, by the bye, situated in the St. Pancras Road, where Mr. Jerry Cruncher and two friends went "fishing" on a memorable night, as recorded in *A Tale of Two Cities*, when their proceedings, and especially those of his "honoured parent," were watched by young Jerry), and proceed westward along the Marylebone Road, called the New Road in Dickens's time, past Park Crescent, Regent's Park, and do not stop until we reach No. 1, Devonshire Terrace. This commodious double-fronted house, in which Dickens resided from 1839 to 1850, is entered at the side, and the front looks into the Marylebone Road. Maclise's beautiful sketch of the house (made in 1840), as given in Forster's *Life*, shows the windows of the lower and first floor rooms as largely bowed, while over the top flat of one of the former is a protective iron-work covering, thus allowing the children to come out of their nursery on the third floor freely to enjoy the air and watch the passers-by. In the sketch Maclise has characteristically put in a shuttlecock just over the wall, as though the little ones were playing in the garden. Forster calls it "a handsome house with a garden of considerable size, shut out from the New Road by a brick wall, facing the York Gate into Regent's Park;" and Dickens himself admitted it to be "a house of great promise (and great premium), undeniable situation, and excessive splendour." That he loved it well is shown by the passage in a letter which he addressed to Forster, "in

full view of Genoa's perfect bay," when about to commence *The Chimes* (1844); he says: — "Never did I stagger so upon a threshold before. I seem as if I had plucked myself out of my proper soil when I left Devonshire Terrace, and could take root no more until I return to it. . . . Did I tell you how many fountains we have here? No matter. If they played nectar, they wouldn't please me half so well as the West Middlesex water-works at Devonshire Terrace."

Mr. Jonathan Clark, who resides here, kindly shows us over the house, which contains thirteen rooms. The polished mahogany doors in the hall, and the chaste Italian marble mantel-pieces in the principal rooms, are said to have been put up by the novelist. On the ground floor, the smaller room to the eastward of the house, with window facing north and looking into the pleasant garden where the plane trees and turf are beautifully green, is pointed out as having been his study.

Mr. Benjamin Lillie, of 70, High Street, Marylebone, plumber and painter, remembers Mr. Dickens coming to Devonshire Terrace. He did a good deal of work for him while he lived there, and afterwards, when he removed to Tavistock House, including the fitting up of the library shelves and the curious counterfeit book-backs, made to conceal the backs of the doors. He also removed the furniture to Tavistock House, and subsequently to Gad's Hill Place. He spoke of the interest which Mr. Dickens used to take in the work generally, and said he would stand for hours with his back to the fire looking at the workmen. In the summer time he used to lie on the lawn with his pocket-handkerchief over his face, and when thoughts occurred to him, he would go into his study, and after making notes, would resume his position on the lawn. On the next page we give an illustration of the courteous and precise manner — not without a touch of humour — in which he issued his orders.

Here it was that Dickens's favourite ravens were kept, in a stable on the south side of the garden, one of which died in 1841, it was supposed from the effects of paint, or owing to "a malicious butcher," who had been heard to say that he "would do for him." His death is described by Dickens in a long passage which thus concludes: —

"On the clock striking twelve he appeared slightly agitated, but he soon recovered, walked twice or thrice along the coach-house, stopped to bark, staggered, exclaimed, '*Holloa, old girl!*' (his favourite expression), and died."

3 Hanover Terrace

Friday, Tenth May, 1861.

Ms Lillie

Please make the alteration in
the two windows in Wellington Street, according
to the estimate I enclose herewith, and to have
the work completed with all convenient
speed. Do so good us to be careful
that the bottom sashes are capable of being
easily raised and the top sashes of being
easily let down—

Faithfully Yours

J. Macleod

In an interesting letter addressed to Mr. Angus Fletcher, recently in the possession of Mr. Arthur Hailstone of Manchester, Dickens further describes the event: — "Suspectful of a butcher who had been heard to threaten, I had the body opened. There were no traces of poison, and it appeared he died of influenza. He has left considerable property, chiefly in cheese and halfpence, buried in different parts of the garden. The new raven (I have a new one, but he is comparatively of weak intellect) administered to his effects, and turns up something every day. The last piece of *bijouterie* was a hammer of considerable size, supposed to have been stolen from a vindictive carpenter, who had been heard to speak darkly of vengeance down the mews."

Maclise on hearing the news sent to Forster a letter, and a pen-and-ink sketch, being the famous "Apotheosis." The second raven died in 1845, probably from "having indulged the same illicit taste for putty and paint, which had been fatal to his predecessor." Dickens says: —

"Voracity killed him, as it did Scott's; he died unexpectedly by the kitchen fire. He kept his eye to the last upon the meat as it roasted, and suddenly turned over on his back with a sepulchral cry of 'Cuckoo!'"

These ravens were of course the two "great originals" of which Grip in *Barnaby Rudge* was the "compound." There was a third raven at Gad's Hill,

but he “gave no evidence of ever cultivating his mind.” The novelist’s remarkable partiality for ravens called forth at the time the preposterous rumour that “Dickens had gone raving (raven) mad.”

Here Longfellow visited Dickens in 1841, and thus referred to his visit: — “I write this from Dickens’s study, the focus from which so many luminous things have radiated. The raven croaks in the garden, and the ceaseless roar of London fills my ears.”



Apotheosis of “Grip” the Raven.

Drawn by D. Maclise, R.A.

Dickens lived longer at Devonshire Terrace than he did at any other of his London homes, and a great deal of his best work was done here, including *Master Humphrey’s Clock* (I. *The Old Curiosity Shop*, II. *Barnaby Rudge*), *American Notes*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, *Dombey and Son*, *The Haunted Man*, and *David Copperfield*. *The Battle of Life* was written at Geneva in 1846. All these were published from his twenty-eighth to his thirty-eighth year; and *Household Words*, his famous weekly popular serial of varied high-class literature, was determined upon here, the first number being issued on 30th March, 1850.

From Devonshire Terrace we pass along High Street, and turn into Devonshire Street, which leads into Harley Street, minutely described in *Little Dorrit* as the street wherein resided the great financier and “master-

spirit” Mr. Merdle, who entertained “Bar, Bishop, and the Barnacle family” at the “Patriotic conference” recorded in the same work, in his noble mansion there, and he subsequently perishes “in the warm baths, in the neighbouring street” — as one may say — in the luxuriant style in which he had always lived.

Harley Street leads us into Oxford Street, and a pleasant ride outside an omnibus — which, as everybody knows, is the best way of seeing London — takes us to Hyde Park Place, a row of tall stately houses facing Hyde Park. Here at No. 5, (formerly Mr. Milner Gibson’s town residence) Charles Dickens temporarily resided during the winter months of 1869, and occasionally until May 1870, during his readings at St. James’s Hall, and while he was engaged on *Edwin Drood*, part of which was written here; this being illustrative of Dickens’s power of concentrating his thoughts even near the rattle of a public thoroughfare. In a letter addressed to Mr. James T. Fields from this house, under date of 14th January, 1870, he says: — “We live here (opposite the Marble Arch) in a charming house until the 1st of June, and then return to Gad’s. . . . I have a large room here with three fine windows over-looking the park — unsurpassable for airiness and cheerfulness.”

A similar public conveyance takes us back to Morley’s by way of Regent Street, about the middle of which, on the west side, is New Burlington Street, containing, at No. 8, the well-known publishing office of Messrs. Richard Bentley and Son, whose once celebrated magazine, *Bentley’s Miscellany*, Dickens edited for a period of two years and two months, terminating, 1838, on his resignation of the editorship to Mr. W. Harrison Ainsworth; and we also pass lower down, at the bottom of Waterloo Place, that most select of clubs, “The Athenæum,” at the corner of Pall Mall, of which Dickens was elected a member in 1838, and from which, on the 20th May, 1870, he wrote his last letter to his son, Mr. Alfred Tennyson Dickens, in Australia; and a tenderly loving letter it is, indicating the harmonious relations between father and son. It expresses the hope that the two (Alfred and “Plorn”) “may become proprietors,” and “aspire to the first positions in the colony without casting off the old connection,” and thus concludes: — “From Mr. Bear I had the best accounts of you. I told him that they did not surprise me, for I had unbounded faith in you. For which take my love and blessing.” Sad to say, a note to this (the last in the series of published letters) states: — “This letter did not reach Australia until after these two

sons of Charles Dickens had heard, by telegraph, the news of their father's death."

At Morley's we refresh ourselves with Mr. Sam Weller's idea of a nice little dinner, consisting of "pair of fowls and a weal cutlet; French beans, tatars, tart and tidiness;" and then depart for Victoria Station, to take train by the London, Chatham and Dover Railway to Rochester.

The weather forecast issued by that most valuable institution, the Meteorological Office (established since Mr. Pickwick's days, in which doubtless as a scientist and traveller he would have taken great interest), was verified to the letter, and we had "thunder locally." On our way down Parliament Street, we pass Inigo Jones's once splendid Whitehall — now looking very insignificant as compared with its grand neighbours the Government Offices opposite — remembering Mr. Jingle's joke about Whitehall, which seems to have been Dickens's first thought of "King Charles's head": — "Looking at Whitehall, Sir — fine place — little window — somebody else's head off there, eh, Sir? — he didn't keep a sharp look out enough either — eh, Sir, eh?"

We also pass "The Red Lion," No. 48, Parliament Street, "at the corner of the very short street leading into Cannon Row," where David Copperfield ordered a glass of the very best ale — "The Genuine Stunning with a good head to it" — at twopence half-penny the glass, but the landlord hesitated to draw it, and gave him a glass of some which he suspected was *not* the "genuine stunning"; and the landlady coming into the bar returned his money, and gave him a "kiss that was half-admiring and half-compassionate, but all womanly and good [he says], I'm sure."



“My magnificent order at the Public House” (vide “David Copperfield”).

The Horse-Guards’ clock is the last noteworthy object, and reminds us that Mark Tapley noticed the time there, on the occasion of his last meeting with Mary Graham in St. James’s Park, before starting for America. It also reminds us of Mr. Micawber’s maxim, “Procrastination is the thief of time — collar him;” — a few minutes afterwards we are comfortably seated in the train, and can defy the storm, which overtakes us precisely in the manner described in *The Old Curiosity Shop*: —

“It had been gradually getting overcast, and now the sky was dark and lowering, save where the glory of the departing sun piled up masses of gold and burning fire, decaying embers of which gleamed here and there through the black veil, and shone redly down upon the earth. The wind began to moan in hollow murmurs, as the sun went down, carrying glad day elsewhere; and a train of dull clouds coming up against it menaced thunder and lightning. Large drops of rain soon began to fall, and, as the storm clouds came sailing onward, others supplied the void they left behind, and spread over all the sky. Then was heard the low rumbling of distant thunder, then the lightning quivered, and then the darkness of an hour seemed to have gathered in an instant.”

We pass Dulwich, — where Mr. Snodgrass and Emily Wardle were married, — a fact that recalls kindly recollections of Mr. Pickwick and his retirement there, as recorded in the closing pages of the *Pickwick Papers*, where he is described as “employing his leisure hours in arranging the memoranda which he afterwards presented to the secretary of the once famous club, or in hearing Sam Weller read aloud, with such remarks as suggested themselves to his mind, which never failed to afford Mr. Pickwick great amusement.” He is subsequently described as “somewhat infirm now, but he retains all his former juvenility of spirit, and may still be frequently seen contemplating the pictures in the Dulwich Gallery, or enjoying a walk about the pleasant neighbourhood on a fine day.”

Although it is but a short distance — under thirty miles — to Rochester, the journey seems tedious, as the “iron-horse” does not keep pace with the pleasurable feelings of eager expectation afloat in our minds on this our first visit to “Dickens-Land”; it is therefore with joyful steps that we leave the train, and, the storm having passed away, find ourselves in the cool of the summer evening on the platform of Strood and Rochester Bridge Station.

CHAPTER III.

ROCHESTER CITY.

“The silent High Street of Rochester is full of gables, with old beams and timbers carved into strange faces. It is oddly garnished with a queer old clock that projects over the pavement out of a grave red brick building, as if Time carried on business there, and hung out his sign.” — *The Seven Poor Travellers*.

“The town was glad with morning light.” — *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

Mudfog, Our Town, Dullborough, the Market Town, and Cloisterham were the varied names that Charles Dickens bestowed upon the “ancient city” of Rochester. Every reader of his works knows how well he loved it in early youth, and how he returned to it with increased affection during the years of his ripened wisdom. Among the first pages of the first chapter of Forster’s *Life* we find references to it: — “That childhood exaggerates what it sees, too, has he not tenderly told? How he thought that the Rochester High-street must be at least as wide as Regent Street which he afterwards discovered to be little better than a lane; how the public clock in it, supposed to be the finest clock in the world, turned out to be as moon-faced and weak a clock as a man’s eyes ever saw; and how in its Town Hall, which had appeared to him once so glorious a structure that he had set it up in his mind as the model from which the genie of the Lamp built the palace for Aladdin, he had painfully to recognize a mere mean little heap of bricks, like a chapel gone demented. Yet, not so painfully either when second thoughts wisely came. ‘Ah! who was I, [he says] that I should quarrel with the town for being changed to me, when I myself had come back, so changed, to it? All my early readings and early imaginations dated from this place, and I took them away so full of innocent construction and guileless belief, and I brought them back so worn and torn, so much the wiser and so much the worse!’”

It would occupy too much space in this narrative to adequately give even a brief historical sketch of the City of Rochester, which is twenty-nine miles from London, situated on the river Medway, and stands on the chalk on the

margin of the London basin; but we think lovers of Dickens will not object to a recapitulation of a few of the most noteworthy circumstances which have happened here, and which are not touched upon in the chapters relating to the Castle and Cathedral.

According to the eminent local antiquary, Mr. Roach Smith, F.S.A., the name of the city has been thus evolved: — "The ceastre or chester is a Saxon affix to the Romano-British (DU)RO. The first two letters being dropped in sound, it became Duro or Dro, and then ROchester, and it was the Roman station Durobrovis." The ancient Britons called it "Dur-brif," and the Saxons "Hrofe-ceastre" — Horf's castle, of which appellation some people think Rochester is a corruption.

Rochester is a place of great antiquity, and so far back as a.d. 600 it seems to have been a walled city. Remains of the mediæval Wall exist in very perfect condition, at the back of the Eagle Inn in High Street, and in other parts of the city. In 676 Rochester was plundered by Ethelred, King of Mercia; and in 884 the Danes sailed up the Medway and besieged it, but were effectually repulsed by King Alfred. About 930, when three Mints were established there by Athelstan, it had grown to be one of the principal ports of the kingdom. William the Conqueror gave the town to his half-brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. Fires in 1130 and 1137 nearly destroyed it.

Not a few royal and distinguished personages have visited Rochester on various occasions, among others Henry VIII., who came there in 1522, accompanied by the Emperor Charles V. Queen Elizabeth came in 1573, when she stayed five days, and attended the Cathedral service on Sunday. She came again in 1583, with the Duke of Anjou, and showed him her "mighty ships of war lying at Chatham." King James I. also visited the city in 1604 and 1606. On the latter occasion His Majesty, who was accompanied by Christian IV., King of Denmark, attended the Cathedral, and afterwards inspected the Navy. Charles II. paid it a visit just before the restoration in 1660, and again subsequently. It is believed that on both occasions he stayed at Restoration House (the "Satis House" of *Great Expectations*) hereafter referred to. Mr. Richard Head presented His Majesty with a silver ewer and basin on the occasion of the restoration. James II. came down to the quiet old city December 19th, 1688, and sojourned with Sir Richard Head for a week at a house (now No. 46 High Street), from whence he ignominiously escaped to France by a smack moored off Sheerness. Mr. Stephen T. Aveling mentioned to us that "it is

curious that Charles the Second ‘came to his own’ in Rochester, and that James the Second ‘skedaddled’ from the same city.” Her Majesty when Princess Victoria stayed at the Bull Inn in 1836 for a night with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, on their way from Dover to London. It was a very tempestuous night, some of the balustrades of Rochester Bridge having been blown into the river, and the Royal Princess was advised not to attempt to cross the bridge.

“On the last day of June 1667 (says Mr. W. Brenchley Rye in his pleasant *Visits to Rochester*), Mr. Samuel Pepys, after examining the defences at Chatham shortly after the disastrous expedition by the Dutch up the Medway, walked into Rochester Cathedral, but he had no mind to stay to the service, . . . ‘afterwards strolled into the fields, a fine walk, and there saw Sir F. Clarke’s house (Restoration House), which is a pretty seat, and into the Cherry Garden, and here met with a young, plain, silly shopkeeper and his wife, a pretty young woman, and I did kiss her!’“ David Garrick was living at Rochester in 1737, for the purpose of receiving instruction in mathematics, etc., from Mr. Colson. In 1742, Hogarth visited the city, in that celebrated peregrination with his four friends, and played hop-sotch in the courtyard of the Guildhall. Dr. Johnson came here in 1783, and “returned to London by water in a common boat, landing at Billingsgate.”

The city formerly possessed many ancient charters and privileges granted to the citizens, but these were superseded by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835.

The Guildhall, “marked by a gilt ship aloft,” — ”where the mayor and corporation assemble together in solemn council for the public weal,” — is “a substantial and very suitable structure of brick, supported by stone columns in the Doric order,” and was erected in 1687. It has several fine portraits by Sir Godfrey Kneller and other eminent painters, including those of King William III., Queen Anne, Sir Cloudesley Shovell, Richard Watts, M.P., and others. The Corporation also possess many interesting and valuable city regalia, namely, a large silver-gilt mace (1661), silver loving-cup (1719), silver oar and silver-gilt ornaments (typical of the Admiralty jurisdiction of the Corporation) (1748), two small maces of silver (1767), sword (1871 — the Mayor being Constable of the Castle), and chain and badges of gold and enamel (1875), the last-mentioned commemorating many historical incidents connected with the city.

Emerging from the railway station of the London, Chatham and Dover Company at Strood, a drive of a few minutes (over the bridge) brings us to the first object of our pilgrimage, the “Bull Inn,” — we beg pardon, the “Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel,” — in High Street, Rochester, which was visited by Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, Mr. Winkle, and their newly-made friend, Mr. Jingle, on the 13th May, 1827. Our cabman is so satisfied with his fare (“only a bob’s worth”), that he does not, as one of his predecessors did, on a very remarkable occasion, “fling the money on the pavement, and request in figurative terms to be allowed the pleasure of fighting us for the amount,” which circumstance we take to be an improving sign of the times.

Changed in name, but not in condition, it seems scarcely possible that we stand under the gateway of the charming old inn that we have known from our boyhood, when first we read our *Pickwick*, what time the two green leaves of *Martin Chuzzlewit* were putting forth monthly, and when the name of Charles Dickens, although familiar, had not become the “household word” to us, and to the world, that it is now.



We look round for evidence — “Good house, nice beds” — “(vide *Pickwick*)” appear on the two sign-boards fixed on either side of the entrance-gate. Only then are we quite sure our driver has not made a

mistake and taken us to “Wright’s next door,” which every reader of *Pickwick* knows, on the authority of Mr. Jingle, “was dear — very dear — half a crown in the bill if you look at the waiter — charge you more if you dine out at a friend’s than they would if you dined in the coffee-room — rum fellows — very.”

Haunches of venison, saddles of mutton, ribs of beef, York hams, fowls and ducks, hang over our heads in the capacious covered gateway; cold viands are seen in a glass cupboard opposite, and silently promise that some good fare, like that which regaled Mr. Pickwick and his friends, is still to be found at the Bull. In the distance is seen the large old-fashioned coach-yard, surrounded by odd buildings, which on market days (Tuesdays) is crowded with all sorts of vehicles ancient and modern. On our right is the kitchen, “brilliant with glowing coals and rows of shining copper lying well open to view.”

By the kindness of Mr. Richard Prall, the town-clerk, beds have been secured for us, and the landlord meets us at the door with a hearty welcome. We are conducted to our rooms on the second floor looking front, on reaching which a strange feeling takes possession of us. Surely we have been here before? Not a bit of it! But the bedrooms are nevertheless familiar to us; we see it all in a minute — the writer’s apartment is Mr. Tupman’s, and his friend’s is Mr. Winkle’s!

“Winkle’s bedroom is inside mine,” said Mr. Tupman, after that delightful dinner of “soles, broiled fowl, and mushrooms,” in the private sitting-room at the Bull, when all the other Pickwickians had, “after the cosy couple of hours succeeding dinner, more or less succumbed to the somniferous influence which the wine had exerted over them,” and he and Mr. Jingle alone remained wakeful, and were discussing the idea of attending the forthcoming ball in the evening.

It is an unexpected and pleasant coincidence that we are located in these two rooms, and altogether a good omen for our tramp generally. They are numbered 13 and 19, and the reason why the numbers are not consecutive is because 19 (Mr. Winkle’s room) is also approached by a back staircase. Mr. Pickwick’s room, as befitted his years and his dignity as G.C.M.P.C., is a larger room, and is number 17. They are all comfortable chambers, with “nice beds.”



The principal staircase of the Bull, which is almost wide enough to drive a carriage and four up it, remains exactly as it was in Mr. Pickwick's days, as described by Dickens and delineated by Seymour. We could almost fancy we witnessed the memorable scene depicted in the illustration, where the irascible Dr. Slammer confronts the imperturbable Jingle. The staircase has on its walls a large number of pictures and engravings, some curious and valuable, a few of which are of purely local interest. A series of oil paintings represent the costumes of all nations. There is a copy of "The Empty Chair," from the drawing of Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A., and also one of the scarce proof lithographs of "Dickens as Captain Bobadil," after the painting by C. R. Leslie, R.A.

Mr. Lawrence informed us that some years ago "The Owl Club" held its meetings at the Bull — a social club, reminding us strongly of one of the early papers in *Bentley's Miscellany*, illustrated by George Cruikshank, entitled the "Harmonious Owls," which has recently been reprinted in the collection called *Old Miscellany Days*, in which paper, by the bye, are several names from Dickens.

In one of the cheerful private sitting-rooms, of which there are many, we find a portrait of Dickens that is new to us. Never have we seen one that so vividly reproduced the novelist as one of us saw him, and heard him read,

in the Town Hall at Birmingham, on the 10th of May, 1866. It is a vignette photograph by Watkins, coloured by Mr. J. Hopper, a local artist, representing the face of the novelist in full, wearing afternoon dress — black coat, and white shirt-front, with gold studs — the attitude being perfectly natural and unconstrained, and a pleasant calm upon the otherwise firm features. The high forehead is surmounted by the well-remembered single curl of brown hair, the sole survival of those profuse locks which grace Maclise's beautiful portrait. The bright blue eyes, with the light reflected on the pupils like diamonds, seem to follow one in every direction. The lines, of course, are marked, but not too strongly; and the faint hectic flush which was apparent in later years — notably when we saw him again in Birmingham in 1869 — shows signs of development. The beard hides the neck, and the white collar is conspicuous. Altogether it is one of the most successful portraits we remember to have seen. As witness of its popularity locally, we may mention that we saw copies of it at Major Budden's at Gad's Hill, at the Mitre Hotel, Chatham, and at the Leather Bottle Inn, Cobham. We are also informed that Mr. Henry Irving gave a good sum for a copy, in the spring of last year. Mr. Lawrence, our host, by good fortune, happening to possess a duplicate, kindly allows us the opportunity of purchasing it ("portable property" as Mr. Wemmick remarks), as an addition to our Dickens collection which it adorns. "Beautiful!" "Splendid!" "Dickens to the life!" are the comments of friends to whom we show it, who personally knew, or remembered, the original.

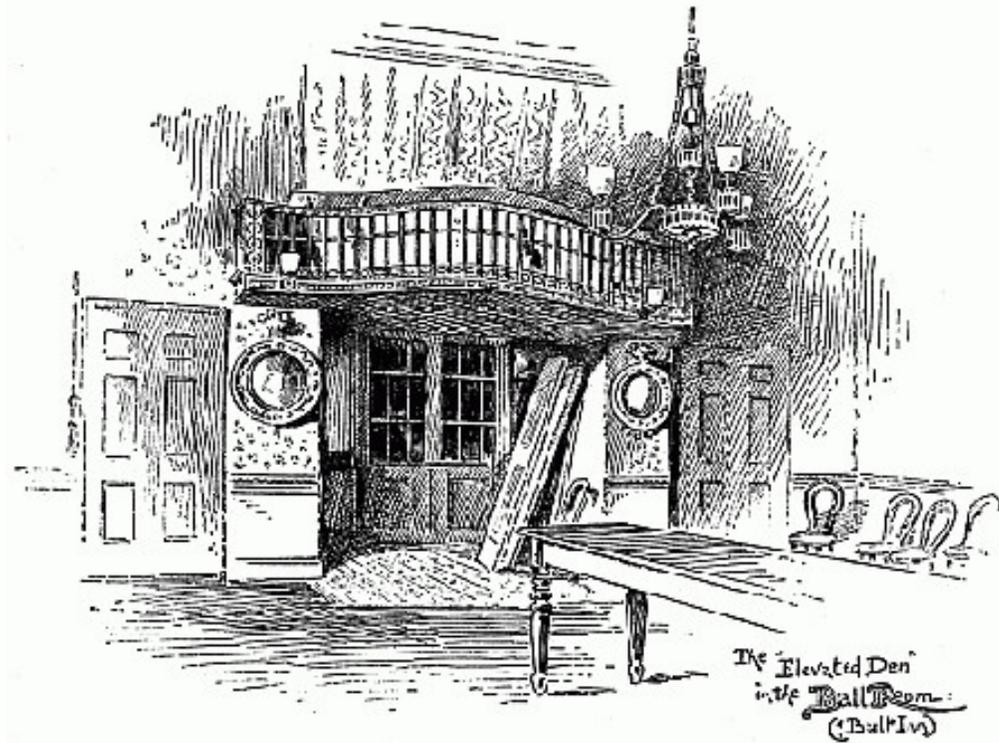
Here is the ball-room, entered from the first-floor landing of the principal staircase, and the card-room adjoining, precisely as it was in Mr. Pickwick's days: —

"It was a long room with crimson-covered benches, and wax candles in glass chandeliers. The musicians were confined in an elevated den, and quadrilles were being systematically got through by two or three sets of dancers. Two card-tables were made up in the adjoining card-room, and two pair of old ladies, and a corresponding number of old gentlemen, were executing whist therein."

A very little stretch of the imagination carries us back sixty years, and, *presto!* the ball-room stands before us, with the wax candles lighted, and the room filled with the *élite* of Chatham and Rochester society, who, acting on the principle of "that general benevolence which was one of the leading features of the Pickwickian theory," had given their support to that "ball for

the benefit of a charity," then being held there, and which was attended by Mr. Tracy Tupman, in his new dress-coat with the P. C. button and bust of Mr. Pickwick in the centre, and by Mr. Jingle, in the borrowed garments of the same nature belonging to Mr. Winkle.

"P. C.," said the stranger. — "Queer set out — old fellow's likeness and 'P. C.' — What does 'P. C.' stand for? 'Peculiar Coat,' eh?" Imagine the "rising indignation" and impatience of Mr. Tupman, as with "great importance" he explains the mystic device!



Everybody remembers how, declining the usual introduction, the two entered the ball-room *incog.*, as "Gentlemen from London — distinguished foreigners — anything;" how Mr. Jingle said in reply to Mr. Tupman's remark, "Wait a minute — fun presently — nobs not come yet — queer place — Dock-yard people of upper rank don't know Dock-yard people of lower rank — Dock-yard people of lower rank don't know small gentry — small gentry don't know tradespeople — Commissioner don't know anybody."

The "man at the door," — the local M.C., — announces the arrivals.

"Sir Thomas Clubber, Lady Clubber, and the Miss Clubbers!" "Commissioner — head of the yard — great man — remarkably great man," whispers the stranger in Mr. Tupman's ear.

“Colonel Bulder, Mrs. Colonel Bulder, and Miss Bulder,” are announced. “Head of the garrison,” says Mr. Jingle. “They exchanged snuff-boxes [how old-fashioned it appears to us who don’t take snuff], and looked very much like a pair of Alexander Selkirks — Monarchs of all they surveyed.”

More arrivals are announced, and dancing begins in earnest; but the most interesting one to us is Dr. Slammer — “a little fat man, with a ring of upright black hair round his head, and an extensive bald plain on the top of it — Dr. Slammer, surgeon to the 97th, who is agreeable to everybody, especially to the Widow Budger. — ‘Lots of money — old girl — pompous doctor — not a bad idea — good fun,’ says the stranger. ‘I’ll dance with her — cut out the doctor — here goes.’” Then comes the flirtation, the dancing, the negus and biscuits, the coquetting, the leading of Mrs. Budger to her carriage. The volcano bursts with terrific energy. . . .

“‘You — you’re a shuffler, sir,’ gasps the furious doctor, ‘a poltroon — a coward — a liar — a — a — will nothing induce you to give me your card, sir?’” and in the morning comes the challenge to the duel. It all passes before our delighted mental vision, as we picture the circumstances recorded in the beloved *Pickwick* of our youth upwards.

Here also is the bar, just opposite the coffee-room, where the “Tickets for the Ball” were purchased by Mr. Tupman for himself and Mr. Jingle at “half a guinea each” (Mr. Jingle having won the toss), and where Dr. Slammer’s friend subsequently made inquiry for “the owner of the coat, who arrived here, with three gentlemen, yesterday afternoon.” We find it to be a very cosy and comfortable bar-room too, wherein we subsequently enjoy many a social pipe and pleasant chat with its friendly frequenters, reminding us of the old tavern-life as described in Dr. Johnson’s days.

The coffee-room of the Bull, in which we take our supper, remains unaltered since the days of the *Pickwickians*. It is on the left-hand side as we enter the hotel from the covered gateway — not very large, but warm and comfortable, with three windows looking into the High Street. Many scenes in the novels have taken place in this memorable apartment — in fact, it is quite historical, from a Dickensian point of view.

Here it was that the challenge to the duel from Dr. Slammer to Mr. Winkle was delivered; and, when Mr. Winkle appeared, in response to the call of the boots, that “a gentleman in the coffee-room” wanted to see him, and would not detain him a moment, but would take no denial, “an old woman and a couple of waiters were cleaning the coffee-room, and an

officer in undress uniform was looking out of the window.” Here also the Pickwickians assembled on that eventful morning when the party set out, three in a chaise and one on horseback, for Dingley Dell, and encountered such dire mishaps. “Mr. Pickwick had made his preliminary arrangements, and was looking over the coffee-room blinds at the passengers in the High Street, when the waiter entered, and announced that the chaise was ready — an announcement which the vehicle itself confirmed, by forthwith appearing before the coffee-room blinds aforesaid.” Subsequently, as they prepare to start, “‘Wo-o!’ cried Mr. Pickwick, as the tall quadruped evinced a decided inclination to back into the coffee-room window.”

It is highly probable that the descriptions of “the little town of Great Winglebury,” and “the Winglebury Arms,” in “The Great Winglebury Duel” of the *Sketches by Boz*, one of the earliest works of the novelist, refer to the city of Rochester and the Bull Inn, for they fit in very well in many respects, although it *is* stated therein that “the little town of Great Winglebury is exactly forty-two miles and three-quarters from Hyde Park Corner.”

The Blue Boar mentioned in *Great Expectations* — one of the most original, touching, and dramatic of Dickens’s novels — is indubitably the Bull Hotel. Although there is an inn in High Street, Rochester, called the Blue Boar, its description does not at all correspond with the text. We find several instances like this, where, probably for purposes of concealment, the real identity of places and persons is masked.

Our first introduction to the Blue Boar is on the occasion of Pip’s being bound apprentice to Joe Gargery, the premium for whom was paid out of the twenty-five guineas given to Pip by Miss Havisham. Pip’s sister “became so excited by the twenty-five guineas, that nothing would serve but we must have a dinner out of that windfall at the Blue Boar, and that Pumblechook must go over in his chaise cart, and bring the Hubbles and Mr. Wopsle.” The dinner is duly disposed of, and although poor Pip was frequently enjoined to “enjoy himself,” he certainly failed to do so on this occasion. “Among the festivities indulged in rather late in the evening,” says Pip, “Mr. Wopsle gave us *Collins’s Ode*, and ‘threw his blood-stain’d sword in thunder down,’ with such effect, that a waiter came in and said ‘The Commercial underneath sent up their compliments, and it wasn’t the Tumblers’ Arms!’” “from which we gather that the said dinner took place in

a private sitting-room (No. 3) over the commercial room, on the opposite side of the gateway to the coffee-room.

It will be remembered that on Pip's attaining "the second stage of his expectations," Pumblechook had grown very obsequious and fawning to him — pressed him to take refreshment, as who should say, "But, my dear young friend, you must be hungry, you must be exhausted. Be seated. Here is a chicken had round from the Boar, here is a tongue had round from the Boar, here's one or two little things had round from the Boar that I hope you may not despise. 'But do I,' said Mr. Pumblechook, getting up again the moment after he had sat down, 'see afore me him as I ever sported with in his times of happy infancy? And may I — *may* I — ?' This 'May I?' meant might he shake hands? I consented, and he was fervent, and then sat down again."

Returning to the coffee-room, we discover it was the identical apartment in which the unexpected and very peculiar meeting took place between Pip and "the spider," Bentley Drummle, "the sulky and red-looking young man, of a heavy order of architecture," both "Finches of the Grove," and rivals for the hand of Estella. Each stands shoulder to shoulder against the fireplace, and, but for Pip's forbearance, an explosion must have taken place.

Through the same coffee-room windows, poor Pip looks under the reverses of his great expectations in consequence of the discovery and subsequent death of his patron. The "servile Pumblechook," who appears here uninvited, again changes his manner and conduct, becoming ostentatiously compassionate and forgiving, as he had been meanly servile in the time of Pip's new prosperity, thus: — "'Young man, I am sorry to see you brought low, but what else could be expected! what else could be expected! . . . This is him . . . as I have rode in my shay-cart; this is him as I have seen brought up by hand; this is him untoe the sister of which I was uncle by marriage, as her name was Georgiana M'ria from her own mother, let him deny it if he can.' . . ."

Dickens takes leave of the Blue Boar, in the last chapter of the work, in these words: —

"The tidings of my high fortunes having had a heavy fall, had got down to my native place and its neighbourhood, before I got there. I found the Blue Boar in possession of the intelligence, and I found that it made a great change in the Boar's demeanour. Whereas the Boar had cultivated my good

opinion with warm assiduity when I was coming into property, the Boar was exceedingly cool on the subject now that I was going out of property.

“It was evening when I arrived, much fatigued by the journey I had so often made so easily. The Boar could not put me into my usual bedroom, which was engaged, — probably by some one who had expectations, — and could only assign me a very indifferent chamber among the pigeons and post-chaises up the yard. But, I had as sound a sleep in that lodging as in the most superior accommodation the Boar could have given me, and the quality of my dreams was about the same as in the best bedroom.”

The visitors’ book in the coffee-room, at the Bull — we never shall call it “The Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel” — abounds with complimentary remarks on the hospitable treatment received by its guests; and there are several poetical effusions, inspired by the classic nature of “Dickens-Land.” One of these, under date of the 18th September, 1887, is worth recording:

“The man who knows his Dickens as he should,
Enjoys a double pleasure in this place;
He loves to walk its ancient streets, and trace
The scenes where Dickens’ characters have stood.
He reads *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*
In Jasper’s Gatehouse, and, with Tope as guide,
Explores the old cathedral, Durdles’ pride;
Descends into the Crypt, and even would
Ascend the Tower by moonlight, thence to see
Fair Cloisterham reposing at his feet,
And passing out, he almost hopes to meet
Crisparkle and the white-haired Datchery.
The gifted writer ‘sleeps among our best
And noblest’ in our Minster of the West;
Yet still he lives in this, his favourite scene,
Which for all time shall keep his memory green.”



We follow Mr. Pickwick's example as regards early rising, and, taking a turn before breakfast, find ourselves on Rochester Bridge. Nature has not much changed since the memorable visit of that "truly great man," who in the original announcement of *The Pickwick Papers* is stated with his companions to have "fearlessly crossed the turbid Medway in an open boat;" but the march of civilization has effaced the old bridge, and lo! three bridges stand in the place thereof. The beautiful stone structure (temp. Edward III.) which Mr. Pickwick leant over, having become unsuitable, was blown up by the Royal Engineers in 1856, and a handsome iron bridge erected in its place. The débris was removed by Mr. J. H. Ball, the contractor, who presented Dickens with one of the balustrades, others having been utilized to form the coping of the embankment of the esplanade under the castle walls. The iron bridge was built by Messrs. Fox and Henderson, the foundations being laid in 1850. The machinery constituting "the swing-bridge or open ship canal (fifty feet wide) at the Strood end is very beautiful; the entire weight to be moved is two hundred tons, yet the bridge is readily swung by two men at a capstan." So says one of the Guide Books, but as a matter of fact we find that it is not now used! The other two bridges (useful, but certainly not ornamental) belong to the respective railway companies which have systems through Rochester, and absolutely

shut out every prospect below stream. What *would* Mr. Pickwick say, if his spirit ever visited the ancient city? Nevertheless, we realize for the first time, with all its freshness and beauty (although perhaps a little marred by the smoke of the lime-kilns, and by the “Medway coal trade,” in which it will be remembered Mr. Micawber was temporarily interested, and which “he came down to see”), the charm of the prospect which Dickens describes, and which Mr. Pickwick saw, in the opening of the fifth chapter of the immortal *Posthumous Papers*: —

“Bright and pleasant was the sky, balmy the air, and beautiful the appearance of every object around, as Mr. Pickwick leant over the balustrades of Rochester Bridge, contemplating nature, and waiting for breakfast. The scene was indeed one, which might well have charmed a far less reflective mind, than that to which it was presented.

“On the left of the spectator lay the ruined wall, broken in many places, and in some, overhanging the narrow beach below in rude and heavy masses. Huge knots of sea-weed hung upon the jagged and pointed stones, trembling in every breath of wind; and the green ivy clung mournfully round the dark and ruined battlements. Behind it rose the ancient castle, its towers roofless, and its massive walls crumbling away, but telling us proudly of its old might and strength, as when, seven hundred years ago, it rang with the clash of arms, or resounded with the noise of feasting and revelry. On either side, the banks of the Medway, covered with corn-fields and pastures, with here and there a windmill, or a distant church, stretched away as far as the eye could see, presenting a rich and varied landscape, rendered more beautiful by the changing shadows which passed swiftly across it, as the thin and half-formed clouds skimmed away in the light of the morning sun. The river, reflecting the clear blue of the sky, glistened and sparkled as it flowed noiselessly on; and the oars of the fishermen dipped into the water with a clear and liquid sound, as their heavy but picturesque boats glided slowly down the stream.”

It was over the same old bridge that poor Pip was pursued by that “unlimited miscreant” Trabb’s boy in the days of his “great expectations.” He says: —

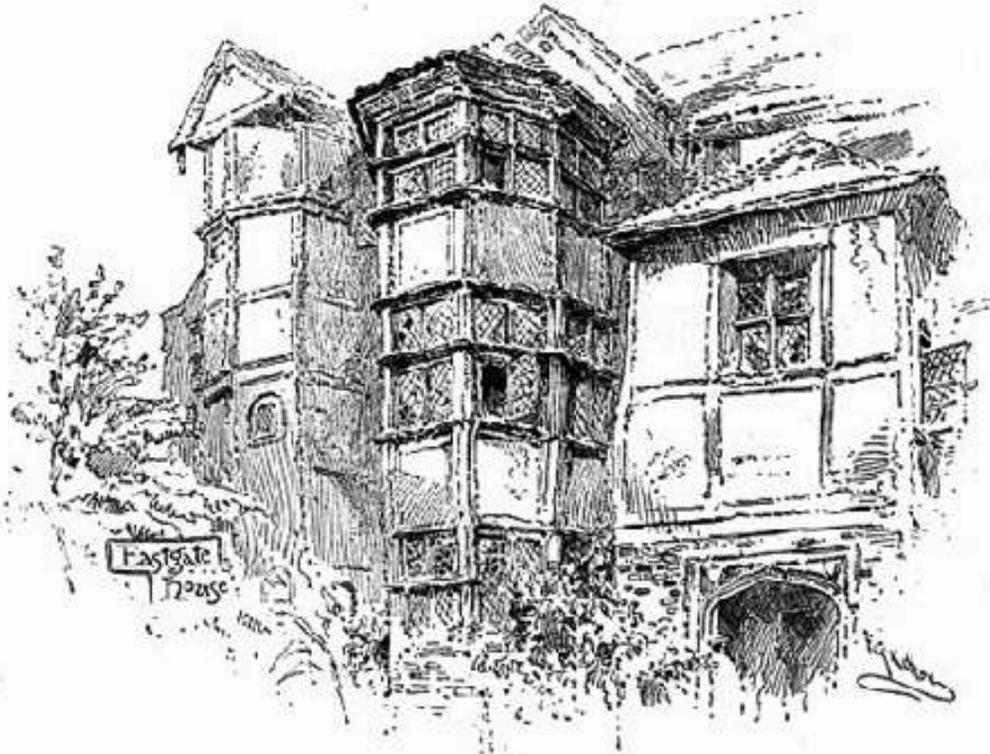
“Words cannot state the amount of aggravation and injury wreaked upon me by Trabb’s boy, when, passing abreast of me, he pulled up his shirt-collar, twined his side hair, stuck an arm akimbo, and smirked extravagantly by, wriggling his elbows and body, and drawling to his attendants: ‘Don’t

know yah; don't know yah, 'pon my soul, don't know yah!' The disgrace [continues Pip] attendant on his immediately afterwards taking to crowing and pursuing me across the bridge with crows, as from an exceedingly dejected fowl who had known me when I was a blacksmith, culminated the disgrace with which I left the town, and was, so to speak, ejected by it into the open country."

There is generally a stiff breeze blowing on the bridge, and the fact may probably have suggested to the artist the positions of the characters in the river scene, one of the plates of *Edwin Drood*, where Mr. Crisparkle is holding his hat on with much tenacity. One other reference to the bridge occurs in the *Seven Poor Travellers*, where Richard Doubledick, in the year 1799, "limped over the bridge here with half a shoe to his dusty foot on his way to Chatham."

After a Pickwickian breakfast in the coffee-room of "broiled ham, eggs, tea, coffee, and sundries," we take a stroll up the High Street. We do not know what the feelings of other pilgrims in "Dickens-Land" may have been on the occasion of a first visit, but we are quite sure that to us it is a perfect revelation to ramble along this quaint street of "the ancient city," returning by way of Star Hill through the Vines, all crowded with associations of Charles Dickens. *Pickwick*, *Great Expectations*, *Edwin Drood*, and many of the minor works of the eminent novelist, had never before appeared so clear to us — they acquire new significance. The air is full of Dickens. At every corner, and almost at the door of every house, we half expect to be met by one or other of the characters who will claim acquaintance with us as their friends or admirers. We are simply delighted, and never tire of repeating our experience in the pleasant summer days of our week's tramp in "Dickens-Land."





Starting from the Bull, and walking along the somewhat narrow but picturesque street towards Chatham, — "the streets of Cloisterham city are little more than one narrow street by which you get into it and get out of it:

the rest being mostly disappointing yards with pumps in them and no thoroughfare — exception made of the Cathedral close, and a paved Quaker settlement, in color and general conformation very like a Quakeress's bonnet, up in a shady corner," — we pass in succession the Guildhall, the City Clock, Richard Watts's Charity, the College Gate (Jasper's Gatehouse), Eastgate House (the Nuns' House), and, nearly opposite it, the residence of Mr. Sapsea, which, as we ourselves discover, was also the residence of "Uncle Pumblechook." The latter buildings are about a quarter of a mile from Rochester Bridge, and are splendid examples of sixteenth-century architecture, with carved oaken-timbered fronts and gables and latticed bay-windows. Eastgate House — the "Nuns' House" of *Edwin Drood*, described as "a venerable brick edifice, whose present appellation is doubtless derived from the legend of its conventual uses" — is especially beautiful, and its "resplendent brass plate on the trim gate" is still so "shining and staring." The date, 1591, is on one of the inside beams, and the fine old place abounds with quaint cosy rooms with carved oak mantel-pieces, and plaster enrichments to the ceilings, as well as mysterious back staircases and means of exit by secret passages. Charles II. is said to have been entertained here by Colonel Gibbons, the then owner, when he visited Chatham and inspected the *Royal George*; but this has been recently disputed. For many years during this century, the house has been occupied as a Ladies' School, and the old pianos used for practice by the pupils are there still, the keys being worn into holes. We wonder whether Rosa Bud and Helena Landless ever played on them! Looking round, we half expect to witness the famous courting scene in *Edwin Drood*, and afterwards "the matronly Tisher to heave in sight, rustling through the room like the legendary ghost of a dowager in silken skirts, [with her] 'I trust I disturb no one; but there *was* a paper-knife — Oh, thank you, I am sure!'" An excellent local institution, called "The Rochester Men's Institute," has its home here. The house has been immortalized by Mr. Luke Fildes in one of the illustrations to *Edwin Drood* ("Good-bye, Rosebud, darling!"), where, in the front garden, the girls are cordially embracing their charming school-fellow, and Miss Twinkleton looks on approvingly, but perhaps regretfully, at the possible non-return of some of the young ladies. Mrs. Tisher is saluting one of the girls. There is a gate opening into the street, with the lamp over it kept in position by an iron bracket, just as it is now, heaps of ladies' luggage are scattered about, which the housemaid and the coachman are removing to

the car outside; and one pretty girl stands in the gateway waving a farewell to the others with her handkerchief.

We feel morally certain that Eastgate House is also the prototype of Westgate House in the *Pickwick Papers*, although, for the purposes of the story, it is therein located at Bury St. Edmund's. The wall surrounding the garden is about seven feet high, and a drop from it into the garden would be uncommonly suggestive of the scene which took place between Sam Weller and his master in the sixteenth chapter, on the occasion of the supposed intended elopement of one of the young ladies of Miss Tomkins's Establishment — which also had the “name on a brass plate on a gate” — with Mr. Charles FitzMarshall, *alias* Mr. Alfred Jingle. The very tree which Mr. Pickwick “considered a very dangerous neighbour in a thunderstorm” is there still — a pretty acacia.



Mr. Sapsea's House.



Mr. Sapsea's Father.

The house opposite Eastgate House was of course Mr. Sapsea's dwelling — "Mr. Sapsea's premises are in the High Street over against the Nuns' House. They are of about the period of the Nuns' House, irregularly modernized here and there." A carved wooden figure of Mr. Sapsea's father in his rostrum as an auctioneer, with hammer poised in hand, and a countenance expressive of "Going — going — gone!" was many years ago fixed over a house (now the Savings Bank) in St. Margaret's, Rochester, and was a regular butt for practical jokes by the young officers of the period, although they never succeeded in their attempts to pull it down. To us the house appears to be an older building than Eastgate House, with much carved oak and timber work about it, and in its prime must have been a most delightful residence. The lower part is now used as business premises, and from the fact that it contains the little drawers of a seedsman's shop, it answers very well to the description of Mr. Pumblechook's "eminently convenient and commodious premises" — indeed there is not a little in common between the two characters. "Mr. Pumblechook's premises in the High Street of the market town [says Pip] were of a peppercorny and farinaceous character, as the premises of a corn Chandler and seedsman should be. It appeared to me that he must be a very happy man indeed to have so many little drawers in his shop; and I

wondered when I peeped into one or two of the lower tiers, and saw the tied-up brown paper packets inside, whether the flower seeds and bulbs ever wanted of a fine day to break out of those jails, and bloom.” Part of these premises is used as a dwelling-house, and Mr. Apsley Kennette, the courteous assistant town-clerk, to whom we were indebted for much kind attention, has apartments on the upper floors of the old mansion, the views from which, looking into the ancient city, are very pretty. There is a good deal of oak panelling and plaster enrichment about the interior, restored by Mr. Kennette, who in the course of his renovations found an interesting wall fresco.

He has had painted most appropriately in gilt letters over the mantel-piece of his charming old panelled chamber of carved and polished oak (with its quaint bay-window looking into the street) the pathetic and sombre lines of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: —

“May not this ancient room thou sitt’st in dwell
In separate living souls for joy or pain;
Nay, all its corners may be painted plain,
Where Heaven shows pictures of some life spent well;
And may be stamped a memory all in vain
Upon the site of lidless eyes in Hell.”



Restoration House.

The beautiful residence in Maidstone Road, formerly Crow Lane, opposite the Vines, called Restoration House, is the "Satis House" of *Great Expectations* — "Miss Havisham's up-town." "Everybody for miles round had heard of Miss Havisham up-town as an immensely rich and grim lady, who lived in a large and dismal house barricaded against robbers, and who led a life of seclusion." There is a veritable Satis House as well, on the opposite side of the Vines alluded to elsewhere. Restoration House, now occupied by Mr. Stephen T. Aveling, is a picturesque old Elizabethan structure, partly covered with ivy, having fine oak staircases, floors, and wainscoted rooms. Charles II. lodged here in 1660, and he subsequently presented to his host, Sir Francis Clarke, several large tapestries, representing pastoral scenes, which the present owner kindly allowed us to see. The tapestry is said to have been made at Mortlake. It was the usual present from royalty in those days — just as Her present Majesty now gives an Indian shawl to a favoured subject. Like many houses of its kind, it contains a secret staircase for escape during times of political trouble.

Mr. Aveling very kindly placed at our disposal the manuscript of an interesting and "true ghost story" written by him relating to Restoration House, which is introduced at the end of this chapter.

Many names in Dickens's novels and tales appear to us as old friends, over the shops and elsewhere in Rochester. Looking through the list of Mayors of the city from 1654 to 1887, we notice nearly twenty of the names as having been given by Dickens to his characters, viz. Robinson, Wade, Brooker, Clarke, Harris, Burgess, Head, Weller, Baily, Gordon, Parsons, Pordage, Sparks, Simmons, Batten, Saunders, Thomson, Edwards, and Budden. The name of Jasper also occurs as a tradesman several times in the city, but we are informed that this is a recent introduction. In the Cathedral burying-ground occur the names of Fanny Dorrett and Richard Pordage. Dartle, we were informed, is an old Rochester name.

The population of the "four towns" of Rochester, Strood, Chatham, and New Brompton, at the census of 1891, was upwards of 85,000. The principal industries of Rochester are lime and cement making, "the Medway coal trade," and boat and barge building.

Rochester is very well off for educational institutions. In addition to the Board schools, there is the King's (or Cathedral) Grammar School founded by Henry VIII., a handsome building in the Vines. The tuition fee commences at £15 per annum for boys under 12, and there is a reduction

made when there are brothers. There are two or three annual competitive Scholarships tenable for a period of years, and there are also two Exhibitions of £60 a year to University College, Oxford. There is also Sir J. Williamson's Mathematical School in the High Street, founded in 1701, having an income of £1500 a year from endowments, and the teaching, which has a wide range, includes physical science. The fees are very small, commencing at about £5 per annum, and there are foundation Scholarships and "Aveling Scholarships" to the value of £20 per annum.

In addition to the famous Richard Watts's Charity, which is described in another chapter, the city possesses several other important charities, viz.: — St. Catherine's Charity on Star Hill, founded by Simon Potyn in 1316, which provides residences for sixteen aged females, with stipends varying from £24 to £28 each; St. Bartholomew's Hospital in New Road, which was founded in 1078 by Bishop Gundulph for the benefit of lepers returning from the Crusades (the present Hospital was erected in 1858, and is supported by voluntary contributions); Sir John Hawkins's Hospital for decayed seamen in Chatham, founded in 1592, and provides for twelve inmates with their wives; and Sir John Hayward's Charity on the Common, founded in 1651, which provides an asylum for twelve poor and aged females, parishioners of St. Nicholas. Not least noteworthy among the numerous objects of interest in the "ancient city" are the beautiful gardens belonging to several of the houses in the High Street, particularly those of Mr. Syms and Mr. Wildish. The fresh green turf, the profusion of flowers, and the rich growth of foliage and fruit, quite surprise and delight the stranger. Mr. Stephen T. Aveling's garden is a marvel of beauty to be seen in a town. "The Cloisterham gardens blush with ripening fruit."

Some of the old-fashioned cries of street hawkers, as "hot rolls," "herrings," "watercresses," and the like, similar to those in the London of Charles Dickens's early days, still survive at Rochester, and are very noticeable and quaint in the quiet morning.

As illustrative of the many changes which have been brought about by steam, even in the quiet old city of Rochester, Mr. Syms called attention to the fact that fifty years ago he could count twenty-eight windmills on the surrounding heights, but now there are scarcely a dozen to be seen.

In Rochester we heard frequent mention of "Gavelkind," one of the ancient customs of Kent, whereby the lands do not descend to the eldest son alone, but to the whole number of male children equally. Lambarde, the

eminent lawyer and antiquary (born 1536), author of *A Perambulation of Kent*, says: — "I gather by *Cornelius Tacitus*, and others, that the ancient Germans, (whose Offspring we be) suffered their lands to descend, not to their eldest Sonne alone, but to the whole number of their male Children: and I finde in the 75th Chapter of *Canutus* Law (a King of this Realm before the Conquest), that after the death of the Father, his Heires should divide both his goods, and his lands amongst them. Now, for as much as all the next of the kinred did this inherit together, I conjecture, that therefore the land was called, either *Gavelkyn* in meaning, *Give all kyn*, because it was given to all the next in one line of kinred, or *Give all kynd*, that is, to all the male Children: for *kynd* in Dutch signifieth yet a male Childe." The learned historian suggests a second possible origin of this curious custom from the writ called "Gavelles," to recover "the rent and service arising out of these lands."

The remarkable custom of "Borough English," whereby the youngest son inherits the lands, also survives in some parts of the county of Kent.

Mr. Robert Langton has done good service by giving in his delightful book, *The Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens*, an illustration by Mr. W. Hull, of the old Rochester Theatre, which formerly stood at the foot of Star Hill, and in which Jingle and Dismal Jemmy — "rum fellow — does the heavy business — no actor — strange man — all sorts of miseries — dismal Jemmy, we call him on the circuit" — were to play on the morrow after the duel. It exists no more, for the Conservative Association has its club-house and rooms on the site of the building. The theatre is referred to in *Edwin Drood*: — "Even its drooping and despondent little theatre has its poor strip of garden, receiving the foul fiend, when he ducks from its stage into the infernal regions, among scarlet beans or oyster-shells, according to the season of the year." And again in *The Uncommercial Traveller*, on "Dullborough Town," when the beginning of the end had appeared: —



Old Rochester Theatre, Star Hill.

“It was To Let, and hopelessly so, for its old purposes; and there had been no entertainment within its walls for a long time, except a Panorama; and even that had been announced as ‘pleasingly instructive,’ and I knew too well the fatal meaning and the leaden import of those terrible expressions. No, there was no comfort in the Theatre. It was mysteriously gone, like my own youth. Unlike my own youth, it might be coming back some day; but there was little promise of it.”

We did not stay at the Bull during the whole of our visit, comfortable lodgings in Victoria Street having been secured for us by the courtesy of Mr. Prall, the landlady of which, from her kindness and consideration for our comfort, we are pleased to recognize as a veritable “Mrs. Lirriper.”

* * * * *

Among many reminiscences of Charles Dickens obtained at Rochester, the following are the most noteworthy: —

We had an interesting chat with Mr. Franklin Homan, Auctioneer, Cabinet-maker, and Upholsterer of High Street, Rochester. Our informant did a good deal of work for Charles Dickens at Gad’s Hill Place, and remarked “he was one of the nicest customers I ever met in my life — so thoroughly precise and methodical. If anything had to be done, he knew

exactly what he wanted, and gave his instructions accordingly. He expected every one who served him to be equally exact and punctual.”

The novelist wrote to Mr. Homan from America respecting the furnishing of two bedrooms, describing in detail how he wished them fitted up — one was maple, the other white with a red stripe. These rooms are referred to in another chapter. The curtains separating them from the dressing-rooms were ordered to be of Indian pattern chintz. When Dickens came home and saw them complete, he said, “It strikes me as if the room was about to have its hair cut, — but it’s my fault, it must be altered;” so crimson damask curtains were substituted.

In the little billiard-room near the dining-room was a one-sided couch standing by the window, which did not seem to please the master of Gad’s Hill Place. He said to Mr. Homan one day, “Whenever I see that couch, it makes me think the window is squinting.” The result was that Mr. Homan had to make a window-seat instead.

On one occasion, when our informant was waiting in the dining-room for some orders from Miss Hogarth, he saw Dickens walking in the garden with a lady, to whom he was telling the story of how as a boy he longed to live in Gad’s Hill Place, and determined to purchase it whenever he had an opportunity.

Mr. Homan mentioned that the act drop painted by Clarkson Stanfield, R.A., for *The Lighthouse* and the scene from *The Frozen Deep*, painted by the same artist, which adorned the hall at Gad’s Hill Place, and which fetched such enormous sums at the sale, were technically the property of the purchaser of Tavistock House, but he said, “Perhaps you would like to have them, Mr. Dickens,” and so they continued to be the property of the novelist.

The valuation for Probate was made by Mr. Homan, and he subsequently sold for the executors the furniture and other domestic effects at Gad’s Hill Place. The art collection was sold by Messrs. Christie, Manson, and Woods. There was a very fine cellar of wine, which included some magnums of port of rare vintage. Mr. Homan purchased a few bottles, and gave one to a friend, Dr. Tamplin of London, who had been kind to his daughter. At a dinner-party some time afterwards at the Doctor’s, a connoisseur being present, the magnum in question was placed on the table, the guests being unaware from whence it came. Reference was made to the choice quality of

the wine. "Yes," said the connoisseur, "it *is* good — very fine. I never tasted the like before, except once at Gad's Hill Place."

Mr. Homan recollects seeing among the plate two oak cases which were not sold, containing the silver figures for dining-table emblematic of spring, summer, and autumn. These were the presents of a Liverpool admirer who wished to remain anonymous. The incident is alluded to in Forster's *Life*, the correspondent being described as "a self-raised man, attributing his prosperous career to what Dickens's writings had taught him at its outset of the wisdom of kindness and sympathy for others, and asking pardon for the liberty he took in hoping that he might be permitted to offer some acknowledgment of what not only had cheered and stimulated him through all his life, but had contributed so much to the success of it." The letter enclosed £500, but Dickens declined this, intimating to the writer that if he pleased to send him any small memorial in another form, he would be glad to receive it.

The funeral was conducted by Mr. Homan, who mentioned that Dickens's instructions in his Will were implicitly followed, as regards privacy and unostentation. It was an anxious time to him, in consequence of the changes which were made in the arrangements, the interment being first suggested to take place at St. Nicholas's Cemetery, then at Shorne, then at Rochester Cathedral, and finally at Westminster Abbey. The mourners, together with the remains, travelled early in the morning by South Eastern Railway from Higham Station to Charing Cross, where a procession, consisting of three mourning-coaches and a hearse, was quietly formed. There was neither show nor public demonstration of any kind. On reaching Westminster Abbey, about half-past nine o'clock, the procession was met by Dean Stanley in the Cloisters, who performed the funeral service. A journalist being by accident in the Abbey at the time of the funeral, Mr. Homan remarked that he became almost frantic when he heard who had just been buried, at having missed such an opportunity.

Mr. Homan possesses several souvenirs of Gad's Hill Place, presented to him by the family, including Charles Dickens's walking-stick, and photographs of the interior and exterior of the house and the châlet.

* * * * *

We were courteously received by the Rev. Robert Whiston, M.A., who resides at the Old Palace, a beautiful seventeenth-century house, abounding with oak panelling and carving, on Boley Hill, bequeathed in 1674, by Mr.

Richard Head, after the death of his wife, to the then Bishop of Rochester and his successors, who were “to hold the same so long as the church was governed by Protestant Bishops.” This residence was sold by permission of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, together with the mansion at Brinley, in order to help to pay for the new palace of Danbury in Essex.

Mr. Whiston was a friend of Charles Dickens, and is one of the oldest inhabitants of Rochester. He was formerly Head-Master of the Cathedral Grammar, or King’s, School of Henry VIII., an office which he resigned in 1877. Many years previously, Mr. Whiston published *Cathedral Trusts and their Fulfilment*, which ran through several editions, and was immediately followed by his dismissal from his mastership, on the ground that he had published “false, scandalous, and libellous” statements, and had libelled “the Chapter of Rochester and other Chapters, and also the Bishop.” Much litigation followed — appeals to the Court of Chancery, the Court of Queen’s Bench, and Doctors’ Commons, which resulted in his replacement in office; and then a second dismissal, followed by his pleading his own cause for five days at Doctors’ Commons against eminent counsel, and after three years of litigation he was fully reinstated in his office. The result at Rochester, for which Mr. Whiston contended, was “an increase of £19 for each of the twenty scholars, and of £35 for each of the four students, a total of £520 a year, and the restoration of the six bedesmen of the Cathedral, with £14 13s. 4d. a year each, who had disappeared since 1810, making altogether £608 a year.” Reforms were effected at other cathedrals, and handsome testimonials — one from Australia — were presented to Mr. Whiston.

A characteristic paper, entitled “The History of a certain Grammar School,” in No. 72 of *Household Words*, dated 9th August, 1851, gives a sketch of Mr. Whiston’s labours, and of the reforms which he effected. He is thus referred to: —

“But the Reverend Adolphus Hardhead was not merely a scholar and a schoolmaster. He had fought his way against disadvantages, had gained a moderate independence by the fruits of early exertions and constant but by no means sordid economy; and, while disinterested enough to undervalue abundance, was too wise not to know the value of money. He was an undoubted financialist, and never gave a farthing without doing real good, because he always ascertained the purpose and probable effect of his charity beforehand. While he cautiously shunned the idle and undeserving, he

would work like a slave, with and for those who would work for themselves; and he would smooth the way for those who had in the first instance been their own pioneers, and would help a man who had once been successful, to attain a yet greater success.”

Anthony Trollope, in *The Warden*, also thus refers to this gentleman: —
”The struggles of Mr. Whiston have met with sympathy and support. Men are beginning to say that these things must be looked into.”

Punch has also immortalized Mr. Whiston, for in the issue of 29th January, 1853, there is a burlesque account with designs of “A stained glass window for Rochester Cathedral.” The design is divided into compartments; each containing a representation in the mediæval fashion of a “Fytte” in “Ye Gestes of Maister Whyston ye Confessour.”

Mr. Whiston had dined at Gad’s Hill several times, and said that nothing could be more charming than Dickens’s powers as a host. Some years after his death, by a fortunate circumstance, a large parcel of letters, written by the novelist, came into the hands of Mr. Whiston, who had the pleasure of handing them to Miss Hogarth and Miss Dickens, by whom they were published in the collection of letters of Charles Dickens.

* * * * *

Thomas Millen of Rochester informed us that he knew Charles Dickens. His (Millen’s) father was a hop-farmer, and about the years 1864-5 lived at Bridgewood House, on the main road from Rochester to Maidstone. One afternoon in the autumn, Dickens, accompanied by Miss Hogarth and his daughters, Mary and Kate, drove along the road, and stopped to admire a pear tree which was covered with ripe fruit. Millen happened to be in the garden at the time, and while noticing the carriage, Dickens spoke to him, and referred to the very fine fruit. Millen said, “Will you have some, sir?” to which Dickens replied, “Thank you, you are very good, I will.” He gave him some pears and some roses. Dickens then said, “You have not the pleasure of knowing me, and I have not the pleasure of knowing you. I am Charles Dickens; and when you pass Gad’s Hill, I shall take it as a favour if you will look in and see my place.” Millen replied, “I feel it to be a great honour to speak to you, sir. I have read most of your works, and I think *David Copperfield* is the master-piece. I hope to avail myself of your kind invitation some day.” Dickens laughed, wished Millen “Good-day,” and the carriage drove on towards Maidstone.

“Some little time after,” said Millen, “I was going to visit an uncle at Gravesend, and drove over with a one-horse trap by way of Gad’s Hill. As I came near the place, I saw Mr. Dickens in the road. He said, ‘So you are here,’ and I mentioned where I was going. He took me in, and we went through the tunnel, and by the cedars, to the châlet, which stood in the shrubbery in front of the house. He showed me his work there — a manuscript on the table, and also some proofs. They were part of *Our Mutual Friend*, which was then appearing in monthly numbers; and on that morning a proof of one of the illustrations had arrived from Mr. Marcus Stone. It was the one in which ‘Miss Wren fixes her idea.’ I was then about sixteen or seventeen, and Dickens said, ‘You are setting out in life; mind *you* always fix your idea.’ He asked me what I was going to be, and I said a farmer. He said, ‘Better be that than an author or poet;’ and after I had had two glasses of wine, he bade me ‘good-bye.’“

* * * * *

We were kindly favoured with an interview by the Misses Drage, of No. 1 Minor Canon Row, daughters of the late Rev. W. H. Drage, who was Curate of St. Mary’s Church, Chatham, from 1820 to 1828, and lived during that time in apartments at No. 3 Ordnance Terrace, next door to the Dickens family. Afterwards their father was Vicar of St. Margaret’s, Rochester, for many years, and resided in their present home. About the year 1850, the Vicar, being interested in the daughter of one of his parishioners, whom he was anxious to get admitted into a public institution in London — a penitentiary or something of the kind — wrote to Miss (now the Baroness) Burdett Coutts, who was a patroness or founder, or who occupied some position of influence in connection therewith. In answer to the reverend gentleman’s application, a letter was received from Charles Dickens, then residing at Devonshire Terrace, who appeared to be associated with Miss Burdett Coutts in the management of the institution, proposing to call at Minor Canon Row on a certain day and hour. The letter then concluded with these remarkable words: — “I trust to my childish remembrance for putting your initials correctly.”

The letter was properly addressed “The Rev. *W. H. Drage*,” and it is interesting to record this circumstance as showing Dickens’s habitual precision and excellent memory. The future novelist was about eleven years old when he left Chatham (1823), consequently a period of twenty-seven years or more must have elapsed since he knew his father’s neighbour as

Curate there; yet, notwithstanding the multiplicity and diversity of his occupations during the interim, his recollection after this long period was perfectly accurate.

It is scarcely necessary to add that the interview took place (probably Dickens came down from London specially), and that the Vicar obtained admission for his *protégée*. The younger Miss Drage, who was in the room at the time of Dickens's visit, particularly noticed what a beautiful head the novelist's was, and in her enthusiasm she made a rough sketch of it while he was talking to her father.

In conversation with the present Mr. Charles Dickens on a subsequent occasion regarding this circumstance, he informed me that there was an institution of the kind referred to, "A Home," at Shepherd's Bush, in which his father took much interest. Forster also says in the *Life* that this Home "largely and regularly occupied his time for several years."

* * * * *

We heard from a trustworthy authority, Y. Z., at Rochester, some particulars respecting an interesting custom at Gad's Hill Place. On New Year's Eve there was always a dinner-party with friends, and a dance, and games afterwards. Some of the games were called "Buzz," "Crambo," "Spanish Merchant," etc. Claret-cup and other refreshments were introduced later, and at twelve o'clock all the servants came into the entrance-hall. Charles Dickens then went in, shook hands with them all round, wished them a Happy New Year ("A happy new year, God bless us all"), and gave each half-a-sovereign. This custom was maintained for many years, until a man-servant — who used to travel with Dickens — disgracefully betrayed his trust, — robbed his master, in fact, — when it was discontinued, and the name of the man who had thus disgraced himself was never allowed to be mentioned at Gad's Hill.

The same authority spoke of the long walks that Dickens regularly took after breakfast — usually six miles, — but he gave these up after the railway accident at Staplehurst, which, it will be remembered, occurred, on the "fatal anniversary," the 9th June, 1865. During one of these walks, he fell in with a man driving a cart loaded with manure, and had a long chat with him, the sort of thing he frequently did (said our informant) in order to become acquainted with the brogue and feelings of the working people. When Dickens went on his way, one of the man's fellow-labourers said to him, "Do you know that that was Charles Dickens who spoke to you?" "I

don't know who it was," replied the man, "but he was a d — — d good fellow, for he gave me a shilling."

Our informant also referred to a conversation between Dickens and some of his friends at Gad's Hill, respecting the unhappy marriages of actors. Twenty such marriages were instanced, and out of these only two turned out happily. He said that Charles Dickens at home was a quiet, unassuming man. He remembers on one occasion his saying, in relation to a war which was then going on, "What must the feelings of a soldier be, when alone and dying on the battle-field, and leaving his wife and children far away for ever?"

* * * * *

A TRUE GHOST STORY RELATING TO MISS HAVISHAM'S HOUSE.

"I live in an old red-brick mansion, nearly covered with ivy — one of those picturesque dwellings with high-pitched roofs and ornamental gables, which were scattered broadcast over England in the days of good Queen Bess. Every stranger looking at it exclaims, 'That house must have a history and a ghost!' Many a story has been told of the ghost which has from time to time been seen, or said to have been seen, within its walls; and many a servant has, from fear, refused service in this so-called haunted house.

"On the 28th May, one thousand six hundred and sixty, Charles the Second sojourned and slept here. This being the eve of 'The Restoration,' a new name was given to the then old house, which name it has since retained. Charles, having knighted the owner (Sir Francis Clarke), departed early the next morning for London.

"There are secret passages *in* the house, and, under ground, *from* the house. From the room in which the king slept, a secret passage through one of the lower panels of the wainscot, leads to various parts of the house. This passage is so well concealed that I occupied the house some years before it was discovered. I had occasion to make a plan of the house, and the inside and outside not agreeing, disclosed the space occupied by the unexplored passage. The jackdaws had forestalled me in my discovery, and had had undisturbed possession for two centuries, having got access through a hole under the eaves of the roof. They had deposited *several bushels* of sticks. They had not been the only tenants, as skeletons and mummies of birds, etc., were also found.

“I came into possession of this old house in December 1875, and on the 27th of April, 1876, slept in it for the first time. At ten o’clock on that night, my family retired to rest; having some letters to write, I sat up later. At a quarter to twelve, I was startled by a loud noise — a sort of rumbling sound, which appeared to proceed from the hall. I left my writing and went to the hall, and found that the noise proceeded from the staircase, but I could see nothing unusual.

“The staircase is one of those so often described as being ‘wide enough to drive a carriage and pair up,’ with massive oak posts and balustrades. The walls are covered with tapestry, given to the house by ‘The Merry Monarch,’ after his visit. An oak chest or two, and some high-backed chairs on the landings, picture to one a suitable habitation for a ghost. Fortunately, or unfortunately, I had no belief in ghosts, and commenced an investigation of this extraordinary noise.

“Could it be rats, or mice, or owls? No; the noise was ten times louder than could possibly proceed from these creatures; besides, I knew there were no rats in the house. The clever builder of the house had filled all the space between the ceilings and floors with silver sand, which rendered it impossible for a rat or mouse to make passages. To prick a hole in a ceiling is to have a continuous stream of sand run down, as from an hour-glass.

“The noise was repeated, but much louder (two drum-sticks upon a large drum would not have made more noise), and I was able to localize it, still I could see nothing. I thought some one had fallen on the stairs, and I shouted ‘Who is there?’ A reply came ‘Hush!’ — first softly, and then very loud — too loud for a human voice. As no person was visible, I was puzzled, and went up-stairs by a back staircase, and ascertained that none of my family had left their bedrooms, and that certainly no trick was being played me.

“The same rumbling, rolling sound was repeated; and as I stood on the top of the great staircase, I felt a little uncomfortable, but not frightened. The noise seemed to proceed from a large carved oak coffer or chest (as old as the house), which stood on a landing, about half-way up the stairs. I approached the chest, and from it appeared to come again the word ‘Hush!’ Could it be the wind whistling through a crack? No; it was far too loud for any such explanation. I opened the lid of the chest and found it empty. Again the noise, now from *under* the chest. I was just strong enough to move the chest; I turned it over and slid it down the stairs on to the next

landing. Again the noise, and again the ‘Hush!’ which now appeared to come from the floor where the coffer had stood.

“I felt I would rather have had some one with me to assist in my investigation, and to join me in making the acquaintance of the ghost; but, although my sensations were probably the most uncomfortable I ever experienced, I was determined, if possible, to unearth the mystery.

“The light was imperfect, and I went to another part of the house for a candle to enable me to examine the floor. In my absence the noise was repeated louder than ever, and not unlike distant thunder. On my return, I was saluted with ‘Hush!’ which I felt convinced came from a voice immediately under the floor. By the light of the candle I examined the dark oak boards, and discovered what appeared to be a trap door about two feet six inches square. The floor at some time had been varnished, and the cracks, or joints of the trap, had been filled and sealed with the varnish. I now hoped I had found the habitation of my troublesome and noisy guest. I procured a chisel and cut the varnished joint, and found that there was a trap door, as I supposed. By the aid of a long screwdriver I was able to move the door, but at that moment a repetition of the noise, immediately under me, made me hesitate for a moment to try and raise it. With feelings better imagined than described, I raised the lid, and looked into a dark chasm. All was still, and I heard the cathedral bell tolling the hour of midnight. A long African spear was in the corner near me, and I struck this into the opening. I tied a string to the candlestick to lower it into the opening, but at this moment I was startled, and was for the first time nervous, or I may say, frightened; but this had better remain for another chapter.

“So far I have not in the smallest degree exaggerated or overdrawn any one of the matters I have recounted. Every word has been written with the greatest care to truth and accuracy.

“S. T. A.”

* * * * *

To cut our ghost story short, without adding another chapter, Mr. Aveling, on looking into the dark chasm by the meagre light of the lowered candle, beheld, to his amazement, the reflection of his own face in the water of a large cistern underneath the staircase, the house having formerly been supplied from the “large brewery” a short distance off. The unearthly noise was no doubt caused by air in the pipes, through which the water rushed when suddenly turned on by the brewers, who were working late at night. In

Great Expectations it is stated that: — "The brewery buildings had a little lane of communication with it" [the courtyard of Satis House], "and the wooden gates of that lane stood open" [at the time of Pip's first visit, when Estella showed him over the premises], "and all the brewery beyond stood open, away to the high enclosing wall; and all was empty and disused. The cold wind seemed to blow colder there, than outside the gate; and it made a shrill noise in howling in and out at the open sides of the brewery, like the noise of wind in the rigging of a ship at sea."

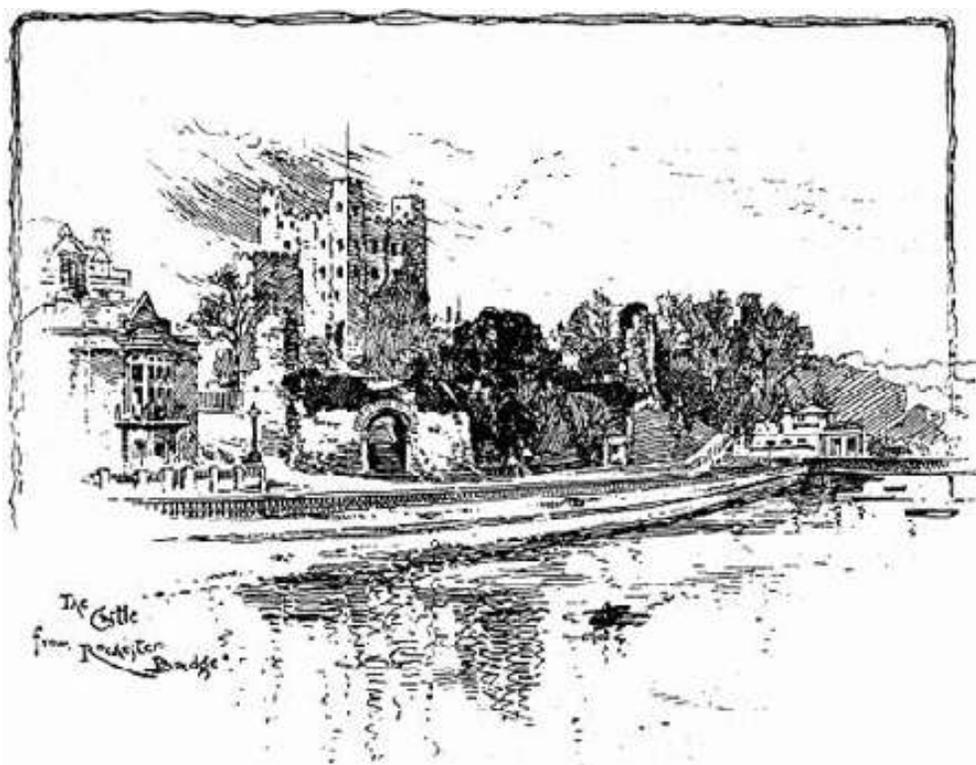
CHAPTER IV.

ROCHESTER CASTLE.

“I took up my hat, and went out, climbed to the top of the old Castle, and looked over the windy hills that slope down to the Medway.” — *The Seven Poor Travellers*.

To the lover of Dickens, both the Castle and Cathedral of Rochester appeal with almost equal interest. The Castle, however, which stands on an eminence on the right bank of the river Medway, close to the bridge, claims prior attention, and a few lines must therefore be devoted to an epitome of its history in the ante-Pickwickian days.

Tradition says that the first castle was erected by command of Julius Cæsar, when Cassivelaunus was Governor of Britain, “in order to awe the Britons.” It was called the “Castle of the Medway,” or “the Kentishmen’s Castle,” and it seems, with other antagonisms, to have awed the unfortunate Britons pretty effectively, for it lasted until decay and dissolution came to it and to them, as to all things. It was replaced by a new castle built by Hrofe (509), which in its turn succumbed to the ravages of time.



Gundulph, Bishop of Rochester (1077), whose name still survives here and there in connection with charities and in other ways in the “ancient city,” appears to be entitled to the credit of having commenced to build the present massive square Tower or Keep, the surviving portion of a magnificent whole, sometimes called “Gundulph’s Tower,” “towards which he was to expend the sum of sixty pounds,” and this structure ranks as one of the most perfect examples of Norman architecture in existence. Other authorities ascribe the erection to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent, half-brother to William the Conqueror, who is described by Hasted as “a turbulent and ambitious prelate, who aimed at nothing less than the popedom.” Later, in the reign of William Rufus, it was accounted “the strongest and most important castle of England.” It was so important that Lambarde, in *A Perambulation of Kent*, says: — “It was much in the eie of such as were authors of troubles following within the realme, so that from time to time it had a part almost in every Tragedie.”

Mr. Robert Collins, in his compact and useful *Visitors’ Handbook of Rochester and Neighbourhood*, quoting from another ancient historian, says that “In 1264, King Henry III. [who in 1251 held a grand tournament in the Castle] ‘commanded that the Shyriffe of Kent do set aboute to finish and complete the great Tower which Gundulph had left imperfect.’” About

1463, Edward IV. repaired part of the Castle, after which it was allowed to fall into decay. The instructions to the “shyriffe” were no doubt necessary; for although £60 would probably go a great way in the time of Bishop Gundulph, the modern æsthetic builder would do very little indeed for that sum, towards the erection of such an impregnable fortress as Rochester Castle, the walls of which vary from eight to thirteen feet in thickness, whatever his progenitor may have done in 1077.

The Keep — the last resort of the garrison when all the outworks were taken — is considered so beautiful that it is selected, under the article “Castle” in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, as an illustration of Norman architecture, showing “an embattled parapet often admitting of chambers and staircases being constructed,” and showing also “embattled turrets carried one story higher than the parapet.” There is also a fine woodcut of the Castle at p. 198 of vol. v. of that work.

The Keep is seventy feet square and a hundred feet high, built of the native Kentish ragstone and Caen stone; and the adamantine mortar or cement used in its construction was made with sand, evidently procured at the seaside some distance from Rochester, for it contains remains of cardium, pecten, solen, and other marine shells, which would not be found in river sand. Mr. Roach Smith suggested that probably the sand may have been procured from “Cockle-shell Hard,” near Sheerness. He called our attention to the fact that in Norman mortar sand is predominant, and in Roman mortar lime or chalk.



The roof and the chambers are gone, — the Keep remains as a mere shell, — and where bishops, kings, and barons came and went, flocks of the common domestic pigeon, in countless numbers, fly about and make their home and multiply. One almost regrets the freedom which these graceful birds possess, although to grudge freedom to a pigeon is like grudging sunshine to a flower. But though the damage to the walls is really trifling, as they will stand for centuries to come, still the litter and mess which the birds naturally make is considerable and unsightly, and decidedly out of keeping in such a magnificent ruin. The pigeons exhibit what takes place when a species becomes dominant to the exclusion of other species, as witness the pest of the rabbits in New Zealand. With profound respect to his Worship the Mayor and the Corporation of Rochester, to whom the Castle and grounds now belong, the writer of these lines, as a naturalist, ventures to suggest that the Castle should be left to the jackdaws, its natural and doubtless its original tenants, which, although of higher organization, have been driven out by superior numbers in the “struggle for existence,” and for whom it is a much more appropriate habitat in keeping with all traditions; and further, that the said pigeons be forthwith made into pies for the use and behoof of the deserving poor of the ancient city of Rochester.

Mention has been made of the fact that the Castle and grounds are the property of the Corporation of Rochester. They were acquired by purchase in 1883 from the Earl of Jersey for £8,000, and the occasion was celebrated by great civic rejoicings. The Corporation are not only to be congratulated on the wisdom of their purchase (“a thing of beauty is a joy for ever”), but also on the excellent manner in which the grounds are maintained — pigeons excepted. The gardens, with closely-cut lawns, abound with euonymus, laurustinus, bay, and other evergreens, together with many choice flowers. The single red, or Deptford pink (*Dianthus Armeria*), grows wild on the walls of the Castle. There is a tasteful statuette of her Majesty, under a Gothic canopy, near the entrance, which records her Jubilee in 1887. The inscriptions on three of the four corners are appropriately chosen from Lord Tennyson’s *Carmen Sæculare*: —

To commemorate the

Jubilee of Queen Victoria,

1887.

L. Levy, Mayor.

“Fifty years of ever-broadening commerce!”

“Fifty years of ever-brightening science!”

“Fifty years of ever-widening empire!”

There is free admission to the grounds through a handsome modern Norman gateway, but a trifling charge of a few pence is made for permission to enter the Keep, which has convenient steps ascending to the top. From the summit of the Keep, there are magnificent views of the valley of the river Medway, the adjacent hills, Rochester, Chatham, and the vicinity. The Cathedral, Jasper’s Gatehouse, and Restoration House, are also noteworthy objects to the lover of Dickens. As Mr. Philips Bevan says, and as we verified, the views inside at midday, when the sun is streaming down, are “very peculiar and beautiful.”

Dickens’s first and last great works are both associated with the Castle, and it is referred to in several other of his writings. We can fancy, more than sixty years ago, the eager and enthusiastic Pickwickians, in company with their newly-made acquaintance, Mr. Alfred Jingle, seated outside the four-horse coach, — the “Commodore,” driven possibly by “Old Chumley,” — dashing over old Rochester Bridge, to “the lively notes of the guard’s key-bugle,” when the sight of the Castle first broke upon them.

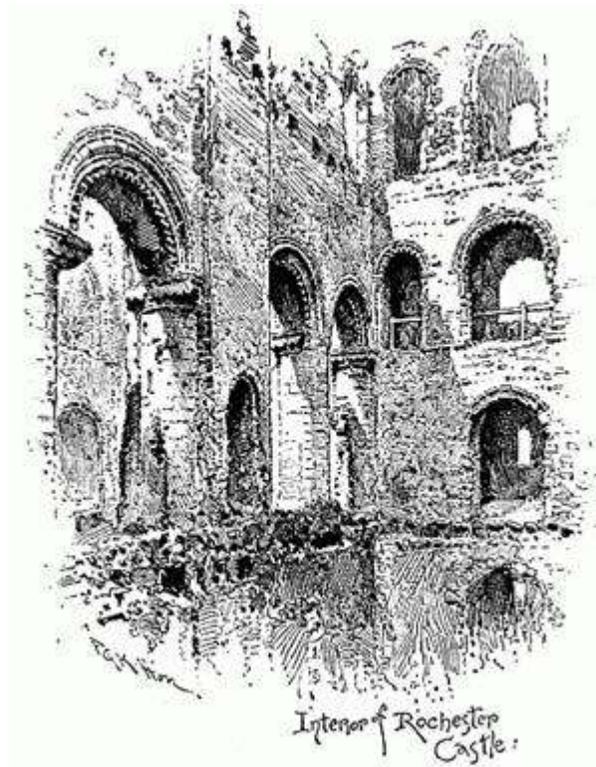
“‘Magnificent ruin!’ said Mr. Augustus Snodgrass, with all the poetic fervour that distinguished him, when they came in sight of the fine old Castle.

“‘What a study for an antiquarian!’ were the very words which fell from Mr. Pickwick’s mouth, as he applied his telescope to his eye.

“‘Ah, fine place!’ said the stranger, ‘glorious pile — frowning walls — tottering arches — dark nooks — crumbling staircases — ’“

Little did poor Mr. Winkle think that within twenty-four hours *his* feeling of admiration for Rochester Castle would be turned into astonishment, for does not the chronicle say that “if the upper tower of Rochester Castle had suddenly walked from its foundation and stationed itself opposite the coffee-room window [of the Bull Hotel], Mr. Winkle’s surprise would have been as nothing compared with the perfect astonishment with which he had heard this address” (referring of course to the insult to Dr. Slammer, and the challenge in the matter of the duel).

It was on the occasion of “a visit to the Castle” very soon afterwards that Mr. Winkle confided in, and sought the good offices of, his friend Mr. Snodgrass, in the “affair of honour” which was to take place at “sunset, in a lonely field beyond Fort Pitt.” Poor fellow! how eagerly he tried, under a mask of the most perfect candour, and how miserably he failed, to arouse the energies of his friend to avert the impending catastrophe.



“‘Snodgrass,’ he said, stopping suddenly, ‘do *not* let me be baulked in this matter — do *not* give information to the local authorities — do *not* obtain the assistance of several peace officers to take either me or Doctor Slammer of the 97th Regiment, at present quartered in Chatham Barracks, into custody, and thus prevent this duel; — I say, do *not*.’

“Mr. Snodgrass seized his friend’s hand as he enthusiastically replied, ‘Not for worlds!’

“A thrill passed over Mr. Winkle’s frame, as the conviction that he had nothing to hope from his friend’s fears, and that he was destined to become an animated target, rushed forcibly upon him.”

The state of the case having been formally explained to Mr. Snodgrass, they make arrangements, hire “a case of satisfaction pistols, with the satisfactory accompaniments of powder, ball, and caps,” and “the two friends returned to their inn.” The next ground which they traversed together to pursue the subject was at Fort Pitt. We will follow them presently.

In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* there is no direct reference to the Castle itself, but the engraving of it, with the Cathedral in the background, after the pretty sketch by Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A., will ever be associated with that beautiful fragment.

Another reference is contained in the preface to *Nicholas Nickleby*, where Dickens says: — "I cannot call to mind now how I came to hear about Yorkshire schools when I was a not very robust child, sitting in by-places near Rochester Castle, with a head full of 'Partridge,' 'Strap,' 'Tom Pipes,' and 'Sancho Panza.'"

A sympathetic notice of the Castle is also contained in the *Seven Poor Travellers*. It begins: —

"Sooth to say, he [Time] did an active stroke of work in Rochester in the old days of the Romans, and the Saxons, and the Normans, and down to the times of King John, when the rugged Castle — I will not undertake to say how many hundreds of years old then — was abandoned to the centuries of weather which have so defaced the dark apertures in its walls, that the ruin looks as if the rooks and daws had picked its eyes out."

And this, the most touching reference of all, occurs in "One Man in a Dockyard," contributed by Dickens to *Household Words* in 1851: —

"There was Rochester Castle, to begin with. I surveyed the massive ruin from the Bridge, and thought what a brief little practical joke I seemed to be, in comparison with its solidity, stature, strength, and length of life. I went inside; and, standing in the solemn shadow of its walls, looking up at the blue sky, its only remaining roof, (to the disturbance of the crows and jackdaws who garrison the venerable fortress now,) calculated how much wall of that thickness I, or any other man, could build in his whole life, — say from eight years old to eighty, — and what a ridiculous result would be produced. I climbed the rugged staircase, stopping now and then to peep at great holes where the rafters and floors were once, — bare as toothless gums now, — or to enjoy glimpses of the Medway through dreary apertures like sockets without eyes; and, looking from the Castle ramparts on the Old Cathedral, and on the crumbling remains of the old Priory, and on the row of staid old red-brick houses where the Cathedral dignitaries live, and on the shrunken fragments of one of the old City gates, and on the old trees with their high tops below me, felt quite apologetic to the scene in general for my own juvenility and insignificance. One of the river boatmen had told me on the bridge, (as country folks do tell of such places,) that in the old times, when those buildings were in progress, a labourer's wages 'were a penny a day, and enough too.' Even as a solitary penny was to their whole cost, it appeared to me, was the utmost strength and exertion of one man towards the labour of their erection."

Dickens always took his friends to the Keep of Rochester Castle. He naturally considered it as one of the sights of the old city. It was equally attractive to his friends, for a curious adventure is recorded in Forster's *Life*, in connection with a visit which the poet Longfellow made there in 1842, and which he recollected a quarter of a century afterwards, and recounted to Forster during a second visit, together with a curious experience in the slums of London with Dickens. The first of these adventures is thus described by Forster: — "One of them was a day at Rochester, when, met by one of those prohibitions which are the wonder of visitors and the shame of Englishmen, we overleapt gates and barriers, and setting at defiance repeated threats of all the terrors of law, coarsely expressed to us by the custodian of the place, explored minutely the castle ruins." Happily such a circumstance could not now take place, for, by the present excellent regulations of the Corporation of the city of Rochester, every visitor can explore the Castle and grounds to his heart's content.

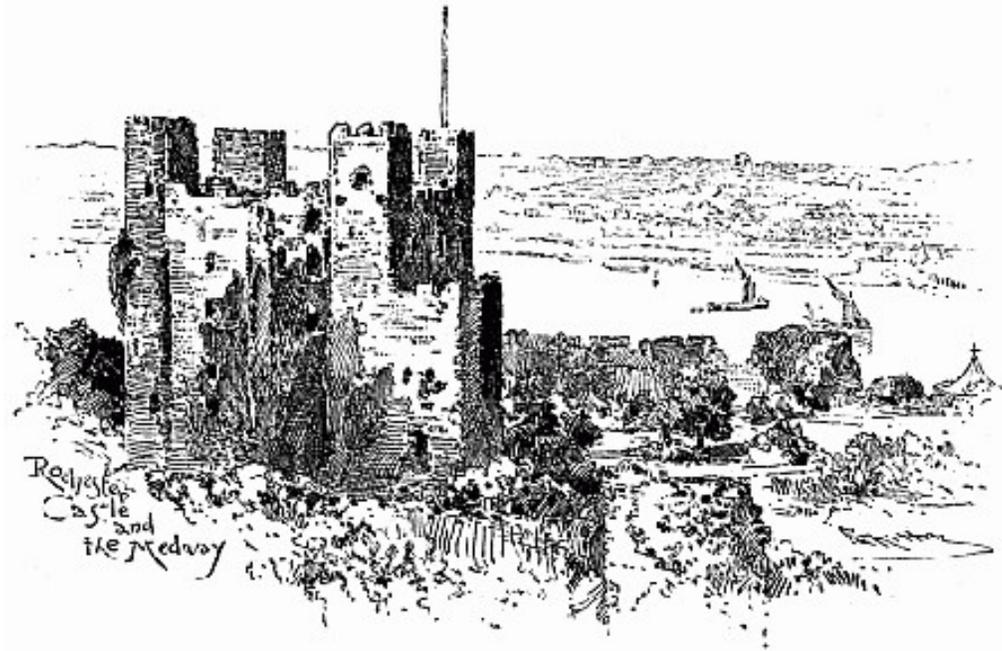
On arriving at either railway station, Strood or Rochester Bridge, the Castle is the first object to claim attention. Our attention is constantly directed to it during our stay in the pleasant city; it is a landmark when we are on the tramp; and it is the last object to fade from our view as we regretfully take our departure.

* * * * *

My fellow-tramp favours me with the following note: —

The Dedication of Rochester Castle to the Public.

"I well remember the day of public rejoicing in the picturesque city of Rochester, on the occasion of the ceremony of formally presenting the old Castle and grounds to the inhabitants. I had received instructions from the manager of the *Graphic* newspaper to make sketches of the principal incidents in connection with the day's proceedings, and I reached my destination just in time to obtain from the authorities some idea of the nature of those proceedings. With this object in view, I made my way through the surging crowd to the Guildhall, where, in one of the Corporation rooms, I found a large assembly of local magnates in official attire, including the Mayor, who was vainly endeavouring to properly adjust his sword, an operation in which I had the honour of assisting, much to his Worship's satisfaction, I hope.



“The streets of Rochester were thronged with excited people, and the houses were gaily decked with flags and bunting. When everything was ready, an imposing procession was formed, and proceeded to the Castle grounds, preceded by a military band; on arriving there, an address was read from the pagoda to an attentive audience, the subsequent proceedings being enlivened by musical strains.

“It had been announced that, in the evening, the old Keep would be illuminated by the electric light, and I made a point of being present to witness the unusual sight. The night was very dark, and the ivy-clad ruin could barely be distinguished; presently, a burst of music from the band was immediately followed by a remarkably strong beam of light, which shot into the darkness with such effect as to fairly startle those present. Then it rested on the grey walls of the huge pile, bathing in brightness the massive stones and clinging ivy, the respective colours of each being vividly apparent. But the most striking feature was yet to come. The hundreds of pigeons which inhabited the nooks and crannies of the old Keep, being considerably alarmed by this sudden illumination of their domain, flew with one accord round and round their ancient tenement, now in the full blaze of light, now lost in the inky darkness beyond, and fluttering about in a state of the utmost bewilderment. Methinks even Mr. Pickwick, had he been present in the flesh, would have been equally amazed at this remarkable spectacle.”

F. G. K.

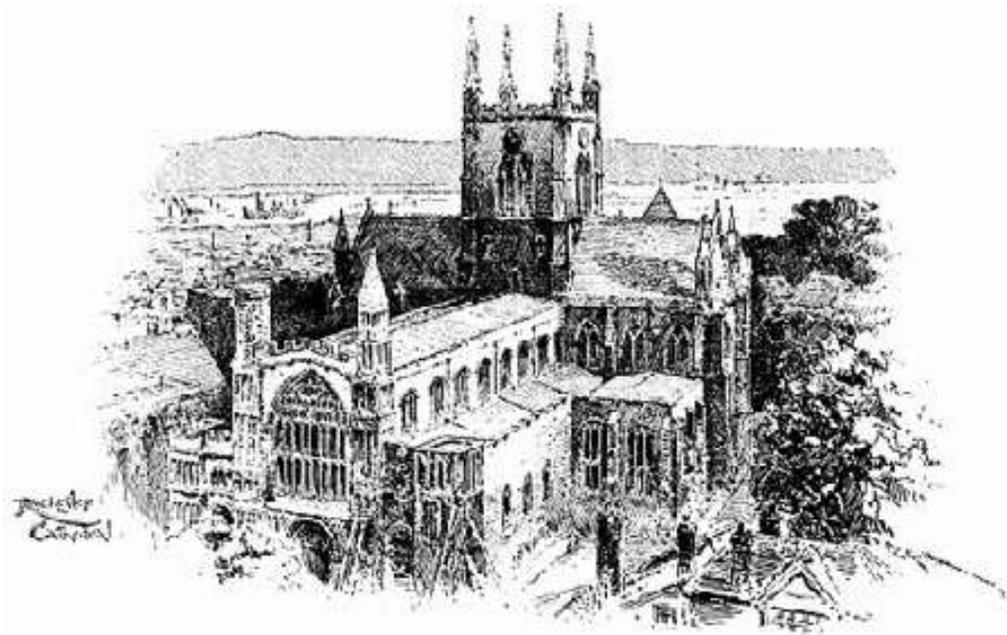
CHAPTER V.

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

“That same afternoon, the massive grey square tower of an old Cathedral rises before the sight of a jaded traveller. The bells are going for daily Vesper Service, and he must needs attend it, one would say, from his haste to reach the open Cathedral door. The choir are getting on their sullied white robes, in a hurry, when he arrives among them, gets on his own robe, and falls into the procession filing in to Service. Then, the Sacristan locks the iron-barred gates that divide the Sanctuary from the Chancel, and all of the procession having scuttled into their places, hide their faces; and then the intoned words, ‘When the wicked man — ’ rise among the groins of arches and beams of roof, awakening muttered thunder.” — *Edwin Drood*.

The readers of Dickens are first introduced to Rochester Cathedral, in the early pages of the immortal *Pickwick Papers*, by that audacious *raconteur*, Mr. Alfred Jingle: —

“Old Cathedral too — earthy smell — pilgrims’ feet worn away the old steps — little Saxon doors — confessionals like money-takers’ boxes at theatres — queer customers those monks — Popes, and Lord Treasurers, and all sorts of old fellows, with great red faces, and broken noses, turning up every day — buff jerkins too — matchlocks — sarcophagus — fine place — old legends too — strange stories: capital.”



But it was through the medium of *Edwin Drood*, and under the masked name of Cloisterham, that all the novel-reading world beyond the “ancient city” first recognized Rochester Cathedral — and indeed the ancient city too — as having been elevated to a degree of interest and importance far beyond that imparted to it by its own venerable history and ecclesiastical associations, numerous and varied as they are. The early portion of the story introduces us to Cloisterham in imperishable language: —

“An ancient city Cloisterham, and no meet dwelling-place for any one with hankering after the noisy world. . . . A drowsy city Cloisterham, whose inhabitants seem to suppose, with an inconsistency more strange than rare, that all its changes lie behind it, and that there are no more to come. . . . In a word, a city of another and a bygone time is Cloisterham, with its hoarse cathedral bell, its hoarse rooks hovering about the cathedral tower, its hoarser and less distinct rooks in the stalls far beneath. . . .”

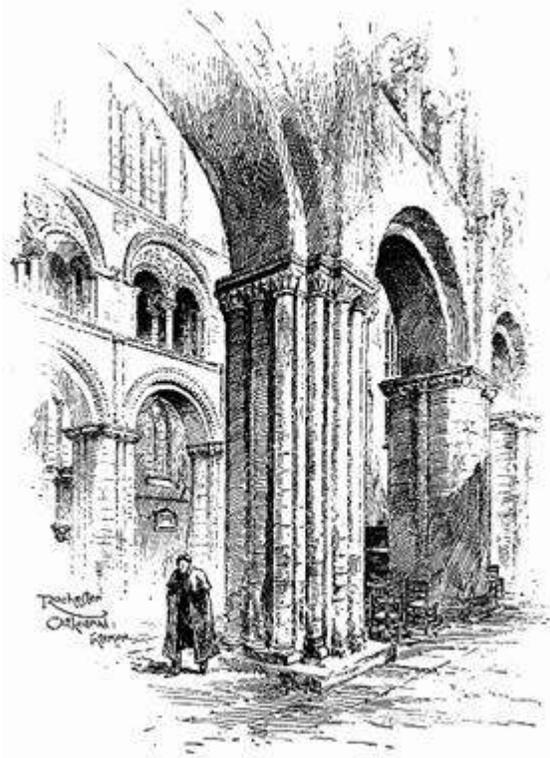
The particulars in this chapter mainly relate to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which Longfellow thought “certainly one of Dickens’s most beautiful works, if not the most beautiful of all,” but a few words may not be inappropriate respecting some of the principal events connected with the Cathedral. It was founded a.d. 604, by Ethelbert, King of Kent, and the first bishop of the See (Bishop Justus) was ordained by Augustine, the Archbishop of the Britons. The See of Rochester is therefore, with the exception of Canterbury, at once the most ancient and also the smallest in England.

The Cathedral, as well as the city, suffered from the attacks of Ethelred, King of Mercia, and in 1075, “when Arnot, a monk of Bec, came to the See, it was in a most deplorable condition.” Bishop Gundulph, who succeeded him, and by whose efforts the Castle was erected, replaced the old English church by a Norman one (1080), and made other improvements. The Cathedral suffered from fire in 1138 and 1179. Its great north transept was built in 1235, and the great south transept in 1240. In 1423, the parish altar of St. Nicholas, in the nave, was removed to a new Church for the citizens on the north side of the Cathedral. In 1470, the great west window was inserted. The Norman west front has a richly sculptured door of five receding arches, containing figures of the Saviour and the twelve apostles, and statues of Henry I. and his Queen, Matilda. There are monuments in the Cathedral to St. William of Perth, a baker of that town, who was murdered near here by his servant, on his way to the Holy Land (1201), and was canonized, to Bishop Gundulph, Bishop John de Sheppey, Bishop de Merton (the founder of Merton College, Oxford), and to many others.

According to Mr. Phillips Bevan, “the chapter-house is remarkable for its magnificent Decorated Door (about 1344), of which there is a fac-simile at the Crystal Palace. The figures represent the Christian and the Jewish Churches, surrounded by Fathers and Angels. The figure at the top is the pure soul for whom the angels are supposed to be praying.”

Various alterations and additions have been made from time to time, the last of which appears to be the central tower, which is terribly mean and inappropriate, and altogether out of place with the ancient surroundings. It was built by Cottingham in 1825.

We pass, at various times, several pleasant hours in the Cathedral and its precincts, admiring the beautiful Norman work, and recalling most delightful memories of Charles Dickens and his associations therewith.



Among the many friends we made at Rochester, was Mr. Syms, the respected Manager of the Gas Company, and an old resident in the city. To this gentleman we are indebted for several reminiscences of Dickens and his works. He fancies that *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* owed its origin to the following strange local event that happened many years ago. A well-to-do person, a bachelor (who lived somewhere near the site of the present Savings Bank in High St., Rochester, Chatham end), was the guardian and trustee of a nephew (a minor), who was the inheritor of a large property. Business, pleasure, or a desire to seek health, took the nephew to the West Indies, from whence he returned somewhat unexpectedly. After his return he suddenly disappeared, and was supposed to have gone another voyage, but no one ever saw or heard of him again, and the matter was soon forgotten. When, however, certain excavations were being made for some improvements or additions to the Bank, the skeleton of a young man was discovered; and local tradition couples the circumstance with the probability of the murder of the nephew by the uncle.

Mr. Syms thought that the "Crozier," which is probably a set off to the "Mitre," the orthodox hotel where Mr. Datchery put up with his "portmanteau," was probably the city coffee-house, an old hotel of the coaching days, which stood on the site now occupied by the London County

Bank. "It was a hotel of a most retiring disposition," and "business was chronically slack at the 'Crozier,'" which probably accounts for its dissolution. Another suggestion is that the "Crozier" may have been "The Old Crown," a fifteenth-century house, which was pulled down in 1864. He could not identify the "Tilted Wagon," the "cool establishment on the top of a hill."

It is generally admitted that "Mr. Thomas Sapsea, Auctioneer, &c.," was a compound of two originals well known in Rochester — a Mr. B. and a Mr. F., who had many of the characteristics of the quondam Mayor of Cloisterham. Mr. Sapsea's house is the fine old timbered building opposite Eastgate House, which has been previously alluded to.

The "Travellers' Twopenny" of *Edwin Drood*, where Deputy, *alias* Winks, lodged, Mr. Syms thought to have been a cheap lodging-house well known in that locality, which stood at the junction of Frog Alley and Crow Lane, originally called "The Duck," and subsequently "Kitt's Lodging-house." But, like less interesting and more important relics of the past, this has disappeared, to make way for modern improvements. It had been partly burnt down before. To satisfy ourselves, we go over the ground, which is near Mr. Franklin Homan's furniture establishment.

We are reminded, in reference to *Edwin Drood*, that the chief tenor singer never heads the procession of choristers. That place of honour belongs to the smaller boys of the choir. An enquiry from us, as to what was the opinion of the townsfolk generally respecting Dickens, elicited the reply that they thought him at times "rather masterful."

We are most attentively shown over the Cathedral and its surroundings by Mr. Miles, the venerable verger. This faithful and devoted official, who began at the bottom of the ladder as a choir boy in the sacred edifice at the commencement of the present century, is much respected, and has recently celebrated his golden wedding. Few can therefore be more closely identified with the growth and development of its current history. Pleasant and instructive it is to hear him recount the many celebrated incidents which have marked its progress, and to see the beautiful memorials of past munificence or affection erected by friends or relatives, which he lovingly points out. It is in no perfunctory spirit, or as mere matter of routine, that he performs his office: we really feel that he takes a deep interest in his task, which makes it a privilege to walk under his guidance through the historic

building, and into its famous crypt, so especially associated with Jasper and Durdles.



The Crypt, Rochester Cathedral.

We enter “by a small side door, . . . descend the rugged steps, and are down in the crypt.” It is very spacious, and vaulted with stone. Even by daylight, here and there, “the heavy pillars which support the roof engender masses of black shade, but between them there are lanes of light,” and we walk “up and down these lanes,” being strangely reminded of Durdles as we notice fragments of old broken stone ornaments carefully laid out on boards in several places. Formerly there were altars to St. Mary and St. Catherine in the crypt or undercroft, but Mr. Wildish’s local guide-book says: — “They seem not to have been much frequented; consequently these saints were not very profitable to the priests.”

We “go up the winding staircase of the great tower, toilsomely turning and turning, and lowering [our] heads to avoid the stairs above, or the rough stone pivot around which they twist.” About ninety steps bring us on to the roof of the Cathedral over the choir, and then, keeping along a passage by the parapet, we reach the belfry, and from thence go on by ladder to the bell-chamber, which contains six bells — dark — very — long ladders — trap-doors — very heavy — almost extinguish us when lowering them — more ladders from bell-chamber to roof of tower. The parapet of the tower

is very high; we can just see over it when standing on a narrow ledge near the top-coping of the leaded roof. There are a number of curious carved heads on the pinnacles of the tower, and the parapet, to our surprise, appears to be about the same height as the top of the Castle Keep. A panoramic view of Cloisterham presents itself to our view (alas! not by moonlight, as in the story), “its ruined habitations and sanctuaries of the dead at the tower’s base; its moss-softened, red-tiled roofs and red-brick houses of the living, clustered beyond.”

We are anxious to go round the triforium, but there is no passage through the arches; it was closed, we are told, at the time of the restoration, about fifteen years ago, when the walls of the Cathedral were pinned for safety. The verger, on being asked, said he did not call to mind that Dickens ever went round the triforium or ascended the tower. If this is so, then much of the wonderful description of that “unaccountable sort of expedition,” in the twelfth chapter of *Edwin Drood*, must have been written from imagination. As it is Sunday, and as the summer is nearly over, Mr. Miles, with a feeling akin to that which George Eliot has expressed regarding imperfect work: —

“but God be praised,

Antonio Stradivari has an eye

That winces at false work and loves the true,” —

apologetically explains that one-half the choir are absent on leave, and perhaps we shall not have the musical portion of the service conducted with that degree of efficiency which, as visitors, we may have expected. Nevertheless we attend the afternoon service; and Mendelssohn’s glorious anthem, “If with all your hearts,” appeals to us with enhanced effect, from the exquisite rendering of it by the gifted pure tenor who takes the solo, followed by the delicate harmonies of the choir, as the sound waves carry them upwards through and around the arches, and from the sublime emotions called into being by the impassioned appeal of the Hebrew prophet.

We study “the fantastic carvings on the under brackets of the stall seats,” and examine the lectern described as “the big brass eagle holding the sacred books upon his wings,” and in imagination can almost call up the last scene described in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, where Her Royal Highness, the Princess Puffer, “grins,” and “shakes both fists at the leader of the choir,” and “Deputy peeps, sharp-eyed, through the bars, and stares astounded from the threatener to the threatened.”

Upon being interrogated as to whether he knew Charles Dickens, our guide immediately answers with a smile — "Knew him! yes. He came here very often, and I knew him very well. The fact is, they want to make me out to be 'Tope.'" And indeed there appears to be such a relevancy in the association, that we frequently find ourselves addressing him as "Mr. Tope," at which he good-humouredly laughs. He further states that Dickens was frequently in Rochester, and especially so when writing *Edwin Drood*, and appeared to be studying the Cathedral and its surroundings very attentively.

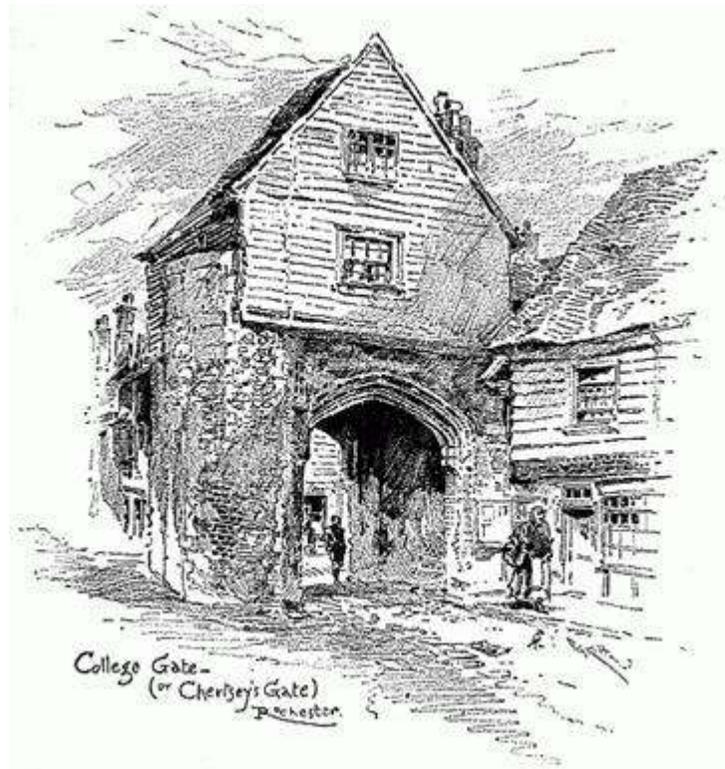
The next question we put is: — "Was there ever such a person as Durdles?" to which he replies, "Of course there was, — a drunken old German stonemason, about thirty years ago, who was always prowling about the Cathedral trying to pick up little bits of broken stone ornaments, carved heads, crockets, finials, and such like, which he carried about in a cotton handkerchief, and which may have suggested to Dickens the idea of the 'slouching' Durdles and his inseparable dinner bundle. He used to work for a certain Squire N — — ." His earnings mostly went to "The Fortune of War," — now called "The Life-Boat," — the inn where he lodged.

Mr. Miles does not remember the prototypes of any other "cathedraly" characters — Crisparkle and the rest — but he quite agrees with the general opinion previously referred to as to the origin of Mr. Sapsea. He considers "Deputy" (the imp-like satellite of Durdles and the "Kinfreederel") to be decidedly a street Arab, the type of which is more common in London than in Rochester. He thinks that the fact of the rooms over the gatehouse having once been occupied by an organ-blower of the Cathedral may have prompted Dickens to make it the residence of the choir-master. He also throws out the suggestion that the discovery in 1825 of the effigy of Bishop John de Sheppey, who died in 1360, may possibly have given rise to the idea of the "old 'uns" in the crypt, the frequent object of Durdles's search, e.g. "Durdles come upon the old chap (in reference to a buried magnate of ancient time and high degree) by striking right into the coffin with his pick. The old chap gave Durdles a look with his open eyes as much as to say, 'Is your name Durdles? Why, my man, I've been waiting for you a Devil of a time!' and then he turned to powder. With a two-foot rule always in his pocket, and a mason's hammer all but always in his hand, Durdles goes continually sounding and tapping all about and about the Cathedral; and

such times may be condensed into the two words that oftenest did duty together in all her conversations: ‘My Sept.’“

The backs of the houses have very pretty gardens, and, as evidence of the pleasant and healthy atmosphere of the locality, we notice beautiful specimens of the ilex, arbutus, euonymus, and fig, the last-named being in fruit. The wall-rue (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*) is found hereabout. There, too, is a Virginia creeper, but we do not observe one growing on the Cathedral walls, as described in *Edwin Drood*. Jackdaws fly about the tower, but there are no rooks, as also stated. Near Minor Canon Row, to the right of Boley Hill (or “Bully Hill,” as it is sometimes called), is the “paved Quaker settlement,” a sedate row of about a dozen houses “up in a shady corner.”

“Jasper’s Gatehouse” of the work above mentioned is certainly an object of great interest to the lover of Dickens, as many of the remarkable scenes in *Edwin Drood* took place there. It is briefly described as “an old stone gatehouse crossing the Close, with an arched thoroughfare passing beneath it. Through its latticed window, a fire shines out upon the fast-darkening scene, involving in shadow the pendent masses of ivy and creeper covering the building’s front.” There are *three* Gatehouses near the Cathedral, a fact which proves somewhat embarrassing to those anxious to identify the original of that so carefully described in the story. A short description of these may not be uninteresting.



(a) “College Yard Gate,” “Cemetery Gate,” and “Chertsey’s Gate,” are the respective names of what we know as “Jasper’s Gatehouse.” It is a picturesque stone structure, weather-boarded above the massive archway,

and abuts on the High Street about a hundred yards north of the Cathedral. Some of the old houses near have recently been demolished, with the result that the Gatehouse now stands out in bold relief against the main thoroughfare of the city. No “pendent masses of ivy” or “creeper” cover it. The Gate was named “Chertsey” after Edward Chertsey, a gentleman who lived and owned property near in the time of Edward IV., and the Cathedral authorities still continue to use the old name, “Chertsey’s Gate.” The place was recently the residence of the under-porter of the Cathedral, and is now occupied by poor people. There are four rooms, two below and two above. (b) “Prior’s Gate” is a castellated stone structure partly covered with ivy, standing about a hundred yards south of the Cathedral, and is not now utilized in any way. There is only one room, approached by a winding staircase or “postern stair.” The Gate was formerly used as a school for choristers, until the new building of the Choir School was opened in Minor Canon Row about three years ago.

(c) The “Deanery Gatehouse” is the name of a quaint and very cosy old house, having ten rooms, some of which, together with the staircase, are beautifully panelled; its position is a little higher up to the eastward of the College Yard Gate, and adjoining the Cathedral, while a gateway passage under it leads to the Deanery. The house was formerly the official residence of the Hon. and Reverend Canon Hotham, who was appointed a Canon in residence in 1808, and lived here at intervals until about 1850, when the Canonry was suppressed. Of all the Gatehouses, this is the only one suitable for the residence of a person in Jasper’s position, who was enabled to offer befitting hospitality to his nephew and Neville Landless. Formerly there was an entrance into the Cathedral from this house, which is now occupied by Mr. Day and his family, who kindly allowed us to inspect it. We were informed that locally it is sometimes called “Jasper’s Gatehouse.” The interior of the drawing-room on the upper floor presents a very strong resemblance to Mr. Luke Fildes’s illustration, “On dangerous ground.” Accordingly, to settle the question of identity, I wrote to Mr. Fildes, whose interesting and courteous reply to my inquiries is conclusive. Before giving it, however, I may mention that my fellow-tramp, Mr. Kitton, suggested, more particularly with reference to another illustration in *Edwin Drood*, viz., “Durdles cautions Mr. Sapsea against boasting,” that, for the purposes of the story, the Prior’s Gate is placed where the College Yard Gate actually stands.



“11, Melbury Road, Kensington, W.

“25th October, 1890.

“Dear Sir,

“The background of the drawing of ‘Durdles cautioning Sapsea,’ I believe I sketched from what you call A., *i. e.* The College Gate. I am almost certain it was not taken from B., the Prior’s.

“The room in the drawing, ‘On dangerous ground,’ is imaginary.

“I do not believe I entered any of the Gatehouses.

“The resemblance you see in the drawing to the room in the Deanery Gatehouse (C.), might not be gained by actual observation of the *interior*.

“In many instances an artist can well judge what the interior may be from studying the *outside*. I only throw this out to show that the artist may not have seen a thing even when a strong resemblance occurs. I am sorry to leave any doubt on the subject, though personally I feel none.

“You see I never felt the necessity or propriety of being locally accurate to Rochester or its buildings. Dickens, of course, meant Rochester; yet, at the same time, he chose to be obscure on that point, and I took my cue from him. I always thought it was one of his most artistic pieces of work; the vague, dreamy description of the Cathedral in the opening chapter of the book. So definite in one sense, yet so locally vague.

“Very faithfully yours,

“Luke Fildes.

“W. R. Hughes, Esq.”

The College Yard Gate (a) must therefore be regarded as the typical Jasper’s Gatehouse, but, with the usual novelist’s license, some points in all three Gatehouses have been utilized for effect. So we can imagine the three friends in succession going up the “postern stair;” and, further on in the story, we can picture that mysterious “single buffer, Dick Datchery, living on his means,” as a lodger in the “venerable architectural and inconvenient” official dwelling of Mr. Tope, minutely described in the eighteenth chapter of *Edwin Drood*, as “communicating by an upper stair with Mr. Jasper’s,” watching the unsuspecting Jasper as he goes to and from the Cathedral.

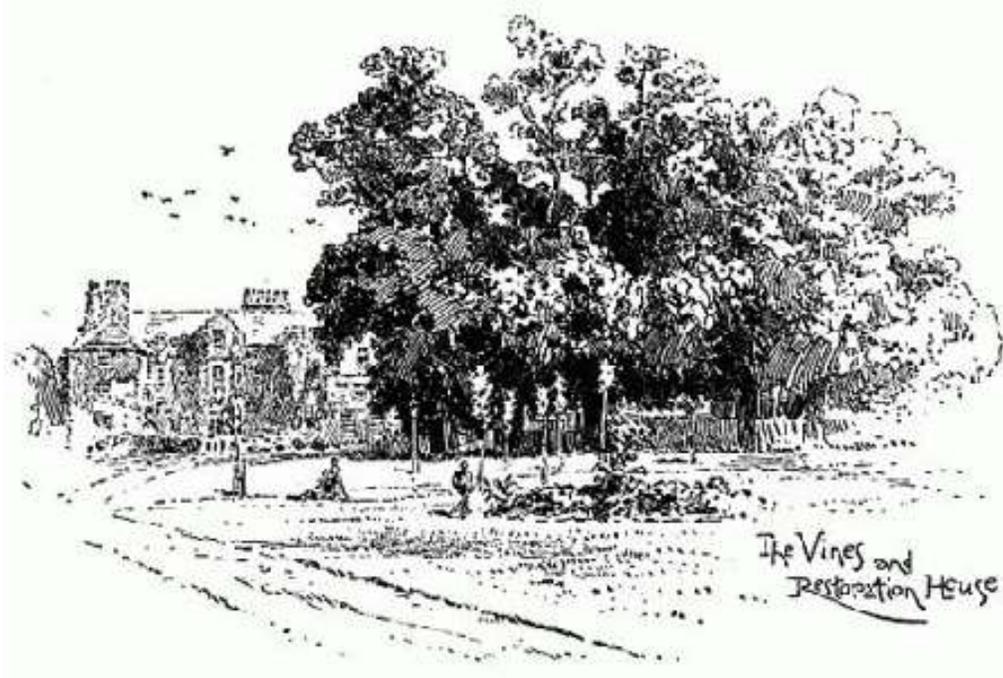
Chapters twelve, fourteen, and twenty-three refer to Jasper’s Gatehouse, and its proximity to the busy hum of human life, in very vivid terms, especially chapter twelve: —

“Among these secluded nooks there is little stir or movement after dark. There is little enough in the high tide of the day, but there is next to none at night. Besides that, the cheerfully frequented High Street lies nearly parallel to the spot (the old Cathedral rising between the two), and is the natural channel in which the Cloisterham traffic flows, a certain awful hush pervades the ancient pile, the cloisters, and the churchyard after dark, which not many people care to encounter. . . . One might fancy that the tide of life was stemmed by Mr. Jasper’s own Gatehouse. The murmur of the tide is heard beyond; but no wave passes the archway, over which his lamp burns red behind the curtain, as if the building were a Lighthouse. . . .

“The red light burns steadily all the evening in the Lighthouse on the margin of the tide of busy life. Softened sounds and hum of traffic pass it, and flow on irregularly into the lonely precincts; but very little else goes by save violent rushes of wind. It comes on to blow a boisterous gale. . . . John Jasper’s lamp is kindled, and his Lighthouse is shining, when Mr. Datchery returns alone towards it. As mariners on a dangerous voyage, approaching an iron-bound coast, may look along the beams of the warning light to the haven lying beyond it that may never be reached, so Mr. Datchery’s wistful gaze is directed to this beacon and beyond. . . .”

The sensation of calm in passing suddenly out of the busy High Street of Rochester into the subdued precincts of the Cathedral, as above described, is very marked and peculiar, and must be experienced to be realized.

Among the many interesting ancient buildings in “the lonely precincts” may be mentioned the old Episcopal Palace of the Bishops of Rochester. My friend Mr. George Payne, F.S.A., Hon. Sec. of the Kent Archæological Society, who now lives there, writes me that: — ”it is impossible to say when it was first built, but it was rebuilt *circa* 1200, the Palace which preceded it having been destroyed by fire. Bishop Fisher was appointed to the See in 1504, and mainly resided at Rochester. The learned prelate here entertained the great Erasmus in 1516, and Cardinal Wolsey in 1527. In 1534 Bishop Fisher left Rochester never to return, being beheaded on Tower Hill, June 22nd, 1535. The front of the Palace has been coated with rough plaster work dusted over with broken tile, but the rear walls are in their original state, being wholly composed of rag, tufa, and here and there Roman tiles. The cellars are of the most massive construction, and many of the rooms are panelled.”

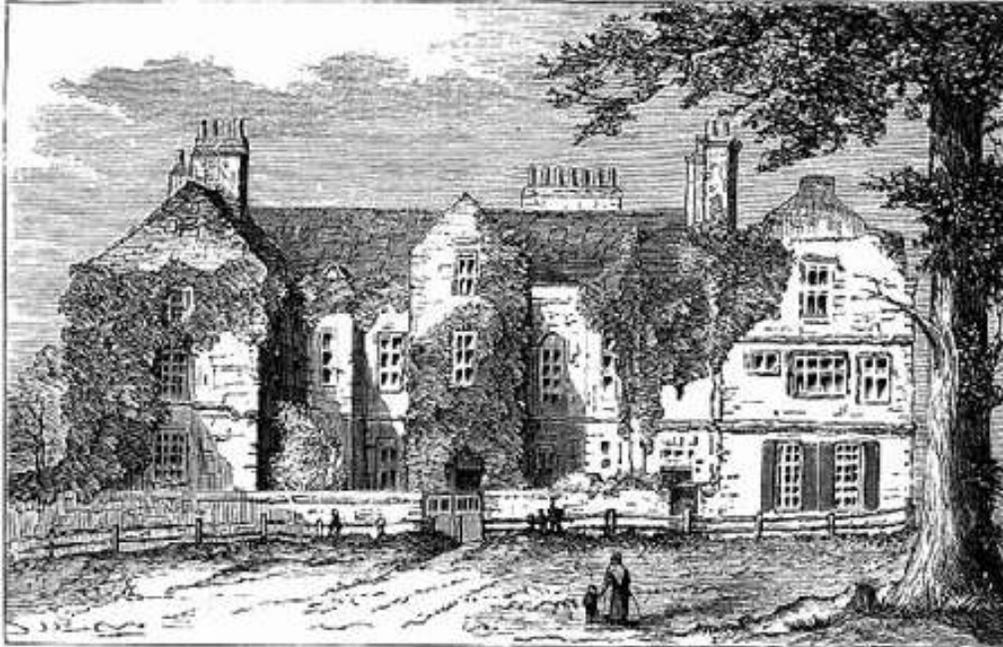


The Monks' Vineyard of *Edwin Drood* exists as “The Vines,” and is one of the “lungs” of Rochester, belonging to the Dean and Chapter, by whom it is liberally leased to the Corporation for a nominal consideration. It was a vineyard, or garden, in the days of the monks, and is now a fine open space, planted with trees, and has good walks and well-trimmed lawns and borders. Remains of the wall of the city, or abbey, previous to the Cathedral, constitute the northern boundary of “The Vines.” There are commodious seats for the public, and it was doubtless on one of these, as represented in

the illustration entitled "Under the Trees," that Edwin Drood and Rosa sat, during that memorable discussion of their position and prospects, which began so childlike and ended so sadly. "Can't you see a happy Future?" For certain, neither of them sees a happy Present, as the gate opens and closes, and one goes in and the other goes away." A fine clump of old elms (seven in number), called "The Seven Sisters," stands at the east end of the Vines, nearly opposite Restoration House, and it was under these trees that the conversation took place.

So curiously exact at times does the description fit in with the places, that we notice opposite Eastgate House the "Lumps of Delight Shop," to which it will be remembered that after the discussion Rosa Bud directed Edwin Drood to take her.

Dickens's last visit to Rochester was on Monday, 6th June, 1870, when he walked over from Gad's Hill Place with his dogs; and he appears to have been noticed by several persons in the Vines, and particularly by Mr. John Sweet, as he stood leaning against the wooden palings near Restoration House, contemplating the beautiful old Manor House. These palings have since been removed, and an iron fence substituted. The object of this visit subsequently became apparent, when it was found that, in those pages of *Edwin Drood* written a few hours before his death, Datchery and the Princess Puffer held that memorable conference there. "They have arrived at the entrance to the Monks' Vineyard; an appropriate remembrance, presenting an exemplary model for imitation, is revived in the woman's mind by the sight of the place," in allusion of course to a present of "three shillings and sixpence" which Edwin Drood gave her Royal Highness on a previous occasion to buy opium.



Restoration House, Rochester, as it appeared in Dickens's time. (From a sketch by an Amateur.)

The extensive promenade called the Esplanade (where in 1889 we saw the Regatta in which, after a series of annual defeats, Rochester maintained its supremacy), on the east side of the river Medway, under the Castle walls, pleasantly approached from the Cathedral Close, is memorable as having been the spot described in the thirteenth chapter where Edwin and Rosa met for the last time, and mutually agreed to terminate their unfortunate and ill-assorted engagement.

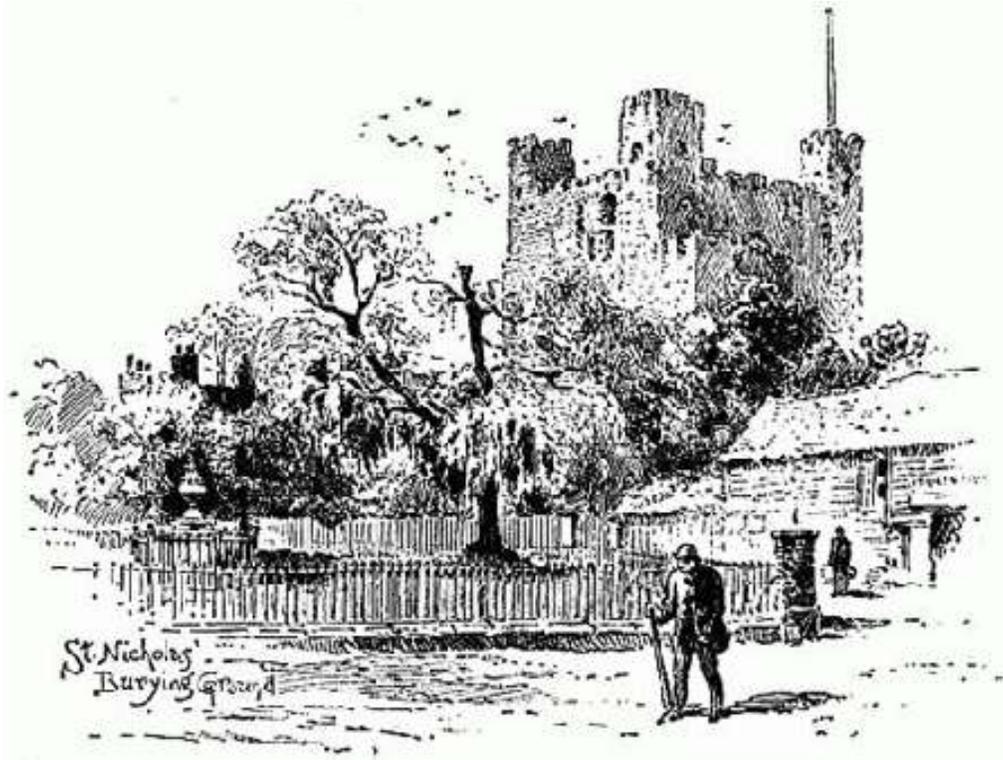
“They walked on by the river. They began to speak of their separate plans. He would quicken his departure from England, and she would remain where she was, at least as long as Helena remained. The poor dear girls should have their disappointment broken to them gently, and, as the first preliminary, Miss Twinkleton should be confided in by Rosa, even in advance of the reappearance of Mr. Grewgious. It should be made clear in all quarters that she and Edwin were the best of friends. There had never been so serene an understanding between them since they were first affianced.”

We are anxious to identify Cloisterham Weir, frequently mentioned in *Edwin Drood*, but more particularly as being the place where Minor Canon Crisparkle found Edwin's watch and shirt-pin. The Weir, we are told in the novel, “is full two miles above the spot to which the young men [Edwin and Neville] had repaired [presumably the Esplanade] to watch the storm.”

There is, however, no Weir nearer than Allington, at which place the tide of the Medway stops, and Allington is a considerable distance from Rochester, probably seven or eight miles. How well the good Minor Canon's propensity for "perpetually pitching himself headforemost into all the deep water in the surrounding country," and his "pilgrimages to Cloisterham Weir in the cold rimy mornings," are brought into requisition to enable him to obtain the watch and pin.

"He threw off his clothes, he plunged into the icy water, and swam for the spot — a corner of the Weir — where something glistened which did not move and come over with the glistening water drops, but remained stationary. . . . He brought the watch to the bank, swam to the Weir again, climbed it, and dived off. He knew every hole and corner of all the depths, and dived and dived and dived, until he could bear the cold no more. His notion was that he would find the body; he only found a shirt-pin sticking in some mud and ooze."

Our failure to identify Cloisterham Weir exhibits another instance where, for the purposes of the story, an imaginary place is introduced. To Mr. William Ball is due the credit for subsequently suggesting that Snodland Brook and Snodland Weir may have possibly been in Dickens's mind in originating Cloisterham Weir; so we tramped over to inspect them. Near the village, the brook (or river, for it is of respectable width) is turbid and shallow, but higher up — a mile or so — we found it clearer and deeper, and we heard from some labourers, whom we saw regaling themselves by the side of a hayrick, that a local gentleman had some years ago been in the habit of bathing in the stream all the year round.



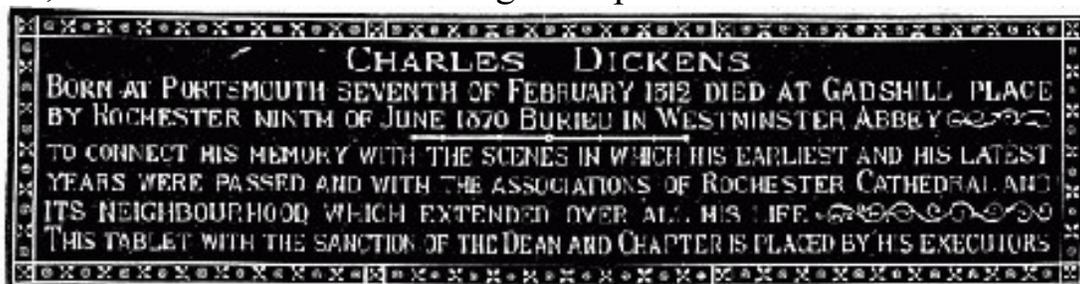
The ancient Church of St. Nicholas (1423) is on the north side of the Cathedral. In front of it is a narrow strip of ground, enclosed with iron railings, formerly the burial-ground of the Church, but now disused, referred to in *Edwin Drood* as “a fragment of a burial-ground in which an unhappy sheep was grazing.” In this enclosure, which is neatly kept, there are a weeping willow at each end, and in the centre an exquisite specimen of the catalpa tree (*Catalpa syringifolia*), the floral ornament of the Cathedral precincts. At the time of our visit it is in perfect condition, the large cordate bright green leaves, and the massive trusses of labiate flowers of white, yellow, and purple colours (not unlike those of the *Impatiens noli-me-tangere* balsam, only handsomer) are worth walking miles to see. It is a North American plant, and in its native country sometimes grows to a height of forty feet. The specimen here described is about twenty feet high, and was planted about fifteen years ago.

On the opposite side of the way is the old cemetery of St. Nicholas' Church, originally part of the Castle moat, but which was converted to its present purpose about half a century ago. This quiet resting-place of the dead has intense interest for the lover of Dickens, as it was here that he desired to be buried; and his family would certainly have carried his wishes into effect, but that the place had been closed for years and no further

interments were allowed. Pending other arrangements at Shorne, an admirable suggestion was made in the *Times*, which speedily found favour with the nation in its great affection for him, namely, that he should rest in Westminster Abbey; and, the Dean of Westminster promptly and wisely responding to the suggestion, it was at once carried into effect.

As we pause, and look again and again at the sheltered nook in the old cemetery sanctified by his memory, and adorned by rich evergreens and other trees, among which the weeping willow and the almond are conspicuous, we quite understand and sympathize with Dickens's love for such a calm and secluded spot.

The Dean and Chapter of Rochester, it will be recollected, were anxious that the great novelist's remains should be placed in or near their Cathedral, and that wish might have been gratified, except, as just explained, that the public decreed otherwise. However, they sanctioned the erection, by the executors, of a brass, which enriches the wall of the south transept of the edifice, and which has the following inscription: —



The unfinished novel of *Edwin Drood*, which, as we have seen, is so inseparably connected with Rochester Cathedral, has been *finished* by at least half a dozen authors, probably to their own satisfaction; but it is a hard matter to the reader to struggle through any one of them. However, there is a little *brochure* in this direction which we feel may here be appropriately noticed. It is called, *Watched by the Dead: A Loving Study of Charles Dickens's half-told Tale*, 1887, and was written by R. A. Proctor, F.R.A.S., the Astronomer, whose untimely death from fever in America was announced after our return from our week's tramp. The author had evidently studied the matter both lovingly and attentively, and starts with the assumption that it is an example of what he calls "Dickens's favourite theme," which more than any other had a fascination for him, and was apparently regarded by him as likely to be most potent in its influence on others. It was that of "a wrong-doer watched at every turn by one of whom

he has no suspicion, for whom he even entertains a feeling of contempt,” and Mr. Proctor has certainly evolved a very suggestive and not improbable conclusion to the story. Instances of Dickens’s favourite theme are adduced from *Barnaby Rudge*, where Haredale, unsuspected, steadily waits and watches for Rudge, till, after more than twenty years, “At last! at last!” he cries, as he captures his brother’s murderer on the very spot where the murder had been committed; from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, where Sampson and Sally Brass are watched by the Marchioness — their powerless victim as they supposed, and by whom their detection is brought about; from *Nicholas Nickleby*, where Ralph Nickleby is watched by Brooker; and from *Dombey and Son*, where Dombey is watched by Carker, and he in turn is watched by good Mrs. Brown and her unhappy daughter. Instances of this kind also appear in *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, and *Little Dorrit*.

Reasoning from similar data, Mr. Proctor concludes that Jasper was watched by Edwin Drood in the person of Datchery, and thus he was to have been tracked remorselessly “to his death by the man whom he supposed he had slain.” The *dénouement* as regards the other characters seems also not improbable. Rosa Bud was to have married Lieutenant Tartar, and Crisparkle, Helena Landless. Neville was to have died, but not before he had learned to understand the change which Edwin’s character had undergone. As to Edwin Drood himself, “purified by trial, strengthened though saddened by his love for Rosa,” Edwin would have been one of those characters Dickens loved to draw — a character entirely changed from a once careless, almost trivial self, to depth and earnestness. “All were to join in changing the ways of dear old Grewgious from the sadness and loneliness of the earlier scenes” in the story, “to the warmth and light of that kindly domestic life for which, angular though he thought himself, his true and genial nature fitted him so thoroughly.” This attempt to solve *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* will amply repay perusal. It was probably one of the last works of this very able and versatile author.

It is right to state that Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A., the illustrator of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, with whom we have had the pleasure of an interview, entirely rejects this theory. He does not favour the idea that Datchery is Edwin Drood; his opinion is that the ingenuous and kind-hearted Edwin, had he been living, would never have allowed his friend Neville to continue so long under the grave suspicion of murder. Nay more:

he is convinced that Dickens intended that Edwin Drood should be killed by his uncle; and this opinion is supported by the fact of the introduction of a "large black scarf of strong close-woven silk," which Jasper wears for the first time in the fourteenth chapter of the story, and which was likely to have been the means of death, *i. e.* by strangulation. Mr. Fildes said that Dickens seemed much surprised when he called his attention to this change of dress — very noticeable and embarrassing to an artist who had studied the character — and appeared as though he had unintentionally disclosed the secret. He further stated that it was Dickens's intention to take him to a condemned cell in Maidstone or some other gaol, in order "that he might make a drawing," "and," said Dickens, "do something better than Cruikshank;" in allusion, of course, to the famous drawing of "Fagin in the condemned cell." "Surely this," remarked our informant, "points to our witnessing the condemned culprit Jasper in his cell before he met his fate."

Mr. Fildes spoke with enthusiasm of the very great kindness and consideration which he received from Dickens, and the pains he took to introduce his young friend to the visitors at Gad's Hill, and in London at Hyde Park Place, who were his seniors. He was under an engagement to visit Dickens, — had his portmanteau packed in fact, almost ready to start on his journey — when he saw to his amazement the announcement of his death in the newspapers — and it was a very great shock to him. Not long afterwards, Mr. Fildes said, the family, with much kind thoughtfulness, renewed the invitation to him to stay a few days at Gad's Hill Place, and during that time he made the imperishable drawing of "The Empty Chair."

Bearing in mind the above circumstances coming from so high an authority, a missing link has been supplied, but — *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* is still unsolved!

CHAPTER VI.

RICHARD WATTS'S CHARITY, ROCHESTER.

“Strictly speaking, there were only *six* Poor Travellers; but being a Traveller myself, though an idle one, and being withal as poor as I hope to be, I brought the number up to seven. . . . I, for one, am so divided this night between fact and fiction, that I scarce know which is which.” — *The Seven Poor Travellers*.

The most unique Charity ever described in fiction, or founded on fact, well deserves a few pages to be devoted to a record of its interesting history and present position. We therefore occupy a short time in examining it on Thursday morning, before our visit to the Marshes.



Except for *The Seven Poor Travellers*, which was the title of the Christmas Number of *Household Words* issued in 1854, it is possible that few beyond “the ancient city” would ever have heard, or indeed have cared to hear, anything about the Worshipful Master Richard Watts or his famous

Charity; now, as all the world knows, it is a veritable “household word” to readers and admirers of Dickens. In the narrative, he, as the first Traveller, is supposed to have visited Rochester, and passed the evening with the six Poor Travellers, and thus to have made the seventh. After hearing the story of the Charity “from the decent body of a wholesome matronly presence” (this was Mrs. Cackett, a former matron, who is said to have been very much astonished at her appearance in the drama of *The Seven Poor Travellers*, which she subsequently witnessed at the Rochester Theatre), he obtains permission to treat the Travellers to a hot supper. The inn at which the first Traveller stayed was doubtless our old acquaintance, the Bull, “where the window of his adjoining bedroom looked down into the Inn yard, just where the lights of the kitchen redden a massive fragment of the Castle wall.” Here was brewed the “wassail” contained in the “brown beauty,” the “turkey” and “beef” roasted, and the “plum-pudding” boiled. As Mr. Robert Langton says, “the account of the treat to the poor Travellers is of course wholly fictitious, although it is accepted as sober truth by many people, both in Rochester and elsewhere.”

It is not our purpose to criticize the seven pretty stories which make up this Christmas Number, part of the first of which only relates to Watts’s Charity; but we will venture to affirm that the concluding portion of that story, referring to “Richard Doubledick,” “who was a Poor Traveller with not a farthing in his pocket, and who came limping down on foot to this town of Chatham,” is one of the most touching instances of Christian forgiveness ever recorded, and hardened indeed must he be who reads it with dry eyes.

To what extent Dickens himself was affected by this beautiful tale, is shown by the following extract from a letter addressed by him, on 22nd December, 1854, to the late Mr. Arthur Ryland, formerly Mayor of Birmingham, now treasured by his widow, Mrs. Arthur Ryland, who kindly allowed a copy to be taken: —

“What you write with so much heartiness of my first Poor Traveller is quite delightful to me. The idea of that little story obtained such strong possession of me when it came into my head, that it cost me more time and tears than most people would consider likely. The response it meets with is payment for anything.”

It is also interesting to record that many years afterwards Mr. Ryland read this story at one of the Christmas gatherings of the Birmingham and

Midland Institute, and subsequently received from an unknown correspondent — Sergeant A — — , of the 106th Light Infantry, then stationed at Umballa, East Indies, who had noticed an account of the reading in a newspaper — a letter under date of 15th July, 1870, asking to be favoured with a copy of the story; “for,” said the writer, “we have just started a Penny Reading Society (if I may call it so), and I’m sure that story would be the means of reclaiming many men from their vices — I mean drinking and low company.” The story was of course sent, and Mr. Ryland subsequently communicated the circumstances to the present Mr. Charles Dickens, who replied — ”I wish my dear father could have seen the sergeant’s letter; it would have pleased him, I am sure.”

As we proceed along the High Street, on the north side towards Chatham, a walk of only a few yards from the Bull brings us to a curious Tudor stone-built house of two stories, with latticed windows and three-pointed gables. Under a lamp in the centre, which is over the “quaint old door” — the door-sill itself being (as is usual with some old houses) a little below the street, so that we drop by a step or two into the entrance-hall — is a tablet containing the following inscription: —

(CENTRE.)

Richard Watts, Esquire,
by his Will dated 22nd August, 1579,
founded this Charity
for Six Poor Travellers,
who, not being Rogues or Proctors,
May receive gratis for one Night
Lodging, Entertainment,
and Fourpence each.

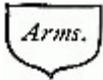
“In testimony of his munificence, in honour of his memory, and inducement to his example, the Charitable Trustees of this City and Borough have caused this stone to be renewed and inscribed, a.d. 1865.”

And on the left and right-hand sides respectively of the preceding appear smaller tablets, with the following inscriptions: —

(LEFT.)

The Charitable Trustees
of this City and
Borough appointed

(RIGHT.)

Pagitt  Somers
Thomas Pagitt,

by the Lord High
Chancellor,
16 December, 1836,
are to see
this Charity
executed.

second husband of
Mary, Daughter of
Thomas Somers
of Halstow,
Widow of Richard Watts,
Deceased a.d. 1599.

We enter the old-fashioned little parlour, or office, on the left-hand side, “warm in winter and cool in summer. It has a look of homely welcome and soothing rest. It has a remarkably cosy fireside, the very blink of which, gleaming out into the street upon a winter’s night, is enough to warm all Rochester’s heart.” The matron receives us politely, and shows us two large books of foolscap size with ruled columns, one of these containing a record of the visitors to the Charity, and the other a list of the recipients thereof. A little pleasantry is caused by one of us entering his name in the wrong book, but this mistake is promptly rectified by the matron, who informs us that we are scarcely objects for relief as “Poor Travellers.” She then kindly repeats to us the two legends respecting the origin of the Charity, the first of which is tolerably well known, but the other is less familiar. Before recording these, it may be well to give an extract from the will of Master Richard Watts (a very curious and lengthy document), which was industriously hunted up by the late Mr. Charles Bullard, author of the *Romance of Rochester*, and by him contributed to the *Rochester and Chatham Journal*, of which it fills a whole column.

The will (dated, as previously stated, August 22nd, 1579) directs, *inter alia*, that “First the Alms-house already erected and standing beside the Markett Crosse, within the City of Rochester aforesaid, which Almshouses my Will Purpose and Desire is that there be reedified added and provided with such Roomes as be there already provided Six Severall Roomes with Chimneys for the Comfort placeing and abideing of the Poore within the said City, and alsoe to be made apt and convenient places therein for Six good Matrices or Flock Bedds and other good and sufficient Furniture to harbour or lodge in poore Travellers or Wayfareing Men being noe Common Rogues nor Proctors, and they the said Wayfareing Men to harbour and lodge therein noe longer than one Night unlesse Sicknes be the farther Cause thereof and those poore Folkes there dwelling shall keepe the House sweete make the Bedds see to the Furniture keepe the same sweete and courteously intreate the said poore Travellers and to every of the

said poore Travellers att their first comeing in to have fourpence and they shall warme them at the Fire of the Residents within the said House if Need be.”

The reason for the exception in the testator’s will as regards rogues is sufficiently obvious, and therefore all the point of this singular bequest lies in the word “Proctors.” Who were they? One of the legends has it that the obsolete word “Proctors” referred to certain sturdy mendicants who swarmed in the south of England, and went about extracting money from the charitable public under the pretence of collecting “Peter’s Pence” for the Pope; or, as the compiler of Murray’s *Handbook to the County of Kent* suggests, “were probably the bearers of licences to collect alms for hospitals,” etc. Possibly the worthy Master Richard Watts objected to the levying of this blackmail; or he may in his walks have been subjected to the proctors’ importunities, and consequently in his will rigorously debarred them in all futurity from any share in his Charity.

The other legend is that Master Watts, being grievously sick and sore to die, sent for his lawyer, who in those days acted as proctor as well, — Steerforth in *David Copperfield* calls the proctor “a monkish kind of attorney,” — and bade him prepare his will according to certain instructions. The will was made, but not in the manner directed, and subsequently, on the testator regaining his health, he discovered the fraud which the crafty lawyer or proctor had tried to perpetrate — which was, in fact, to make himself the sole legatee. In his just indignation he made another will, and in it for ever excluded the fraternity of proctors from benefiting thereby. The reader is at liberty to accept whichever of the two legends he chooses. It is right to say that Mr. Roach Smith utterly rejects the second story. He says proctors were simply rogues, although some of them may have been licensed.

The following is a foot-note to Fisher’s *History and Antiquities of Rochester and its Environs*, MDCCLXXII.



“It is generally thought that the reason of Mr. Watts’s excluding proctors from the benefit of the Charity, was that a proctor had been employed to make his will, whereby he had given all the estates to himself; but I am inclined to believe that the word proctor is derived from procurator, who was an itinerant priest, and had dispensations from the Pope to absolve the subjects of this realm from the oath of allegiance to Queen Elizabeth, in whose reign there were many such priests.”

When the identity of Miss Adelaide Anne Procter, the gifted author of the pure and pathetic *Legends and Lyrics* (who had been an anonymous contributor to *Household Words* for some time under the *nom de plume* of “Mary Berwick”), became known to Charles Dickens, he sent her a charming and kindly letter of congratulation and appreciation, dated 17th December, 1854 (just at the time that the Christmas stories of the *Seven Poor Travellers* were published), which thus concludes: —

“You have given me so much pleasure, and have made me shed so many tears, that I can only think of you now in association with the sentiment and grace of your verses. Pray accept the blessing and forgiveness of Richard Watts, *though I am afraid you come under both his conditions of exclusion.*”

Mark Driffield



Mark Driffield



We are informed that the original bequest of the testator was only £36 16s. 8d. per annum, being the rent of land; but now, owing to the improved letting of the land, for building and other purposes, the Revenues of the Charity are upwards of £4,000 per annum. The “fourpence” of the foundation would be equal to some three shillings and fourpence of our money. The trustees, about sixteen in number, — one of whom has filled the office for fifty years — have very wisely and prudently obtained an extension of their powers; and the Court of Chancery have twice (in 1855 and 1886) sanctioned schemes for the administration of the funds, which have largely benefited Rochester in many ways. As witness of this, there are a series of excellent almshouses on the Maidstone Road (which cost about £6,000), with appropriate entrance-gates and gardens, endowed for the support and maintenance of townsmen and townswomen. We subsequently go into several of the rooms, all beautifully clean, and in most cases tastefully decorated by the inmates with a few pictures, prints, and flowers, and find that the present occupants are ten almsmen and six women. We have a chat with one of the almsmen, — a hearty old man, once the beadle of St. Margaret’s Church, — who rejoices in the name of Peter Weller, and whom we find to be well up in his *Pickwick*. There are a resident head-nurse and three other resident nurses in the establishment, who occasionally

go out to nurse the sick in the city. In addition to these almshouses, a handsome new hospital has been erected in the New Road, and partly endowed (£1,000 a year) out of the funds. Contributions are also made annually from the same source towards the support of the Public Baths, and for apprenticing deserving lads. Such is the development of this remarkable Charity.

The matron calls our attention to many interesting names in the Visitors' book. Under date of the 11th May, 1854, are the signatures, in good bold writing, of Charles Dickens and Mark Lemon; and in subsequent entries, extending over many years, appear the names of Wilkie Collins, W. H. Wills, W. G. Wills, Walter Besant, Thomas Adolphus Trollope, J. Henry Shorthouse, Augustus J. C. Hare, and other well-known *littérateurs*. As usual, there are also numerous names of Americans, including those of Miss Mary Anderson and party.

There are many curious remarks recorded in this book, such as an entry dated 26th June, 1857, which says: — "Tossed by, and out of the Bull with a crumpled horn, as no one would lend me five shillings, therefore obliged to solicit the benefit of this excellent charity." There is an admirable testimony in Latin, by the late Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Wordsworth, to the usefulness of the institution, which, dated 23rd August, 1883, is as follows: — "*Esto perpetua obstantibus Caritatis Commissionariis.*" His Lordship's remark was probably in allusion to the fact that the Charity Commissioners were (as we were afterwards informed) inclined, some time ago, to abolish the Charity, but this proceeding was stoutly and successfully resisted by the trustees. But the most gratifying records which we see in the book consist of several entries by recipients of the Charity themselves, who have subsequently come again after prosperous times in the capacity of visitors, and thus testified to the benefits received. Here is one: — "Having once enjoyed the Charity, I wish it a long life."



A clerk has the responsibility of making a careful selection of six from the number of applicants, and this appears to be no light task, inasmuch as the “prescribed number of Poor Travellers are forthcoming every night from year’s end to year’s end,” and sometimes amount to fifty in a day. In selecting the persons to be admitted, care is taken that, unless under special circumstances, the same person be not admitted for more than one night, and in no case for more than two consecutive nights. A glance over the register shows that the names include almost all trades and occupations; and, as regards the fact of a great many coming from Kentish towns, Dartford, Greenwich, Canterbury, Maidstone, etc., we are informed, in reply to our enquiry, that this is no criterion of the real residence, because the place where the traveller last lodged is always entered. The matron told us a story of a clever attempt to obtain admission by a Poor Traveller “with a tin whistle and very gentlemanly hands,” who subsequently turned out to be a reporter from the *Echo*, in which paper there afterwards appeared an account of the Charity, called *On Tramp by an Amateur*.



We are shown over the premises — scrupulously neat and clean — and observe that there are excellent lavatories with foot-pans, and a pair of slippers provided for each recipient. We afterwards see the six Poor Travellers who have had their supper, and are comfortably smoking their pipes in a snug room, and we have a pleasant and interesting chat with them. They are much above the condition of ordinary tramps, and are lodged in six separate bedrooms, or “dormitories” which open out of a gallery at the back part of the building, a very curious structure, remaining just as it was in the days of Queen Elizabeth. For supper, each man is allowed half a pound of cooked meat, a pound of bread, and half-a-pint of porter, and receives fourpence in money on leaving. It is right to state that we heard complaints in the city relating to the evil effects of a number of poor travellers being attracted to the Charity daily, when but a few can obtain relief.



Satis House.

Respecting the Worshipful Master Richard Watts himself very little is known, except that he was appointed by Queen Elizabeth in 1560 to be the surveyor and clerk of the works for the building of Upnor Castle; that he was paymaster to the Wardens of Rochester Bridge for some years previously; that he was recorder of Rochester, and represented the city in Parliament from 1563 to 1571, and that he resided at “Satis House,” which stood on the site of the modern residence bearing the same name, now occupied by Mrs. Booth, a little to the south of the Cathedral, but which must not, however, be confounded with the Satis House of *Great Expectations*, this latter, as has been previously explained, being identical with Restoration House, in Crow Lane. When Queen Elizabeth visited Rochester in 1573, Watts had the honour of entertaining Her Majesty there, on the last day of her residence in “the ancient city”; and to his expressions of regret at having no better accommodation to offer, the Queen was pleased generously to reply, “Satis,” by which name the house has ever since been known. Estella, in *Great Expectations*, gives another view of the origin of the name. She says: — “Its other name was Satis; which is Greek, or Latin, or Hebrew, or all three — or all one to me — for enough: but it meant more than it said. It meant, when it was given, that whoever had this house, could want nothing else. They must have been easily satisfied in those days, I should think.” Archbishop Longley was born there in 1794.



Watts's Monument in Rochester Cathedral.

Over the Memorial Brass of Charles Dickens.

There is a monument to the proctor-hating philanthropist on the wall of the south transept of the Cathedral over the brass to Charles Dickens, surmounted by a very curious painted marble half-figure effigy with flowing beard, of "worthy Master Richard starting out of it, like a ship's figurehead." Underneath is the following epitaph: —

Sacred to the Memory of
Richard Watts, Esq.,
 a principal Benefactor to this City,
 who departed this life Sept. 10, 1579, at
 his Mansion house on Bully Hill, called Satis
 (so named by Q. Elizabeth of glorious memory),
 and lies interr'd near this place, as by his Will doth
 plainly appear. By which Will, dated Aug. 22, and
 proved Sep. 25, 1579, he founded an Almshouse
 for the relief of poor people and for the reception
 of six poor Travelers every night, and for
 employing the poor of this City.

* * * * *

The Mayor and Citizens of this City,
in testimony of their Gratitude and his Merit,
have erected this Monument, a.d. 1736.
Richard Watts, Esq.,
then Mayor.

Over and over again, in the various roads and lanes which we traverse, in the county famous for “apples, cherries, hops, and women,” we have ample opportunities of verifying the experience of Dickens, and indeed of many other observers (including David Copperfield, who met numbers of “ferocious-looking ruffians”), as to the prevalence of tramps, not all of whom appear eligible as recipients of Watts’s Charity! Our fraternity seems to be ubiquitous, and had we the purse of Fortunatus, it would hardly suffice to satisfy their requirements. What a wonderfully thoughtful, descriptive, and exhaustive chapter is that on “Tramps” in *The Uncommercial Traveller!* We believe Rochester and Strood Hill must have been in Dickens’s mind when he penned it. Every species and every variety of tramp is herein described, — The surly Tramp, The slinking Tramp, The well-spoken young-man Tramp, The John Anderson Tramp, Squire Pouncerby’s Tramp, The show Tramp, The educated Tramp, The tramping Soldier, The tramping Sailor, The Tramp handicraft man, Clock-mending Tramps, Harvest Tramps, Hopping Tramps and Spectator Tramps — but perhaps the most amusing of all is the following: —

“The young fellows who trudge along barefoot, five or six together, their boots slung over their shoulders, their shabby bundles under their arms, their sticks newly cut from some roadside wood, are not eminently prepossessing, but are much less objectionable. There is a tramp-fellowship among them. They pick one another up at resting stations, and go on in companies. They always go at a fast swing — though they generally limp too — and there is invariably one of the company who has much ado to keep up with the rest. They generally talk about horses, and any other means of locomotion than walking: or, one of the company relates some recent experiences of the road — which are always disputes and difficulties. As for example. So as I’m a standing at the pump in the market, blest if there don’t come up a Beadle, and he ses, ‘Mustn’t stand here,’ he ses. ‘Why not?’ I ses. ‘No beggars allowed in this town,’ he ses. ‘Who’s a

beggar?' I ses. 'You are,' he ses. 'Who ever see *me* beg? Did *you*?' I ses. 'Then you're a tramp,' he ses. 'I'd rather be that than a Beadle,' I ses. (The company express great approval.) 'Would you?' he ses to me. 'Yes, I would,' I ses to him. 'Well,' he ses, 'anyhow, get out of this town.' 'Why, blow your little town!' I ses, 'who wants to be in it? Wot does your dirty little town mean by comin' and stickin' itself in the road to anywhere? Why don't you get a shovel and a barrer, and clear your town out o' people's way?' (The company expressing the highest approval and laughing aloud, they all go down the hill.)"

It is worthy of consideration, and it is probably more than a mere coincidence, to observe that some of the reforms which have been effected in the management of the now munificent revenues of Richard Watts's Charity were instigated as a sequence to the appearance of Dickens's imperishable stories, published under the title of *The Seven Poor Travellers*. The Rev. Robert Whiston, with whom we chatted on the subject, is of opinion that the late Lord Brougham is entitled to the credit for reforms in this and other charities.

CHAPTER VII.

AN AFTERNOON AT GAD'S HILL PLACE.

“It was just large enough, and no more; was as pretty within as it was without, and was perfectly arranged and comfortable.” — *Little Dorrit*.

“This has been a happy home. . . . I love it. . . .” — *The Cricket on the Hearth*.

A never-to-be-forgotten day was Saturday, the twenty-fifth of August, 1888, a day remarkable, as were many of the closing days of the summer of that year, for its bright, sunny, and cheerful nature. The sky was a deep blue — usually described as an Italian sky — broken only by a few fleecy, cumulus clouds, which served to bring out more clearly the rich colour of the background. There was a fine bracing air coming from the north-west, for which the county of Kent is famous. Truly an enjoyable day for a holiday! and one that Dickens himself would have loved to describe. So after a desultory stroll about the streets of Rochester, one of many delightful strolls, we make our first outward tramp, and that of course to Gad's Hill. By the way, much attention has been devoted to the consideration of the derivation of the name, “Gad's Hill.” It is no doubt a corruption of “God's Hill,” of which there are two so-called places in the county, and there is also a veritable “God's Hill” a little further south, in the Isle of Wight.



Rochester from Strood Hill.

Crossing Rochester Bridge, we enter the busy town of Strood, pass through its long thoroughfare, go up the Dover Road, — which was the ancient Roman military road afterwards called Watling Street, until a little above Strood it turned slightly to the left, passing through what is now Cobham Park, — and leave the windmill on Broomhill to the right. The ground rises gently, the chalk formation being exposed here and there in disused pits. A portion of the road higher up is cut through the Thanet sands, which rest on the chalk. Again and again we stop, and turn to admire the winding valley of the Medway. As we get more into the country and leave the town behind, we find the roadsides still decked with summer flowers, notably the fine dark blue Canterbury bell — the nettle-leaved *Campanula* (*Campanula Trachelium*) — and the exquisite light-blue chicory (*Cichorium Intybus*); but the flowers of the latter are so evanescent that, when gathered, they fade in an hour or two. This beautiful starlike-blossomed plant is abundant in many parts of Kent. We pass on the right the pretty high-standing grounds of Mr. Hulkes at the “Little Hermitage,” and notice the obelisk further to the right on still higher land, erected about fifty years ago to the memory of Charles Larkin (a name very suggestive of “the eldest Miss Larkins”) of Rochester, — ”a parish orator and borough Hampden” — by his grateful fellow-citizens.

A walk of less than three miles brings us to the “Sir John Falstaff” — ”a delightfully old-fashioned roadside inn of the coaching days, which stands on the north side of the road a little below ‘Gad’s Hill Place,’ and which no man possessed of a penny was ever known to pass in warm weather.”

Mr. Kitton relates in *Dickensiana* the following amusing story of a former waiter at the “Falstaff”: —

“A few days after Dickens’s death, an Englishman, deeply grieved at the event, made a sort of pilgrimage to Gad’s Hill — to the home of the great novelist. He went into the famous ‘Sir John Falstaff Inn’ near at hand, and in the effusiveness of his honest emotions, he could not avoid taking the country waiter into his confidence.

“‘A great loss this of Mr. Dickens,’ said the pilgrim.

“‘A very great loss to us, sir,’ replied the waiter, shaking his head; ‘he had all his ale sent in from this house!’”

One of the two lime-trees only remains, but the well and bucket — as recorded by the *Uncommercial Traveller* in the chapter on “Tramps” — are

there still, surrounded by a protective fence.



The “Sir

John Falstaff” Inn, Gad’s Hill.

We have but little time to notice the “Falstaff,” for our admiring gaze is presently fixed on Gad’s Hill Place itself, the house in which Dickens resided happily — albeit trouble came to him as to most men — from the year 1856 till his death in 1870. Everybody knows the story of how, as a little boy, he cherished the idea of one day living in this house, and how that idea was gratified in after-life. It is from the *Uncommercial Traveller*, in the chapter on “Travelling Abroad,” and the repetition is never stale. He says:

—
“So smooth was the old high road, and so fresh were the horses, and so fast went I, that it was midway between Gravesend and Rochester, and the widening river was bearing the ships, white-sailed or black-smoked, out to sea, when I noticed by the wayside a very queer small boy.

““Holloa!’ said I to the very queer small boy, ‘where do you live?’

““At Chatham,’ says he.

““What do you do there?’ says I.

““I go to school,’ says he.

“I took him up in a moment, and we went on. Presently, the very queer small boy says, ‘This is Gad’s Hill we are coming to, where Falstaff went out to rob those travellers, and ran away.’

““You know something about Falstaff, eh?’ said I.

““All about him,’ said the very queer small boy. ‘I am old (I am nine), and I read all sorts of books. But *do* let us stop at the top of the hill, and

look at the house there, if you please!’

“‘You admire that house?’ said I.

“‘Bless you, sir,’ said the very queer small boy, ‘when I was not more than half as old as nine, it used to be a treat for me to be brought to look at it. And now, I am nine, I come by myself to look at it. And ever since I can recollect, my father, seeing me so fond of it, has often said to me, ‘If you were to be very persevering, and were to work hard, you might some day come to live in it.’ Though that’s impossible!’ said the very queer small boy, drawing a low breath, and now staring at the house out of window with all his might.

“I was rather amazed to be told this by the very queer small boy; for that house happens to be *my* house, and I have reason to believe that what he said was true.”



Gadshill Place Gadshill

Place

Mrs. Lynn Linton, the celebrated novelist, who resided at Gad’s Hill as a child, has very kindly given us her personal recollections of it sixty years ago, and of the interesting circumstances under which Charles Dickens subsequently purchased the property; — which will be found at the end of this chapter.

Before seeking permission to enter the grounds of Gad’s Hill Place, which are surrounded by a high wall, and screened externally by a row of

well-topped lime-trees, we retrace our steps for a few minutes, in order to refresh ourselves with a homely luncheon, and what Mr. Richard Swiveller would call a “modest quencher,” at the Sir John Falstaff. It may be certain that not much time is consumed in this operation. We then take a good look at the remarkable house opposite, the object of our pilgrimage, which has been made well known by countless photographs and engravings. It is a comfortable, but a not very attractive-looking red-brick house of two stories, with porch at entrance, partly covered with ivy. All the front windows, with the exception of the central ones, are bayed, and there are dormer windows in the roof, which is surmounted by a bell-turret and vane. What a strange fascination it has for admirers of Dickens when seen for the first time! According to Forster, in his *Life* of the novelist, the house was built in 1780 by a well-known local character named James Stevens, who rose to a good position. He was the father-in-law of the late Professor Henslow, the Botanist, of Cambridge. Dickens paid for it the sum of £1,790, and the purchase was completed on Friday, 14th March, 1856. The present owner is Major Austin F. Budden, of the 12th Kent Artillery Volunteers, who, we find, in the course of subsequent conversation, had also done good municipal service, having filled the office of Mayor of Rochester for two years, — from 1879 to 1881, — and that he was elected at the early age of twenty-eight.

We ring the bell at the gate which shuts the house out from view, and are promptly answered by a pleasant-speaking housemaid, who takes our cards on a salver, and ushers us into the library. We are requested to enter our names in the visitors’ book, and this is done with alacrity. We are under the impression that we shall only be allowed to see the hall and study, a privilege allowed to any visitor on presentation of a card; but fortunately for us the courteous owner appears, and says that, as he has half an hour to spare, he will show us entirely over the house. He is better than his word, and we, delighted with the prospect, commence our inspection of the late home of the great novelist with feelings of singular pleasure, which are altogether a new sensation. Do any readers remember, when perusing the *Waverley* novels in their youth, a certain longing (as the height of their ambition, possibly gratified in after-life) to see Abbotsford, the home of the “Wizard of the North”? *That* is a feeling akin to the one which possesses us on the present occasion, a feeling of veneration almost amounting to awe as we recall, and seem to realize, not only the presence of Charles Dickens

himself, but of the many eminent literary, artistic, and histrionic characters — his contemporaries — who assembled here, and shared the hospitality of the distinguished owner. “Dickens penetrates here — where does not his genial sunshine penetrate?”

Turning over the leaves of the visitors’ book, Major Budden calls our attention to the signatures of Americans, who constitute by far the majority of visitors. Among the more recent appears the name of that accomplished actress, Miss Mary Anderson — herself a great admirer of Charles Dickens — who came accompanied by a party of friends. We also found her name, with the same party, in the visitors’ book at Richard Watts’s Charity in Rochester. Major Budden spoke also of the great enthusiasm always exhibited by our American friends in regard to Dickens, some of whom had told him more than once that it was the custom to instruct their children in a knowledge of his works: they read them, in fact, in the schools.

The library, or study, is a very cosy little room, made famous by Mr. Luke Fildes’s picture of “The Empty Chair.” It is situated on the west side of the porch, looking to the front, with the shrubbery in the distance; and among the most conspicuous objects contained in it are the curious counterfeit book-backs devised by Dickens and his friends, and arranged as shelves to fit the door of the room. They number nearly eighty, and a selection is given below of a few of the quaintest titles, viz.: —

The Quarrelly Review. 4 vols.

King Henry the Eighth’s Evidences of Christianity. 5 vols.

Noah’s Arkitecture. 2 vols.



Chickweed.

Groundsel (by the Author of Chickweed).

Cockatoo on Perch.

History of a Short Chancery Suit. 21 vols.

Cats' Lives. 9 vols.

Hansard's Guide to Refreshing Sleep (many volumes).

The Wisdom of our Ancestors — I. Ignorance. II. Superstition. III. The Block. IV. The Stake. V. The Rack. VI. Dirt. VII. Disease.

Several of the titles were used for a similar purpose at Tavistock House, London — Dickens's former residence.

We cannot help, as we sit down quietly for a few minutes, wondering how much of *Little Dorrit*, *Hunted Down*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, *The Uncommercial Traveller*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (which were all issued between 1856 and 1870) was written in this famous room, to say nothing of those heaps of exquisite letters which so helped, cheered, interested, or amused many a correspondent, and have delighted the public since.

In the hall, which has the famous parquet floor laid down by Dickens, is still hanging the framed illumination, artistically executed by Owen Jones, and placed there immediately after Dickens became the "Kentish freeholder on his native heath" as he called it. It is as follows: —

This House,

Gad's Hill Place,
stands on the summit of Shakespeare's Gad's Hill,
ever memorable for its association with
Sir John Falstaff, in his noble fancy.



Counterfeit Book-backs on Study Door.

“But, my lads, my lads, to-morrow morning by four o'clock early at Gad's Hill. There are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses; I have vizards for you all; you have horses for yourselves.”

From the hall we enter the dining-room, a cheerful apartment looking on to the beautiful lawn at the back, which has at the end the arched conservatory of lilac-tinted glass at top, in which the novelist took so much interest, and where he hung some Chinese lanterns, sent down from London the day before his death. We are informed that in this building he signed the last cheque which he drew, to pay his subscription to the Higham Cricket Club. The door of the dining-room is faced with looking-glass, so that it may reflect the contents of the conservatory. Among these are two or three New Zealand tree-ferns which Dickens himself purchased. In the dining-room Major Budden pointed out the exact spot where the fatal seizure from effusion on the brain took place, on the afternoon of Wednesday, 8th June,

1870, and where Dickens lay: first on the floor to the right of the door on entering, and afterwards to the left, when the couch was brought down (by order of Mr. Steele, the surgeon of Strood, as we subsequently learned), upon which he breathed his last.

The drawing-room faces the front, and, like the dining-room, has been lengthened, and opens into the conservatory. In fact, Dickens was always improving Gad's Hill Place. There is a memorable reference to the conservatory by Forster in the third vol. of the *Life*. He says: —

“This last addition had long been an object of desire with him, though he would hardly, even now, have given himself the indulgence but for the golden shower from America. He saw it first in a completed state on the Sunday before his death, when his youngest daughter was on a visit to him.

“‘Well, Katey,’ he said to her, ‘now you see positively the last improvement at Gad’s Hill,’ and every one laughed at the joke against himself. The success of the new conservatory was unquestionable. It was the remark of all around him, that he was certainly, from this last of his improvements, drawing more enjoyment than from any of its predecessors, when the scene for ever closed!”

This room is a long one, and, in common with all the others, gives us, under the auspices of the brilliantly fine day, some idea of the late owner’s love of light, air, and cheerfulness. That the situation is also a healthy and bracing one is confirmed by the fact, that in a letter written on board the *Russia*, bound for Liverpool, on the 26th April, 1868, after his second American tour, he speaks of having made a “Gad’s Hill breakfast.”

Our most considerate cicerone next takes us into several of the bedrooms, these being of large size, and having a little dressing-room marked off with a partition, head-high, so that no cubic space is lost to the main chamber. As illustrative of Charles Dickens’s care for the comfort of his friends, it is said that in the visitors’ bedrooms there was always hot water and a little tea-table set out, so that each one could at any time make for himself a cup of the beverage “that cheers but not inebriates.” The views from these rooms are very charming. Mr. W. T. Wildish afterwards told us, that during the novelist’s life-time, Mr. Trood, the landlord of the Sir John Falstaff, once took him over Gad’s Hill Place, and he was surprised to find Dickens’s own bath-room covered with cuttings from *Punch* and other comic papers. I have since learned that this was a screen of engravings which had originally been given him.

The gardens, both flower and vegetable, are then pointed out — the approach thereto from the back lawn being by means of a flight of steps — as also the rosary, which occupies a portion of the front lawn to the westward. The roses are of course past their best, but the trees look very healthy.

In the flower garden we are especially reminded of Dickens's love for flowers, the China-asters, single dahlias, and zinnias being of exceptional brightness. As to the violets, which are here in abundance, both the Neapolitan and Russian varieties, the Major shows us a method of cultivating them, first in frames, and then in single rows, so that he can get them in bloom for nearly nine months in the year!

Adjoining the lawn and vegetable garden is "the much-coveted meadow," which the master of Gad's Hill obtained by exchange of some land with the trustees of Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School at Rochester, and in which he planted "a number of limes and chestnuts, and other quick-growing trees." Four grass walks meet in the centre of the vegetable garden, where there is a fine old mulberry tree.

It is stated in Forster's *Life* of the novelist (Vol. iii. p. 188) that Dickens obtained the meadow by exchange of some land "with the Trustees of Watts's Charity." But this is not right. The distinguished historian of the Commonwealth, and the faithful friend of the novelist all through his life, is so habitually accurate, that it is an exceptional circumstance for any one to be able to correct him. However, I am indebted to Mr. A. A. Arnold, of Rochester, for the following authentic account of the transaction.

Dickens was always anxious to obtain this meadow (which consists of about fourteen acres), and, believing that the Trustees of Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School at Rochester were not empowered to sell their land, he purchased a field at the back of his own shrubbery from Mr. Brooker, of Higham, with a view — as appears from the following characteristically courteous and business-like letter — to effect an exchange.

"Gad's Hill Place,
Higham by Rochester, Kent.
Monday, Thirtieth June, 1862.

"Gentlemen,

"Reverting to a proposal already made in general terms by my solicitor, Mr. Ouvry, of Lincoln's Inn Fields, to Messrs. Essel and Co., I beg to

submit my application to you in detail.

“It is that you will have the kindness to consider the feasibility of exchanging the field at the back of my property here (marked 404 in the accompanying plan), for the plot of land marked 384 in the said plan.



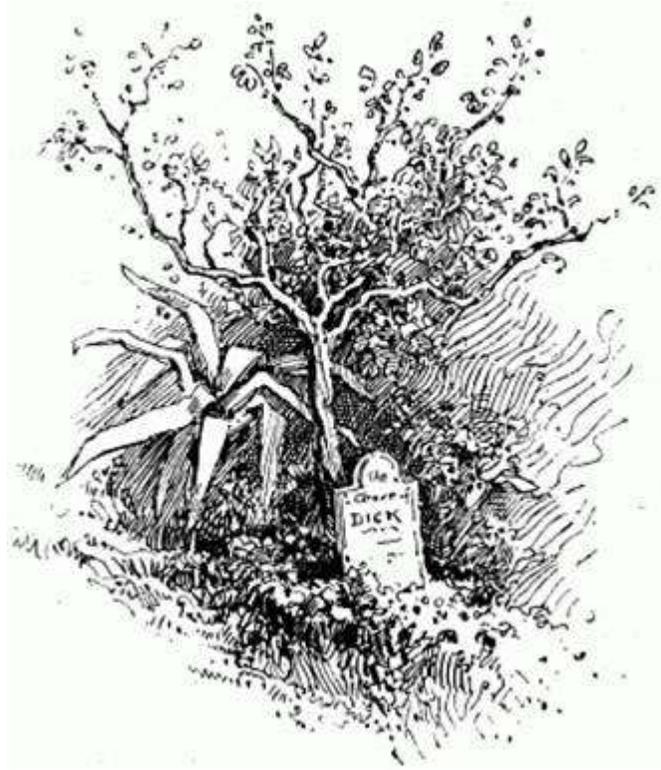
Gad's Hill Place from the rear.

“I believe it will appear to you, on inquiry, that the land I offer in exchange for the meadow is very advantageously situated, and is of greater extent than the meadow, and would be of greater value to the Institution, whose interests you represent. On the other hand, the acquisition of the meadow as a freehold would render my little property more compact and complete.

“I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,
Your faithful and obedient Servant,
Charles Dickens.

“To the Governors of
Sir Joseph Williamson's Free School,
Rochester.”

The offer fell through at the time; but it was renewed in 1868 in a different form, and eventually the field was sold (by permission of the Charity Commissioners) to Charles Dickens at an “accommodation” price — £2,500 — which really exceeded its actual market value.



But to resume our inspection. The whole of the back of the house, looking southward, is covered by a Virginia creeper (*Ampelopsis quinquefolia*) of profuse growth, which must be an object of singular beauty in the autumn when the crimson tints appear. As it now stands it is beautifully green, and there is scarcely more than a leaf or two here and there marking autumnal decay. The two famous hawthorn trees were blown down in a gale some years ago.

In a quiet corner under a rose-tree (*Gloire de Dijon*), flanked by a *Yucca* in bloom, the bed underneath consisting of deep blue lobelia, is a touching little memorial to a favourite canary. This consists of a narrow little board, made like a head-stone, and set aslant, on which is painted in neat letters the following epitaph: —

This is
the grave of
DICK,
the best of birds,
born
at Broadstairs,

Midsummer, 1851,
died
at Gad's Hill Place,
4th October, 1866.

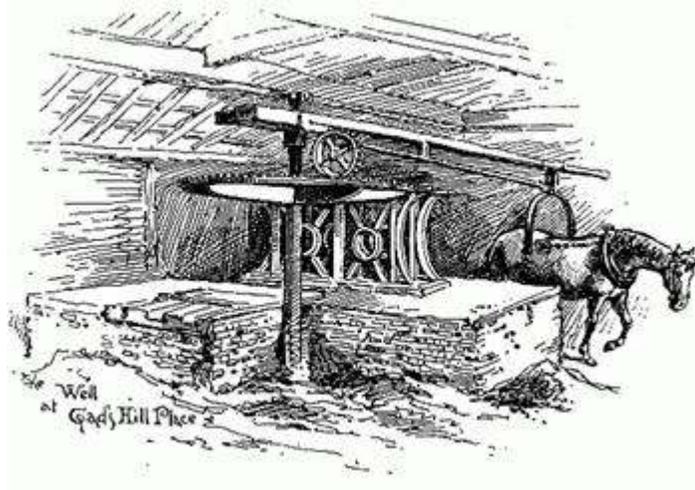
No one can doubt who was the author of these simple lines. "Dick," it should be said, "was very dear both to Dickens and his eldest daughter," and he has been immortalized in Forster's *Life*. There is a very humorous account given of the attacks which the cats in the neighbourhood made upon him, and which were frustrated by an organized defence. The following is the passage: —

"Soon after the arrival of Dickens and his family at Gad's Hill Place, a household war broke out, in which the commander-in-chief was his man French, the bulk of the forces engaged being his children, and the invaders two cats." Writing to Forster, Dickens says: — "The only thing new in this garden is that war is raging against two particularly tigerish and fearful cats (from the mill, I suppose), which are always glaring in dark corners after our wonderful little Dick. Keeping the house open at all points, it is impossible to shut them out, and they hide themselves in the most terrific manner: hanging themselves up behind draperies, like bats, and tumbling out in the dead of night with frightful caterwaulings. Hereupon French borrows Beaucourt's gun, loads the same to the muzzle, discharges it twice in vain, and throws himself over with the recoil, exactly like a clown. . . . About four pounds of powder and half a ton of shot have been fired off at the cat (and the public in general) during the week. The funniest thing is, that immediately after I have heard the noble sportsman blazing away at her in the garden in front, I look out of my room door into the drawing-room, and am pretty sure to see her coming in after the birds, in the calmest manner possible, by the back window."

Passing on our way the large and well-lighted servants' hall, over which is the bachelors' room, — whence in days gone by that rare literary serial, *The Gad's Hill Gazette*, issued from a little printing press, presented by a friend to the sixth son of the novelist, who encouraged his boy's literary tastes, — we next see the stables, as usual, like everything else, in excellent order. A small statue of Fame blowing her golden trumpet surmounts the bachelors' room, and looks down upon us encouragingly.

Our attention is then turned to the well, which is stated to be two hundred and seventeen feet deep, in the shed, or pumping-room, over which is the

Major's mare, "Tell-tale," cheerfully doing her daily twenty minutes' task of drawing water, which is pumped up to the cistern on the roof for the supply of the house. There is said to be never less than twenty feet of water in the well.



It may be interesting to mention that Gad's Hill Place ("the title of my estate, sir, my place down in Kent"), which is in the parish of Higham, and about twenty-six miles from London, stands on an elevation two hundred and fifty feet above mean sea-level. The house itself is built on a bed of the Thanet sands. The well is bored right through these sands, which Mr. W. H. Whitaker, F.R.S., of H. M. Geological Survey (who has kindly given me some valuable information on the subject), states "may be about forty feet thick, and the water is drawn up from the bed of chalk beneath. This bed is of great thickness, probably six hundred or seven hundred feet, and the well simply reaches the level at which the chalk is charged with water, *i. e.* something a little higher than the level of the neighbouring river." The chalk is exposed on the lower bases of Gad's Hill, such as the Railway Station at Higham, the village of Chalk, the town of Strood, etc.

There are humorous extracts from letters by Dickens in Forster's *Life* respecting the well, which may appropriately be introduced. He says: —

"We are still (6th of July) boring for water here, at the rate of two pounds per day for wages. The men seem to like it very much, and to be perfectly comfortable." . . . And again, "Here are six men perpetually going up and down the well (I know that somebody will be killed), in the course of fitting a pump; which is quite a railway terminus — it is so iron, and so big. The process is much more like putting Oxford Street endwise, and laying gas along it, than anything else. By the time it is finished, the cost of this water

will be something absolutely frightful. But of course it proportionately increases the value of the property, and that's my only comfort. . . . Five men have been looking attentively at the pump for a week, and (I should hope) may begin to fit it in the course of October." The depression caused by the prospect of the "absolutely frightful" cost of the water seems to have continued to the end of the letter, for it thus concludes: — "The horse has gone lame from a sprain, the big dog has run a tenpenny nail into one of his hind feet, the bolts have all flown out of the basket carriage, and the gardener says all the fruit trees want replacing with new ones."



The Porch, Gad's Hill Place.

Two of the Major's dogs are chained in the places formerly occupied by Dickens's dogs, "Linda" and "Turk." The chains are very long, and allow the animals plenty of room for exercise. The space between the two permitted a person to walk past without their being able to come near him; and, as an instance of Dickens's thoughtful kindness even to the lower animals, two holes were made in the wall so that the dogs could get through in hot weather, and lie in the shade of the trees on the other side. On the back gate entering into the lane at the side of the house was painted, "Beware of the dogs!" This caution appears to have been very necessary, for we heard more than once the story of an intrusive tramp who trespassed, and going too near the dogs, got sadly mauled. Dickens, with characteristic

goodness, sent him at once to Chatham Hospital, and otherwise healed his wounds.

We are next conducted round the grounds, and have an opportunity of examining the front of the house more in detail. The porch is flanked by two cosy seats, the pretty little spade-shaped shields, and lateral angular ornamental supports on the back of which, we are informed, were constructed of pieces of wood from Shakespeare's furniture given to Dickens by a friend. A large variegated holly grows on either side of the porch, and a semi-circular gravel walk leads to the door. There is a closely-cut lawn in front, and opposite the hollies are two fine specimens of *Aucuba Japonica* — the so-called variegated laurel.



The Cedars,

Gad's Hill.

It will be remembered that the master of Gad's Hill had a tunnel excavated under the Dover Road (which runs through the property), so as to approach the "shrubbery" previously referred to, without having to cross the open public road. We did not learn who constructed the tunnel, but it was designed either by his brother, Mr. Alfred L. Dickens, who died at Manchester in 1860, or by his brother-in-law, Mr. Henry Austin. The entrance to the tunnel is by a flight of about twenty steps, flanked by two beautifully-grown specimens of *Cedrus deodara*, the "deodar," or god-tree

of the Himalayas. The tunnel itself is cut through the sands, and, being only a little longer than the width of the road, it is not at all dark, but very pleasant and cool on a hot day. A corresponding flight of steps leads us into the shrubbery, which is shut off from the main road by iron railings only. Both ends of the tunnel are covered with ivy, which has the effect of partially concealing the openings. Readers of Forster's *Life* will recollect that the Swiss ch[^]let presented to Dickens by his friend Fechter the actor, and in which he spent his last afternoon, formerly stood in the shrubbery. The ch[^]let now stands in the terrace-garden of Cobham Hall.

Before we reach the exact place we have an opportunity of examining the two stately cedar trees (*Cedrus Libani*) which are the arboreal gems of the place. Major Budden informs us that they are about one hundred and twenty-eight years old, and were planted in their present position when they had attained about twenty years' growth. Some idea of their luxuriance may be formed when it is mentioned that the girth of each tree exceeds sixteen feet, and the longest branch of one of them measures eighty-four feet in length. In consequence of the habit of these trees "fastigiating" at the base, a very numerous series of lateral ramifying branches is the result. These branches spread out in terraces, and the rich green foliage, covered with exudations of resin, seems as though powdered silver had been lightly dusted over it. Each tree extends over a circular area of about eighty feet of ground in diameter. Under one of the cedars is the grave of "the big and beautiful Linda," Dickens's favourite St. Bernard dog. One of the trees has been injured, a large branch over-weighted with snow having broken off some years ago.

Two or three noble ash trees also grace this spot, running straight up in a column some thirty-five feet before shooting out a canopy of branches and leaves. There are also a few Scotch firs, the trunks well covered with ivy, and a pretty specimen of the variegated sycamore. The undergrowth of laurel, laurustinus, briar, privet, holly, etc., is very luxuriant here, and the vacant ground is closely covered with the wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), which must form a continuous mass of pearly white flowers in spring-time.

The ground formerly occupied by the ch[^]let is pointed out to us, its site being marked by a bed of rich scarlet nasturtiums. It will be recollected that Dickens describes the interior of the building in a letter to an American friend, which is thus recorded in Forster's *Life*: —

“Divers birds sing here all day, and the nightingales all night. The place is lovely and in perfect order. . . . I have put five mirrors in the châlet where I write, and they reflect and refract, in all kinds of ways, the leaves that are quivering at the windows, and the great fields of waving corn, and the sail-dotted river. My room is up among the branches of the trees; and the birds and the butterflies fly in and out, and the green branches shoot in at the open windows, and the lights and shadows of the clouds come and go with the rest of the company. The scent of the flowers, and indeed of everything that is growing for miles and miles, is most delicious.”

But the glory of Gad’s Hill Place is reserved for us until the close of our visit, when Major Budden very kindly takes us up to the roof, which is approached by a commodious flight of steps; and here, on this exceptionally fine day, we are privileged to behold a prospect of surpassing beauty. Right away to the westward is the great Metropolis, its presence being marked by the usual pall of greyish smoke. Opening from the town, and becoming wider and wider as the noble river approaches its estuary, is the Thames, now conspicuous by numerous vessels, showing masts and white and brown sails, and here and there by the smoky track of a steamer.

We remember how often the city and the river have been the scene of many and many an exploit in Dickens’s novels. Northward are the dreary marshes, the famous “meshes” of *Great Expectations*, hereafter to be noticed. Then far to the eastward runs the valley of the Medway, the picturesque city of Rochester thereon being crowned by those conspicuous landmarks, its magnificent Castle and ancient Cathedral. In the background is the busy town of Chatham, its heights being capped by an enormous square and lofty building erected by the sect called “Jezreelites,” whatever that may be. We were informed that the so-called “immortal” leader had just died, and it has since been reported that the gloomy building is likely to be converted into a huge jam factory. Beyond, and nearly seven miles off, is the high land called “Blue Bell,” about three hundred feet above mean sea-level, and all along to the south the undulating grounds and beautiful woodland scenery of Cobham Park complete the picture.



View from the Hill
of Dickens's House
at Gad's Hill

As Major Budden points out in detail these many natural beauties of the district, we can quite understand and sympathize with Dickens's love for this exquisite spot; and we heartily congratulate the present owner of Gad's Hill Place on the charming historical property which he possesses, and which, so far as we can perceive (all honour to him), is kept in the same excellent condition that characterized it during the novelist's lifetime. What is particularly striking about it is at once its compactness, completeness, and unpretentiousness.

Descending to the library, whence we started nearly three hours previously, we refresh ourselves with a glass of water from the celebrated deep well — a draught deliciously cool and clear — which the hospitable Major presses us to “dilute” (as Professor Huxley has somewhere said) in any way we please, but which we prefer to drink, as Dickens himself drank it — pure. Before we rise to leave the spot we have so long wished to see, and which we have now gone over to our hearts' content, we sadly recall to memory for a moment the “last scene of all that ends this strange, eventful history,” — that tragic incident which occurred on Thursday, 9th June, 1870, when there was an “empty chair” at Gad's Hill Place, and all intelligent English-speaking nations experienced a personal sorrow.

And so with many grateful acknowledgments to our kind and courteous host, who gives us some nice flowers and cuttings as a parting souvenir, we take our leave, having derived from our bright sunny visit to Gad's Hill Place that “wave of pleasure” which Mr. Herbert Spencer describes as

“raising the rate of respiration, — raised respiration being an index of raised vital activities in general.” In fine, the impression left on our minds is such as to induce us to feel that we understand and appreciate more of Dickens’s old home than any illustration or written description of it, however excellent, had hitherto adequately conveyed to us. We have seen it for ourselves.

* * * * *

The reminiscences which follow are from Mrs. Lynn Linton and three of Charles Dickens’s nearest neighbours.

GAD’S HILL SIXTY YEARS AGO.

The early love which Charles Dickens felt for Gad’s Hill House, and his boyish ambition to be one day its owner, had been already anticipated by my father. As a boy and young man, my father’s heart was set on this place; and when my grandfather’s death put him in sufficient funds he bought it. Being a beneficed clergyman, both of whose livings were in the extreme north of England, he could not live in the house; but he kept it empty for many years, always hoping to get leave of absence from the Bishop for a term long enough to justify the removal of his large family from Keswick to Rochester. In 1831 a five years’ leave of absence was granted; and we all came up by coach to this Mecca of my father’s love. We were three days and three nights on the road; and I remember quite distinctly the square courtyard and outside balcony of the old Belle Sauvage Inn, where we put up on our arrival in London. I remember, too, the powerful scent of the Portugal laurel and the bay-tree which grew on the right-hand side of Gad’s Hill House as we entered — brought out by the warm damp of the late autumn afternoon. In our time all the outhouses had leaden figures on the top. There was a cupola with an alarm bell, which one night was rung lustily, to the terror of the whole neighbourhood, and the ashamed discovery among ourselves that rats were not burglars. In the shrubbery were two large leaden figures of Pomona and Vertumnus, standing on each side of the walk leading up to the arbour. We had then two arbours — one opposite the house at the end of the green walk, and another in a dilapidated state further in the shrubbery. They were built of big flint stones, many of which had holes in them, where small birds made their nests. I remember in one was a tomtit which was quite tame, and used to fly in and out while we were watching it. The two cedars, which I believe are still there, were a little

choked and overshadowed by a large oak-tree, which my father cut down. Between seventy and eighty coaches, "vans," and mail-carts passed our house during the day, besides private carriages, specially those of travellers posting to or from Dover. Regiments, too, often passed on their way to Gravesend, where they embarked for India; and ships' companies, paid off, rowdy and half-tipsy, made the road really dangerous for the time being. We used to lock the two gates when we heard them coming, shouting and singing up the hill; and we had to stand many a mimic siege from the blue-jackets trying to force their way in. Sweet-water grapes grew and ripened in the open air over the wash-house; and the back of the house was covered with a singularly fine and luscious jargonelle pear. The garden was rich in apples. We had many kinds, from the sweet and pulpy nonsuch, to the small tight little pearmain and lemon pippin. We had nonpareils, golden pippins, brown and golden russets, Ribstone pippins, and what we called a port-wine apple — the flesh red, like that of the "blood-oranges." The small orchard to the right was as rich in cherry-trees, filberts, and cobnuts. In the garden we had a fig-tree, and the mulberry-tree, which is still there, was in full bearing in our time. The garden altogether was wonderfully prolific in flowers as well as fruits — roses as well as strawberries and apples; and the green-house was full of grapes. Nightingales sang in the trees near the house, and the shrubbery was full of song birds. We had a grand view from the leads, where we used sometimes to go, and whence I remember seeing a farmyard fire over at Higham — which fire they said had been caused by an incendiary. There was a Low Church clergyman in the neighbourhood who might have been Chadband or Stiggins. He was fond of some girls we knew, and called them his "lambs." He used to put his arm round their waists, and they sat on his knees quite naturally. I myself heard him preach at Shorne against the institution of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. He said it was not only superstitious but irreligious; as pancakes meant "pan Kakon," all evil. This I, then a girl of thirteen or so, heard and remember. When my father died his property had to be sold, as he did not make an eldest son. Mr. W. H. Wills, the trusty friend of Charles Dickens, and editor of *Household Words* and *All The Year Round*, was also a friend of mine. We met at a dinner, and he spoke to me about Gad's Hill, but as if he wanted to buy it for himself. He was afraid to mention Charles Dickens's name, lest we should ask too much. So he told me afterwards. I had been left executrix under my father's will, being then the only unmarried daughter; and I took

the news to our solicitor and co-executor, Mr. Loaden. He wrote to Mr. Wills, and the sale was effected. We scored a little triumph over the "ornamental timber." Mr. Dickens objected to our price; the case was submitted to an arbitrator, and we got more than we originally asked. But there was never one moment of pique on either side, nor a drop of bad blood as the consequence. It was always a matter for a laugh and a joke between Mr. Wills and myself. When we first went to Gad's Hill there was a fish-pond at the back; but my father had it filled up, lest one of his adventurous little ones should tumble in. Officers used to come up from Chatham to the Falstaff, and have pigeon matches in our big field; and one of the sights which used to delight our young eyes, was the gallant bearing and gay uniforms of the Commandant at Chatham, when he and his staff rode by. We were great walkers in those days, and used to ramble over Cobham Park, and round by Shorne, and down to the dreary marshes beyond Higham. But this was not a favourite walk with us, and we girls never went there alone. The banks on the Rochester road — past Davies's Straits — were full of sweet violets, white and purple; and the fungi, lichens, flowers, and ferns about Shorne and Cobham yet linger in my memory as things of rarest beauty. We always thought that the coachman, "Old Chumley," as he was called, was old Weller. He was a fine, cheery, trustworthy man; and once when my father was in London, he had one of my sisters and myself — girls then about fifteen and thirteen — put under his charge to be delivered to him at the end of the journey. The dear old fellow took as much care of us as if he had been our father himself. I remember my brothers gave him a new whip, and he was very fond of us all.

E. L. L.

* * * * *

*** We had at a subsequent visit to Gad's Hill Place, on the invitation of our hospitable friends, Major and Mrs. Budden, the pleasure of a long and interesting conversation with Mr. James Hulkes, J.P., of the Little Hermitage, Frindsbury, a Kentish man, who came to live here more than sixty years ago, and who was thus a very near neighbour of Charles Dickens during the whole of the time that he resided at Gad's Hill Place. We were shown into a delightful room at the back of the house, overlooking the shrubberies of the mansion — in the distance appearing the high ground on which stands the monument to Charles Larkin. The room is a happy

combination of part workshop, with a fine lathe and assortment of tools fitted round it — part study, with a nice collection of books, engravings and pictures (some of hunting scenes) on the walls — and part naturalist's den, with cases of stuffed birds and animals, guns and fishing-rods — the fragrant odour of tobacco breathing friendly welcome to a visitor of smoking proclivities. The varied tastes of the owner were sufficiently apparent, and a long chat of over two hours seemed to us but a few minutes.

Mr. Hulkes said he just remembered the road from Strood to Gad's Hill being cut through the sands down to the chalk. It was for some time afterwards called "Davies's Straits," after the Rev. George Davies, the then Chairman of the Turnpike Road Board, and the term indicated the difficulty and expense of the operation. Before the new road was cut, the old highway constituting this part of the Dover Road was very hilly and dangerous.

Reverting to the subject of Charles Dickens, our relator remarked, "I fear I cannot be of much use to you by giving information about Mr. Dickens, as I only knew him as a kind friend, a very genial host, and a most charming companion; to the poor he was always kind — a deserving beggar never went from his house unrelieved." What indeed could be said more! These few simple words, spoken so earnestly after a period of nearly twenty years, sufficed to bring before us the lost neighbour whose memory was so warmly cherished by his surviving friend.

John Forster, in the *Life*, speaks of Mr. Hulkes as being "one of the two nearest country neighbours with whom the [Dickens] family had become very intimate," and mentions that both Mr. and Mrs. Hulkes were present at the wedding of the novelist's second daughter, Kate, with Mr. Charles Alston Collins. Mr. Hulkes spoke of the pleasant parties at Gad's Hill Place, at which he met Mr. Forster, Mr. Wilkie Collins, Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, Mr. Marcus Stone, Mr. H. F. Chorley, and many others; and observed that, on the occasion of charades and private theatricals there, Charles Dickens was always in fine form. He showed us an original manuscript programme (of which we were allowed to take a copy), written on half-a-sheet of foolscap; and from the fact that "*Gads Hill Gazette* Printing Office" appears in the corner it would seem that it was printed on the occasion for the guests. It is as follows: —

December 31st, 1863.

"A night's exploit on Gad's Hill." — *Shakespeare.*

Her Majesty's Servants

will have the honour of presenting

Three Charades!!!

Each Charade is a word of two syllables, arranged in three Scenes. The first scene is the first syllable; the second is the second syllable; the third scene is the entire word.

(At the end of each Charade the audience is respectfully invited to name the word.)

Charade 1!

Scene I. — The awful end of the Profligate Sailor.

Scene II. — On the way to foreign parts.

Scene III. — Miss Belinda Jane and the faithful policeman (Division Q).

Charade 2!!

Scene I. — Archery at Castle Doodle.

Scene II. — Fra Diavolo a Dread Reality.

Scene III. — The Choice of a too Lowly Youth.

Charade 3!!!

Scene I. — The Pathetic History of the Poor Little Sweep.

Scene II. — Mussulman Barbarity to Christians.

Scene III. — Merry England.

Gad's Hill Gazette Printing Office.

The various parts were taken by Dickens and his family, and the entire word of the last Charade is supposed to be "May Day."

In connection with charades, Mr. Hulkes alluded to Dickens's remarkable facility for "guessing a subject fixed on when he was out of the room, in half a dozen questions;" and related the story of how at the young people's game of "Yes and No," he found out the proper answer to a random question fixed upon by Mr. Charles Collins, one of the company, in his absence, which was, "The top-boot of the left leg of the head post-boy at Newman's Yard, London." The squire sometimes took a stroll with his neighbour, but observed "he was too fast a walker for me — I couldn't keep up with him!"

Mr. Hulkes possesses a nearly complete “file” (from 1862 to 1866) of the *Gad’s Hill Gazette*, to which he was one of the subscribers, and which was edited by the novelist’s son, Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens, and, as before stated, printed at Gad’s Hill Place. It chronicled the arrivals and departures, the results of cricket matches and billiard games, with interesting gossip of events relating to the family and the neighbourhood. Occasionally there was a leading article, and now and then an acrostic appeared. Among the subscribers were the novelist and his family, The Lord Chief Justice, The Dean of Bristol, Lady Molesworth, Mrs. Milner Gibson, M. Stone, A. Halliday, J. Hulkes, C. Kent, W. H. Wills, H. F. Chorley, Edmund Yates, etc. The number for January 20th, 1866, contains a humorous correspondence on the management of the journal between “Jabez Skinner” and “Blackbury Jones.” Mr. H. F. Dickens kindly allows a copy of the number for December 30th, 1865, to be reproduced, which is interesting as giving an account of the Staplehurst accident, and also the notice issued when the journal was discontinued.

Transcriber’s Note: Copies of the original fascimilies can be seen by clicking on the Gazette’s page numbers

THE GAD’S HILL GAZETTE

Edited by H. F. Dickens

December 30th 1865 Price 2d

We are very glad to meet our subscribers again after such a long lapse of time, and we hope that they will patronise us in the same kind and indulgent manner as they did, last season.

In the circulars, we announced that some great improvements were to be made in the Gazette — We are sorry that they cannot appear in this number (as our suppliers of type have disappointed us) but we hope that next week, we shall be able to publish this journal in quite a different form.

Hoping that our subscribers will excuse us this week, we beg to wish them all A Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

Christmas at Gad’s Hill.

During the past week, Gad’s Hill has resounded with the sounds of festivity and merriment.

(Continued on the next page)

As is usually the case, the house has been filled with the guests who have come to taste of Mr Dickens' hospitality. These consisted of Mr Mad, and Master Fechter, Mr & Mrs C. Collins, Mr Mrs and Master C. Dickens junr, Mr Morgan (who suddenly appeared on Christmas Day, having just returned from America) Mr M. Stone, Mr Chorley and Mr Dickenson.

The latter gentleman has not yet entirely recovered from the effects of a most disastrous railway accident in which he was a sufferer, and had it not been for the courage and intrepidity of Mr Dickens, he would not now be spending his Christmas at Gad's Hill. A short time before the accident occurred, Mr Dickenson had a dispute with a French gentleman about the opening of the window when the former offered to change places, if the open window was disagreeable to his fellow traveller — this they did. —

Then came the accident, accompanied by all its frightful incidents. The French gentleman was killed, Mr Dickenson was stunned and hurled with great violence under the debris of a carriage.

Mr Dickens, who was in another compartment, managed to crawl out of the window and then, caring little for his own safety, busied himself in helping the wounded. Whilst engaged in doing this, he passed by a carriage, underneath which he saw a gentleman (Mr Dickenson) lying perfectly still, and bleeding from the eyes, ears, nose and mouth.

He was immediately taken to the town of Staplehurst where he so far recovered as to be able to return to London, that evening.

Next morning he was suffering from a very severe concussion of the brain and was ill for many weeks — But to our subject.

On Christmas Day, Mr, Mrs & Miss Malleon came to dinner. At about 9, an ex tempore dance began and was kept up till about 2 o'clock Tuesday morning. During the week, billiards has been much resorted to. (See next page)

All the visitors are still here, except Mr Fechter and family who left on December 26th, and Mr Morgan (who is to return on 31st. Talking of Mr Fechter, our readers will be glad to hear that he has made a most decided success in his new piece entitled — The Master of Ravenswood —

Sporting Intelligence.

Billiards

Of all the matches that have been played during the past week the most important was a Great Handicap on Christmas Day, the prize being a pewter. Annexed is an account of it.

Stone	Scratch	C Dickens jun	20	Harry	30
Fechter	5	Dickenson	20	C Dickens	35
Morgan	10	Collins	30	Plorn	40

Our space will not allow us to enter into the minute details of this match suffice it to say that Mr Dickenson won but that as regards good play, he was excelled by Mr Stone (who, however, was so heavily weighted that he could not win. Great credit is due to Mr Ch Dickens junr for the way in which he handicapped the men.

On Saturday 30th a match is to be played between The Earl of Darnley and Mr M Stone.

— — — — —
Gad's Hill Gazette Office.

January — 1867.

In a circular issued last August, we announced that a final number of the Gad's Hill Gazette was to be published this Xmas. We are grieved however to state, that the shortening of the Wimbledon School holidays (in which establishment the Editor is a pupil) has rendered this impossible.

It is with feelings of the deepest regret that we find ourselves obliged to conclude the publication of our Journal in this sudden and unexpected manner, but we feel sure that the great indulgence of the Public will overlook this, as it has done many other great errors in the Gad's Hill Gazette.

In conclusion, we beg to take leave of our Subscribers in our public capacity of Editor, thanking them for their kindness in supporting our Journal, and wishing them all

— "A Happy New Year." —



A. F. Dickens

(Signed) Sole Editor

Mrs. Hulkes had a number of pleasant recollections of Gad's Hill Place, and of Charles Dickens and his family. "As a girl," said this lady, "I was an admiring reader of his works, and I longed to see and know the author; but little did I think that my high ambition would ever be gratified." That a warm friendship existed between his admirer and Charles Dickens, who subsequently became her near neighbour, is evidenced by the fact that, in reply to her request, he allowed this lady the great privilege of reading the catastrophe of that exquisitely-pathetic and nobly-altruistic story of *A Tale of Two Cities*, some weeks before its publication, as appears from the following letter: —

"Gad's Hill Place,

"Higham by Rochester, Kent.

"*Sunday evening, Sixteenth Oct., 1857.*

"My dear Mrs. Hulkes,

"My daughter has shown me your note, and it has impressed me with the horrible determination to become a new kind of Bluebeard, and lay an awful injunction of secrecy on you for five mortal weeks.

"Here is the remainder of the *Tale of Two Cities*. Not half-a-dozen of my oldest and most trusty literary friends have seen it. It is a real pleasure to me to entrust you with the catastrophe, and to ask you to keep a grim and inflexible silence on the subject until it is published. When you have read the proofs, will you kindly return them to me?

"With my regard to Mr. Hulkes,

"Believe me always,

"Faithfully yours,

"Charles Dickens.

"Mrs. Hulkes."

Mrs. Hulkes said that when Dickens went to Paris in 1863, he jokingly said to her, "I am going to Paris; what shall I bring you?" She replied, "A good photograph of yourself, as I do not like the one you gave me; and I hear the French people are more successful than the English, or their climate may help them." And he brought a photograph of himself, of which there were only four printed. It now graces Mrs. Hulkes' drawing-room, and represents the novelist very life-like in full face, head and bust. The photograph was taken by Alphonse Maze, and has been exquisitely engraved in Mr. Kitton's *Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil*.

Mrs. Hulkes mentioned a curious and interesting circumstance. On the night before the funeral of her friend, Miss Dickens sent down to the Little Hermitage to ask if she could kindly give her some roses. Mrs. Hulkes cut a quantity from one of the trees in the garden (Lamarque, she believes), and the tree never bloomed again, and soon after died. No doubt, as she observed, it bled to death from the excessive cutting. It was the second case only of the kind in her experience as a rose-grower during very many years.

Charles Dickens also took interest in his friend's son (their only child, who has since finished his University career), and this gentleman prizes as a relic a copy of *A Child's History of England*, which was presented to him, with the following inscription written in the characteristic blue ink — "Charles Dickens. To his little friend, Cecil James Hulkes. Christmas Eve, 1864." In a letter to Miss Hogarth, written from New York, on Friday, 3rd January, 1868, he says: — "I have a letter from Mrs. Hulkes by this post, wherein the boy encloses a violet, now lying on the table before me. Let her know that it arrived safely and retaining its colour."

There are many interesting relics of Gad's Hill Place now in the possession of the family at the Little Hermitage, notably Charles Dickens's seal with his crest, and the initials C. D., his pen-tray, his desk, a photograph of the study on 8th June, 1870 (a present from Miss Hogarth), the portrait above referred to, an arm-chair, a drawing-room settee, a dressing-table, and a library writing-table.

* * * * *

On another occasion we were favoured with an interview by Mr. J. N. Malleson, of Brighton, who formerly resided at the Great Hermitage, Higham, and who was a neighbour of Charles Dickens for many years. Mr. Malleson came to the Great Hermitage in 1859, and a day or two after Christmas Day in that year — having previously been a guest at the wedding of Dickens's second daughter Kate, with Mr. Charles Alston Collins — he met the novelist, who, stopping to chat pleasantly, asked his neighbours where they dined at Christmas? "Oh, Darby and Joan," said our informant. Dickens laughingly replied: — "That shall never happen again"; and the following year, and every year afterwards, except when their friend was in America, Mr. and Mrs. Malleson received and accepted invitations to dine at Gad's Hill Place. On the exception in question, the family of Dickens dined at the Great Hermitage.

* * * * *

In the autumn of the year 1889 we had a most interesting chat with Mr. William Stocker Trood, at his residence, Spearcehay Farm, Pitminster, pleasantly situated in the vale of Taunton, for many years landlord of the Sir John Falstaff at Gad's Hill. The first noteworthy circumstance to record is that his name is not *Edwin* Trood, as commonly supposed, but William Stocker, as above stated, Stocker being an old family name. This fact disposes of the supposition that the former two names, with the alteration of a single letter, gave rise in Dickens's mind to the designation of the principal character in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The name of "Trood" is by the substitution of one letter easily converted into Drood, and that word is perhaps more euphonious with "Edwin" as prefixed to it; but "William Stocker" is not by any means easily converted into "Edwin." The idea that "Edwin Drood" is derived from "William Stocker Trood" may therefore be dismissed as a popular fallacy. It may be mentioned, however, *en passant*, that Mr. Trood had a brother named Edward, who sometimes visited him at the Falstaff, and also a son who bore the name of his uncle.

We found our informant to be wonderfully genial, hale and hearty, although in his eighty-fifth year. He had a perfect recollection of Charles Dickens, and remembered his first coming to Gad's Hill Place. Before the house was properly furnished and put in order, both Mr. and Mrs. Dickens sometimes slept at the Falstaff; and afterwards, when visitors were staying at Gad's Hill Place, and the bedrooms there were full, some of them slept at the Inn; in particular, John Forster, Wilkie Collins, and Marcus Stone. He said Mr. Dickens was a very nice man to speak to, and Mrs. Dickens was a very nice lady. They were always kind and pleasant as neighbours, but Mr. Dickens did not talk much. Said Mr. Trood: — "When I was at Higham, Mr. Dickens used to say no one could put in a word; I had all the talk to myself." The sons were all very pleasant; in fact, he liked the family very much indeed.

Mr. Trood sometimes acted as local banker to Charles Dickens, and used to cash his cheques for him. Only the day before his death, he cashed a cheque for £22, and was subsequently offered £24 for it by an admirer of Dickens who desired the autograph; but to his credit it should be mentioned that he did not accept the offer.

Our informant next spoke of the wonderful partiality of Dickens to cricket; he would stand out all night if he could watch a cricket match. The

matches were always played in Mr. Dickens's field, and the business meetings of the club were held monthly at the Falstaff. Mr. Trood was Treasurer of the club. Occasionally there was a dinner.

A circumstance was related which made a profound impression on our friend. The family at Gad's Hill Place were very fond of music, and on one occasion there were present as visitors two great violinists, one a German and the other an Italian, and it was a debated question among the listeners outside the gates, where the music could be distinctly heard, which played the better. Mr. Trood had just returned from Gravesend in the cool of the summer evening, about ten o'clock, and stood in the road opposite listening, "spellbound," to the delightful music. Miss Dickens played the accompaniments.

Mr. Trood spoke with a lively and appreciative recollection of the Christmas sports that were held in a field at the back of Gad's Hill Place, and of the good order and nice feeling that prevailed at those gatherings, although several thousand people were present. Among the games that were played, the wheeling of barrows by blind-folded men seemed to tickle him most.

Our octogenarian friend also spoke of the great love of Dickens for scarlet geraniums. Hundreds of the "Tom Thumb" variety were planted in the beds on the front lawn and in the back garden at Gad's Hill Place.

Soon after the terrible railway accident at Staplehurst, Dickens came over to the Falstaff and spoke to Mr. Trood, who congratulated him. Said Dickens, "I never thought I should be here again." It is a wonderful coincidence to record, that a young gentleman named Dickenson, who subsequently became intimate with the novelist, changed places (so as to get the benefit of meeting the fresh air) with a French gentleman in the same carriage who was killed, and Mr. Dickenson escaped! The accident happened on the 9th June, 1865, and Dickens died on the "fatal anniversary," 9th June, 1870.

Mr. Trood confirmed his daughter's (Mrs. Latter's) account of the *fracas* with the men and performing bears, given in another chapter, adding, "That *was* a concern."

* * * * *

The beautiful city of Exeter is not far from Taunton, and we naturally avail ourselves of the opportunity of stopping there for a few hours, and stroll over to see the village of Alphington. It was here, in the year 1839,

that Charles Dickens took and furnished Mile End Cottage for his father and mother and their youngest son. He thus describes the event in a letter to Forster: — "I took a little house for them this morning (5th March, 1839), and if they are not pleased with it I shall be grievously disappointed. Exactly a mile beyond the city on the Plymouth road there are two white cottages: one is theirs, and the other belongs to their landlady. I almost forget the number of rooms, but there is an excellent parlour with two other rooms on the ground floor, there is really a beautiful little room over the parlour which I am furnishing as a drawing-room, and there is a splendid garden. The paint and paper throughout is new and fresh and cheerful-looking, the place is clean beyond all description, and the neighbourhood I suppose the most beautiful in this most beautiful of English counties." The negotiations with the landlady and the operation of furnishing the house are most humorously portrayed in the same letter.

The cottage is also described in *Nicholas Nickleby*, which he was writing at the time. Mrs. Nickleby, in allusion to her old home, calls it "the beautiful little thatched white house one storey high, covered all over with ivy and creeping plants, with an exquisite little porch with twining honeysuckles and all sorts of things."

Fifty years have passed since the parents of the novelist went to live at Alphington, which, notwithstanding the subsequent growth of the city, still continues to be a pretty suburb with fine views of the Ide Hills to the westward, and Heavitree to the eastward. Our efforts to obtain any reminiscences of the Dickens family in the village were quite unsuccessful — so long a time had elapsed since their departure — although, to oblige us, the vicar of the place kindly made enquiries, and took some interest in the matter.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARLES DICKENS AND STROOD.

“So altered was the battle-ground, where thousands upon thousands had been killed in the great fight.” — *The Battle of Life*.

“Keep me always at it, I’ll keep you always at it, you keep somebody else always at it. There you are, with the Whole Duty of Man in a commercial country.” — *Little Dorrit*.

The town of Strood, — the Roman *Strata*, — which stands on the left bank of the river Medway, has, like the city of Rochester, its interesting historical associations. Its Church, dedicated to St. Nicholas, stands high on the north side of the London road leading to Gad’s Hill, and has a brass of T. Glover and his three wives. At one time there was a hospital for travellers, founded by Bishop Glanville (*temp.* Richard I.), near the Church. The most interesting remains are, however, those of the Temple Farm, distant about half a mile south, formerly (*temp.* Henry II.) the mansion of the Knights Templars of the Teutonic order, to whom it, together with the lands thereto belonging, was given by that monarch. The gift was confirmed by King John and by Henry III. (1227); but the unfortunate brethren of the order did not retain possession more than a century, for in the reign of Edward II. they were dispossessed of their lands and goods, under pretence of their leading a vicious course of life, but in reality to satisfy the avarice of their dispossessors. The present building dates from about James I., has one fine room overlooking the river, and underneath is a spacious vault called by Grose the “Preceptory,” excavated out of the chalk, and having fine groined stone arches and aisles — the walls are of very great thickness. Near Frindsbury Church — in which are three most interesting wall-paintings of St. William the Baker of Perth, St. Lawrence, and another figure, all three discovered on the jambs of the Norman windows only a few years ago — stands the Quarry House, a handsome old red-brick mansion, “described as more Jacobean than Elizabethan,” built in the form of a capital E, each storey slightly receding behind the front level of that beneath

it, the top tapering into pretty gables, the effect being enhanced by heavy buttresses.

There is a dreadful legend of the ancient people of Strood common to several other parts of the kingdom, e.g. Auster in Dorsetshire, which the quaint and diligent Lambarde, quoting from Polydore Virgil, evidently regarded as serious, and takes immense pains to confute! It relates to St. Thomas à Becket and his contention with King Henry II., whereby he began to be looked upon as the King's enemy, and as such began to be "so commonly neglected, contemned, and hated: —



“That when as it happened him upon a time to come to *Stroude*, the Inhabitants thereabouts (being desirous to dispite that good Father) sticked not to cut the tail from the horse on which he road, binding themselves thereby with a perpetuall reproach: for afterward (by the will of God) it so happened, that every one which came of that kinred of men which plaid that naughty prank, were borne with tails, even as brute beasts be.”

Surely had the credulous historian lived in Darwinian times, he might have recorded this as a splendid instance of “degeneration”!



In a lecture delivered here some years ago, the Rev. Canon Scott Robertson, Editor of *Archæologia Cantiana*, gave a graphic picture of "Strood in the Olden Times." To this we are much indebted for the opportunity of giving an abstract of several of the most interesting details.

In the thirteenth century Strood and Rochester were the scene of a severe struggle between Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the leader of the Barons in their war against Henry III. to resist the aggressive encroachments of the King on the liberties of the subject, and the supporters of that monarch.



Simon de Montfort, who was a Strood landowner, and possessed of other large properties in Kent, took the lead, followed by several other nobles, in the siege of Rochester. Their first obstacle was the fortified gate-house at the Strood end of Rochester Bridge, and for some time their efforts were in vain, till at length, by means of small ships filled with inflammable matter, set on fire and driven towards the centre of the wooden bridge, causing “actual or expected ignition of the timbers,” the King’s soldiers were dismayed and retreated. The Earl of Gloucester simultaneously reached the south end of the city, and the Barons took possession thereof, sacking the town, monastery, and Cathedral Church. The garrison of the Castle shut themselves up in the strong Norman Keep, and held it till relieved by Prince Edward, the King’s son.

The Castle was subsequently taken by Simon de Montfort after the Battle of Lewes (1264), where Henry III. was taken prisoner and brought to Rochester, and a Proclamation was issued transferring the custody of the Royal Castle to the Barons.

At the Battle of Evesham (1265) Simon de Montfort was slain; and the King, on becoming master of the situation, imposed a fine, equivalent to about £1,500 of our money, on Strood, because it was the headquarters of Simon during his assault on Rochester. The fine caused much ill-feeling

between the two towns, which lasted until the reign of Edward I. Such was Strood in the olden times.

Long years have since passed, and the amenities of an industrial age have succeeded to these turmoils. The town of Strood appears to be flourishing, and now possesses large engineering works, cement manufactories, flour mills, and other extensive industries.

Allusion has been previously made to a very entertaining *brochure*, entitled *Charles Dickens and Rochester*, by Mr. Robert Langton, F. R. Hist. Soc. of Manchester (himself, we believe, a Rochester man). In it there is scarcely any reference to Strood, although the sister-town, Chatham, is freely mentioned. Our enquiries at Strood, on the Tuesday and subsequently, resulted in the discovery of many most interesting memorials of Charles Dickens in connection with that town, enough almost to fill a small volume. There was a general impression that Dickens had no great liking for Strood, and yet it was a doctor from that town who was one of his most intimate friends, and who attended him in his last illness; it was a builder in Strood who executed most of the alterations and repairs at Gad's Hill Place; it was a Strood contractor who gave him the souvenir of old Rochester Bridge; it was at Strood that an eminent local scientist lived, who was incidentally, but very importantly, associated with him in the movement connected with the Guild of Literature and Art; and it was at a quiet roadside inn at Strood that he sometimes called to refresh himself after one of those long walks, alone or with friends, for which he was famous.

Let us reverse the order of the above, and give a recollection from the last-mentioned. The "Crispin and Crispianus" is a very old-fashioned inn, which stands on the north side of the London road just out of Strood, and was, as we were informed, erected some centuries ago. It is a long building, of brick below, with an overhanging upper floor and weather-boarded front, surmounted by a single dormer window. The sanded floor of the common parlour is, as the saying goes, "as clean as a new pin." Round the room is a settle terminating with arms at each side of the door, which is opposite the fireplace. Mrs. Masters, the cheerful and obliging landlady, who has lived here thirty years, describes Dickens to us (as we sit in the seat he used now and then to occupy), when on one of his walks, as habited in low shoes not over-well mended, loose large check-patterned trousers that sometimes got entangled in the shoes when walking, a brown coat thrown open, sometimes without waistcoat, a belt instead of braces, a necktie which now and then

got round towards his ear, and a large-brimmed felt hat, similar to an American's, set well at the back of his head. In his hand he carried by the middle an umbrella, which he was in the habit of constantly swinging, and if he had dogs (a not unfrequent occurrence), he had a small whip as well. He walked in the middle of the road at a rapid pace, upright, but with his eyes cast down as if in deep thought. When he called at the Crispin for refreshment, usually a glass of ale (mild sixpenny — bitter ale was not drawn in those days), or a little cold brandy and water, he walked straight in, and sat down at the corner of the settle on the right-hand side where the arm is, opposite the fire-place; he rarely spoke to any one, but looked round as though taking in everything at a glance. (In *David Copperfield* he says, "I looked at nothing, that I know of, but I saw everything.") Once he and a friend were sheltering there during a thunderstorm (by a coincidence, a storm occurs at the time we are here), and while Dickens stood looking out of the window he saw opposite a poor woman with a baby, who appeared very worn, wet, and travel-stained. She too was sheltering from the rain.

"Call her in here," said Dickens. Mrs. Masters obeyed.

"Now," said he, "draw her some brandy."

"How much?" she asked.

"Never mind," he answered, "draw her some."

The landlady drew her four-pennyworth, the quantity generally served

"Now," said Dickens to the woman, "drink that up," which she did, and soon seemed refreshed. Dickens gave her a shilling, and remarked to Mrs. Masters that "now she will go on her way rejoicing." The story is a trivial one, but the units make the aggregate, and it sufficiently indicates his kindness of heart and thoughtfulness for others.

In some of his walks Dickens was accompanied either by his sister-in-law, Miss Hogarth, or by friends who were staying at "Gad's" (or the "Place," as it was sometimes called). Mrs. Masters, whose recollections of Dickens are very vivid, said — "Lor! we never thought much about him when he was alive; it was only when his death took place that we understood what a great man he was." Alas! it is not the first instance that "a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." The news of his death was a great shock to Mrs. Masters, who heard of it from Edward, son of Mr. W. S. Trood, the landlord of the Sir John Falstaff, as he was bearing the intelligence to Rochester within half-an-hour after the event.

In passing we should mention, that the Crispin and Crispianus has been immortalized in the chapter on “Tramps,” in *The Uncommercial Traveller*, where, in reference to the handicrafts of certain tramps, Dickens imagines himself to be a travelling clockmaker, and after adjusting “t’ould clock” in the keeper’s kitchen, “he sees to something wrong with the bell of the turret stable clock up at the Hall [Cobham Hall]. . . . Our task at length accomplished, we should be taken into an enormous servants’-hall, and there regaled with beef and bread, and powerful ale. Then, paid freely, we should be at liberty to go, and should be told by a pointing helper to keep round over yinder by the blasted ash, and so straight through the woods till we should see the town-lights right afore us. . . . So should we lie that night at the ancient sign of the Crispin and Crispianus [at Strood], and rise early next morning to be betimes on tramp again.”

We are also indebted to Mrs. Masters for an introduction to our next informant, Mr. J. Couchman, master-builder and undertaker of Strood, who, though advanced in years and tried by illness, is very free and chatty; and from him and his son we obtained some interesting facts. He had worked for Charles Dickens at Gad’s Hill Place, from the date of his going there (“which,” says Mr. Couchman, “was on Whitsun Monday, 1856,”) until the 11th June, 1870, two days after the sad occurrence “which eclipsed the gaiety of nations.”

From Mr. Couchman’s standpoint as a tradesman, it is interesting to record his experience of Dickens in his own words. “Mr. Dickens,” he says, “was always very straightforward, honourable, and kind, and paid his bills most regularly. The first work I did for him was to make a dog-kennel; I also put up the châlet at Gad’s Hill. When it was forwarded from London, which was by water, Mr. Fechter [whose name he did not at first remember] sent a Frenchman to assist in the erection. The châlet consisted of ninety-four pieces, all fitting accurately together like a puzzle. The Frenchman did not understand it, and could not make out the fitting of the pieces. So I asked Mr. Henry [Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens, the novelist’s sixth son, the present Recorder of Deal] if he understood French. He said ‘Yes,’ and told me the names of the different pieces, and I managed it without the Frenchman, who stayed the night, and went away next day.” In conversation, we suggest that the circumstance of the châlet having been made in Switzerland may have embarrassed the Frenchman, he not having been accustomed to that kind of work. In his letter to Forster of the 7th

June, 1865, Dickens says: — "The chalet is going on excellently, though the ornamental part is more slowly put together than the substantial. It will really be a very pretty thing; and in the summer (supposing it not to be blown away in the spring), the upper room will make a charming study. It is much higher than we supposed."

Mr. Couchman also took down the chalet after Charles Dickens's death, and erected it at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, where it remained for a short time, and was subsequently presented to the Earl of Darnley by several members of the Dickens family. His lordship afterwards ordered him to fit it up at Cobham Hall, where, as previously stated, it now stands. The woods of which it is constructed he believed to be Baltic oak and a kind of pine, the lighter parts being of maple or sycamore. We saw it subsequently.

Several contracts were entered into by Mr. Couchman with Charles Dickens for the extension and modification of Gad's Hill Place, notably during the year 1861. We are favoured with a sight of an original specification signed by both parties, which is as follows: —

"Specification of works proposed to be done at Gad's Hill House, Higham, for C. Dickens, Esq.

"*Bricklayer.* — To take off slates and copings and heighten brick walls and chimneys, and build No. 2 new chimneys with stock and picking bricks laid in cement. No. 2 chimney bars, to cope gable ends with old stone. No. 2 hearthstones. No. 2 plain stone chimney-pieces. No. 2 — 2 ft. 6 in. Register stoves. To lath and plaster ceiling, side walls, and partitions with lime and hair two coats, and set to slate the new roof with good countess slates and metal nails.

"*Carpenter.* — To take off roof, to lay floor joist with 7 × 2½ in. yellow battens; to fix roof, ceiling, joist and partitions of good fir timber, 4 ft. × 2 ft.; to use old timber that is sound and fit for use; to close board roof, lead flat and gutters; to lay 1 in. × 9 in. white deal floors, to skirt rooms with 8 in. × ¾ in. deal; to fix No. 4 pairs of 1¾ in. sashes and frames for plate-glass as per order. *All the sashes to have weights and pulleys for opening.* To fix No. 2 — 6 ft. 6 in. × 2 ft. 6 in. 1½ in., four panel doors, and encase frames with all necessary mouldings; to fix window linings, and 1½ in. square framings and doors for No. 2 dressing-rooms; to fix No. 2, 7 in. rim locks. No. 2 box latches, sash fastenings, sash weights, to fix 4 in. O. G. iron eaves, gutter with cistern heads, and 3 in. iron leading pipes.

“Plumber, Glazier, and Painter. — To take up old lead guttering, and lay new gutters and lead flats with 6lb. lead, ridge and flushings with 5lb. lead; to paint all wood and iron-work that requires painting 4 coats in oil, the windows to be glazed with good plate glass; to paper rooms and landings when the walls are dry with paper of the value of 1s. 6d. per piece, the old lead to be the property of the plumber. The two cisterns to be carried up and replaced on new roof, the pipes attached to them to be lengthened as required by the alterations; and a water tap to be fitted in each dressing-room.

“All old materials not used and rubbish to be carted away by the contractor. All the work to be completed in a sound and workman-like manner to the satisfaction of C. Dickens, Esq., for the sum of £241. The roof to be slated and flat covered with lead in one month from commencing the work. The whole to be completed — paper excepted — and all rubbish cleared away by the 30th day of November, 1861.

“(Signed) J. Couchman,

“Builder.

“*High Street, Strood,*

“*Sep. 10th, 1861.*”

Then follows in Dickens’s own handwriting: —

“The above contract I accept on the stipulated conditions; the specified time, in common with all the other conditions, to be strictly observed.

“(Signed) Charles Dickens.

“Gad’s Hill Place,

“Saturday, 21st Sep., 1861.”

What is most interesting to notice in the above specification, is the careful way in which Dickens appears to have mastered all the details, and the very sensible interlineations given in italics which he made, (1) as to the sashes and weights, (2) as to the two cisterns, and especially (3) in the final memorandum as to *time*.

It is also worthy of remark, that the work *was* completed in the specified time, the bill duly sent in, and the next day Dickens sent a cheque for the amount.

Another contract, amounting to £393, was executed by Mr. Couchman, for extensions at Gad’s Hill. On its completion, Mr. Dickens paid him by two cheques. He went up to London to the Bank (Coutts’s in the Strand) to cash them. The clerk just looked at the cheques, the signature apparently

being very familiar to him, and then put the usual question — "How will you have it?" to which he replied, "Notes, please."

It appears that, as is frequently the case in large establishments, orders were sometimes given by the servants for work which the master knew nothing about until the bill was presented; and to prevent this, Dickens issued instructions to the tradesmen that they were not to execute any work for him without his written authority. The following is an illustration of this new arrangement: —

"Gad's Hill Place,

"Higham by Rochester, Kent.

"*Thursday, 5th Nov., 1858.*

"Mr. Couchman,

"Please to ease the coach-house doors, and to put up some pegs, agreeably to George Belcher's directions.

"Charles Dickens."

It should be mentioned that George Belcher was the coachman at the time.

Mr. Couchman recalls an interesting custom that was maintained at Gad's Hill. There were a number of tin check plates, marked respectively *3d.* and *6d.* each, which enabled the person to whom they were given to obtain an equivalent in refreshment of any kind at the Sir John Falstaff. The threepenny checks were for the workmen, and the sixpenny ones for the tradesmen. The chief housemaid had the distribution of these checks to persons employed in the house, the head-gardener to those engaged in the gardens, and the coachman to those in the stables. On one occasion, our informant remembers when his men were engaged upon some work at Gad's Hill, such checks were given out to them, and that he also had one offered to him; but, recollecting that his position as a master scarcely entitled him to the privilege, he stated his objections to the housemaid, who said in reply that it was a pity to break an old custom, he had better have one. "So," says our informant, "I had a sixpenny ticket with the others, and obtained my refreshment."

He has in his photographic album a *carte-de-visite* of Charles Dickens, by Watkins. It is the well-known one in which the novelist is represented in a sitting position, dressed in a grey suit; and the owner considered it a very good likeness. He also showed us a funeral card which he thought had been sent to him by the family of Dickens at the time of his death, but judging by

its contents, this seems impossible. It is, however, well worth transcribing:

To the Memory of
Charles Dickens
(England's most popular author),
who died at his Residence,
Higham, near Rochester, Kent,
June 9th, 1870.
Aged 58 years.

He was a sympathizer with the poor, suffering, and oppressed; and by his death one of England's greatest writers is lost to the world.

Mr. Couchman confirms the verbal sketch of Dickens as drawn by his neighbour, Mrs. Masters, and states that Dickens used to put up his dogs ("Linda" and "Turk"), "boisterous companions as they always were," in the stables whenever he came to see him on business.

Mr. William Ball, J.P., of Hillside, Strood, kindly favoured us with many interviews, and generally took great interest in the subject of our visit to "Dickens-Land," rendering invaluable assistance in our enquiries. This gentleman is the son of Mr. John H. Ball, the well-known contractor, who removed old Rochester Bridge; he is also a brother-in-law of the late gifted tenor, Mr. Joseph Maas, to whom a handsome memorial tablet, consisting of a marble medallion of the deceased, over which is a lyre with one of the strings broken, has since been erected on the east wall of the south transept of Rochester Cathedral. By Mr. Ball's considerate courtesy and that of his daughters, we are allowed to see many interesting relics of Charles Dickens and Gad's Hill. When Mr. Ball's father removed the old bridge in 1859, it will be remembered that he offered to present the novelist with one of the balustrades as a souvenir, the offer being gracefully and promptly accepted, as the following letter testifies: —

"Gad's Hill Place,
"Higham by Rochester, Kent.
"Thursday, eighth June, 1859.
"Sir,

"I feel exceedingly obliged to you for your kind and considerate offer of a remembrance of old Rochester Bridge; that will interest me very much. I

accept the relic with many thanks, and with great pleasure.

“Do me the favor to let it be delivered to a workman who will receive instructions to bring it away, and once again accept my acknowledgments.

“Yours faithfully,

“Charles Dickens.

“Mr. John H. Ball.”

The present Mr. William Ball, then a young lad, was the bearer of the gift, and on being asked by us why he didn't ask to see the great novelist, replies, “Yes, I ought to have done so, but I was afraid of the dogs!”

The balustrade, which was placed on the back lawn at Gad's Hill, was mounted on a square pedestal, on the sides of which were representations of the four seasons, and a sun-dial crowned the capital. Something like it, but a little modified, appears in one of Mr. Luke Fildes's beautiful illustrations to the original edition of *Edwin Drood*, entitled “Jasper's Sacrifices.” Three more of the balustrades now ornament Mr. Ball's garden at Hillside.

Mr. Ball the elder was invited to send in a tender for the construction of the tunnel at Gad's Hill previously mentioned, but it was not accepted, as appears from a letter addressed to him by Mr. Alfred L. Dickens (Charles Dickens's brother), of which we are allowed to take a copy: —

“8, Richmond Terrace,

“Whitehall, S.W.

“August 30th, 1859.

“Dear Sir,

“I am very sorry that absence from home has prevented my replying to your note as to the tender for the Gad's Hill tunnel before.

“I much regret that the amount of your tender is so much higher than my estimate, that I cannot recommend my brother to accept it.

“I am,

“Dear Sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“Alfred L. Dickens.

“Mr. Ball.”

Among the Dickens relics at Hillside, we are shown by Mr. Ball the pretty set of five silver bells presented by his friend Mr. F. Lehmann, to the novelist, who always used them when driving out in his basket ponyphaeton. They are fastened on to a leather pad, and make a pleasant musical sound when shaken. They are of graduated sizes, the largest being

somewhat smaller than a tennis-ball, and appear to be in the key of C: comprising the Tonic, Third, Fifth, Octave, and Octave of the Third.

There is also a hall clock with maker's name — "Bennett, Cheapside, London." This was the "werry identical" clock respecting which Dickens wrote the following characteristically humorous letter to Sir John Bennett:

—
"My Dear Sir,

"Since my hall clock was sent to your establishment to be cleaned it has gone (as indeed it always had) perfectly well, but has struck the hours with great reluctance, and after enduring internal agonies of a most distressing nature, it has now ceased striking altogether. Though a happy release for the clock, this is not convenient to the household. If you can send down any confidential person with whom the clock can confer, I think it may have something on its works that it would be glad to make a clean breast of.

"Faithfully yours,

"Charles Dickens."

Included among the relics are a very handsome mahogany fire-screen in three folds, of red morocco, with Grecian key-border, a musical Canterbury, and a bookcase. But the most interesting object from an art point of view is an India proof copy, "before letters," of Sir Edwin Landseer's beautiful picture of "King Charles's Spaniels," the original of which is said to have been painted for the late Mr. Vernon in two days, and is now in the National Gallery. The engraving of the picture is by Outram. It has the initials in pencil "E. L.," and a little ticket on the frame — "Lot 445," that being the number in the auctioneer's catalogue.

The following is the story as recently told by Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A., in his most interesting and readable *Autobiography and Reminiscences*, 1887: —

"His" [Sir Edwin's] "rapidity of execution was extraordinary. In the National Gallery there is a picture of Two Spaniels, of what is erroneously called the Charles II. breed (the real dog of that time is of a different form and breed altogether, as may be seen in pictures of the period), the size of life, with appropriate accompaniments, painted by him in two days. An empty frame had been sent to the British Institution, where it was hung on the wall, waiting for its tenant — a picture of a lady with dogs — till Landseer felt the impossibility of finishing the picture satisfactorily. Time had passed, till two days only remained before the opening of the

Exhibition. Something must be done; and in the time named those wonderfully life-like little dogs were produced.”

Mr. Ball has also an interesting photograph of the “Last Lot,” some bottles of wine, evidently taken on the occasion of the sale at Gad’s Hill Place after Dickens’s death, the auctioneer being represented with his hammer raised ready to fall, and a smile upon his face. Among the crowd, consisting principally of London and local dealers, may be seen two local policemen with peaked caps, and auctioneer’s porters in shirt-sleeves and aprons. The sale took place in a large tent at the back of the house and close to the well, which can be readily seen through an opening in the tent.

The next person whom we meet at Strood is Mr. Charles Roach Smith, F.S.A., the eminent archæologist, who has achieved a European reputation, and from whom we get many interesting particulars relating to Dickens. We heard some idle gossip at Rochester to the effect that Mr. Roach Smith always felt a little “touchy” about the satire on archæology in *Pickwick*, in re “Bill Stumps, his mark.” That, however, we took *cum grano salis*, because this gentleman, from his delightful conversation and frank manner, is evidently above any such littleness. He is, however, free to confess, that Dickens had not much love for Strood, but infinitely preferred Chatham.

There had been but little personal intercourse between Dickens and Mr. Roach Smith, though each respected the other. Our informant says that, soon after the novelist came to Gad’s Hill Place, Mrs. Dickens called and left her husband’s card, which he, whether rightly or not, took as an intimation that the acquaintance was not to be extended. He spoke with all the enthusiasm of a man of science, and rather bitterly too, of a certain reading given by Dickens at Chatham to an overflowing house, whereas on the same evening a distinguished Professor of Agriculture (a Mr. Roberts or Robinson, we believe), who came to instruct the people at Ashford (one of the neighbouring towns) by means of a lecture, failed to secure an audience, and only got a few pence for admissions. The learned Professor subsequently poured forth his troubles to Mr. Roach Smith, from whom he obtained sympathy and hospitality. We venture to remind our good friend that the public in general much prefer amusement to instruction, at which he laughs, and says that in this matter he perfectly agrees with us. He expresses his strong opinion as to Dickens’s reading of the “Murder of Nancy” (*Oliver Twist*), which he characterizes as “repulsive and indecent.”

The most important communication made to us by Mr. Roach Smith is that contained in volume ii. of his recently published *Reminiscences and Retrospections, Social and Archæological*, 1886. As this interesting work may not be generally accessible, it is as well to quote the passage intact. It has reference to the Guild of Literature and Art, for the promotion of which Dickens, Lord Lytton, John Forster, Mark Lemon, John Leech, and others, gave so much valuable time and energy, in addition to liberal pecuniary support. The following is the extract: —

“Of Mr. Dodd I knew much. He was one of my earliest friends when I lived in Liverpool Street — I may say, one of my earliest patrons; and the intimacy continued up to his death, a few years since. The story of his connection with the movement for a dramatic college, and of his rapid separation from it, a deposition by order of the projectors and directors, forms a curious episode in the history of our friendship; and especially so, as I had an important, though unseen, part to sustain.

“In the summer of 1858 I was summoned to Mr. Dodd’s residence at the City Wharf, New North Road, Hoxton, to give consent to be a trustee, with Messrs. Cobden and Bright, for five acres of land, which Mr. Dodd was about to give for the building of a dramatic college, which had been resolved on at a public meeting, held on the 21st of July in this year, in the Princess’s Theatre, Mr. Charles Kean acting as chairman. ‘I give this most freely,’ said Mr. Dodd to me, ‘for it is to the stage I am indebted for my education; to it I owe whatsoever may be good in me.’ That there was much good in him, thousands can testify; and thousands yet to come will be evidence to his benevolence. Of course, I felt pleased in being selected to act as a trustee for this gift. I conceived, and I suppose I was correct, that Mr. Dodd intended that his gift was strictly for a dramatic college, and for no other purpose, then or thereafter. Having expressed my willingness and resolution to be faithful to the trust, I said, ‘I presume, Mr. Dodd, you stipulate for a presentation?’ He looked rather surprised; and asked his solicitor, who sat by him, how they came to overlook this? Both of them directly agreed that this simple return should be required.

“I must leave such of my readers as feel inclined, to search in the public journals for the correspondence between the directors and Mr. Dodd up to the 13th of January, 1859, when, at a meeting held in the Adelphi Theatre, Lord Tenterden in the chair, it was stated that Mr. Dodd evinced, through his solicitor, a disposition to fence round his gift with legal restrictions and

stipulations, which apprised the committee of coming difficulty; and the meeting unanimously agreed to decline Mr. Dodd's offer of land. Previously and subsequently to this, Mr. Dodd was most discourteously commented on and attacked in the newspapers, the editors of which, however, sided with him. I was told that the stipulation for a presentation was the great offence; but I should think that the provision made against the improper use of the land must have been the real grievance. In the very last letter I received from Mr. Dodd, not very long anterior to his death, he says that Mark Lemon told him that Charles Dickens had said he had never occasion to repent but of two things, one being his conduct to Mr. Dodd. That Dickens, Thackeray, and others sincerely believed they were taking the best steps for accomplishing their benevolent object, there can be no doubt; their judgment, not their heart, was wrong. The scheme was based upon a wrong principle, as was shown by its collapse in less than twenty years, after the expenditure of very large subscriptions, and the patronage of the Queen. Articles in *The Era* of the 22nd July, 1877, leave no doubt, while they clearly reveal the causes of failure."

It may be mentioned that the Mr. Henry Dodd above referred to, appears to have been a large city contractor, or something of that kind. According to Mr. Roach Smith, what with him led on to fortune was a long and heavy fall of snow, which had filled the streets of the city of London, and rendered traffic impossible. The city was blocked by snow, and there was no remedy at hand. Mr. Dodd boldly undertook a contract to remove the mighty obstruction in a given time. This he did thoroughly and within the limited number of days. Afterwards he appears to have undertaken brick-making and other works on a very large scale. In the opinion of Mr. Roach Smith, Mr. Dodd was the origin of the "golden dustman" in *Our Mutual Friend*, whom every reader of Dickens remembers as Mr. Nicodemus, *alias* Noddy Boffin.

Speaking of Dickens's readings, our informant relates a conversation with Charles Dickens's sixth son, Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens. The former gentleman asked the latter whose model he took?

"Oh, my father's," said Mr. Henry Dickens. "I would not take any man's model," said Mr. Roach Smith, "I would take my own." And judging from the perfect intonation and thoroughly musical rhythm of his voice, there is no doubt whatever that his model, whoever it may have been, was one of very high standard.

We have since learnt that Mr. Roach Smith is the President of the Strood Elocution Society, an almost unique institution of its kind. It has been established upwards of thirteen years; and at the weekly meetings “the various readers are subjected to an exhaustive and salutary criticism by the members present.” Mr. Roach Smith has always taken immense interest in the progress of this Society. Miss Dickens occasionally helped at the above meetings.

Mr. Roach Smith kindly favours us with the following extract from the third and forthcoming volume of his *Retrospections* with reference to the late Mr. J. H. Ball, of Strood, which may appropriately be here introduced:

“Although I have said that I was the gainer by our acquaintance, yet now and then I had a chance of serving him. Soon after the death of the great novelist, Charles Dickens, and when people were speculating as to what would become of his residence at Gad’s Hill, Mr. Ball, wishing to purchase it, commissioned me to call on the executrix, Miss Hogarth, and offer ten thousand pounds, for which he had written a cheque. I accordingly went, and sent in my card. Miss Hogarth, fortunately, could not see me; she was hastening to catch the train for London, the carriage being at the door, and not a moment to be lost; but she would be happy to see me on her return in a day or two. I then wrote to Mr. Forster, the other executor; and received a reply that the place was not for sale. I kept him ignorant of the sum that Mr. Ball was willing to give, and thus saved my friend some thousands of pounds, . . . for the house and land were not worth half the money.”



After some further conversation with our kind octogenarian friend, who insists on showing us hospitality notwithstanding his sufferings from a trying illness, we take our departure with many pleasant memories of our visit.

We have, after one or two unsuccessful attempts, the good fortune to meet with Mr. Stephen Steele, M.R.C.S. and L.S.A., of Bridge House, Esplanade, Strood, who was admitted a member of the medical profession so far back as the year 1831, and has therefore been in practice nearly sixty years. It will be remembered that this experienced surgeon was sent for by Miss Hogarth, to see Dickens in his last illness. He is good enough to go over and describe to us in graphic and sympathetic language the whole of the circumstances attending that sorrowful event. Previously to doing so, he gives us some interesting details of his recollections of Charles Dickens. Dr. Steele had occupied the onerous post of Chairman of the Liberal Association at Rochester for thirty years, and believes that in politics Dickens was a Liberal, for he frequently prefaced his remarks in conversation with him on any subject of passing interest by the expression, "We Liberals, you know —"



As a matter of fact, Dickens discharged his conscience of his political creed in the remarks which followed his address as President of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, delivered 27th September, 1869, when he said — "My political creed is contained in two articles, and has no reference to any party or persons. My faith in the 'people governing' is, on the whole, infinitesimal; my faith in the 'people governed' is, on the whole, illimitable." At a subsequent visit to Birmingham on the 6th January, 1870, when giving out the prizes at the Institute, he further emphasized his political faith in these words: — "When I was here last autumn, I made a short confession of my political faith — or perhaps, I should better say, want of faith. It imported that I have very little confidence in the people who govern us — please to observe 'people' with a small 'p,' — but I have very great confidence in the People whom they govern — please to observe 'People' with a large 'P.'"

A few days after Charles Dickens's first visit, my friend Mr. Howard S. Pearson, Lecturer on English Literature at the Institute, addressed a letter to him on the subject of the remarks at the conclusion of his Presidential Address, and promptly received in reply the following communication, which Mr. Pearson kindly allows me to print, emphasizing his (Dickens's) observations: —

“Gad’s Hill Place,
“Higham by Rochester, Kent.
“*Wednesday, 6th October, 1869.*

“Sir,

“You are perfectly right in your construction of my meaning at Birmingham. If a capital P be put to the word People in its second use in the sentence, and not in its first, I should suppose the passage next to impossible to be mistaken, even if it were read without any reference to the whole spirit of my speech and the whole tenor of my writings.

“Faithfully yours,

“Charles Dickens.

“H. S. Pearson, Esquire.”

Dr. Steele had dined several times at Gad’s Hill Place, and was impressed with Dickens’s wonderful powers as a host. He never absorbed the whole of the conversation to himself, but listened attentively when his guests were speaking, and endeavoured, as it were, to draw out any friends who were not generally talkative. He liked each one to chat about his own hobby in which he took most interest. Our informant was also present at Gad’s Hill Place at several theatrical entertainments, and especially remembers some charades being given. After the performance of the latter was over, Dickens walked round among his guests in the drawing-room, and enquired if any one could guess the “word.” Says the doctor, “We never seemed to do so, but there was always a hearty laugh when we were told what it was. There was a good deal of company at Gad’s Hill at Christmas time.”

À propos of private theatricals at Gad’s Hill Place, Mr. T. Edgar Pemberton, in *Charles Dickens and the Stage*, calls attention to the fact that “Mr. Clarkson Stanfield’s *Lighthouse Act* drop subsequently decorated the walls of Gad’s Hill Place; and although it took the painter less than a couple of days to execute, fetched a thousand guineas at the famous Dickens Sale in 1870.” A cloth painted for *The Frozen Deep*, which was the next and last of these productions, also had a foremost place in the Gad’s Hill picture-gallery.

Dr. Steele mentions a conversation once with Dickens about Gad’s Hill and Shakespeare’s description of it. He (the doctor) considers that Shakespeare could not have described it so accurately if he had not been there, and Dickens agreed with him in this opinion. Possibly he may have stayed at the “Plough,” which was an inn on the same spot as, or close to,

the “Falstaff.” The place must have been much wooded at that time, and Shakespeare might have been there on his way to Dover. A note in the *Rochester and Chatham Journal*, 1883, states that “Shakespeare’s company made a tour in Sussex and Kent in the summer of 1597.”

Dr. Steele, in common with his friend Charles Dickens, strongly deprecated the action of certain parties in Rochester, by voting at a public meeting something to this effect: — ”That the Theatre was an irreligious kind of institution, and, in the opinion of the meeting, it ought to be closed.”

The doctor observes that Dickens was not much of a Church-goer. He went occasionally to Higham, and used to give the vicar assistance for the poor and distressed. Dickens and Miss Hogarth asked Dr. Steele to point out objects of charity worthy of relief, and they gave him money for distribution.

He remarks that Dickens did not care much about associating with the local residents, going out to dinners, &c. Most of the principal people of Rochester would have been glad of the honour of his presence as a guest, but he rarely accepted invitations, preferring the quietude of home.

As regards readings, our informant says he is under the impression that Dickens must have had some lessons or hints from some one of experience (possibly his friend Fechter, the actor), as he noticed from time to time a regular improvement, which was permanently maintained. On the subject of the American War, he thinks Dickens’s sympathies were decidedly with the South. With respect to the American Readings, Dr. Steele expresses his opinion that the excitement, fatigue, and worry consequent thereon had considerably shortened Dickens’s life, if it had not pretty well killed him. He considered him a most genial sort of man; “he always looked you straight in the face when speaking.”

Before referring to the closing chapter in Dickens’s life, we have some interesting talk respecting Venesection, — *à propos* of that memorable occasion on the ice at Dingley Dell, when “Mr. Benjamin Allen was holding a hurried consultation with Mr. Bob Sawyer on the advisability of bleeding the company generally, as an improving little bit of professional practice,” — and Dr. Steele gives us his opinion thereon, and on some points connected with the medical profession. He was a student of Guy’s and St. Thomas’s Hospitals, and was under the distinguished physicians Drs. Addison and Elliotson. He considered the characters of Bob Sawyer and Ben Allen not at all overdrawn. They were good representations of the

medical students of those days. He believed the practice of Venesection commenced to be general about the year 1811, for his father was a medical practitioner before him, and he does not remember his (the father's) telling him that he practised it before that time. Says our friend, "We used to bleed regularly in my young days, and in cases of pneumonia and convulsions we never thought of omitting to bleed. We should have considered that to have done so would have been a grave instance of irregular practice. And," he adds, "I bleed in cases of convulsions now." The doctor did not think well of the change at the time, but, speaking generally, he says Venesection had had its turn, and has now given place to other treatment.

The events in connection with the fatal illness of Dickens are then touchingly related as follows: —

"I was sent for on Wednesday, the eighth of June, 1870, to attend at Gad's Hill Place, and arrived about 6.30 p.m. I found Dickens lying on the floor of the dining-room in a fit. He was unconscious, and never moved. The servants brought a couch down, on which he was placed. I applied clysters and other remedies to the patient without effect. Miss Hogarth, his sister-in-law, had already sent a telegram (by the same messenger on horseback who summoned me) to his old friend and family doctor, Mr. Frank Beard, who arrived about midnight. He relieved me in attendance at that time, and I came again in the morning. There was unhappily no change in the symptoms, and stertorous breathing, which had commenced before, now continued. In conversation Miss Hogarth and the family expressed themselves perfectly satisfied with the attendance of Mr. Beard and myself. I said, 'That may be so, and we are much obliged for your kind opinion; but we have a duty to perform, not only to you, my dear madam, and the family of Mr. Dickens, but also to the public. What will the public say if we allow Charles Dickens to pass away without further medical assistance? Our advice is to send for Dr. Russell Reynolds.' Mr. Beard first made the suggestion.

"The family reiterated their expression of perfect satisfaction with the treatment of Mr. Beard and myself, but immediately gave way, Dr. Russell Reynolds was sent for, and came in the course of the day. This eminent physician without hesitation pronounced the case to be hopeless. He said at once on seeing him, 'He cannot live.' And so it proved. At a little past 6 o'clock on Thursday, the 9th of June, 1870, Charles Dickens passed quietly away without a word — about twenty-four hours after the seizure."



Such is the simple narrative which the kind-hearted octogenarian surgeon, whom it is a delightful pleasure to meet and converse with, communicates to us, and then cordially wishes us “good-bye.”

* * * * *

There is an annual pleasure fair at Strood, instituted, it is said, so far back as the reign of Edward III. It takes place during three days in the last week of August, and as it is going on while we are on our tramp, we just look in for a few minutes, the more especially as we were informed by Mr. William Ball, and others who had seen him, that Dickens used to be very fond of going there at times in an appropriate disguise, where perhaps he may have seen the prototype of the famous “Doctor Marigold.” The fair is now held on a large piece of waste ground near the Railway Station. There are the usual set-out of booths, “Aunt Sallies,” shooting-galleries, “Try your weight and strength, gentlemen” machines, a theatre, with a tragedy and comedy both performed in about an hour, and hot-sausage and gingerbread stalls in abundance. But the deafening martial music poured forth from a barrel-organ by means of a steam-engine, belonging to the proprietor of a huge “Merry-go-round,” and the wet and muddy condition of the ground from the effects of the recent thunderstorm, make us glad to get away.

A MYSTERIOUS DICKENS-ITEM.

Mr. C. D. Levy, Auctioneer, etc., of Strood, was good enough to lend me what at first sight, and indeed for some time afterwards, was supposed to be a most unique Dickens-item. It came into his possession in this way. At the sale of Charles Dickens's furniture and effects, which took place at Gad's Hill in 1870, Mr. Levy was authorized by a customer to purchase Dickens's writing-desk, which, however, he was unable to secure. In transferring the desk to the purchaser at the time of the sale, a few old and torn papers tumbled out, and being considered of no value, were disregarded and scattered. One of these scraps was picked up by Mr. Levy, and proved on further examination to be a sheet of headed note-paper having the stamp of "Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent." — On the first page were a few rough sketches drawn with pen and ink, which greatly resembled some of the characters in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* — Durdles, Jasper, and Edwin Drood. At the side was a curious row of capital letters looking like a puzzle. On the second and third pages were short-hand notes, and on the fourth page a few lines written in long-hand, continued on the next page, — wonderfully like Charles Dickens's own handwriting, — being the commencement of a speech with reference to a cricket match. The sheet of paper had evidently been made to do double duty, for after the sketches had been drawn on the front page, the sheet was put aside, and when used again was turned over, so that what ordinarily would have been page 4 became page 1 for the second object. No "Daniel" in Strood or Rochester had ever been able to decipher the mysterious hieroglyphics, or make known the interpretation thereof, during twenty years, or give any explanation of the sketches. But everybody thought that in some way or other they related to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* — and possibly contained a clue to the solution of that exquisite fragment. So, as a student and admirer of Dickens, Mr. Levy kindly left the matter in my hands to make out what I could of it. Reference was accordingly had to several learned pundits in the short-hand systems of "Pitman," "Odell," and "Harding," but without avail; and eventually Mr. Gurney Archer, of 20, Abingdon Street, Westminster (successor to the old-established and eminent firm of Messrs. W. B. Gurney and Sons, who have been the short-hand writers to the House of Lords from time immemorial), kindly transcribed the short-hand notes, which referred to a speech relating to a cricket match, a portion of which had already been

written out in long-hand, as above stated, — but there was not a word in the short-hand about Edwin Drood!

So far, one portion of the mystery had been explained — not so the sketches, which were still believed to contain the key to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. As a *dernier ressort*, application was made to the fountain-head — to Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A., the famous illustrator of that beautiful work. He received me most courteously, scrutinized the document closely; we had a long chat about Edwin Drood generally, the substance of which has been given in a previous chapter — but he admitted that the sketches failed to give any solution of the mystery.

The document was subsequently sent by Mr. Kitton to Mrs. Perugini, who at once replied that it had caused some merriment when she saw it again, as she remembered it very well. It had been done by her brother, Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens, when a young man living at home at Gad's Hill — that the short-hand notes referred to his speech at a dinner after one of the numerous cricket matches held there, and that the sketches were rough portraits of some of the cricketers. The capital letters at the side referred to a double acrostic. The heads of the speech had been suggested by his father as being desirable to be brought before the cricket club, which at that time was in a rather drooping condition.

Now although the original theory about this curious document entirely broke down, and not an atom has been added to what was already known about *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, still there is one subject of much interest which the document has brought to light. The short-hand is the same system, "Gurney's," as that which Charles Dickens wrote as a reporter in his early newspaper days — a system not generally used now, but which he subsequently taught his son to write. Of the many sheets which Dickens covered with notes in days gone by not one remains. But there are two manuscripts by Dickens in Gurney's system of short-hand, now in the Dyce and Forster collection at South Kensington, which relate to some private matters in connection with publishing arrangements. The document is certainly interesting from this point of view (*i. e.* the system which Dickens used), and from its reference to life at Gad's Hill, and especially to cricket, the favourite game mentioned many times in this book, in which the novelist took so much interest. Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens, with whom I had on another occasion some conversation on the subject of this souvenir of his youth at Gad's Hill, remarked that many more important issues had

hung upon much more slender evidence. It was done about the year 1865-6, before he went to college.

At our interview Mr. H. F. Dickens told me the details of the following touching incident which happened at one of the cricket matches at Gad's Hill. His father was as usual attired in flannels, acting as umpire and energetically taking the score of the game, when there came out from among the bystanders a tall, grizzled, and sun-burnt Sergeant of the Guards. The Sergeant walked straight up to Mr. Dickens, saying, "May I look at you, sir?" "Oh, yes!" said the novelist, blushing up to the eyes. The Sergeant gazed intently at him for a minute or so, then stood at attention, gave the military salute, and said, "God bless you, sir." He then walked off and was seen no more. In recounting this anecdote, Mr. H. F. Dickens agreed with me that, reading between the lines, one can almost fancy some lingering reminiscences similar to those in the early experience of Private Richard Doubledick.

CHAPTER IX.

CHATHAM: — ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ORDNANCE TERRACE, THE HOUSE ON THE BROOK, THE MITRE HOTEL, AND FORT PITT. LANDPORT: — PORTSEA, HANTS.

“The home of his infancy, to which his heart had yearned with an intensity of affection not to be described.” — *The Pickwick Papers*.

“I believe the power of observation in numbers of very young children to be quite wonderful for its closeness and accuracy. Indeed, I think that most grown men who are remarkable in this respect, may, with greater propriety, be said not to have lost the faculty than to have acquired it; the rather, as I generally observe such men to retain a certain freshness, and gentleness, and capacity of being pleased, which are also an inheritance they have preserved from their childhood.” — *David Copperfield*.

The naval and military town of Chatham, unlike the Cathedral city of Rochester, has, at first sight, few attractions for the lover of Dickens. Mr. Phillips Bevan calls it “a dirty, unpleasant town devoted to the interests of soldiers, sailors, and marines.” We are not disposed to agree entirely with him; but we must admit that it has little of the picturesque to recommend it — no venerable Castle or Cathedral to attract attention, no scenes in the novels of much importance to visit, no characters therein of much interest to identify. Mr. Pickwick's own description of the four towns of Strood, Rochester, Chatham, and Brompton, certainly applies more nearly to Chatham than to the others; but things have improved in many ways since the days of that veracious chronicler, as we are glad to testify: —

“The principal productions of these towns,” says Mr. Pickwick, “appear to be soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers, and dockyard men. The commodities chiefly exposed for sale in the public streets are marine stores, hard-bake, apples, flat-fish, and oysters. The streets present a lively and animated appearance, occasioned chiefly by the conviviality of the military. . . .

“The consumption of tobacco in these towns,” continues Mr. Pickwick, “must be very great; and the smell which pervades the streets must be exceedingly delicious to those who are extremely fond of smoking. A superficial traveller might object to the dirt, which is their leading characteristic; but to those who view it as an indication of traffic and commercial prosperity, it is truly gratifying.”

And yet for all this, there are circumstances to be noticed of the deepest possible interest connected with Chatham, and spots therein to be visited, which every pilgrim to “Dickens-Land” must recognize. At Chatham, — “my boyhood’s home,” as he affectionately calls it, — many of the earlier years of Charles Dickens (probably from his fourth to his eleventh) were passed; here it was “that the most durable of his earlier impressions were received; and the associations around him when he died were those which at the outset of his life had affected him most strongly.”

Admirers of the great novelist are much indebted to Mr. Robert Langton, F. R. Hist. Soc., for his *Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens*, a book quite indispensable to a tramp in this neighbourhood, the charming illustrations by the late Mr. William Hull, the author, and others rendering the identification of places perfectly easy. Dickens says, “If anybody knows to a nicety where Rochester ends and Chatham begins, it is more than I do.” “It’s of no consequence,” as Mr. Toots would say, for the High Street is one continuous thoroughfare, but as a matter of fact, a narrow street called Boundary Lane on the north side of High Street separates the two places.

A few words of recapitulation as to early family history may be useful here. John Dickens, who is represented as “a fine portly man,” was a Navy pay-clerk, and Elizabeth his wife (*née* Barrow), who is described as “a dear good mother and a fine woman,” the parents of the future genius, resided in the beginning of this century at 387, Mile End Terrace, Commercial Road, Landport, Portsea, “and is so far in Portsea as being in the island of that name.” Here Charles Dickens was born, at twelve o’clock at night, on Friday, 7th February, 1812. He was the second child and eldest son of a rather numerous family consisting of eight sons and daughters, and was baptized at St. Mary’s, Kingston (the parish church of Portsea), under the names of Charles John Huffham; the last of these is no doubt a misspelling, as the name of his grandfather, from whom he took it, was Huffam, but Dickens himself scarcely ever used it. In the old family Bible now in possession of Mr. Charles Dickens it is Huffam in his father’s own

handwriting. The Dickens family left Mile End Terrace on 24th June, 1812, and went to live in Hawke Street, Portsea, from whence, in consequence of a change in official duties of the elder Dickens, they removed to Chatham in 1816 or 1817, and resided there for six or seven years, until they went to live in London.

Bearing these circumstances in mind, it is very natural that we should determine on an early pilgrimage to Chatham, and Sunday morning sees us at the old church — St. Mary's — where Dickens himself must often have been taken as a child, and where he saw the marriage of his aunt Fanny with James Lamert, a Staff Doctor in the Army, — the Doctor Slammer of *Pickwick*, — of whom Mr. Langton says: — "The regimental surgeon's kindly manner, and his short odd way of expressing himself, still survive in the recollections of a few old people." Dr. Lamert's son James, by a former wife, was a great crony of young Charles Dickens, taking him to the Rochester theatre, and getting up private theatricals in which they both acted.

Surely there is a faint description of those times in the second chapter of *David Copperfield*: —



St. Mary's Church, Chatham.

"Here is our pew in the church. What a high-backed pew! With a window near it, out of which our house can be seen, and *is* seen many times during the morning's service by Peggotty, who likes to make herself as sure as she can that it's not being robbed, or is not in flames. But though Peggotty's eye wanders, she is much offended if mine does, and frowns to me, as I stand upon the seat, that I am to look at the clergyman. But I can't always look at him — I know him without that white thing on, and I am afraid of his

wondering why I stare so, and perhaps stopping the service to enquire — and what am I to do? It's a dreadful thing to gape, but I must do something. I look at my mother, but *she* pretends not to see me. I look at a boy in the aisle, and *he* makes faces at me. I look at the sunlight coming in at the open door through the porch, and there I see a stray sheep — I don't mean a sinner, but mutton — half making up his mind to come into the church. I feel that if I looked at him any longer, I might be tempted to say something out loud; and what would become of me then!"

The church, now undergoing reconstruction, is not a very presentable structure, and has little of interest to recommend it, except a brass to a famous navigator named Stephen Borough, the discoverer of the northern passage to Russia (1584), and a monument to Sir John Cox, who was killed in an action with the Dutch (1672). The name of Weller occurs on a gravestone near the church door.

We cross the High Street, proceed along Railway Street, formerly Rome Lane, pass the Chatham Railway Station (near which is a statue of Lieutenant Waghorn, R.N., "pioneer and founder of the Overland Route," born at Chatham, 1800, and died 1850), and find ourselves at Ordnance Terrace, a conspicuous row of two-storied houses, prominently situated on the higher ground facing us, beyond the Station. In one of these houses (No. 11 — formerly No. 2) the Dickens family resided from 1817 to 1821. The present occupier is a Mr. Roberts, who kindly allows us to inspect the interior. It has the dining-room on the left-hand side of the entrance and the drawing-room on the first floor, and is altogether a pleasantly-situated, comfortable, and respectable dwelling. No. 11, "the second house in the terrace," is overgrown with a Virginia creeper, which, from its possible association with Dickens's earliest years, may have induced him to plant the now magnificent one which exists at Gad's Hill. "Here it was," says Forster, "that his first desire for knowledge, and his greatest passion for reading, were awakened by his mother, who taught him the first rudiments, not only of English, but also, a little later, of Latin. She taught him regularly every day for a long time, and taught him, he was convinced, thoroughly well." Mr. Langton also says that "It was during his residence here that some of the happiest hours of the childhood of little Charles were passed, as his father was in a fairly good position in the Navy Pay Office, and they were a most genial, lovable family." Here it was that the theatrical entertainments and the genial parties took place, when, in addition to his

brothers and sisters and his cousin, James Lamert, there were also present his friends and neighbours, George Stroughill, and Master and Miss Tribe.



No. 11,

Ordnance Terrace, Chatham. *Where the Dickens Family lived 1817-21.*

Mr. Langton further states that “Ordnance Terrace is known to have formed the locality and characters for some of the earlier *Sketches by Boz.*” “The Old Lady” was a Miss Newnham, who lived at No. 5, and who was, by all accounts, very kind to the Dickens children. The “Half-pay Captain” was also a near neighbour, and he is supposed to have supplied one of the earliest characters to Dickens as a mere child. Some of the neighbours at the corner house next door (formerly No. 1) were named Stroughill, — pronounced Stro’hill (there was, it will be remembered, a *Struggles* at the famous cricket-match at All-Muggleton) — and the son, George, is said to have had some of the characteristics of Steerforth in *David Copperfield*. He had a sister named Lucy, probably the “Golden Lucy,” from her beautiful locks, and who, according to Mr. Langton, “was the special favourite and little sweetheart of Charles Dickens.” She was possibly the prototype of her namesake, in the beautiful story of the *Wreck of the Golden Mary*.

About the year 1821 pecuniary embarrassments beset and tormented the Dickens family, which were afterwards to be “ascribed in fiction” in the histories of the Micawbers and the Dorrits, and the family removed to the House on the Brook. In order to follow their steps in perfect sequence, we

have to return by the way we came from the church, cross the High Street, and proceed along Military Road, so as to visit the obscure dwelling, No. 18, St. Mary's Place, situated in the valley through which a brook, now covered over, flows from the higher lands adjacent, into the Medway.



The House on the Brook, Chatham. *Where the Dickens Family lived 1821-3.*



Giles's School, Chatham.

The House on the Brook — "plain-looking, whitewashed plaster front, and a small garden before and behind" — next door to the former Providence (Baptist) Chapel, now the Drill Hall of the Salvation Army, is a

very humble and unpretentious six-roomed dwelling, and of a style very different to the one in Ordnance Terrace. Here the Dickens family lived from 1821 to 1823. The Reverend William Giles, the Baptist Minister, father of Mr. William Giles, the schoolmaster, formerly officiated at the chapel. This was the Mr. Giles who, when Dickens was half-way through *Pickwick*, sent him a silver snuff-box, with an admiring inscription to the "Inimitable Boz." Dickens went to school at Mr. Giles's Academy in Clover Lane (now Clover Street), Chatham, and boys of this and neighbouring schools were thus nicknamed: —

"Baker's Bull-dogs,

"Giles's Cats,

"New Road Scrubbers,

"Troy Town Rats."

It was in the House on the Brook that he acquired those "readings and imaginings" which in "boyish recollections" he describes as having been brought away from Chatham: — "My father had left a small collection of books in a little room up-stairs, to which I had access (for it adjoined my own), and which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, *Humphry Clinker*, *Tom Jones*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, and *Robinson Crusoe*, came out, a glorious host to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time, — they and the *Arabian Nights*, and the *Tales of the Genii*, — and did me no harm; for whatever harm was in some of them was not there for me. I knew nothing of it."

It is very probable that his first literary effort, *The Tragedy of Misnar; the Sultan of India*, "founded" (says Forster), "and very literally founded, no doubt, on the *Tales of the Genii*," was composed after perusal of some of the works above referred to, but it is to be feared that it was never even rehearsed. The circumstances of the family had so changed for the worse, that here were neither juvenile parties nor theatrical entertainments.

A view from one of the upper windows of the house in St. Mary's Place gives the parish church and churchyard precisely as described in that pathetic little story, *A Child's Dream of a Star*. Charles Dickens was the child who "strolled about a good deal, and thought of a number of things," and his little sister Fanny — or his younger sister Harriet Ellen — was doubtless "his constant companion" referred to in the story.

We leave with feelings of respect the humble but famous little tenement, its condition now sadly degraded; proceed along the High Street, and soon reach “The Mitre Inn and Clarence Hotel,” a solid-looking and comfortable house of entertainment, at which Lord Nelson and King William IV., when Duke of Clarence, frequently stayed, and (what is more to our purpose) where we find associations of Charles Dickens. There are a beautiful bowling-green and grounds at the back, approached by a series of terraces well planted with flowers, and the green is surrounded by fine elms which constitute quite an oasis in the desert of the somewhat prosaic Chatham. The Mitre is thus immortalized in the “Guest’s Story” of the *Holly Tree Inn*:



Mitre Inn, Chatham.

“There was an Inn in the Cathedral town where I went to school, which had pleasanter recollections about it than any of these. I took it next. It was the Inn where friends used to put up, and where we used to go to see parents, and to have salmon and fowls, and be tipped. It had an ecclesiastical sign — the ‘Mitre’ — and a bar that seemed to be the next best thing to a Bishopric, it was so snug. I loved the landlord’s youngest daughter to distraction — but let that pass. It was in this Inn that I was cried over by my rosy little sister, because I had acquired a black-eye in a fight. And though she had been, that holly-tree night, for many a long year where all tears are dried, the Mitre softened me yet.”

About the year 1820 the landlord of the Mitre was Mr. John Tribe, and his family being intimate with the Dickenses, young Charles spent many pleasant evenings at the “genial parties” given at this fine old inn. Mr. Langton mentions that the late Mr. Alderman William Tribe, son of Mr.

John Tribe, the former proprietor, perfectly recollected Charles Dickens and his sister Fanny coming to the Mitre, and on one occasion their being mounted on a dining-table for a stage, and singing what was then a popular duet, *i. e.* —

“Long time I’ve courted you, miss,
And now I’ve come from sea;
We’ll make no more ado, miss,
But quickly married be.
Sing Fal-de-ral,” &c.

The worthy alderman is also stated to have had in his possession a card of invitation to spend the evening at Ordnance Terrace, addressed from Master and Miss Dickens to Master and Miss Tribe, which was dated about this time.

In consequence of the elder Dickens being recalled from Chatham to Somerset House, to comply with official requirements, the family removed to London in 1823, “and took up its abode in a house in Bayham Street, Camden Town.” Dickens thus describes his journey to London in “Dullborough Town,” one of the sketches in *The Uncommercial Traveller*:

“As I left Dullborough in the days when there were no railroads in the land, I left it in a stage-coach. Through all the years that have since passed, have I ever lost the smell of the damp straw in which I was packed — like game — and forwarded, carriage paid, to the Cross Keys, Wood Street, Cheapside, London? There was no other inside passenger, and I consumed my sandwiches in solitude and dreariness, and it rained hard all the way, and I thought life sloppier than I had expected to find it. . . .”

Mr. W. T. Wildish, the proprietor of the *Rochester and Chatham Journal*, kindly favours us with some interesting information which has recently appeared in his journal, relating to Charles Dickens’s nurse — the Mary Weller of his boyhood (and perhaps the Peggotty as well), but known to later generations as Mrs. Mary Gibson of Front Row, Ordnance Place, Chatham, who died in the spring of the year 1888, at the advanced age of eighty-four. Very touchingly, but unknowingly, did Dickens write from Gad’s Hill, 24th September, 1857, being unaware that she was still living:

“I feel much as I used to do when I was a small child, a few miles off, and somebody — *who*, I wonder, and which way did *she* go when she died?

— hummed the evening hymn, and I cried on the pillow — either with the remorseful consciousness of having kicked somebody else, or because still somebody else had hurt my feelings in the course of the day.”

Mrs. Gibson, when Mary Weller (what a host of pleasant recollections does the married name of the “pretty housemaid” bring up of the Pickwickian days!), lived with the family of Mr. John Dickens, at No. 11, Ordnance Terrace, Chatham, and afterwards when they moved to the House on the Brook. Her recollections were most vivid and interesting. According to the testimony of her son, communicated to Mr. Wildish, Mrs. Gibson “used to be very fond of talking of the time she passed with the Dickens family, and one of her highest satisfactions in her later years was to hear Charles Dickens’s works read by her son Robert; and while listening to the descriptions of characters read to her, his mother would detect likenesses unsuspected by other persons whom Dickens must have known when a boy; and she also agreed in thinking, with Dickens’s biographer, that in Mr. Micawber’s troubles were related some of the experiences of the elder Dickens, who is believed for a time to have occupied a debtor’s prison. She, however, would never bring herself to believe that her hero was himself ever reduced to such great hardships as the blacking-bottle period in *David Copperfield* would suggest if taken literally. She used to speak of the future author as always fond of reading, and said he was wont to retire to the top room of the House on the Brook, and spend what should have been his play-hours in poring over his books, or in acting to the furniture of the room the creatures that he had read about.”

Mr. Langton, who had a personal interview with Mrs. Gibson herself, has recorded the fact that she well remembered singing the Evening Hymn to the children of John Dickens, and seemed very much surprised at being asked such a question. She lived with the family when Dickens’s little sister, Harriet Ellen, died — a circumstance that no doubt in after years inspired the *Child’s Dream of a Star* already referred to. When the family removed to London, Mary Weller was pressed to accompany them, but was not in a position to accept the offer, in consequence of her promise to marry Mr. Thomas Gibson, a shipwright of the Chatham Dockyard, with whom she lived happily until his death, in 1886, at the age of eighty-two.

Mrs. Gibson modestly declined, on her son Robert’s suggestion, to seek an introduction to Charles Dickens, when he read some of his works at the old Mechanics’ Institute at Chatham, fearing that he had forgotten her. It is

certain, however, that, from the reproduction of her name as the pretty housemaid at Mr. Nupkins's at Ipswich, and from the extract from the letter above referred to, she had a kindly place in his recollections.

Poor David Copperfield, on his way to his aunt's at Dover, stopped at Chatham — "foresore and tired," he says, "and eating bread that I had bought for supper." He is afraid "because of the vicious looks of the trampers;" and even if he could have spared the few pence he possessed for a bed at the "one or two little houses" with the notice "lodgings for travellers," he would have hardly cared to go in, on account of the company he would have been thrown into. And so he says, "I sought no shelter, therefore, but the sky; and toiling into Chatham — which, in that night's aspect, is a mere dream of chalk, and draw-bridges, and mastless ships in a muddy river, roofed like Noah's arks, — crept, at last, upon a sort of grass-grown battery overhanging a lane, where a sentry was walking to and fro. Here" [he continues] "I lay down near a cannon; and, happy in the society of the sentry's footsteps, . . . slept soundly until morning." Of course it is not possible for us to identify this spot. "Very stiff and sore of foot," he says, "I was in the morning, and quite dazed by the beating of drums and marching of troops, which seemed to hem me in on every side when I went down towards the long narrow street." However, he has to reserve his strength for getting to his journey's end, and to this effect he resolves upon selling his jacket.

There are plenty of marine-store dealers at Chatham, whom we notice on our tramp, but none of them would, we believe, now answer to the description of "an ugly old man, with the lower part of his face all covered with a stubbly grey beard, in a filthy flannel waistcoat, and smelling terribly of rum," such as he who assailed little David, in reply to his offer to sell the jacket, with, "Oh, what do you want? Oh, my eyes and limbs, what do you want? Oh, my lungs and liver, what do you want? Oh — goroo, goroo!" After losing his time, and being rated at and frightened by this "dreadful old man to look at," who in every way tries to avoid giving him the money asked for, — half-a-crown, — offering him in exchange such useless things to a hungry boy as "a fishing-rod, a fiddle, a cocked hat, and a flute," the poor lad is obliged to close with the offer of a few pence, "with which [he says] I soon refreshed myself completely; and, being in better spirits then, limped seven miles upon my road."

The Convict Prison at Chatham is said to have been built on a piece of ground which, in the middle of the last century, belonged to one Thomas Clark, a singular character, who lived on the spot for many years by himself in a small cottage, and who used every night, as he went home, to sing or shout, "Tom's all alone! Tom's all alone!" This, according to the opinion of some, may have given rise to the "Tom all alone's" of *Bleak House*, more especially considering the fact that military operations were frequently going on at Chatham, which Dickens would notice in his early days. The circumstance is thus referred to in the novel: — "Twice lately there has been a crash, and a crowd of dust, like the springing of a mine, in Tom all alone's, and each time a house has fallen."

Mr. George Robinson of Strood directs our attention to the fact that a "child's caul," such as that described in the first chapter of *David Copperfield*, which he was born with, and which was advertised "at the low price of fifteen guineas," would be a likely object to be sought after in a sea-faring town like Chatham, in Dickens's early days, when the schoolmaster was less abroad than he is now.

In after years, memories of Chatham Dockyard appear in many of the sketches in the *Uncommercial Traveller* and other stories. "One man in a Dockyard" describes it as having "a gravity upon its red brick offices and houses, a staid pretence of having nothing to do, an avoidance of display, which I never saw out of England." "Nurse's Stories" says that "nails and copper are shipwrights' sweethearts, and shipwrights will run away with them whenever they can." In *Great Expectations* the refrain, "Beat it out, beat it out — old Clem! with a clink for the stout — old Clem!" which Pip and his friends sang, is from a song which the blacksmiths in the dockyard used to sing in procession on St. Clement's Day.

By accident we make the acquaintance of Mr. William James Budden of Chatham, who informs us that Charles Dickens was better known there in his latter years for his efforts, by readings and otherwise, to place the Mechanics' Institute on a sound basis and free from debt.

Dickens, as the *Uncommercial Traveller*, thus describes the Mechanics' Institute and its early efforts to succeed: —

"As the town was placarded with references to the Dullborough Mechanics' Institution, I thought I would go and look at that establishment next. There had been no such thing in the town in my young days, and it occurred to me that its extreme prosperity might have brought adversity

upon the Drama. I found the Institution with some difficulty, and should scarcely have known that I had found it if I had judged from its external appearance only; but this was attributable to its never having been finished, and having no front: consequently, it led a modest and retired existence up a stable-yard. It was (as I learnt, on enquiry) a most flourishing Institution, and of the highest benefit to the town: two triumphs which I was glad to understand were not at all impaired by the seeming drawbacks that no mechanics belonged to it, and that it was steeped in debt to the chimney-pots. It had a large room, which was approached by an infirm step-ladder: the builder having declined to construct the intended staircase, without a present payment in cash, which Dullborough (though profoundly appreciative of the Institution) seemed unaccountably bashful about subscribing.”

Mr. Budden is of opinion that the origin of the “fat boy” in *Pickwick* was Mr. James Budden, late of the Red Lion Inn in Military Road, who afterwards acquired a competence, and who had the honour of entertaining Dickens at a subsequent period of his life. Mr. Budden is under the impression, from local hearsay, that Dingley Dell formerly existed somewhere in the neighbourhood of Burham.

* * * * *

We are obligingly favoured with an interview by Mr. John Baird of New Brompton, Chairman of the Chatham Waterworks Company, although he is suffering from serious indisposition at the time of our visit. This gentleman was born in 1810 (two years before Charles Dickens), and recollects reading with delight the famous *Sketches by Boz*, as they appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*. The most curious coincidence about Mr. Baird is, that in stature and facial appearance he is the very counterpart of the late Charles Dickens in the flesh — his double, so to speak. This remarkable resemblance, our informant says, is “something to be proud of, to be mistaken for so great a man, but it was very inconvenient at times.”

On one occasion, as Mr. Baird was hastening to catch a train at Rochester Bridge Station, a stout elderly lady, handsomely dressed, supposed to be Dean Scott’s wife, — but to whom he was unknown, — bowed very politely to him, and in slackening his pace to return the compliment, which he naturally did not understand, he very nearly missed his train.

Sir Arthur Otway told Mr. Baird that the Rev. Mr. Webster, late Vicar of Chatham, had always mistaken him for Charles Dickens.

At one of the Readings given by Dickens on behalf of the Mechanics' Institute at Chatham, Mr. Charles Collins, his son-in-law, and his wife and her sister being present in the reserved seats in the gallery, Mr. Baird noticed that they looked very eagerly at him, and this pointed notice naturally made him feel very uncomfortable. Dickens himself, accompanied by his son and daughter, once passed our friend in the street, and scanned him very closely, and he fancies that Dickens called attention to the resemblance.

At the last reading which the novelist gave at Chatham, Mr. Baird being present as one of the audience, the policeman at the door mistook him for Dickens, and shouted to those in attendance outside, "Mr. Dickens's carriage!" It is interesting to add, that after the reading a cordial vote of thanks to Dickens was proposed by Mr. H. G. Adams, the Naturalist, at one time editor of *The Kentish Coronal*, who recounted the well-known story of the novelist's father taking him, when a little boy, to see Gad's Hill Place, and of the strong impression it made upon his mind.

Our informant had the honour of meeting Dickens at dinner at Mr. James Budden's, and states that he was standing against the mantel-piece in the drawing-room when the novelist arrived, and that he walked up to him and shook hands cordially, without the usual ceremony of introduction. Dickens was no doubt too polite to refer to the curious resemblance.

But the most remarkable case remains to be told, illustrating the converse of the old proverb — "It is a wise father that knows his own child." This is given in Mr. Baird's own words: —

"My daughter, when a little girl about six years old, was with her mother and some friends in a railway carriage at Strood station (next Rochester), and one of them called the child's attention to a gentleman standing on the platform, asking if she knew who he was. With surprised delight she at once exclaimed, 'That's my papa!' That same gentleman was Mr. Charles Dickens!"

Mr. Baird speaks of the great appreciation which the people of Chatham had of Dickens's services at the readings, and says it was very good and kind of him to give those services gratuitously. He confirms the general opinion as to the origin of the "fat boy," and the "very fussy little man" at Fort Pitt, who was the prototype of Dr. Slammer.

It struck us both forcibly that Mr. Baird's appearance at the time of our visit was very like the last American photograph of Dickens, taken by

Gurney in 1867.

* * * * *

Mr. J. E. Littlewood of High Street, Chatham, knew Charles Dickens about the year 1845 or 1846 at the Royalty (Miss Kelly's) Theatre in Dean Street, Soho, our informant having been in times past a bit of an amateur actor, and played Bob Acres in *The Rivals*. He subsequently heard Dickens read at the Chatham Mechanics' Institute about 1861, and said that the facial display in the trial scene from *Pickwick* (one of the pieces read) was wonderful. He had the honour of dining at the late Mr. Budden's in High Street, opposite Military Road, to meet Dickens. There was a large company present. In acknowledging the toast of his health, which had been proposed at the dinner — either by Sir Arthur Otway or Captain Fanshawe — Dickens said he was very pleased to read “in memory of the old place,” meaning Chatham, but that he might be reading “all the year round” for charities.

Mr. Littlewood also heard Dickens say, that “he had passed many happy hours in the House on the Brook” looking at “the Lines” opposite. “At that time” (said our informant) “the place was more rural — considered a decent spot — not so crowded up as now — nor so vulgar — many respectable people lived there in Dickens's boyhood. The place has sadly changed since for the worse.”

* * * * *

Mr. Humphrey Wood, Solicitor, of Chatham, was, about the year 1867, local Hon. Secretary to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and, having applied to Charles Dickens to give a Reading on behalf of the Society, received the following polite answer to his application. If only a few words had to be said, they were well said and to the purpose.

“Gad's Hill Place,

“Higham by Rochester, Kent.

“*Thursday, 5th September, 1867.*

“Sir,

“In reply to your letter, I beg to express my regret that my compliance with the request it communicates to me, is removed from within the bounds of reasonable possibility by the nature of my engagements, present and prospective.

“Your faithful servant,

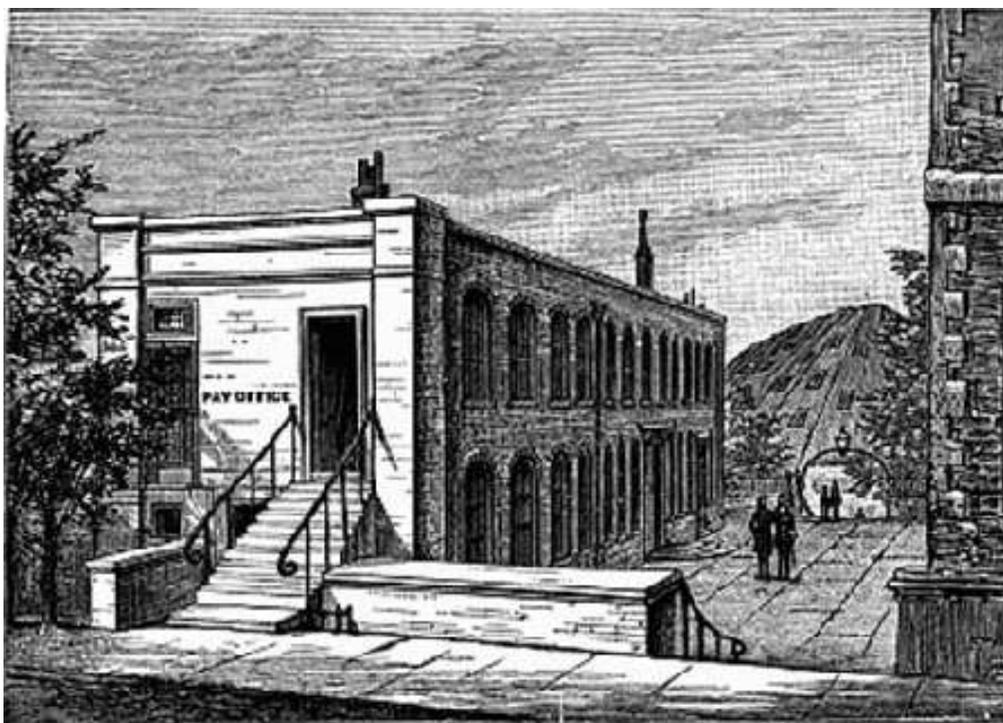
“Charles Dickens.

“Humphrey Wood, Esq.”

Like other towns in Kent, Chatham contains many names which are suggestive of some of Dickens’s characters, *viz.* Dowler, Whiffen, Kimmins, Wyles, Arkcoll, Perse, Winch, Wildish, Hockaday, Mowatt, Hunnisett, and others.

It is, of course, scarcely necessary to mention, in passing, that Chatham is one of the most important centres of ship-building for the Royal Navy; the dockyards — often referred to in Dickens’s minor works — cover more than seventy acres, and are most interesting. Here, at the Navy Pay-Office, the elder Dickens was employed during his residence at Chatham.

Fort Pitt next claims our attention. It stands on the high ground above the Railway Station at Chatham, just beyond Ordnance Terrace. In Charles Dickens’s early days, and indeed long after, until the establishment of the magnificent Institution at Netley, Fort Pitt was the principal military Hospital in England, and was visited by Her Majesty during the Crimean War. It is still used as a hospital, and contains about two hundred and fifty beds. The interesting museum which previously existed there has been removed to Netley. From Fort Pitt we see the famous “Chatham lines,” which constitute the elaborate and almost impregnable fortifications of this important military and ship-building town. The “lines” were commenced as far back as 1758, and stretch from Gillingham to Brompton, a distance of several miles, enclosing the peninsula formed by the bend of the river Medway. Forster says: —



Navy Pay-Office, Chatham.

“By Rochester and the Medway to the Chatham lines was a favourite walk with Charles Dickens. He would turn out of Rochester High Street through the Vines, . . . would pass round by Fort Pitt, and coming back by Frindsbury would bring himself by some cross-fields again into the high-road.”

The Chatham lines are locally understood as referring to a piece of ground about three or four hundred yards square, near Fort Pitt, used as an exercising-ground for the military.

Chapter IV. of *Pickwick*, “describing a field day and bivouac,” refers to the Chatham lines as the place where the review was held, on the third day of the visit of the Pickwickians to this neighbourhood, and which (having been relieved of the company of their quondam friend, Mr. Jingle, who had caused at least one of the party so much anxiety) they all attended, possibly at Mr. Pickwick’s suggestion, as he is stated to have been “an enthusiastic admirer of the army.” The programme is thus referred to: —

“The whole population of Rochester and the adjoining towns, rose from their beds at an early hour of the following morning, in a state of the utmost bustle and excitement. A grand review was to take place upon the lines. The manœuvres of half a dozen regiments were to be inspected by the eagle eye

of the commander-in-chief; temporary fortifications had been erected, the citadel was to be attacked and taken, and a mine was to be sprung.”

The evolutions of this “ceremony of the utmost grandeur and importance” proceed. Mr. Pickwick and his two friends (Mr. Tupman “had suddenly disappeared, and was nowhere to be found”), who are told to keep back, get hustled and pushed by the crowd, and the unoffending Mr. Snodgrass, who is in “the very extreme of human torture,” is derided and asked “vere he vos a shovin’ to.” Subsequently they get hemmed in by the crowd, “are exposed to a galling fire of blank cartridges, and harassed by the operations of the military.” Mr. Pickwick loses his hat, and not only regains that useful article of dress, but finds the lost Mr. Tupman, and the Pickwickians make the acquaintance of old Wardle and his hospitable family from Dingley Dell, by whom they are heartily entertained, and from whom they receive a warm invitation to visit Manor Farm on the morrow. There is a fine view of Chatham and Rochester from the fields round Fort Pitt, and on a bright sunny morning the air coming over from the Kentish Hills is most refreshing, very different indeed to what it was on a certain evening in Mr. Winkle’s life, when “a melancholy wind sounded through the deserted fields like a giant whistling for his house-dog.” We ramble about for an hour or more, and in imagination call up the pleasant times which Charles Dickens, as a boy, spent here.



Fort Pitt, Chatham.

Almost every inch of the ground must have been gone over by him. What a delightful “playing-field” this and the neighbouring meadows must have been to him and his young companions, before the railway and the builder took possession of some of the lower portions of the hill which forms the base of Fort Pitt. “Here,” says Mr. Langton, “is the place where the schools

of Rochester and Chatham used to meet to settle their differences, and to contend in the more friendly rivalry of cricket,” and no doubt Dickens frequently played when “Joe Specks” in Dullborough “kept wicket.” In after life the memory of the past came back to Dickens with all its freshness, when he again visited the neighbourhood as the *Uncommercial Traveller* in “Dullborough”: —

“With this tender remembrance upon me” [that of leaving Chatham as a boy], “I was cavalierly shunted back into Dullborough the other day, by train. My ticket had been previously collected, like my taxes, and my shining new portmanteau had had a great plaster stuck upon it, and I had been defied by Act of Parliament to offer an objection to anything that was done to it, or me, under a penalty of not less than forty shillings or more than five pounds, compoundable for a term of imprisonment. When I had sent my disfigured property on to the hotel, I began to look about me; and the first discovery I made, was, that the Station had swallowed up the playing-field.

“It was gone. The two beautiful hawthorn-trees, the hedge, the turf, and all those buttercups and daisies, had given place to the stoniest of jolting roads; while, beyond the Station, an ugly dark monster of a tunnel kept its jaws open, as if it had swallowed them and were ravenous for more destruction. The coach that had carried me away, was melodiously called Timpson’s Blue-eyed Maid, and belonged to Timpson, at the coach-office up street; the locomotive engine that had brought me back was called severely No. 97, and belonged to S.E.R., and was spitting ashes and hot-water over the blighted ground.

“When I had been let out at the platform-door, like a prisoner whom his turnkey grudgingly released, I looked in again over the low wall, at the scene of departed glories. Here, in the haymaking time, had I been delivered from the dungeons of Seringapatam, an immense pile (of haycock), by my countrymen, the victorious British (boy next door and his two cousins), and had been recognized with ecstasy by my affianced one (Miss Green), who had come all the way from England (second house in the terrace) to ransom me, and marry me.”

Fort Pitt must have had considerable attractions in Mr. Pickwick’s time, as it would appear that it was visited by him and his friends on the first day of their arrival at Rochester. Lieutenant Tappleton (Dr. Slammer’s second),

when presenting the challenge for the duel, thus speaks to Mr. Winkle in the second chapter of *Pickwick*: —

““You know Fort Pitt?”

““Yes; I saw it yesterday.”

““If you will take the trouble to turn into the field which borders the trench, take the foot-path to the left, when you arrive at an angle of the fortification; and keep straight on till you see me; I will precede you to a secluded place, where the affair can be conducted without fear of interruption.”

““*Fear* of interruption!’ thought Mr. Winkle.”

Everybody remembers how the meeting took place on Fort Pitt. Mr. Winkle, attended by his friend Mr. Snodgrass, as second, is punctuality itself.

““We are in excellent time,’ said Mr. Snodgrass, as they climbed the fence of the first field; ‘the sun is just going down.’ Mr. Winkle looked up at the declining orb, and painfully thought of the probability of his ‘going down’ himself, before long.”

Presently the officer appears, “the gentleman in the blue cloak,” and “slightly beckoning with his hand to the two friends, they follow him for a little distance,” and after climbing a paling and scaling a hedge, enter a secluded field.

Dr. Slammer is already there with his friend Dr. Payne, — Dr. Payne of the 43rd, “the man with the camp-stool.”

The arrangements proceed, when suddenly a check is experienced.

““What’s all this?” said Dr. Slammer, as his friend and Mr. Snodgrass came running up. — ‘That’s not the man.’

““Not the man!’ said Dr. Slammer’s second. ““Not the man!’ said Mr. Snodgrass.

““Not the man!’ said the gentleman with the camp-stool in his hand.

““Certainly not,’ replied the little doctor. ‘That’s not the person who insulted me last night.’

““Very extraordinary!’ exclaimed the officer.

““Very,’ said the gentleman with the camp-stool.”

Mutual explanations follow, and, notwithstanding the temporary dissatisfaction of Dr. Payne, Mr. Winkle comes out like a trump — defends the honour of the Pickwick Club and its uniform, and wins the admiration of Dr. Slammer.

“‘My dear sir,’ said the good-humoured little doctor, advancing with extended hand, ‘I honour your gallantry. Permit me to say, Sir, that I highly admire your conduct, and extremely regret having caused you the inconvenience of this meeting, to no purpose.’

“‘I beg you won’t mention it, Sir,’ said Mr. Winkle.

“‘I shall feel proud of your acquaintance, Sir,’ said the little doctor.

“‘It will afford me the greatest pleasure to know you, Sir,’ replied Mr. Winkle.

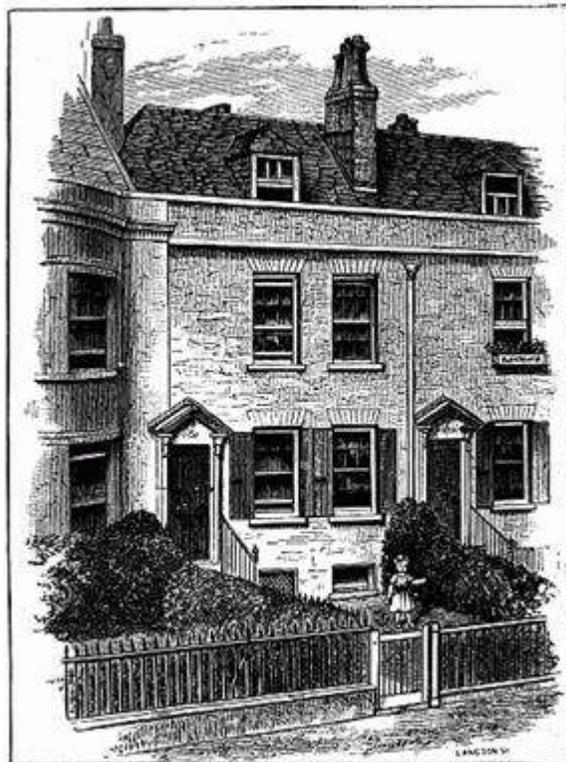
“Thereupon the doctor and Mr. Winkle shook hands, and then Mr. Winkle and Lieutenant Tappleton (the doctor’s second), and then Mr. Winkle and the man with the camp-stool, and finally Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass: the last-named gentleman in an excess of admiration at the noble conduct of his heroic friend.

“‘I think we may adjourn,’ said Lieutenant Tappleton.

“‘Certainly,’ added the doctor.”

We ourselves also adjourn, taking with us many pleasant memories of Chatham and Fort Pitt, and of the period relating to “the childhood and youth of Charles Dickens.”

* * * * *



Birthplace of Charles Dickens,

387 Mile End Terrace, Commercial Road, Landport.

No tramp in "Dickens-Land" can possibly be complete without a visit to the birthplace of the great novelist, and on another occasion we therefore devote a day to Portsea, Hants. A fast train from Victoria by the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway takes us to Portsmouth Town, the nearest station, which is about half a mile from Commercial Road, and a tram-car puts us down at the door. We immediately recognize the house from the picture in Mr. Langton's book, but the first impression is that the illustration scarcely does justice to it. From the picture it appears to us to be a very ordinary house in a row, and to be situated rather low in a crowded and not over respectable neighbourhood. Nothing of the kind. The house, No. 387, Mile End Terrace, Commercial Road, Landport, where the parents of Charles Dickens resided before they removed to another part of Portsea, and subsequently went to live at Chatham, and where the future genius first saw light, was eighty years ago quite in a rural neighbourhood; and in those days must have been considered rather a genteel residence for a family of moderate means in the middle class. Even now, with the pressure which always attends the development of large towns, and their extension on the border-land of green country by the frequent conversion of dwelling-houses into shops, or the intrusion of shops where dwelling-houses are, this residence has escaped and remains unchanged to this day.

There is another point of real importance to notice. Mr. Langton, referring to this house, says: — "The engraving shows the little fore-court or front garden, with the low kitchen window of the house, whence the movements of Charles [who is presumably represented in the engraving by the figure of a boy about two or three years old, with curly locks, dressed in a smart frock, and having a large ball in his right hand], attended by his dear little sister Fanny, could be overlooked." Very pretty indeed, but alas! I am afraid, purely imaginary, considering, as will hereafter appear, that Charles was a baby in arms, aged about four months and sixteen days, when his parents quitted the house in which he was born.

The house is now, and has been for many years, occupied by Miss Sarah Pearce, the surviving daughter of Mr. John Dickens's landlord, her sisters, who formerly lived with her, being all dead. It stands high on the west side of a good broad road, opposite an old-fashioned villa called Angus House, in the midst of well-trimmed grounds, and the situation is very open, pleasant, and cheerful. It is red-brick built, has a railing in front, and is

approached by a little entrance-gate opening on to a lawn, whereon there are a few flower-beds; a hedge divides the fore-court from the next house, and a few steps guarded by a handrail lead to the front door. It is a single-fronted, eight-roomed house, having two underground kitchens, two floors above, and a single dormer window high up in the sloping red-tiled roof. As is usual with old-fashioned houses of this type, the shutters to the lower windows are outside. Both the front and back parlours on the ground floor are very cheerful, cosy little rooms (in one of them we are glad to see a portrait of the novelist), and the view from the back parlour looking down into the well-kept garden, which abuts on other gardens, is very pretty, marred only by a large gasometer in the distance, which could hardly have been erected in young Charles Dickens's earliest days. In the garden we notice a lovely specimen of the *Lavatera arborea*, or tree-mallow, covered with hundreds of white and purple blossoms. It is a rarity to see such a handsome, well-grown tree, standing nearly eight feet high, and it is not unlikely, from the luxuriance of its growth, that it existed in Charles Dickens's infancy. From the pleasant surroundings of the place generally, and from the fact that flowers are much grown in the neighbourhood (especially roses), it is more than probable that Dickens's love for flowers was early developed by these associations. The road leads to Cosham, and to the picturesque old ruin of Porchester Castle, a nice walk from the town of Portsmouth, and probably often traversed by Dickens, his sister, and his nurse.

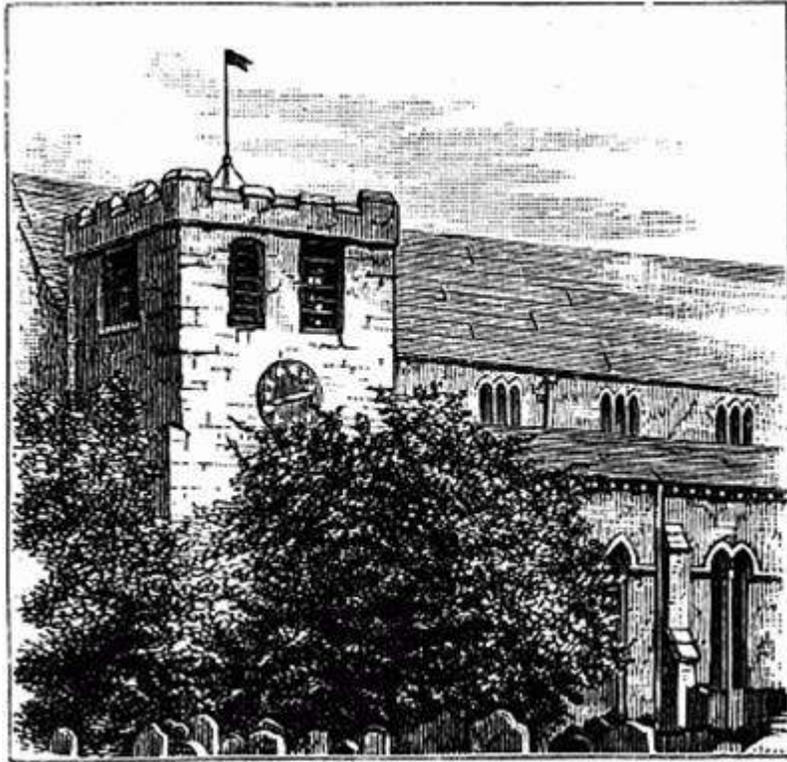
Mr. Langton states that "it is said in after years Charles Dickens could remember places and things at Portsmouth that he had not seen since he was an infant of little more than two years old (he left Portsmouth when he was only four or five), and there is no doubt whatever that many of the earliest reminiscences of *David Copperfield* were also tender childish memories of his own infancy at this place."

Mr. William Pearce, solicitor of Portsea, son of the former landlord, and brother of Miss Sarah Pearce, the present occupant, has been kind enough to supply the following interesting information respecting No. 387, Mile End Terrace: —

"The celebrated novelist was born in the front bedroom of the above house, which my sisters many years ago converted into a drawing-room, and it is still used as such.

“Mr. John Dickens, the father of the novelist, and his wife came to reside in the house directly after they were married. Mr. John Dickens rented the house of my father at £35 a-year, from the 24th June, 1808, until the 24th June, 1812, when he quitted, and moved into Hawke Street, in the town of Portsea. Miss Fanny Dickens, the novelist’s sister, was the first child born in the house, and then the novelist.

“I was born on the 22nd February, 1814, and have often heard my mother say that Mr. Gardner, the surgeon, and Mrs. Purkis, the monthly nurse (both of whom attended my mother with me and her six other children), attended Mrs. Dickens with her two children, Fanny and Charles, who were both born in the above house; besides this, Mrs. Purkis has often called on my sisters at the house in question, and alluded to the above circumstances.



St. Mary’s Church, Portsea.

“Mr. Cobb (whom I recollect), a fellow-clerk of Mr. John Dickens in the pay-office in the Portsmouth Dockyard, rented the same house of my father after Mr. John Dickens left, and often alluded to the many happy hours he spent in it while Mr. Dickens resided there.”

We next visit the site of old Kingston Parish Church, — St. Mary’s, Portsea — where Charles Dickens was baptized on 4th March, 1812. A very handsome and large new church, costing nearly forty thousand pounds,

and capable of seating over two thousand persons, has been erected, and occupies the place of the old church, where the ceremony took place. Mr. Langton has given a very pretty little drawing of the old church in his book, so that its associations are preserved to lovers of Dickens. The old church itself was the second edifice erected on the same spot, and thus the present one is the third parish church which has been built here. There is a large and crowded burial-ground attached to it; but a cursory examination does not disclose any names on the gravestones to indicate characters in the novels.

It is right to note here, that the kind people of Portsmouth were desirous of inserting a stained-glass window in their beautiful new church to the memory of one of their most famous sons (the eminent novelist, Mr. Walter Besant, was born at Portsmouth, as also were Isambard K. Brunel, the engineer, and Messrs. George and Vicat Cole, Royal Academicians), but they were debarred by the conditions of Dickens's will, which expressly interdicted anything of the kind. It states: —

“I conjure my friends on no account to make me the subject of any monument, memorial, or testimonial whatever. I rest my claim to the remembrance of my country upon my published works, and to the remembrance of my friends upon their experience of me in addition thereto.”

Before leaving Portsmouth, we just take a hasty glance at the Theatre Royal, which remains much as it was during the days of Mr. Vincent Crummles and his company, as graphically described in the twenty-second and following chapters of *Nicholas Nickleby*. Of that genial manager, Mr. T. Edgar Pemberton, in his *Charles Dickens and the Stage*, observes: —

“Every line that is written about Mr. Crummles and his followers is instinct with good-natured humour, and from the moment when, in the road-side inn ‘yet twelve miles short of Portsmouth,’ the reader comes into contact with the kindly old circuit manager, he finds himself in the best of good company.”

Mr. Rimmer, in his *About England with Dickens*, referring to the “Common Hard” at Portsmouth, says that the “people there point out in a narrow lane leading to the wharf, the house where Nicholas is supposed to have sojourned.”

CHAPTER X.

AYLESFORD, TOWN MALLING, AND MAIDSTONE.

“Its river winding down from the mist on the horizon, as though that were its source, and already heaving with a restless knowledge of its approach towards the sea.” — *Edwin Drood*.

“Oh, the solemn woods over which the light and shadow travelled swiftly, as if Heavenly wings were sweeping on benignant errands through the summer air; the smooth green slopes, the glittering water, the garden where the flowers were symmetrically arranged in clusters of the richest colours, how beautiful they looked!” — *Bleak House*.

Another delightful morning, fine but overcast, favours our tramp in this neighbourhood. We are up betimes on Monday, and take the train by the South-Eastern Railway from Strood station to Aylesford. It is a distance of nearly eight miles between these places; and the intermediate stations of any note which we pass on the way are Cuxton (about three miles) and Snodland (about two miles further on), which are two large villages. As the railway winds, we obtain excellent views of the chalk escarpments on the series of hills opposite, these being the result of centuries of quarrying. The land on either side of the river is marshy and intersected by numerous water-courses. These grounds are locally termed “saltings,” caused by the overflow of the Medway at certain times, and are used as sanitarium for horses which require bracing.

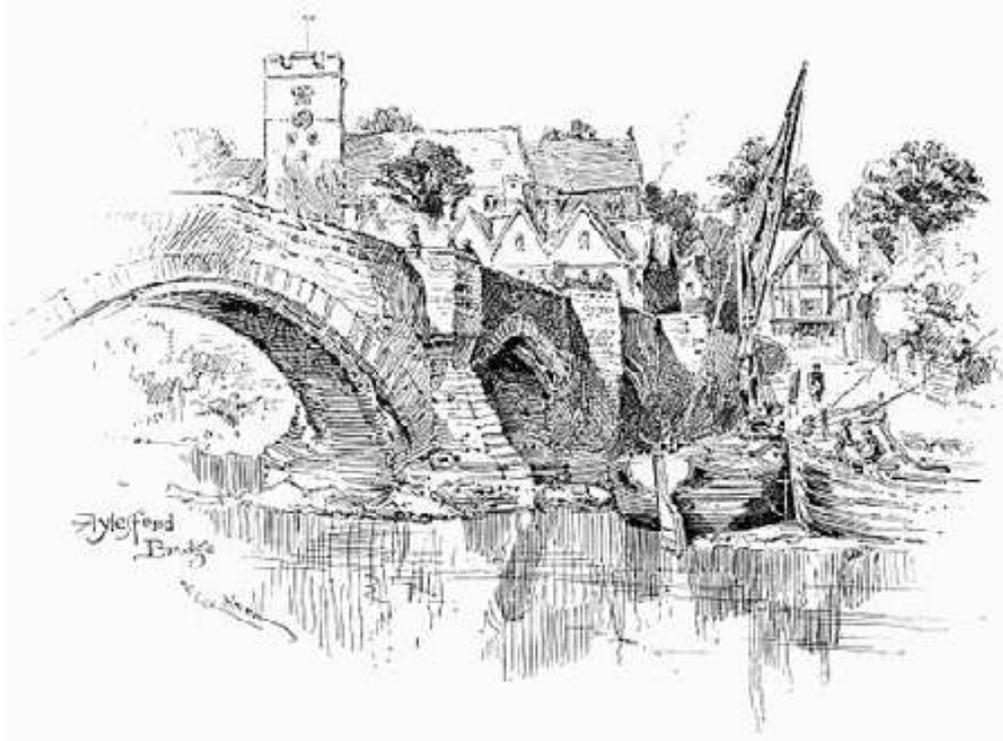


Cuxton is at the entrance of the valley between the two chalk ranges of hills which form the water-parting of the river Medway. As Mr Phillips Bevan rightly observes — "this valley is utilized for quarrying and lime-burning to such an extent, that it has almost the appearance of a northern manufacturing district," but it is a consolation, on the authority of Sir A. C. Ramsay, to know that "man cannot permanently disfigure nature!"

At Snodland the river becomes narrower, and the scenery of the valley is more picturesque. Early British and Roman remains have been found in the district, and according to the authority previously quoted — "In one of the quarries, which are abundant, Dr. Mantell discovered some of the most interesting and rarest chalk fossils with which we are acquainted, including the fossil Turtle (*Chelonia Benstedii*)."

Alighting from the train at Aylesford station, we have but a few minutes to ramble by the river, the banks of which are brightened by the handsome flowers of the purple loosestrife. We notice the charming position of the Norman church, which stands on an eminence on the right bank of the Medway, overlooking the main street, and is surrounded by fine old elm trees — the bells were chiming "Home, sweet home," a name very dear to Dickens. The Medway ceases to be a tidal river at Allington beyond Aylesford, and one or other of the weirs at Allington or Farleigh (further on)

may have suggested the idea of “Cloisterham Weir” in *Edwin Drood*; but they are too far distant (as shown in Chapter V.) to fit in with the story. The ancient stone bridge which spans the Medway at Aylesford is seven-arched; a large central one, and three smaller ones on either side. One or two of the arches on the left bank are filled up, as though the river had silted on that side. Mr. Roach Smith considers the bridge to be a very fine specimen of mediæval architecture. It is somewhat narrow, but there are large abutments which afford shelter to foot passengers.



We are much inclined to think that Aylesford Bridge was in the mind of Dickens when he makes the Pickwickians cross the Medway, only a wooden bridge is mentioned in the text for the purpose perhaps of concealing identity. The place is certainly worth visiting, and the approach to it by the river is exceedingly picturesque.

Aylesford is supposed to be the place where the great battle between Hengist and Vortigern took place. Near to it, at a place called Horsted, is the tomb of Horsa, who fell in the battle between the Britons and Saxons, a.d. 455. Names of Dickens’s characters, Brooks, Joy, etc., occur at Aylesford. There is a very fine quarry here, from whence the famous Kentish rag-stone — “a concretionary limestone” — is obtained. It forms the base, and is overlaid by the Hassock sands and the river drift. In the distance is seen the bold series of chalk rocks constituting the ridge of the valley.

Just outside Aylesford we pass Preston Hall, a fine modern Tudor mansion standing in very pretty grounds, and belonging to Mr. H. Brassey.

We now resume our tramp towards the principal point of our destination, Town Malling, or West Malling, as it is indifferently called (the “a” in Malling being pronounced long, as in “calling”). The walk from Aylesford lies through the village of Larkview, and is rather pretty, but there is nothing remarkable to notice until we approach Town Malling. Here it becomes beautifully wooded, especially in the neighbourhood of Clare House Park, the Spanish or edible chestnut, with its handsome dark green lanceolate serrate leaves, and clumps of Scotch firs, with their light red trunks and large cones, the result of healthy growth, which would have delighted the heart of Mr. Ruskin, being conspicuous. On the road we pass a field sown with maize, a novelty to one accustomed to the Midlands. The farmer to whom it belongs says that it is a poor crop this year, owing to the excess of wet and late summer, but in a good season it gives a fine yield. We are informed that it is used in the green state as food for cattle and chickens.



A pleasant tramp of about three miles brings us to Town Malling, which stands on the Kentish rag. The approach to Town Malling is by a waterfall, and there are the ruins of the old Nunnery, founded by Bishop Gundulph in 1090, in the place. East Malling is a smaller town, and lies nearer to

Maidstone. Our object in visiting this pretty, old-fashioned Kentish country town, is to verify its identity with that of Muggleton of the *Pickwick Papers*. Great weight must be attached to the fact that the present Mr. Charles Dickens, in his annotated Jubilee Edition of the above work, introduces a very pretty woodcut of “High Street, Town Malling,” with a note to the effect that —

“Muggleton, perhaps, is only to be taken as a fancy sketch of a small country town; but it is generally supposed, and probably with sufficient accuracy, that, if it is in any degree a portrait of any Kentish town, Town Malling, a great place for cricket in Mr. Pickwick’s time, sat for it.”

The reader will remember that when at the hospitable Mr. Wardle’s residence at Manor Farm in Dingley Dell (by the bye, there is a veritable “Manor Farm” at Frindsbury, near Strood, with ponds adjacent, which may perhaps have suggested the episode of Mr. Pickwick on the ice), an excursion was determined on by the Pickwickians to witness a grand cricket match about to be played between the “All Muggleton” and the “Dingley Dellers,” a conference first took place as to whether the invalid, Mr. Tupman, should remain or go with them.

“‘Shall we be justified,’ asked Mr. Pickwick, ‘in leaving our wounded friend to the care of the ladies?’

“‘You cannot leave me in better hands,’ said Mr. Tupman.

“‘Quite impossible,’ said Mr. Snodgrass.”

The result of the conference was satisfactory.

“It was therefore settled that Mr. Tupman should be left at home in charge of the females, and that the remainder of the guests under the guidance of Mr. Wardle should proceed to the spot, where was to be held that trial of skill, which had roused all Muggleton from its torpor, and inoculated Dingley Dell with a fever of excitement.

“As their walk, *which was not above two miles long*, lay through shady lanes and sequestered footpaths, and as their conversation turned upon the delightful scenery by which they were on every side surrounded, Mr. Pickwick was almost inclined to regret the expedition they had used, when he found himself in the main street of the town of Muggleton.”

The chronicle of *Pickwick* then proceeds to state that —

“Muggleton is a corporate town, with a mayor, burgesses, and freemen; . . . an ancient and loyal borough, mingling a zealous advocacy of Christian principles with a devoted attachment to commercial rights; in demonstration

whereof, the mayor, corporation, and other inhabitants, have presented at divers times, no fewer than one thousand four hundred and twenty petitions, against the continuance of negro slavery abroad, and an equal number against any interference with the factory system at home; sixty-eight in favour of the sales of livings in the Church, and eighty-six for abolishing Sunday trading in the streets.”

On the occasion of their second visit to Manor Farm to spend Christmas, the Pickwickians came by the “Muggleton Telegraph,” which stopped at the “Blue Lion,” and they walked over to Dingley Dell.

Assuming, as has been suggested by Mr. Frost in his *In Kent with Charles Dickens*, that Dingley Dell is somewhere on the eastern side of the river Medway, within fifteen miles of Rochester, — Mr. William James Budden (a gentleman whom we met at Chatham) gave as his opinion that it was near Burham, — then it would require a much greater walk than that (“which was not above two miles long”) to reach Town Malling (leaving out of the question the fact that Burham is only about six miles from Rochester instead of fifteen miles, as the waiter at the Bull told Mr. Pickwick in reply to his enquiry), whereby we reluctantly for the time arrive at the conclusion, — as Mr. Frost did before us — that Dingley Dell as such near Town Malling cannot be identified.

On another visit to “Dickens-Land” Mr. R. L. Cobb suggested that Cobtree Hall, near Aylesford, was the prototype of Dingley Dell. It may have been; but except one goes as the crow flies, it is more than two miles distant from Town Malling. But as Captain Cuttle would say — we “make a note of it.”

After all, Dingley Dell is no doubt a type of an English yeoman’s hospitable home. There are numbers of such in Kent, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Devonshire, and other counties, and the one in question may have been seen by Dickens almost anywhere.

There is, at any rate, one objection to Muggleton being Town Malling — the latter is not, as mentioned in the text, “a corporate town.” The neighbouring corporate towns which might be taken for it are Faversham, Tunbridge Wells, and Seven Oaks; but, as Mr. Rimmer, in his *About England with Dickens*, points out — “These have no feature in common with the enterprising borough which had so distinguished itself in the matter of petitions.” On the other hand, there is *one* very strong reason in favour of Town Malling, and that is its devotion to the noble old English game of

cricket. So far as we could make out, no town in Kent has done better service in this respect. But more of this presently.

* * * * *

So many friends recommended us to see Cobtree Hall that, after the foregoing was written, we determined to follow their advice, and on a subsequent occasion we take the train to Aylesford and walk over, the distance being a pleasant stroll of about a mile. We were well repaid. The mansion, formerly called Coptray Friars, belonging to the Aylesford Friary, is an Elizabethan structure of red brick with stone facings prettily covered with creeping plants, standing on an elevated position in a beautifully wooded and undulating country overlooking the Medway and surrounded by cherry orchards and hop gardens. Major Trousdell was so courteous as to show us over the building, which has been altered and much enlarged during the last half century. Internally there is something to favour the hypothesis of its being the type of Manor Farm, Dingley Dell. Such portions of the old building remaining, as the kitchen, are highly suggestive of the gathering described in that good-humoured Christmas chapter of *Pickwick* (xxviii.), and there is a veritable beam to correspond with Phiz's plate of "Christmas Eve at Mr. Wardle's." "The best sitting-room, [described as] a good long, dark-panelled room with a high chimney-piece, and a capacious chimney up which you could have driven one of the new patent cabs, wheels and all," may still be discerned in the handsome modern dining-room, with carved marble mantel-piece of massive size formerly supplied with old-fashioned "dogs." The views from the bay-window are very extensive and picturesque. The mansion divides the two parishes of Boxley and Allington, the initials of which are carved on the beam in the kitchen. Externally, there is much more to commend it to our acceptance. Remains of a triangular piece of ground, with a few elm-trees, still survive as "the rookery," where Mr. Tupman met with his mishap, and to our delight there is "the pond," not indeed covered with ice, as on Mr. Pickwick's memorable adventure, but crowded with water-lilies on its surface; its banks surrounded by the fragrant meadow-sweet and the brilliant rose-coloured willow herb. Furthermore we were informed, by Mr. Franklin of Maidstone, that the "Red Lion," which formerly stood on the spot now occupied by Mercer's Stables, is locally considered to be the original of "a little roadside public-house, with two elm-trees, a horse-trough, and a sign-post in front;" where the Pickwickians sought assistance

after the breakdown of the “four-wheeled chaise” which “separated the wheels from the body and the bin from the perch,” but were inhospitably repulsed by the “red-headed man and the tall bony woman,” who suggested that they had stolen the “immense horse” which had recently played Mr. Winkle such pranks. Finally, in a pleasant chat with the Rev. Cyril Grant, Vicar of Aylesford, and his curate, the Rev. H. B. Boyd (a son of A. K. H. B.), we elicited the fact that Cobtree Hall is locally recognized as the original of Manor Farm. Nay more, in Aylesford churchyard a tomb was pointed out on the west side with the inscription: — ”Also to the memory of Mr. W. Spong, late of Cobtree, in the Parish of Boxley, who died Nov. 15th, 1839,” who is said to have been the prototype of the genial and hospitable “old Wardle.”

True, neither the distance to Rochester nor to Town Malling fits in with the narrative, but this is not material. Dickens, with the usual “novelist’s licence,” found it convenient often-times to take a nucleus of fact, and surround it with a halo of fiction, and this may have been one of many similar instances. His wonderfully-gifted and ever-facile imagination was never at fault. So on our return journey we console ourselves by reading the following description, in chapter vi. of *Pickwick*, of the first gathering of the Pickwickians at their host’s, one of the most delightful bits in the whole book, and “make-believe,” as the Marchioness would say, that we have actually seen Manor Farm, Dingley Dell.

“Several guests who were assembled in the old parlour, rose to greet Mr. Pickwick and his friends upon their entrance; and during the performance of the ceremony of introduction, with all due formalities, Mr. Pickwick had leisure to observe the appearance, and speculate upon the characters and pursuits, of the persons by whom he was surrounded — a habit in which he in common with many other great men delighted to indulge.

“A very old lady, in a lofty cap and faded silk gown, — no less a personage than Mr. Wardle’s mother, — occupied the post of honour on the right-hand corner of the chimney-piece; and various certificates of her having been brought up in the way she should go when young, and of her not having departed from it when old, ornamented the walls, in the form of samplers of ancient date, worsted landscapes of equal antiquity, and crimson silk tea-kettle holders of a more modern period. The aunt, the two young ladies, and Mr. Wardle, each vying with the other in paying zealous and unremitting attentions to the old lady, crowded round her easy-chair,

one holding her ear-trumpet, another an orange, and a third a smelling-bottle, while a fourth was busily engaged in patting and punching the pillows, which were arranged for her support. On the opposite side sat a bald-headed old gentleman, with a good-humoured benevolent face, — the clergyman of Dingley Dell; and next him sat his wife, a stout, blooming old lady, who looked as if she were well skilled, not only in the art and mystery of manufacturing home-made cordials, greatly to other people's satisfaction, but of tasting them occasionally, very much to her own. A little hard-headed, Ripstone pippin-faced man, was conversing with a fat old gentleman in one corner; and two or three more old gentlemen, and two or three more old ladies, sat bolt upright and motionless on their chairs, staring very hard at Mr. Pickwick and his fellow-voyagers.

“‘Mr. Pickwick, mother,’ said Mr. Wardle, at the very top of his voice.

“‘Ah!’ said the old lady, shaking her head; ‘I can’t hear you.’

“‘Mr. Pickwick, grandma!’ screamed both the young ladies together.

“‘Ah!’ exclaimed the old lady. ‘Well; it don’t much matter. He don’t care for an old ‘ooman like me, I dare say.’

“‘I assure you, madam,’ said Mr. Pickwick, grasping the old lady’s hand, and speaking so loud that the exertion imparted a crimson hue to his benevolent countenance; ‘I assure you, ma’am, that nothing delights me more, than to see a lady of your time of life heading so fine a family, and looking so young and well.’

“‘Ah!’ said the old lady, after a short pause; ‘it’s all very fine, I dare say; but I can’t hear him.’

“‘Grandma’s rather put out now,’ said Miss Isabella Wardle, in a low tone; ‘but she’ll talk to you presently.’

“Mr. Pickwick nodded his readiness to humour the infirmities of age, and entered into a general conversation with the other members of the circle.

“‘Delightful situation this,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

“‘Delightful!’ echoed Messrs. Snodgrass, Tupman, and Winkle.

“‘Well, I think it is,’ said Mr. Wardle.

“‘There ain’t a better spot o’ ground in all Kent, sir,’ said the hard-headed man with the pippin-face; ‘there ain’t indeed, sir — I’m sure there ain’t, sir,’ and the hard-headed man looked triumphantly round, as if he had been very much contradicted by somebody, but had got the better of him at last. ‘There ain’t a better spot o’ ground in all Kent,’ said the hard-headed man again after a pause.

“‘Cept Mullins’ meadows!’ observed the fat man, solemnly.

“‘Mullins’ meadows!’ ejaculated the other, with profound contempt.

“‘Ah, Mullins’ meadows,’ repeated the fat man.

“‘Reg’lar good land that,’ interposed another fat man.

“‘And so it is, sure-ly,’ said a third fat man.

“‘Everybody knows that,’ said the corpulent host.

“The hard-headed man looked dubiously round, but finding himself in a minority, assumed a compassionate air, and said no more.

“‘What are they talking about?’ inquired the old lady of one of her grand-daughters, in a very audible voice; for, like many deaf people, she never seemed to calculate on the possibility of other persons hearing what she said herself.

“‘About the land, grandma.’

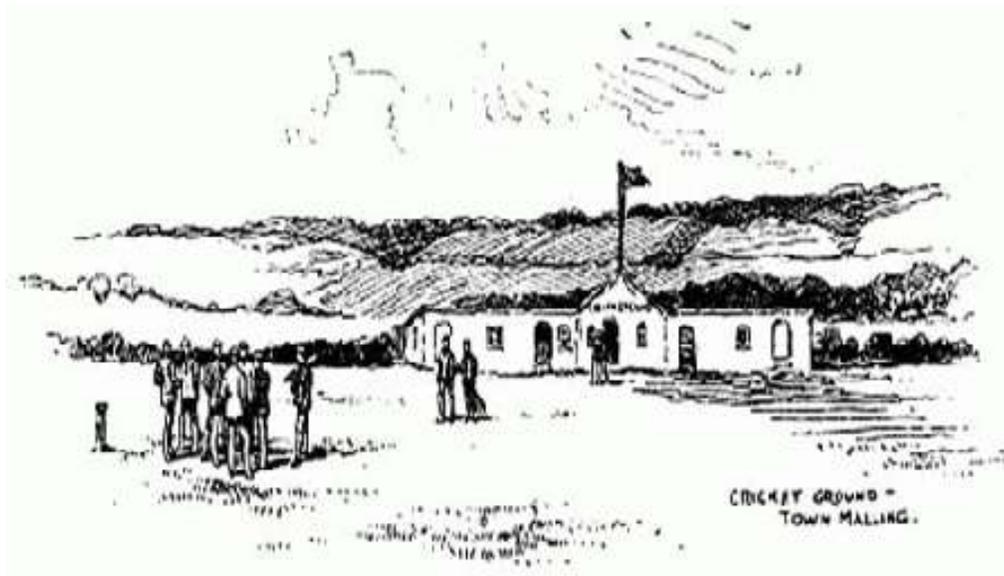
“‘What about the land? Nothing the matter, is there?’

“‘No, no. Mr. Miller was saying our land was better than Mullins’ meadows.’

“‘How should he know anything about it?’ inquired the old lady indignantly. ‘Miller’s a conceited coxcomb, and you may tell him I said so.’ Saying which, the old lady, quite unconscious that she had spoken above a whisper, drew herself up, and looked carving-knives at the hard-headed delinquent.”

* * * * *

In the course of our tramp we fall in with “a very queer small boy,” rejoicing in the Christian names of “Spencer Ray,” upon which we congratulate him, and express a hope that he will do honour to the noble names which he bears, one being that of the great English philosopher, and the other that of the famous English naturalist. This boy, who is just such a bright intelligent lad as Dickens himself would have been at his age (twelve and a half years), gives us some interesting particulars respecting Town Malling and its proclivities for cricket, upon which he is very eloquent. It appears that in the year 1887 the cricketers of Town Malling won eleven matches out of twelve; but during this year they have not been so successful. He directed us to the cricket-ground, which we visit, and find to be but a few minutes’ walk from the centre of the town, bearing to the westward. It is a very fine field, nearly seven acres in extent, in splendid order, as level as a die, and as green as an emerald. It lies well open, and is flanked by the western range of hills of the Medway valley.



The marquee into which Mr. Pickwick and his friends were invited, first by “one very stout gentleman, whose body and legs looked like half a gigantic roll of flannel, elevated on a couple of inflated pillow-cases,” and then by the irrepressible Jingle with — ”This way — this way — capital fun — lots of beer — hogsheads; rounds of beef — bullocks; mustard — cart-loads; glorious day — down with you — make yourself at home — glad to see you — very,” has been replaced by a handsome pavilion.

There is no cricket-playing going on at the time, but there are several cricketers in the field, and from them we learn confirmatory evidence of the long existence of the ground in its present condition, and the enthusiasm of the inhabitants for the old English game.

Another proof of the long-established love of the people of Town Malling for cricket we subsequently find in the fact that the parlour of the Swan Hotel, which is an old cricketing house, and probably represents the “Blue Lion of Muggleton,” has in it many very fine lithographic portraits of all the great cricketers of the middle of the nineteenth century, including: — Pilch, Lillywhite, Box, Cobbett, Hillyer (a native of Town Malling), A. Mynn, Taylor, Langdon, Kynaston, Felix (*Felix on the Bat*), Ward, Kingscote, and others. Several of these names will be recognized as those of eminent Kentish cricketers. About a quarter of a century ago — my friend and colleague Mr. E. Orford Smith (himself a Kentish man and a cricketer) informs me that — the Kentish eleven stood against all England, and retained their position for some years.

As we stand on the warm day in the centre of the ground, and admire the lights and shadows passing over the surrounding scenery, we can almost conjure up the scene of the famous contest, when, on the occasion of the first innings of the All-Muggleton Club, "Mr. Dumkins and Mr. Podder, two of the most renowned members of that most distinguished club, walked, bat in hand, to their respective wickets. Mr. Luffey, the highest ornament of Dingley Dell, was pitched to bowl against the redoubtable Dumkins, and Mr. Struggles was selected to do the same kind office for the hitherto unconquered Podder."

Everybody remembers how the game proceeded under circumstances of the greatest excitement, in which batters, bowlers, scouts, and umpires, all did their best under the encouraging shouts of the members: — "Run — run — another. — Now, then, throw her up — up with her — stop there — another — no — yes — no — throw her up! throw her up!" Mr. Jingle himself being as usual very profuse in his remarks, as — "'Ah, ah! — stupid' — 'Now, butter-fingers' — 'Muff' — 'Humbug' — and so forth." "In short, when Dumkins was caught out, and Podder stumped out, All-Muggleton had notched some fifty-four, while the score of the Dingley Dellers was as blank as their faces." So "Dingley Dell gave in, and allowed the superior prowess of All-Muggleton," Mr. Jingle again expressing his views of the winners: — "'Capital game — well played — some strokes admirable,' as both sides crowded into the tent at the conclusion of the game."

Yes! We are convinced that Muggleton and Town Malling (except for the mayor and corporation) are one. At any rate we feel quite safe in assuming that Town Malling was the type from which Muggleton was taken; and we confidently recommend all admirers of *Pickwick* to include that pleasant Kentish country-town in their pilgrimage.

Having exhausted, so far as our examination is concerned, the cricket-ground, by the kindness of our young friend who acts as guide, we see a little more of the town. It consists of a long wide street, with a few lateral approaches. The houses are well built, and the church, which is partly Norman, and, like most of the village churches in Kent, is but a little way from the village, stands on an eminence from whence a good view may be obtained. We observe, as indicative of the fine air and mild climate of the place, many beautiful specimens of magnolia, and wistaria (in second flower) in front of the better class of houses. One of these is named "Boley

House,” and as we are told that Sir Joseph Hawley resided near, our memories immediately revert to the cognomen of a well-known character in *The Chimes*. Other names in the place are suggestive of Dickens’s worthies, e.g. Rudge, Styles, Briggs, Saunders, Brooker, and John Harman. The last-mentioned is the second instance in which Dickens has varied a local name by the alteration of a single letter. There is also the not uncommon name of “Brown,” who, it will be remembered, was the maker of the shoes of the spinster aunt when she eloped with the faithless Jingle; “in a po-chay from the ‘Blue Lion’ at Muggleton,” as one of Mr. Wardle’s men said; and the discovery of the said shoes led to the identification of the errant pair at the “White Hart” in the Borough. After Sam Weller had described nearly all the visitors staying in the hotel from an examination of their boots: —

““Stop a bit,’ replied Sam, suddenly recollecting himself. ‘Yes; there’s a pair of Vellingtons a good deal vorn, and a pair o’ lady’s shoes, in number five.’ ‘Country make.’

““Any maker’s name?’

““Brown.’

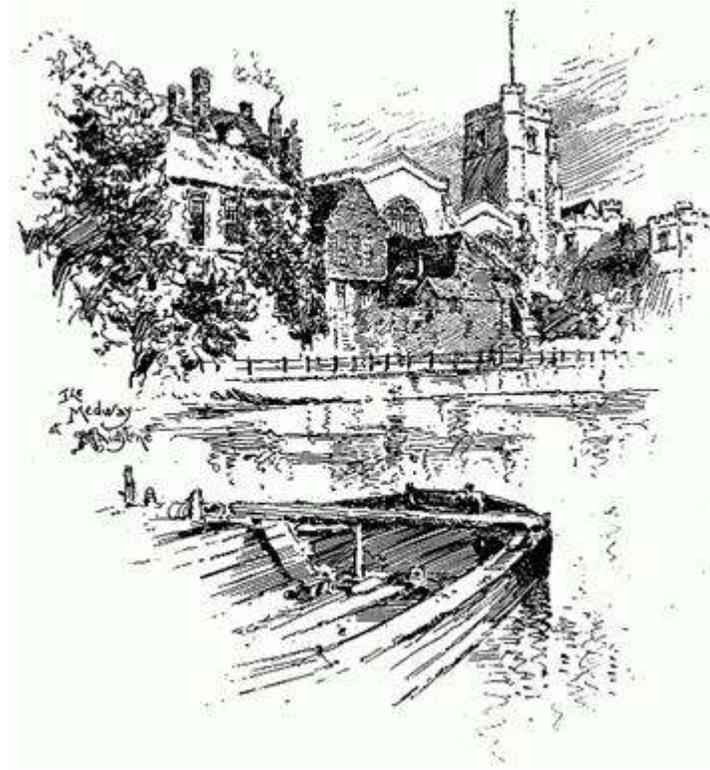
““Where of?’

““Muggleton.’

““It *is* them,’ exclaimed Wardle. ‘By heavens, we’ve found them.’“

What happened afterwards every reader of *Pickwick* very well knows.

Near Town Malling there is a curious monument erected to the memory of Beadsman, the horse, belonging to Sir Joseph Hawley, which won the Derby in 1859, and which was bred in the place. The monument (an exceedingly practical one) consists of a useful pump for the supply of water.



After some luncheon at the Boar Inn, we are sorry to terminate our visit to this pleasant place; but time flies, and trains, like tides, “wait for no man.” So we hurry to the railway station, passing on our way a fine hop-garden, and take tickets by the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway for Maidstone. We have a few minutes to spare, and our notice is attracted to a curious group in the waiting-room. It consists of a rural policeman, and what afterwards turned out, to be his prisoner, a slouching but good-humoured-looking labourer, with a “fur cap” like Rogue Riderhood. The officer leans against the mantelpiece, pleasantly chatting with his charge, who is seated on the bench, leisurely eating some bread and cheese with a large clasp-knife, in the intervals of which proceeding he recounts some experiences for the edification of the officer and bystanders. These are occasionally received with roars of laughter. One of his stories relates to a house-breaker who, being “caught in the act” by a policeman, and being asked what he was doing, coolly replied, “Attending to my business, of course!” (This must surely be taken “in a Pickwickian sense.”) After finishing his bread and cheese, the charge eats an apple, and then regales himself with something from a large bottle. The unconcernedness of the man, whatever his offence may be (poaching perhaps), is in painful contrast to the careworn and anxious faces of his wife and little daughter (both

decently dressed), the latter about seven years old, and made too familiar with crime at such an age. After we arrive at Maidstone (only a few minutes' run by railway), it is a wretched sight to witness the leave-taking at the gaol. First the man shakes hands with his wife, all his forced humour having left him, and then affectionately kisses the little girl, draws a cuff over his eyes, and walks heavily into the gaol after the officer. We are glad to notice that he is not degraded as a wild beast by being handcuffed. It was an episode that Dickens himself perhaps would have witnessed with interest, and possibly stored up for future use. What particularly strikes us is the difference in the relations between these people and what would be the case under similar circumstances in a large town. There is not that feature of hardness, that familiarity with crime which breeds contempt, in the rural incident. Poor man! let us hope his punishment will soon be finished, and that he may return to his family, and not become an old offender; but for the present, as Mr. Bagnet says, "discipline must be maintained."

Maidstone, the county and assize town of Kent, appears to be a thriving and solid-looking place, as there are several paper-mills, saw-mills, stone quarries, and other indications of prosperity. There are but few historical associations connected with it, as Maidstone "has lived a quiet life." Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion, and the attack on the town by Fairfax in 1648, are among the principal incidents. Dickens frequently walked or drove over to this town from Gad's Hill. Many of the names which we notice over the shops in the principal street are very suggestive of, if not actually used for, some of the characters in his novels, *e.g.* Pell, Boozer, Hibling, Fowle, Stuffins, Bunyard, Edmed, Gregsbey, Dunmill, and Pobgee.

It has been said that Maidstone possesses a gaol; it also has large barracks, and, what is better still, a Museum, Free Library, and Public Gardens. Chillington Manor House, — a highly picturesque and well-preserved Elizabethan structure, formerly the residence of the Cobhams, — contains the Museum and Library. Standing in a quiet nook in the Brenchley Gardens, the lines of George Macdonald, quoted in the local *Guide Book*, well describe its beauties: —

"Its windows were aërial and latticed,
Lovely and wide and fair,
And its chimneys like clustered pillars
Stood up in the thin blue air."

The Museum — the new wing of which was built as a memorial of his brother, by Mr. Samuel Bentlif — is the property of the Corporation, and owes much of its contents to the liberality of Mr. Pretty, the first curator, and to the naturalist and traveller, Mr. J. L. Brenchley. It contains excellent fine art, archæological, ethnological, natural history, and geological collections. Among the last-named, in addition to other interesting local specimens, are some fossil remains of the mammoth (*Elephas primigenius*) from the drift at Aylesford, obtained by its present able curator, Mr. Edward Bartlett, to whom we are indebted for a most pleasant ramble through the various rooms. We notice an original “Dickens-item” in the shape of a very good carved head of the novelist, forming the right top panel of an oak fire-place, the opposite side being one of Tennyson, by a local carver named W. Hughes, who was formerly employed at Gad’s Hill Place. No pilgrim in “Dickens-Land” should omit visiting Maidstone and its treasures in Chillington Manor House; nor of seeing the splendid view of the Medway from the churchyard, looking towards Tovil.



We are particularly anxious to verify Dickens’s experience of the walk from Maidstone to Rochester. In a letter to Forster, written soon after he came to reside at Gad’s Hill Place, he says: — ”I have discovered that the seven miles between Maidstone and Rochester is one of the most beautiful

walks in England,” and so indeed we find it to be. It is, however, a rather long seven miles; so, cheerfully leaving the gloomy-looking gaol to our right and proceeding along the raised terrace by the side of the turn-pike road, we pass through the little village of Sandling, and soon after commence the ascent of the great chalk range of hills which form the eastern water-parting of the Medway. The most noticeable object before we reach “Upper Bell” is “Kit’s Coty (or Coity) House,” about one and a half miles north-east from Aylesford, and not very far from the Bell Inn. According to Mr. Phillips Bevan, the peculiar name is derived from the Celtic “Ked,” and “Coity” or “Coed” (Welsh), and means the Tomb in the Wood. Seymour considers the words a corruption of “Catigern’s House.” Below Kit’s Coty House, Mr. Wright, the archæologist, found the remains of a Roman villa, with quantities of Samian ware, coins, and other articles.

There are many excavations in the chalk above Kit’s Coty House, apparently for interments; and the whole district appears in remote ages to have been a huge cemetery. Tradition states that “the hero Catigern was buried here, after the battle fought at Aylesford between Hengist and Vortigern.”

The Cromlech, which is now included in the provisions of the Ancient Monuments Protection Act, 1882, lies under the hillside, a few yards from the main road, and is fenced in with iron railings, and beautifully surrounded by woods, the yew, said to have been one of the sacred trees of the Druids, being conspicuous here and there. That somewhat rare plant the juniper is also found in this neighbourhood. The “dolmens” which have been “set on end by a vanished people” are four in number, and consist of sandstone, three of them, measuring about eight feet each, forming the uprights, and the fourth, which is much larger, serving as the covering stone.

In a field which we visit, not very far from Kit’s Coty House, is another group of stones, called the “countless stones.” As we pass some boys are trying to solve the arithmetical problem, which cannot be readily accomplished, as the stones lie intermingled in a very strange and irregular manner, and are overgrown with brushwood. The belief that these stones cannot be counted is one constantly found connected with similar remains, *e.g.* Stonehenge, Avebury, etc. We heard a local story of a baker, who once tried to effect the operation by placing a loaf on the top of each stone as a

kind of check or tally; but a dog running away with one of his loaves, upset his calculations.

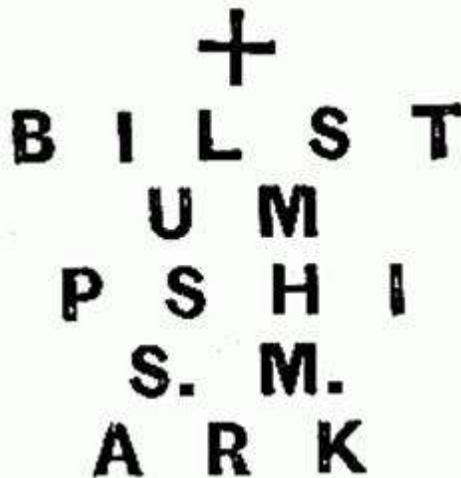


Both the “Coty House” and the “countless stones” consist of a silicious sandstone of the Eocene period, overlying the chalk, and are identical with the “Sarsens,” or “Grey Wethers,” which occur at the pre-historic town of Avebury, and at Stonehenge; the smaller stones of the latter are, however, of igneous origin, and “are believed by Mr. Fergusson to have been votive offerings.” These masses, of what Sir A. C. Ramsay calls “tough and intractable silicious stone,” have been, he says, “left on the ground, after the removal by denudation of other and softer parts of the Eocene strata.” We subsequently saw several of these “grey wethers” in the grounds of Cobham Hall, and we noticed small masses of the same stone *in situ* in Pear Tree Lane, near Gad’s Hill Place.

Speaking of Kit’s Coty House in his *Short History of the English People*, the late Mr. J. R. Green, in describing the English Conquest and referring to this neighbourhood, says: — “It was from a steep knoll on which the grey weather-beaten stones of this monument are reared that the view of their first battle-field would break on the English warriors; and a lane which still leads down from it through peaceful homesteads would guide them across the ford which has left its name in the little village of Aylesford. The

Chronicle of the conquering people tells nothing of the rush that may have carried the ford, or of the fight that went struggling up through the village. It only tells that Horsa fell in the moment of victory, and the flint heap of Horsted, which has long preserved his name, and was held in after-time to mark his grave, is thus the earliest of those monuments of English valour of which Westminster is the last and noblest shrine. The victory of Aylesford did more than give East Kent to the English; it struck the keynote of the whole English conquest of Britain.”

Dickens’s visits to this locality in his early days may have suggested the discovery of the stone with the inscription: —



+

B I L S T

U M

P S H I

S. M.

A R K

In later life he was fond of bringing his friends here “by a couple of postilions in the old red jackets of the old red royal Dover road” to enjoy a picnic. Describing a visit here with Longfellow he says: — ”It was like a holiday ride in England fifty years ago.”



Returning to the main road, we reach the high land of Blue Bell — "Upper Bell," as it is marked on the Ordnance Map. We are not quite on the highest range, but sufficiently high (about three hundred feet) to enable us to appreciate the splendid view that presents itself. In the valley below winds the Medway, broadening as it approaches Rochester. The opposite heights consist of the western range of hills, the width of the valley from point to point being about ten miles. The "sky-line" of hills running from north to south cannot be less than sixty miles, extending to the famous Weald of Kent (weald, wald, or wolde, being literally "a wooded region, an open country"); all the intervening space of undulating slope and valley (river excepted) is filled up by hamlets, grass, root, and cornfields, hop-gardens, orchards and woodlands, the whole forming a picture of matchless beauty. No wonder Dickens was very fond of this delightful walk; it must be gone over to be appreciated.

We tramp on through Boxley and Bridge Woods, down the hill, and pass Borstal Convict Prison and Fort Clarence, where there are guns which we were informed would carry a ball from this elevated ground right over the Thames into the county of Essex (a distance of seven miles); and so we get back again to Rochester.

CHAPTER XI.

BROADSTAIRS, MARGATE, AND CANTERBURY.

“We have a fine sea, wholesome for all people; profitable for the body, profitable for the mind.” — *Our English Watering-Place*.

“All is going on as it was wont. The waves are hoarse with repetition of their mystery; the dust lies piled upon the shore; the sea-birds soar and hover; the winds and clouds go forth upon their trackless flight; the white arms beckon in the moonlight to the invisible country far away.” — *Dombey and Son*.

“A moment, and I occupy my place in the Cathedral, where we all went together every Sunday morning, assembling first at school for that purpose. The earthy smell, the sunless air, the sensation of the world being shut out, the resounding of the organ through the black and white arched galleries and aisles, are wings that take me back and hold me hovering above those days in a half-sleeping and half-waking dream.” — *David Copperfield*.

Taking advantage of an excursion train (for tramps usually go on the cheap), we start early on Wednesday by the South-Eastern Railway from Chatham station for Broadstairs. As usual the weather favours us — it is a glorious day. Passing the stations of New Brompton, Rainham, Newington, and Sittingbourne, we soon get into open country, in the midst of hop gardens with their verdant aisles of the fragrant and tonic, tendril-like plants reaching in some instances perhaps to several hundred yards, and crowned with yellowish-green fruit-masses, which have a special charm for those unaccustomed to such scenery. The odd-looking “oast-houses,” or drying-houses for the hops, are a noticeable feature of the neighbourhood, dotting it about here and there in pairs. They are mostly red-brick and cone-shaped, somewhat smaller than the familiar glass-houses of the Midland districts, and have a wooden cowl, painted white, at the apex for ventilation. We are rather too early for the hop-picking, and thus — but for a time only — miss an interesting sight. Dickens, in one of his letters to Forster, gives a dreary picture of this annual harvest: —

“Hop-picking is going on, and people sleep in the garden, and breathe in at the key-hole of the house door. I have been amazed, before this year, by the number of miserable lean wretches, hardly able to crawl, who come hop-picking. I find it is a superstition that the dust of the newly-picked hop, falling freshly into the throat, is a cure for consumption. So the poor creatures drag themselves along the roads, and sleep under wet hedges, and get cured soon and finally.”

On the whole it is said to be a very indifferent season, but many plantations look promising. “If,” as a grower remarks to us in the train, “we could have a little more of this fine weather! There has been too much rain, and too little sun this year.” The apples also are a poor crop.



On a second visit to this pleasant neighbourhood, we see at Mear’s Barr Farm, near Rainham, the whole process of hop-picking. True, it is not executed by that ragamuffinly crowd of strangers which Dickens had in his “mind’s eye” when he wrote the words just quoted, and which usually takes possession of most of the hop-growing districts of Kent during the picking season, but by an assemblage of native villagers, mostly women, girls, and boys, — neat, clean, and homely, — together with a few men who do the heavier part of the work. They are of all ages, from the tottering old grandmother, careworn wife, and buxom maiden, to the child in perambulator and baby in arms; and in the bright sunlight, amid the groves of festooning green columns, form a most orderly, varied, and picturesque

gathering — a regular picnic in fact, judging from the cheerful look on most of the faces, and the merry laugh that is occasionally heard.

Mr. Fred Scott, tenant of the farm, of which Lord Hothfield is owner, is kind enough to go over the hop-garden with us, and describe all the details. When the hops are ripe (*i. e.* when the seeds are hard) and ready to be gathered, the pickers swarm on the ground, and a man divides the “bine” at the bottom of the “pole” by means of a bill-hook — not cutting it too close for fear of bleeding — leaving the root to sprout next year, and then draws out the pole, to which is attached the long, creeping bine, trailing over at top. If the pole sticks too fast in the ground, he eases it by means of a lever, or “hop-dog” (a long, stout wooden implement, having a toothed iron projection). “Mind my dog don’t bite you, sir,” says one of the men facetiously, as we step over this rough-looking tool. Women then carry the poles to, and lay them across, the “bin,” a receptacle formed by four upright poles stuck in the ground and placed at an angle, supporting a framework from which depends the “bin-cloth,” made of jute or hemp, holding from ten to twenty bushels of green hops, weighing about 1½ lbs. per bushel when dry.

The picking then commences, and nimble fingers of all sizes very soon strip the poles of the aromatically-smelling ripe hops, the poles being cast aside in heaps, to be afterwards cleared of the old bines and put into “stacks” of three hundred each, and used again next season.

The bins, which vary in number according to the size of the hop-garden, are placed in rows on the margin of the plantation, and usually have ten “hop-hills” (*i. e.* plants) on each side, and are moved inside the plantation as the poles are pulled up. Each bin belongs to a “sett” (*i. e.* family or companionship), consisting of from five to seven persons, and is taken charge of by a “binman.” When the bin is full, a “measurer” (either the farmer himself or his deputy) takes account of the quantity of hops picked, and records it in a book to the credit of each working family. Then the green hops are carted off in “pokes” or sacks to the “oast-houses” to be dried. For this purpose, anthracite coal and charcoal are used in the kiln, a shovelful or two of sulphur being added to the fire when the hops are put on. The process of drying takes eleven hours, and afterwards the dried hops are packed in pockets which, when full, weigh about a hundredweight and a half each, the packing being effected by hydraulic pressure. They are then sent to market, the earliest arrivals fetching very high prices. As much as

£50 per cwt. was paid in 1882, but the ordinary price averages from £4 to £8 per cwt.

Humulus Lupulus, the hop, belongs to the natural order *Urticaceæ* — a plant of rather wide distribution, but said to be absent in Scotland — and is a herbaceous, diœcious perennial, usually propagated by removal of the young shoots or by cuttings. According to Sowerby, the genus is derived from *humus*, the ground, as, unless supported or trained, the plant falls to the earth; and the common name “hop” from the Saxon *hoppān*, to climb. William King, in his *Art of Cookery*, says that “heresy and hops came in together”; while an old popular rhyme records that: —

“Hops, carp, pickerel, and beer,
Came into England all in one year.”

Tusser in his *Hondreth Good Points of Husbandrie*, published in 1557, gives sundry directions for the cultivation of hops, and quaintly advocates their use as follows: —

“The hop for his profit I thus do exalt,
It strengtheneth drink, and it savoureth malt;
And being well brewed, long kept it will last,
And drawing abide — if you draw not too fast.”

The hop has many varieties — thirty or more — among which may be mentioned prolificas, bramblings, goldings, common goldings, old goldings, Canterbury goldings, Meopham goldings, etc. When once planted they last for a hundred years, but some growers replace them every ten years or sooner.

The principal enemies of the hop are “mould” caused by the fungus *Sphærotheca Castagnei*, and several kinds of insects, especially the “green fly,” *Aphis humuli*, but the high wind is most to be dreaded. It tears the hop-bines from the poles and throws the poles down, which in falling crush other bines, and thus bruise the hops and prevent their growth, besides obstructing the passage of air and sunlight, and causing the development of mould or mildew. The remedy for mould is dusting with sulphur, and for the green fly, syringing with tobacco or quassia water and soap, “Hop-wash,” as it is called. Sometimes the lady-bird (*Coccinella septempunctata*) is present in sufficient numbers to consume the green fly. Very little can be done to obviate the effects of the wind, but a protective fence of the wild hop — called a “lee” or “loo” — is sometimes put up round very choice plantations.

The hop-poles, the preparation of which constitutes a distinct industry, are either of larch, Spanish chestnut, ash, willow, birch, or beech — larch or chestnut being preferred. Women clear the poles of the bark, and men sharpen them at one end, which is dipped in creosote before being used. The ground is cleared, and the poles are stuck in against the old plants in February or March.

We are informed that the hop-picking is much looked forward to by the villagers with pleasure as the means of supplying them with a little purse for clothing, etc., against winter-time. Each family or companionship earns from thirty shillings to two pounds per week during the season.

We proceed on our excursion, and pass Faversham, which stands in a rather picturesque bit of country some way up Faversham Creek, and is sheltered on the west by a ridge of wooded hills where the hop country ceases, as the railway bends north-easterly for Margate and Ramsgate. Whitstable, the next station passed, is famous for the most delicate oysters in the market, the fishery of which is regulated by an annual court; and it is said that one grower alone sends fifty thousand barrels a year to London from this district. We speculate whether these delicious molluscs were supplied at that famous supper described in the thirty-ninth chapter of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, at which were present Kit, his mother, the baby, little Jacob, and Barbara, after the night at the play, when Kit told the waiter “to bring three dozen of his largest-sized oysters, and to look sharp about it,” and fulfilled his promise “to let little Jacob know what oysters meant.” All along, as the railway winds from Whitstable to Margate, glimpses of the sea are visible, and vary our excursion pleasantly.

The next noteworthy place we pass is Reculver — the ancient Regulbium — which, according to Mr. Phillips Bevan, is “mentioned in the Itinerary of Antoninus as being garrisoned by the first cohort of Brabantois Belgians. After the Romans, it was occupied by the Saxon Ethelbert, who is said to have occupied it as a palace, and to have been buried there.” “The two picturesque towers” (quoting Bevan again), “which form so conspicuous a land and sea mark, are called ‘The Sisters,’ and are in reality modern-built by the Trinity Board in place of two erected traditionally by an Abbess of Faversham, who was wrecked here with her sister on their way to Broadstairs.” The sea is fast encroaching on the land here, notwithstanding the erection of a large sea-wall and piles.

Passing Margate, we reach Broadstairs, about thirty-seven miles from Chatham. Broadstairs, immortalized in *Our English Watering Place* (which paper, says Forster, “appeared while I was there, and great was the local excitement”), is so inseparably associated with the earlier years of Charles Dickens’s holiday-life, that it becomes most interesting to his admirers. Forster also says, “His later seaside holiday, September 1837, was passed at Broadstairs, as were those of many subsequent years; and the little watering-place has been made memorable by his pleasant sketch of it.” At the time of his first visit (1837) he was writing a portion of *Pickwick* (Part 18); in 1838 part of *Nicholas Nickleby*; and in 1839 part of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. He was also there in 1840, 1841, and 1842, when writing the *American Notes*; in 1845 and 1847, when writing *Dombey and Son*; in 1848 and 1850, when engaged on *David Copperfield*; and in 1851, when he was drafting the outlines of *Bleak House*. At the end of November of that year, when he had settled himself in his new London abode (Tavistock House), the book was begun, “and, as so generally happened with the more important incidents of his life, but always accidentally, begun on a Friday.” After 1851, he returned not again to Broadstairs until 1859, when he paid his last visit to the place, and stayed a week there. The reason for his forsaking it was that it had become too noisy for him.

Broadstairs stands midway between the North Foreland and Ramsgate, and owes its name to the breadth of the sea-gate or “stair,” which was originally defended by a gate or archway. An archway still survives on the road to the sea, and bears on it two inscriptions, (1) “Built by George Culenier about 1540”; (2) “Repaired by Sir John Henniker, Bart., 1795.”

Broadstairs has good sands, precipitous chalk cliffs, and a very fine sea-view. The railway station is about a mile from the pier, and the town is approached by a well-kept road (“the main street of our watering-place. . . . You may know it by its being always stopped up with donkey chaises. Whenever you come here and see the harnessed donkeys eating clover out of barrows drawn completely across a narrow thoroughfare, you may be quite sure you are in our High Street”), with villas standing in their own gardens, most of which are brightened by summer flowers, notably the blue clematis (*Clematis Jackmani*) and by those charming seaside evergreens the *Escallonia* and the *Euonymus*. As we near the sea, the shops become more numerous, and, on the right-hand side, we have no difficulty in finding (although we heard it had been altered considerably) the house “No. 12,

High Street,” in which Dickens lived when he first visited Broadstairs. It is a plain little dwelling of single front, with a small parlour looking into the street, and has one story over — just the place that seems suited to the financial position of the novelist when he was commencing life. The house is now occupied by Mr. Bean, plumber and glazier, whose wife courteously shows us over it, and into the back yard and little garden, kindly giving us some pears from an old tree growing there, whereon we speculate as to whether Dickens himself had ever enjoyed the fruit from the same old tree. He appears to have lived in this house during his visits in 1837 and 1838. We ask the good lady if she is aware that Charles Dickens had formerly stayed in her house, and she replies in the negative, so we recommend her to get her husband to put up a tablet outside to the effect “Charles Dickens lived here, 1837,” in imitation of the example of the Society of Arts in Furnival’s Inn. There can be no doubt as to the identity of the house, for we take the precaution of ascertaining that the numbers have not been altered.

Our efforts to discover “Lawn House,” where Dickens stayed on his visits from 1838 to 1848, are attended with some difficulty. First we are told it lay this way, then that, and then the other; a smart villa in a new road is pointed out to us as the object of our search, which we at once reject, as being too recent. But we are patient and persevering, feeling, with Mr. F.’s aunt, that “you can’t make a head and brains out of a brass knob with nothing in it. You couldn’t do it when your Uncle George was living; much less when he’s dead!” Finally, we appeal to some one who looks like the “oldest inhabitant,” and obtain something like a clue. We are eventually directed to a veritable “Lawn House,” which is the last house on the left as you approach “Fort House.” It must have changed in respect of its surroundings since forty years have passed, and although there is nothing outside to indicate it as such, it seems fair to assume that this was the house described in the *Life* as “a small villa between the hill and the cornfield.” The present occupier, who has no recollection of Dickens ever having been there, courteously allows us to see the hall and dining-room. The house is of course a great improvement upon “No 12, High Street.”

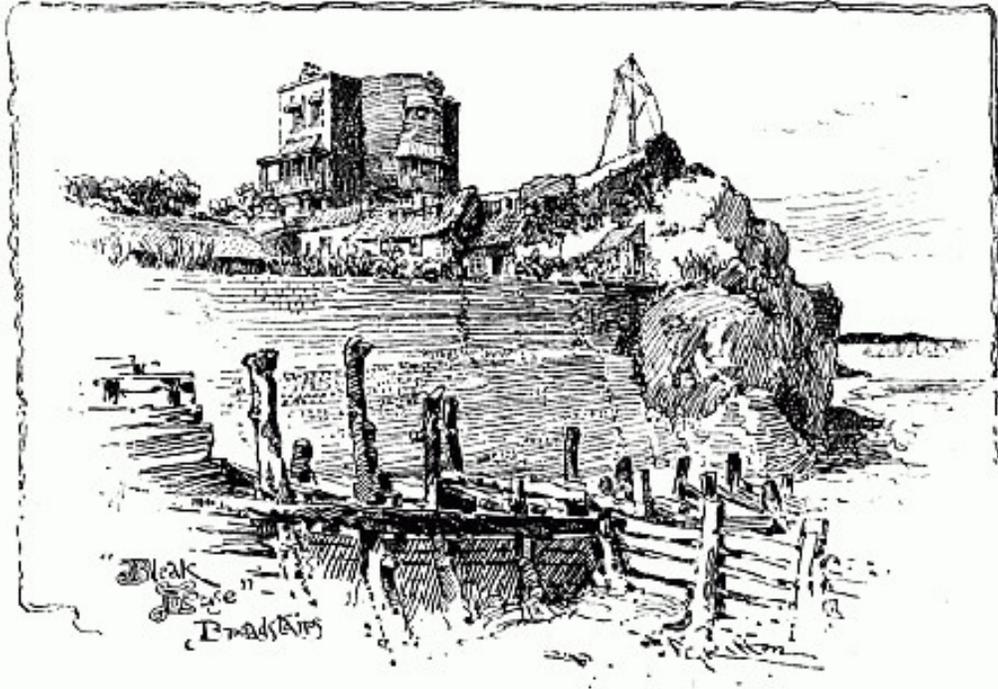
A few steps from “Lawn House” lead us to the drive approaching “Fort House,” pleasantly surrounded by a sloping lawn and shrubbery. John Forster, alluding to it in the *Life*, says: —

“The residence he most desired there, ‘Fort House,’ stood prominently at the top of a breezy hill on the road to Kingsgate, with a cornfield between it

and the sea, and this in many subsequent years he always occupied.”

Alas! the cornfield is no more, but “Fort House,” or “Bleak House,” as it is indifferently termed locally, remains intact. It is the most striking object of the place, standing on a cliff overlooking the sea, the harbour, and the town (made familiar by several photographs and engravings), with its curious verandahs and blinds, as seen in the vignette of J. C. Hotten’s interesting book, *Charles Dickens: The Story of His Life*. An excellent photograph is published in the town, of which we are glad to secure a copy.

In the sixth chapter of *Bleak House* it is called “an old-fashioned house with three peaks in the roof in front, and a severe sweep leading to the porch.” In the same chapter there is a minute account of the interior, too lengthy to be quoted; but the description does not resemble Fort House. We are kindly permitted by the occupier to see the study in which the novelist worked, a privilege long to be remembered. This room is approached by “a little staircase of shallow steps” from the first floor, as described in *Bleak House*; but it will be borne in mind that the “Bleak House” of the novel is placed in Hertfordshire, near St. Albans, and *not* at Broadstairs, although many persons still believe that Fort House is the original of the story. From the study we have a lovely view of the sea — the balmy breeze of a summer’s day lightly fanning the waves, and just sufficing to move the delicate filamentous foliage of the tamarisk trees now standing in the place where the cornfield was. Even at the time we see it, changed as all its surroundings are, we can imagine the enjoyment which Dickens had in this healthy spot on the North Downs.



In that interesting “book for an idle hour” called *The Shuttlecock Papers*, Mr. J. Ashby-Sterry thus sympathetically alludes to “Bleak House”: —
”What a romantic place this is to write in, is it not? What a glorious study to work in! Indeed, both from situation and association, it would be impossible to find a better place for writing, were it not that one feels that so much superb work has been done on this very spot by so great an artist, that the mere craftsman is inclined to question whether it is worth while for him to write at all.”

How well Dickens loved Broadstairs is told in his letter of the 1st September, 1843, addressed to Professor Felton, of Cambridge, U. S. A., as follows: —

“This is a little fishing-place; intensely quiet; built on a cliff, whereon — in the centre of a tiny semi-circular bay — our house stands; the sea rolling and dashing under the windows. Seven miles out are the Goodwin Sands (you’ve heard of the Goodwin Sands?), whence floating lights perpetually wink after dark, as if they were carrying on intrigues with the servants. Also there is a lighthouse called the North Foreland on a hill behind the village, a severe parsonic light, which reproves the young and giddy floaters, and stares grimly out upon the sea. Under the cliff are rare good sands, where all the children assemble every morning and throw up impossible fortifications, which the sea throws down again at high-water. Old

gentlemen and ancient ladies flirt after their own manner in two reading-rooms, and on a great many scattered seats in the open air. Other old gentlemen look all day long through telescopes and never see anything.

“In a bay-window in a one-pair sits, from nine o’clock to one, a gentleman with rather long hair and no neckcloth, who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny indeed. His name is Boz. At one he disappears, and presently emerges from a bathing machine, and may be seen — a kind of salmon-coloured porpoise — splashing about in the ocean. After that he may be seen in another bay-window on the ground-floor, eating a strong lunch; after that, walking a dozen miles or so, or lying on his back in the sand reading a book. Nobody bothers him unless they know he is disposed to be talked to; and I am told he is very comfortable indeed. He’s as brown as a berry, and they *do* say is a small fortune to the innkeeper who sells beer and cold punch. But this is mere rumour. Sometimes he goes up to London (eighty miles or so away), and then I’m told there is a sound in Lincoln’s Inn Fields at night, as of men laughing, together with a clinking of knives and forks, and wine-glasses.”

And further in a letter to another correspondent recently made public: —

“When you come to London, to assist at Miss Liston’s sacrifice, don’t forget to remind your uncle of our Broadstairs engagement to which I hold you bound. A good sea — fresh breezes — fine sands — and pleasant walks — with all manner of fishing-boats, lighthouses, piers, bathing-machines, are its only attractions, but it’s one of the freshest little places in the world, consequently the proper place for you.”

In the year 1851, in a letter dated 8th September, addressed to Mr. Henry Austin, he thus alludes to a wreck which took place at Broadstairs: —

“A great to-do here. A steamer lost on the Goodwins yesterday, and our men bringing in no end of dead cattle and sheep. I stood supper for them last night, to the unbounded gratification of Broadstairs. They came in from the wreck very wet and tired, and very much disconcerted by the nature of their prize — which, I suppose after all, will have to be recommitted to the sea, when the hides and tallow are secured. One lean-faced boatman murmured, when they were all ruminating over the bodies as they lay on the pier: ‘Couldn’t sassage be made on it?’ but retired in confusion shortly afterwards, overwhelmed by the execrations of the bystanders.”

Dickens got tired of Broadstairs in 1847, for reasons given in the following letter to Forster, though he did not forsake it till some years after:

“Vagrant music is getting to that height here, and is so impossible to be escaped from, that I fear Broadstairs and I must part company in time to come. Unless it pours of rain, I cannot write half an hour without the most excruciating organs, fiddles, bells, or glee singers. There is a violin of the most torturing kind under the window now (time, ten in the morning), and an Italian box of music on the steps — both in full blast.”

By good luck we fall in with an “old salt,” formerly one of the boatmen of *Our English Watering Place* who are therein immortalized by much kindly mention, with whom we have a pleasant chat about Charles Dickens. Harry Ford (the name of our friend) well remembers the great novelist, when in early days he used to come on his annual excursions with his family to Broadstairs. “Bless your soul,” he says, “I can see ‘Old Charley,’ as we used to call him among ourselves here, a-coming flying down from the cliff with a hop, step, and jump, with his hair all flying about. He used to sit sometimes on that rail” (pointing to the one surrounding the harbour), “with his legs lolling about, and sometimes on the seat that you’re a-sitting on now” (adjoining the old Look-out House opposite the Tartar Frigate Inn), “and he was very fond of talking to us fellows and hearing our tales — he was very good-natured, and nobody was liked better. And if you’ll read” (continues our informant) “that story that he wrote and printed about *Our Watering Place*, I was the man who’s mentioned there as mending a little ship for a boy. I held that child between my knees. And what’s more, sir, I took ‘Old Charley,’ on the very last time that he came over to Broadstairs (he wasn’t living here at the time), round the foreland to Margate, with a party of four friends. I took ‘em in my boat, the *Irene*,” pointing to a clinker-built strong boat lying in the harbour, capable of holding twenty people. “The wind was easterly — the weather was rather rough, and it took me three or four hours to get round. There was a good deal of chaffing going on, I can tell you.”



Mrs. Long, of Zion Place, Broadstairs, the wife of an old coastguardman, who was stationed at the Preventive Station when Dickens lodged at Fort House, also remembered the novelist. The coastguard men are also immortalized in *Our English Watering Place*, as “a steady, trusty, well-conditioned, well-conducted set of men, with no misgiving about looking you full in the face, and with a quiet, thorough-going way of passing along to their duty at night, carrying huge sou’wester clothing in reserve, that is fraught with all good prepossession. They are handy fellows — neat about their houses, industrious at gardening, would get on with their wives, one thinks, in a desert island — and people it too soon.”

Mrs. Long says “Mr. Dickens was a very nice sort of gentleman, but he didn’t like a noise.” The windows of Fort House, she reminds us, overlooked the coastguard station, and whenever the children playing about made more noise than usual, he used to tell her husband gently “to take the children away,” or “to keep the people quiet.” This little story fully confirms Dickens’s often-expressed feeling of dislike, which subsequently grew intolerable, to Broadstairs as a watering-place.

After taking a turn or two on the lively Promenade, — made bright by the rich masses of flesh-coloured flowers of the valerian which fringe its margin, — to enjoy the sunshine and air, and watch the holiday folks, we bid adieu to Broadstairs, and proceed to Margate.

Of Margate there is not much to say. We reach it by an early afternoon train of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, to get the quickest

service by the South-Eastern Railway on to Canterbury. Our stay at Margate is consequently very limited.

To some minds this popular Cockney watering-place has great attractions; its broad sands, its beautiful air, and its boisterous amusements, negro-melodies, merry-go-rounds, and the like; but it was a place seldom visited by Dickens, although he was so often near it. Only twice in the *Life* is it recorded that he came here; once being in 1844, when he wrote to Forster respecting the theatre as follows: —

“*Nota Bene.* — The Margate Theatre is open every evening, and the four Patagonians (see Goldsmith’s *Essays*) are performing thrice a week at Ranelagh.’ A visit from me” — Forster goes on to say — ”was at this time due, to which these were held out as inducements; and there followed what it was supposed I could not resist, a transformation into the broadest farce of a deep tragedy by a dear friend of ours. ‘Now you really must come. Seeing only is believing, very often isn’t that, and even Being the thing falls a long way short of believing it. Mrs. Nickleby herself once asked me, as you know, if I really believed there ever was such a woman; but there will be no more belief, either in me or my descriptions, after what I have to tell of our excellent friend’s tragedy, if you don’t come and have it played again for yourself, ‘by particular desire.’ We saw it last night, and oh! if you had but been with us! Young Betty, doing what the mind of man without my help never *can* conceive, with his legs like padded boot-trees wrapped up in faded yellow drawers, was the hero. The comic man of the company, enveloped in a white sheet, with his head tied with red tape like a brief, and greeted with yells of laughter whenever he appeared, was the venerable priest. A poor toothless old idiot, at whom the very gallery roared with contempt when he was called a tyrant, was the remorseless and aged Creon. And Ismene, being arrayed in spangled muslin trousers very loose in the legs and very tight in the ankles, such as Fatima would wear in *Blue Beard*, was at her appearance immediately called upon for a song! After this can you longer — ?”



He speaks in a letter to Forster, dated September, 1847, of “improvements in the Margate Theatre since his memorable first visit.” It had been managed by a son of the great comedian Dowton, and the piece which Dickens then saw was *As You Like It*, “really very well done, and a most excellent house.” It was Mr. Dowton’s benefit, and “he made a sensible and modest kind of speech,” which impressed Dickens, who thus concludes his letter: — “He really seems a most respectable man, and he has cleaned out this dusthole of a theatre into something like decency.”

There is also the following significant mention of Margate in chapter nineteen of *Bleak House*: —

“It is the hottest long vacation known for many years. All the young clerks are madly in love, and according to their various degrees, pant for bliss with the beloved object at Margate, Ramsgate, or Gravesend.”

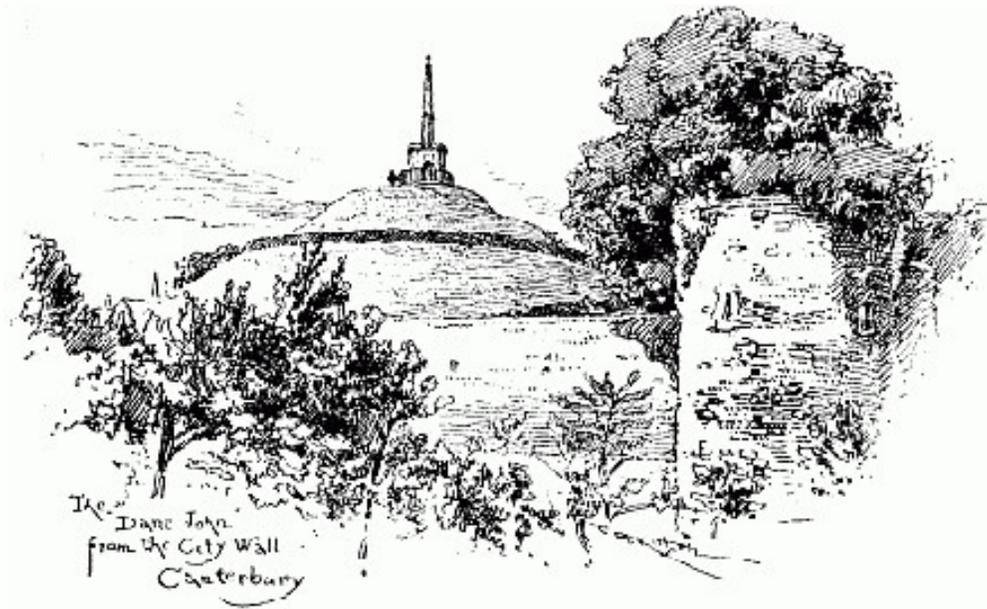
If Broadstairs was noisy, Margate must have been intensely so. We leave the crowded holiday-making place without much feeling of regret, and passing Ramsgate — of which there is but one mention in the *Life* — on our way, reach Canterbury in the afternoon.

We are delighted with this exquisitely beautiful old city, our only regret being that our time is very limited, and our means of ascertaining places situated in “Dickens-Land” more so.

Taking up our temporary quarters at the “Sir John Falstaff” Hotel, in remembrance of its namesake at Gad’s Hill, after the refreshment of a meal,

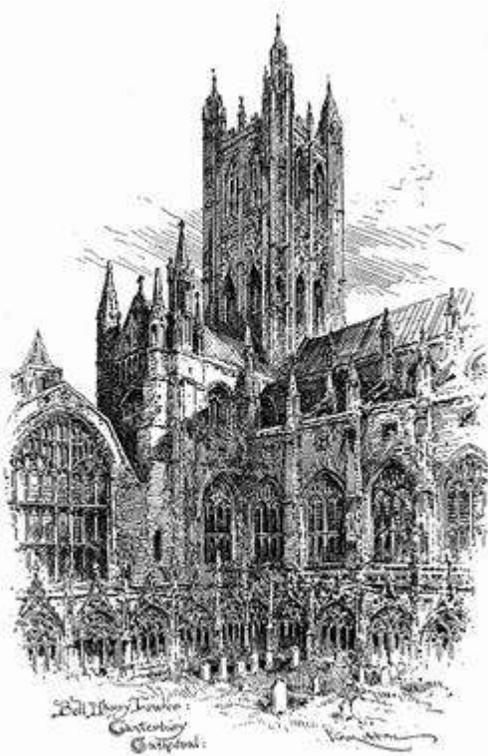
we commence our tramp through Canterbury, where David Copperfield passed some of his happiest days. Of the Falstaff here there is an excellent picture in Mr. Rimmer's *About England with Dickens*; a very quaint old inn with double front, and bay-windows top and bottom, possibly of the sixteenth century, and with a long swinging sign extending over the pavement, on which is painted a life-like presentment of the portly knight, the pretty ornamental ironwork supporting it reminding one of Washington Irving's description in *Bracebridge Hall*, "fancifully wrought at top into flourishes and flowers."

A few steps further on is the West Gate, "standing between two lofty and spacious round towers erected in the river," built by Archbishop Sudbury, who was barbarously murdered by Wat Tyler in the reign of Richard II., which is the sole remaining one of six gates formerly constituting the approaches to the city. From this gate, looking eastward, with the river Stour on either side, banked by neatly-trimmed private gardens, a beautiful view of the city is obtained. The High Street, crowded with gables of the sixteenth century and later timbered houses, slightly bends and rises as well, until the perspective seems to lose itself in a distant grove of trees, locally called the "Dane John," a corruption of "Donjon." This view, especially when seen on a summer afternoon, is most picturesque. The present appearance of the quiet street is decidedly unlike that which it presented on that busy market-day when Miss Betsey Trotwood drove her nephew along it, for David says, "My aunt had a good opportunity of insinuating the grey pony among carts, baskets, vegetables, and hucksters' goods. The hair-breadth turns and twists we made drew down upon us a variety of speeches from the people standing about, which were not always complimentary; but my aunt drove on with perfect indifference."



We notice in the windows and in many of the shops an abundance of brightly-coloured cut-flowers, a notable feature of the county of Kent; but we have little time to spare, and hasten on to the Cathedral precincts.

“What a magnificent edifice!” is our first thought on beholding the Cathedral, a noble pile so well befitting the Metropolitan See of England, from which the Christianity of the Kingdom first flowed. Dating from Ethelbert, at the close of the sixth century, three structures have successively occupied the site, culminating in the present one, which, according to Mr. Phillips Bevan, was erected at different times between 1070 and 1500; and he goes on to say: — ”No wonder that it exhibits so many styles and peculiarities of detail, although the two most prominent architectural eras are those of ‘Transition-Norman’ and ‘Perpendicular.’“



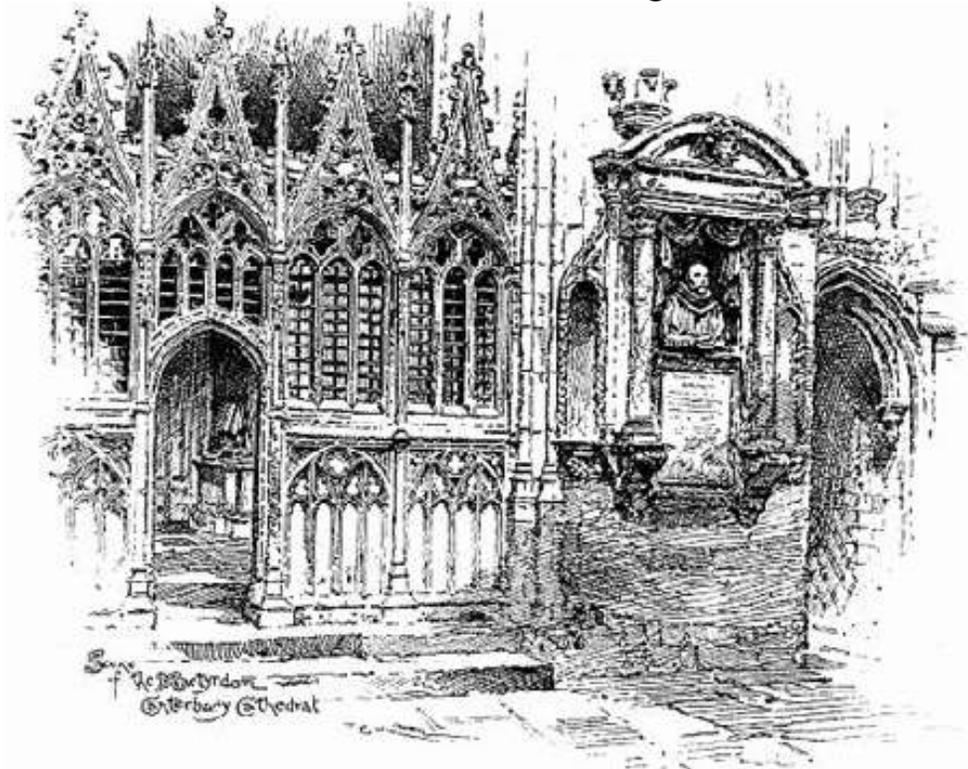
The appropriate stone figures in niches of distinguished Royal and Ecclesiastical personages associated with the Cathedral (which at the suggestion of Dean Alford in 1863 replaced those of the murderers of the martyr, Thomas à Becket), from King Ethelbert to Queen Victoria, and from Archbishop Lanfranc to Archbishop Longley; the lofty groined arches and stately towers, the beautiful carved screen, the noble monuments, the splendid choir (a hundred and eighty feet in length) approached by many steps, the rich stained-glass windows, all attract our admiring attention, and confirm our impression that a modern pilgrimage to Canterbury is a thing to be highly appreciated; and on no account would we have missed this part of our excursion. The murder of Thomas à Becket (1170) took place between the nave and the choir in a transept or cross aisle called “The Martyrdom.”

There is an interesting Sidney Cooper Gallery of Art, and also a Museum in the city, the latter containing some rare old Roman Mosaic pavement discovered in Burgate Street at a depth of ten feet.

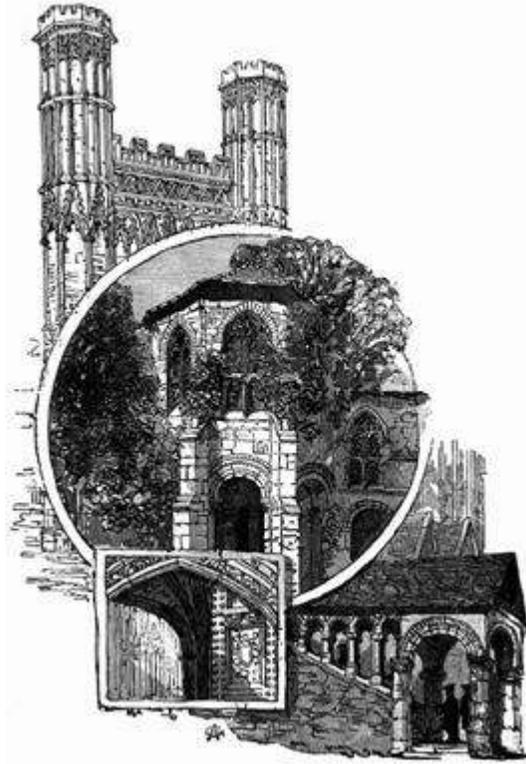
But our object is to identify spots made memorable in *David Copperfield*, and we walk round the spacious Cathedral Close and “make an effort” (as Mrs. Chick said) in trying to find the simple-minded and good Dr. Strong’s House. It is described as “a grave building in a courtyard, with a learned air about it that seemed very well suited to the stray rooks and jackdaws who

came down from the Cathedral towers, and walked with a clerkly bearing on the grass-plot.”

Alas! it is not here, although there are many such houses that correspond with it in some particulars. So we try several of the “dear old tranquil streets,” but fail to discover the identical building.



The next object of our search is Mr. Wickfield’s residence, “a very old house bulging out over the road; a house with low latticed windows, bulging out still further, and beams with carved heads on the ends, bulging out too.” How strongly the description in many parts tallies with the houses in Rochester opposite “Eastgate House”; but here again we are baffled, as other modern pilgrims have been before, and we cannot associate any particular building with either of the two houses. The house in Burgate Street now occupied as offices by Messrs. Plummer and Fielding, Diocesan Registrars, who obligingly permit an examination of it, is suggested to us as being Mr. Wickfield’s house, but, after an inspection, on several grounds we are obliged to reject this suggestion.



“Bits” of Old Canterbury.

There was many a “low old-fashioned room, walked straight into from the street,” which would have served for the “umble” dwelling of Uriah Heep and his mother, but none can be pointed out with absolute certainty as being the veritable one.

By the kindness of Dr. Sheppard and Mr. T. B. Rosseter, F.R.M.S., we are, however, enabled to identify two houses in Canterbury alluded to in *David Copperfield*. The “County Inn,” where Mr. Dick slept on his visits to David “every alternate Wednesday,” was no doubt The Royal Fountain Hotel in St. Margaret’s Street (formerly the Watling Street), which is still recognized as such. A passage in the seventeenth chapter thus refers to these visits: —

“Mr. Dick was very partial to ginger-bread. To render his visits the more agreeable, my aunt had instructed me to open a credit for him at a cake-shop, which was hampered with the stipulation that he should not be served with more than one shilling’s-worth in the course of any one day. This, and the reference of all his little bills at the County Inn, where he slept, to my aunt before they were paid, induced me to think that Mr. Dick was only allowed to rattle his money, and not to spend it.”

The “little Inn” (as recorded in the same chapter) where Mr. Micawber “put up” on his first visit to Canterbury, and where he “occupied a little room in it partitioned off from the commercial, and strongly flavoured with tobacco smoke,” is doubtless the “Sun Inn” in Sun Street, which is at the opposite corner of the square where the ancient “Chequers” in Mercery Lane — the Pilgrim’s Inn of Chaucer — stood. It was a place of resort from afar, and was altered in the seventeenth century. Dr. Sheppard calls attention to the interesting fact that the omnibus from Herne Bay stopped at the Sun; and probably, in his visits to Broadstairs, Dickens would often run over for a day’s trip to Canterbury.

On their first visit to the “little Inn,” Mr. and Mrs. Micawber — notwithstanding their chronic impecuniosity — thus entertained David Copperfield: —

“We had a beautiful little dinner. Quite an elegant dish of fish; the kidney end of a loin of veal roasted; fried sausage-meat; a partridge and a pudding. There was wine, and there was strong ale; and after dinner Mrs. Micawber made us a bowl of hot punch with her own hands.”

They spent a jolly evening, and ended with singing *Auld Lang Syne*.

The “little Inn” is again alluded to later in the story, where Mr. Micawber announces his full determination to abstain from everything until he has exposed the machinations of, and blown to pieces, “the — a — detestable serpent — Heep;” and finally, where David Copperfield “assisted at an explosion,” and Mr. Micawber is triumphant, and the “transcendent and immortal hypocrite and perjurer, Heep,” is forced to succumb.

Speaking of the “little Inn” for the last time, David says: — “I looked at the old house from the corner of the street. . . . The early sun was striking edgewise on its gables and lattice-windows, touching them with gold; and some beams of its old peace seemed to touch my heart.”

Dr. Sheppard subsequently told us that, when he was beginning to turn his attention to the deciphering and utilizing of ancient MSS., he was much impressed, when perusing some articles in *Household Words*, or some other papers written by Dickens, relating to the neglected state of public records, more particularly at Canterbury; and when many years after the very records of which he wrote came under his (Dr. Sheppard’s) care, he was surprised to find the names of Snodgrass, Sam Weller, and others therein. The records to which Dr. Sheppard referred were those in charge of the Archbishop’s Registrar at Canterbury. If time permits it would be pleasant

to go on to Dover, to see “Miss Betsey Trotwood’s house,” but this is impossible; and indeed, all that can be said about a tramp in search of “that very neat little cottage with cheerful bow windows in front of it, a small square gravelled court or garden full of flowers carefully tended, and smelling deliciously,” has been well said by Mr. Ashby-Sterry in his delightful little volume, *Cucumber Chronicles*.



After much perseverance, and in spite of almost as many difficulties as beset poor little David Copperfield himself in his search for his aunt (who, as the Dover boatmen told him, “lived in the South Foreland Light, and had singed her whiskers by doing so” — “that she was made fast to the great buoy outside the harbour, and could only be visited at half-tide” — “that she was locked up in Maidstone Jail for child-stealing” — and that “she was seen to mount a broom in the last high wind and make direct for Calais”), Mr. Ashby-Sterry succeeded, although his greatest embarrassment arose from that irrepressible nuisance, “Buggins the Builder,” who cannot be controlled even in the neighbourhood of Dover, so “hugely does he delight to mar those spots that have been hallowed by antiquity, seclusion, or the pen of the novelist. Hence the abode of Betsey Trotwood is not so pleasant as it must have been formerly, for other houses have clustered about the back and the front.” But Mr. Ashby-Sterry quite satisfied himself as to the

identity on Dover Heights of the very neat little cottage, and assures us that “the house, however, still stands high, the fresh breezes from over the sea and across the Down smite it. It still has a view of the sea, though perhaps not so uninterrupted as it was in the days of David Copperfield.” He further states that it is, perhaps, not quite so neat as it was in Miss Betsey Trotwood’s time, though there are no donkeys about. Here are the bow windows, with the room above, where Mr. Dick alarmed poor David by nodding and laughing at him on his first arrival. The window on the right must have belonged to the neat room “with the drugget-covered carpet,” and the old-fashioned furniture brightly polished, where might be found “the cat, the kettle-holder, the two canaries, the old china, the punch-bowl full of dried rose leaves, the tall press guarding all sorts of bottles and pots, and wonderfully out of keeping with the rest.” On the strength of this description by an ardent lover of Dickens, we fully make up our minds to visit Dover at no distant date to see Miss Betsey Trotwood’s house for ourselves.

À propos of Miss Trotwood’s domicile, we have been favoured by Mr. C. K. Worsfold, an old resident of Dover, with a letter containing some interesting particulars, from which we extract the following: —

“Dickens’s description of the local habitation of Betsey Trotwood is not consistent with the surroundings. The hills on either side of the town belong to the War Department, and are occupied as fortifications; on the eastern side is the Castle, and on the western side barracks and forts. On the western heights there is a house somewhat answering to Dickens’s description, having a garden in front of it, and a small plot of grass in front of the garden; and about forty years ago there lived in this house a lady of rather masculine character, who always resented any intrusion of boys, and perhaps donkeys, on the grass in front of her house and garden, and I believe she was occasionally rather rough with the boys; but there the likeness to Betsey Trotwood ends. This was a married lady living with her husband.

“I know it was a matter of conversation forty years ago that Dickens must have found his original in the lady in question, but I think he was rather in the habit of selecting his characters without reference to locality, and then adapting them to his requirements.

“Dickens was a frequent visitor to Dover, and he may possibly have been a witness of some encounter between this lady and the boys, and on that

occasion donkeys may have been present. I do not know of any relative of the lady answering to Miss Trotwood's worthy nephew."

"A moderate stroke," as Mr. Datchery said, "is all I am justified in scoring up"; and we reluctantly leave the "sunny street of Canterbury, dozing, as it were, in the hot light," and take our places in the train for Chatham, distant about twenty-seven miles.

The only new parts of interest which we go over, on our return journey by rail, are the green fields surrounding the ancient city, wherein are numbers of those beautiful and quiet-feeding cattle, which the eminent artist, Mr. T. Sidney Cooper, R.A. (who resides in the neighbourhood), loves to paint, and paints so well; and in due time we pass the chalk-topped hills called Harbledown, overlooking Canterbury, from whence the best view of the city is obtained, and safely reach our headquarters at Rochester.

CHAPTER XII.

COOLING, CLIFFE, AND HIGHAM.

“And now the range of marshes lay clear before us, with the sails of the ships on the river growing out of it; and we went into the Churchyard . . . and the light wind strewed it with beautiful shadows of clouds and trees.”

* * * * *

“What might have been your opinion of the place?”

“A most beastly place. Mudbank, mist, swamp and work; work, swamp, mist, and mudbank.” — *Great Expectations*.

* * * * *

“They were now in the open country; the houses were very few and scattered at long intervals, often miles apart. Occasionally they came upon a cluster of poor cottages, some with a chair or low board put across the open door, to keep the scrambling children from the road; others shut up close, while all the family were working in the fields. These were often the commencement of a little village; and after an interval came a wheelwright’s shed, or perhaps a blacksmith’s forge; then a thriving farm, with sleepy cows lying about the yard, and horses peering over the low wall, and scampering away when harnessed horses passed upon the road, as though in triumph at their freedom.” — *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

Now for a long tramp in the country of the Marshes — the famous “Meshes” of *Great Expectations*. The air is sultry on this Thursday afternoon, and there is thunder in the distance. The storm, however, does not pass over Rochester, but further on we find traces of it where the roadways have been washed up. Afterwards the air becomes deliciously cool, and that hum of all Nature which succeeds the quiet preceding the storm is distinctly perceptible. Crossing Rochester Bridge, keeping to the right along Strood and Frindsbury — the churchyard of which affords a splendid view of Rochester, Chatham, and the Medway — passing up Four Elms Hill and through the little village of Wainscot, nothing of interest calls for notice until we have travelled some miles from Strood. After crossing a

tramway belonging to Government, and utilized by the Royal Engineers as a means of communication between the powder-magazine and Chatham Barracks, we observe that vegetation, which is so rich in other parts of Kent, here appears to be dwarfed and stunted. A hop-garden presents a very miserable contrast, in its struggle for existence, to others we have seen in the more central parts of the county, and even some of these were far from being luxuriant, owing to such a peculiarly wet and cold season. The hedges in places are diversified with the small gold and violet star-like flowers and the green and scarlet berries of the climbing woody nightshade, or bitter-sweet (*Solanum Dulcamara*), often mistaken for the deadly nightshade (*Atropa Belladonna* — a fine bushy herbaceous perennial, with large ovate-shaped leaves, and lurid, purple bell-shaped flowers), quite a different plant, and happily somewhat rare in England. The delicate light-blue flowers of the chicory are very abundant here.

A tramp of upwards of six miles from Rochester, by way of Hoo, brings us to Lodge Hill, overlooking Perry Hill, which affords a magnificent view of the mouth of the Thames beyond the low-lying Marshes, and of Canvey Island, off the coast of Essex, on the opposite side. By the kindness of a farmer's wife we are allowed to take a short cut through the farm-garden and grounds, which leads direct to Cooling (or Cowling) Church, a cheerless, grey-stone structure, the tower standing out as a beacon long before we reach it.

Those unacquainted with this part of Kent may be interested in knowing that the Marshes, which stretch out over a considerable distance on either side of the Thames, on both the Kent and the Essex coasts, consist entirely of alluvial soil reclaimed at some time from the river. They are intersected by ditches and water-courses, and covered with rank vegetation, chiefly of grass, rushes, and flags, where not cultivated. Higher up the land is rich, and large tracts of it are planted with vegetables as market gardens. Sea-gulls, plovers, and herons are numerous; their call-notes in the still evening sounding shrill and uncanny over the long stretches of flat lands.

Dear old Michael Drayton, the Warwickshire poet, who touched upon almost everything, has not omitted to describe the Marshes in a somewhat similar locality, for in the *Polyolbion* (Song XVIII.) he gracefully compares them to a female enamoured of the beauties of the River Rother, thus: —

“Appearing to the flood, most bravely like a Queen,
Clad all from head to foot, in gaudy Summer's green,

Her mantle richly wrought with sundry flow'rs and weeds;
Her moistful temples bound with wreaths of quiv'ring reeds;
And on her loins a frock, with many a swelling plait,
Emboss'd with well-spread horse, large sheep, and full-fed neat;
With villages amongst, oft powthered here and there;
And (that the same more like to landscape should appear)
With lakes and lesser fords, to mitigate the heat
In summer, when the fly doth prick the gadding neat.”

Readers of *Great Expectations* will remember that the scene in the first chapter between Pip and the convict, Magwitch, is laid in Cooling churchyard, and on reaching this spot we are instantly reminded of what doubtless gave origin to the idea of the five dead little brothers of poor Philip Pirrip, for there, on the left of the principal pathway, are indeed, not five stone lozenges, but *ten* in one row and three more at the back of them, such peculiarly-shaped and curiously-arranged little monuments as we never before beheld. They consist of a grey stone (Kentish-rag, probably, but lichen-encrusted by time) of cylindrical shape, widening at the shoulders, coffin-like, and about a yard in length, the diameter being about eight inches, including the portion buried in the earth. Four little foot-stones are placed in front, and separating the ten little memorials from the three at the back is a large head-stone, bearing the name — ”Comport of Cowling Court, 1771.” Cooling Church, which has the date 1615 on one of the bells, has an example of a Hagioscope, a curious, small, square, angular, tunnel-like opening through the wall, which divides the nave from the chancel. It is said to have been the place through which those members of the church, who were unworthy or unable to receive the sacred elements, might get a look at their more acceptable companions during the administration of the sacrament. The Rev. W. H. A. Leaver, the Rector, who kindly shows us over his church, in reply to our question as to whether he could give any information about Charles Dickens, said that he was a new-comer in the district, and that all he remembers is, that when his sister was a little baby in arms, her mother happened once to be travelling in the same train with the great novelist, who, with his usual kindness, gave the child an orange, which she acknowledged very ungratefully by scratching his face!

The following is a picture of the neighbourhood, given in the opening sentences of the story: —



“Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time, I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana, wife of above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes, and mounds, and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair, from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all, and beginning to cry, was Pip.”

Here follows the appearance of the awful convict, and the terrible threats by which he induces Pip to bring him “that file and them wittles” on the morrow; to enforce obedience the convict tilts Pip two or three times, “and then” [says Pip] “he gave me a most tremendous dip and roll, so that the church jumped over its own weathercock.” Then he held him by the arms in an upright position on the top of the stone, finally threatening him “with having his heart and liver torn out,” in case of non-compliance.

All the characters described in *Great Expectations*, and all the scenes wherein they played their parts — Pip, with and without his “great expectations”; his sister Mrs. Joe Gargery, “on the rampage with Tickler;” Joe Gargery, “ever the best of friends, dear Pip;” Mr. and Mrs. Hubble, the former fond of “a bit of savoury pork pie as would lay atop of anything you could mention and do no harm;” the stage-struck Wopsle, *alias* “Mr. Waldengarver”; “the servile Pumblechook;” the two convicts, “Pip’s convict,” Magwitch, with “the great iron on his leg,” and the “other convict,” Compeyson, also ironed; “slouching old” Orlick; Bidley, simple-hearted and loving; “the Serjeant” and “party of soldiers”; Mr. Jaggers, “the Old Bailey lawyer”; Estella, Miss Havisham, Herbert Pocket, and Bentley Drummle at “the market town”; Joe’s Forge (now converted into a dwelling-house); “The Three Jolly Bargemen” (obviously taken from “The Three Horse-shoes,” the present village inn); the “old Battery,” “the little sluice-house by the lime-kiln;” — all centre round Cooling churchyard, and appear before us as though traced on a map.



Cooling Church.

Forster says in the *Life*: — “It is strange as I transcribe the words, with what wonderful vividness they bring back the very spot on which we stood when he said he meant to make it the scene of the opening of this story —

Cooling Castle ruins and the desolate Church, lying out among the marshes seven miles from Gad's Hill!"

Beyond where the river runs to the sea, we conjure up the chase and recapture of Pip's convict, while poor Pip himself, assisted by his friend Herbert Pocket, is straining every nerve to get him away. As illustrative of the wonderfully careful way in which Dickens did all his work, we also read in Forster's *Life*: —

"To make himself sure of the actual course of a boat in such circumstances, and what possible incidents the adventure might have, Dickens hired a steamer for the day from Blackwall to Southend. Eight or nine friends, and three or four members of his family, were on board, and he seemed to have no care, the whole of that summer day (22nd of May, 1861), except to enjoy their enjoyment and entertain them with his own in shape of a thousand whims and fancies; but his sleepless observation was at work all the time, and nothing had escaped his keen vision on either side of the river. The fifteenth chapter of the third volume is a masterpiece."

Speaking generally of this fascinating story, which possesses a thousand-fold greater interest to us now we visit the country there described (not formerly very accessible, but now readily approached by the railway from Gravesend to Sheerness, alighting at Cliffe, the nearest station to Cooling), Forster says: —

"It may be doubted if Dickens could better have established his right to the front rank among novelists claimed for him, than by the ease and mastery with which, in these two books of *Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*, he kept perfectly distinct the two stories of a boy's childhood, both told in the form of autobiography." The marshes are also alluded to twice in *Bleak House* — first, in chapter one — "Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights;" and secondly, in the twenty-sixth chapter, in the dialogue between Trooper George and his odd but kind-hearted attendant Phil Squod, the original of which, by the bye, was a Chatham character.

"And so, Phil,' says George of the shooting gallery, after several turns in silence; 'you were dreaming of the country last night.'

"Phil, by the bye, said as much, in a tone of surprise, as he scrambled out of bed.

"Yes, guv'ner.'

"What was it like?"

“I hardly know what it was like, guv’ner,’ said Phil, considering.

“How did you know it was the country?”

“On accounts of the grass, I think. And the swans upon it,’ says Phil, after further consideration.

“What were the swans doing on the grass?”

“They was a eating of it, I expect,’ says Phil. . . .

“The country,’ says Mr. George, applying his knife and fork, ‘why I suppose you never clapped your eyes on the country, Phil?’

“I see the marshes once,’ says Phil, contentedly eating his breakfast.

“What marshes?”

“*The* marshes, commander,’ returns Phil.

“Where are they?”

“I don’t know where they are,’ says Phil, ‘but I see ‘em, guv’ner. They was flat. And miste.’”

Forster says: — ”About the whole of this Cooling churchyard, indeed, and the neighbouring castle ruins, there was a weird strangeness that made it one of his [Dickens’s] attractive walks in the late year or winter, when from Higham he could get to it across country, over the stubble fields; and, for a shorter summer walk, he was not less fond of going round the village of Shorne, and sitting on a hot afternoon in its pretty shady churchyard.”

Altogether, the place has a dreary and lonesome appearance in the close of the summer evening, and we can picture with wonderful vividness the remarkable scenes described in *Great Expectations*, as the lurid purple reflection from the setting sun spreads over the Thames valley, and lights up the marshes; the tall pollards standing out like spectres contribute to the weirdness and beauty of the scene.

Dickens was not the only admirer of the Marshes. Turner also visited them, and painted some of his most famous pictures from observation there, namely “Stangate Creek,” “Shrimping Sands,” and “Off Sheerness.”

A few paces from the church brings us to Cooling Castle, built by Sir John de Cobham, the third Baron Cobham, in the reign of Richard II., whose arms appear on the gatehouse, together with a very curious motto in early English characters. We extract the following interesting account of the tower from the *Archæologia Cantiana* (vol. xi.): —



“On the south face of the eastern Outer Gate Tower, we see the well-known inscription, which takes the form of a Charter, with Lord Cobham’s seal appended to it. This is formed of fourteen copper plates exquisitely enamelled. The writing is in black, while the ground is of white enamel; the seal and silk cords are of the proper colours. The whole work is an exquisite example of enamel, which after five hundred years’ exposure to the weather remains nearly as good as when it was put up. The inscription states very clearly why Lord Cobham erected a castle here, viz. for the safety of the country. The French invasion had shewn the need, and the inscription was perhaps intended to disarm the suspicions and hostility of the serfs by reminding them of that need. It runs thus, in four lines, each enamelled upon three plates of copper: —

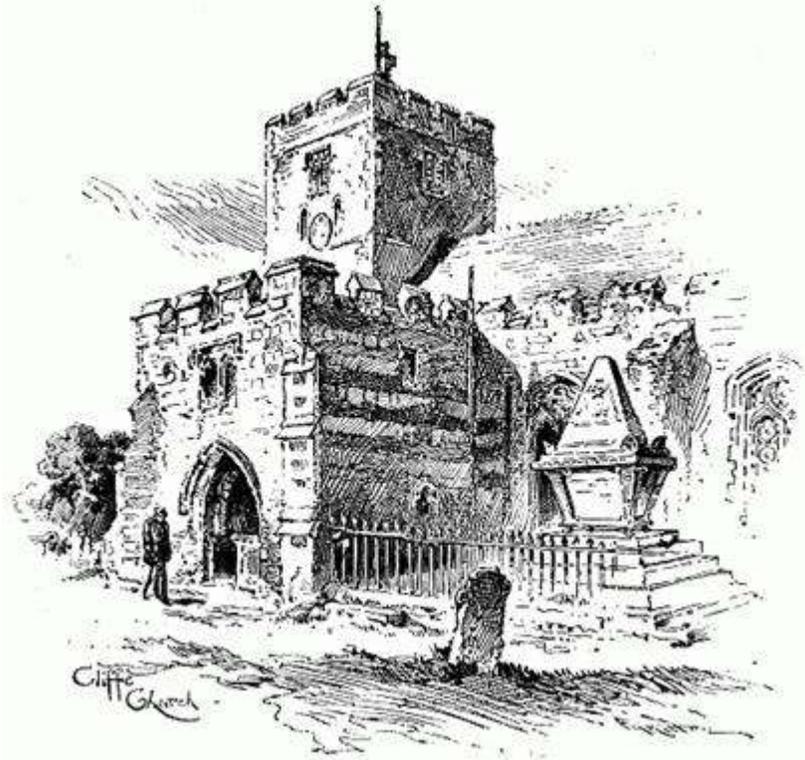
““Knoweth that beth and schul be
That i am mad in help of the cuntre
In knowyng of whyche thyng
Thys is chartre and witnessyng.”“

“(Seal, ‘gules’, on a chevron ‘or’ three lions rampant ‘sable’.)

“Inscriptions are rare on Gothic buildings, especially on castles. This at Coulyng is remarkable from being in English, at a time when Latin was employed in all charters; it contains that early form of the plural ‘beth’

instead of 'are.' The inscription measures thirty-two inches by fourteen, and the diameter of the seal is no less than seven and a quarter inches long."

After stopping a short time to admire the imposing entrance gate and the remains of the ancient moat, we wend our way for two or three miles, by lanes and "over the stubble-fields," to the straggling village of Cliffe, the houses of which are very old and mostly weather-boarded. The approach to the church is by a rare example of a lich-gate, having a room over it for muniments, and the church itself (which is very large, and seems to be out of proportion to the size of the village) stands in a commanding position on a ridge of chalk, overlooking the marshes, from whence the views of the river in the distance are very fine. It is supposed to be the place where the Saxon Church held its councils, and there is a local tradition of a ferry having once existed near here. Evidence of this seems to survive in the fact that all the roads both on the Kent and Essex shores appear to converge to this point. The church has some interesting *miserere* stalls and brasses to the Faunce family (17th century). On the walls we find specimens of that somewhat rare fern, the scaly spleenwort (*Ceterach officinarum*).



Time does not permit us to go on to Gravesend, which like this place was one of Dickens's favourite spots ("We come, you see" [says Mr. Peggotty, speaking of himself and Ham to David Copperfield, when they visited him

at Salem House], “the wind and tide making in our favor, in one of our Yarmouth lugs to Gravesen”“), so we defer our visit to that popular resort until another occasion.

We notice in places where the harvest has been cleared (which, alas! owing to excess of wet and absence of sun, has not been an abundant one), preparations for cultivation next year, exhibiting that peculiar effect from ploughing which that gifted writer and born naturalist, the late Richard Jeffreys, described in his book *Wild Life in a Southern County*, with that love for common things which was so characteristic of him: —

“The ploughmen usually take special care with their work near public roads, so that the furrows end on to the base of the highway shall be mathematically straight. They often succeed so well that the furrows look as if traced with a ruler, and exhibit curious effects of vanishing perspective. Along the furrow, just as it is turned, there runs a shimmering light as the eye traces it up. The ploughshare, heavy and drawn with great force, smooths the earth as it cleaves it, giving it for a time a ‘face,’ as it were, the moisture on which reflects the light. If you watch the farmers driving to market, you will see that they glance up the furrows to note the workmanship and look for game; you may tell from a distance if they espy a hare, by the check of the rein and the extended hand pointing.”

Our destination is now Higham — ”Higham by Rochester, Kent,” — Dickens’s nearest village, in which, from his first coming to Gad’s Hill, he took the deepest interest, and after a further long tramp of nearly four miles steadily maintained, we reach Lower Higham towards dusk; and in a lane we ask an old labourer (who looks as though he would be all the better for “Three Acres and a Cow”) if we are on the right road to Higham Station. Curtly but civilly the man answers, “Keep straight on,” when an incident occurs which brightens up matters considerably. The questioner says to the labourer, “Do you remember the late Charles Dickens?” (We always spoke, when in the district, of “the *late* Charles Dickens,” to distinguish him from his eldest son, who lived at Gad’s Hill for some years after his father’s death. Frequently the great novelist was spoken of by residents as “old Mr. Dickens!”)

“Do I remember Muster Dickens?” responds the venerable rustic, and his eyes sparkle, and his face beams with such animation that he becomes a different being. “Of course I do; he used to have games — running, jumping, and such-like — for us working people, and I’ve often won a

prize. He used to come among us and give us refreshments, and make himself very pleasant.”

“How long have you lived in this parish?” says the questioner.

“Sixty-seven year,” is the answer.

Time prevents further inquiries, so we bid our friend “good-evening.”

In referring to the sports at Gad’s Hill, Mr. Langton has recorded how a friend sent him a broadside of a portion of one day’s amusements, which from its amateurish appearance was probably printed by Dickens’s sons at the private printing-press before alluded to. The occasion was the 26th December, 1866, and the Christmas sports were held in a field at the back of Gad’s Hill Place. Mr. Trood, a former landlord of the “Sir John Falstaff” (whose name has been previously mentioned), had, by permission of Charles Dickens, a booth erected for the refreshment of persons contesting. The attendance was between two and three thousand, and there was not a single case of misconduct or damage. Mr. A. H. Layard, M.P. (afterwards Sir Austin Layard), was present, and took great interest in the proceedings, Dickens having appointed him “chief commissioner of the domestic police.” Sir Austin Layard said of the sports, “Dickens seemed to have bound every creature present upon what honour the creature had to keep order. What was the special means used, or the art employed, it might have been difficult to say, but that was the result.” We made every effort to obtain one of the bills of these sports, but without success, and therefore take the liberty of quoting from Mr. Langton’s copy: —

Christmas Sports.

The All-Comers’ Race.

Distance — Once round the field.

First Prize 10*s.*; Second, 5*s.*; Third, 2*s.* 6*d.*

Entries to be made in Mr. Trood’s tent before 12 o’clock.

To start at 2.45.

Starter — M. Stone, Esq.

Judge and Referee — C. Dickens, Esq.

Clerk of the Course — C. Dickens, Junr., Esq.

Stewards and Keepers of the Course — Messrs. A. H. Layard, M.P., H. Chorley, J. Hulkes, and H. Dickens.

In a letter written to Mr. Forster next day, Dickens said, “The road between this and Chatham was like a fair all day, and surely it is a fine thing to get such perfect behaviour out of a reckless sea-port town.”

We presently meet with another representative of the class of village labourer at Upper Higham, a cheery old man, although, as is sadly too often the case in his class, he was suffering from “the Rheumatiz.” “Those are nice chrysanthemums in your garden,” we observe. “Yes, they are, sir,” he replies; “but if they had been better attended to when they was young, they’d have been nicer.” “Well, I suppose both of us would,” is the rejoinder. We are in touch on the instant. Our new acquaintance laughs, and so a question or two is put to him, and the following is the substance of his answers, rendered *à la* Jingle but very feelingly: —

“Mr. Dickens was a nice sort of man — very much liked — missed a great deal when he died — poor people and the like felt the miss of him. He was a man as shifted a good deal of money in the place. You see, he had a lot of friends — kept a good many horses, — and then there was the men to attend to ‘em, and the corn-chandler, the blacksmith, the wheelwright, and others to be paid — the poor — and such-like — felt the miss of him when he died.”

“How long have you lived here?”

“Well, I come in ‘45, eleven years before Mr. Dickens.”

“And I suppose you are over sixty.”

“Well, sir, I shall never see seventy again.”

Wishing our friend “good-night,” we continue our tramp. On another occasion we met, in the same place, a third specimen of village labourer, “a mender of roads,” who knew Charles Dickens, and so we walked and chatted pleasantly with him for some distance. Said our informant, “You see, Mr. Dickens was a very liberal man; he held his head high up when he walked, and went at great strides.” The “mender of roads” was some years ago a candidate for a vacant place as under-gardener at Gad’s Hill, but the situation was filled up just an hour before he applied for it. He said Mr. Dickens gave him half-a-crown, and afterwards always recognized him when he met him with a pleasant nod, or cheerfully “passed the time of day.” We heard in many places that Dickens was “always kindly” in this way to his own domestics, and to the villagers in a like station of life to our intelligent friend “the mender of roads.” A fourth villager, a groom, who had been in his present situation for twenty years, said: — “Both the old gentleman and young Mr. Charles were very much liked in Higham. There wasn’t a single person in the place, I believe, but what had a good word for them.”

It may be interesting to mention that Higham — the old name of which was Lillechurch — is an extensive parish divided into several hamlets. In a useful little book published in 1882, called *A Handbook of Higham*, the Rev. C. H. Fielding, M.A., the author, says: — "There are few parishes more interesting than Higham, as it provides food for the antiquarian and the student of Nature; while its position near the 'Medway smooth, and the Royal-masted Thame,' affords to the artist many an opportunity for a picture, while the idler has the privilege of lovely views." Mr. Roach Smith was of opinion that Higham was the seat of "a great Roman pottery." A Monastery of importance existed here for several centuries, Mary, daughter of King Stephen, being one of the Prioresses; but it was dissolved by Henry VIII. The list of flowering plants given in Mr. Fielding's book is extensive and interesting, and contains many rarities.

A "Cheap Jack," a veritable Doctor Marigold, had taken up his quarters at Higham, and we loiter among the bystanders to hear his patter. We feel quite sure that had Dickens been present he would have listened and been as amused with him as ourselves. We heard a few days previously the public crier going round in his cart, announcing the arrival of this worthy by ringing his bell and proclaiming in a stentorian voice something to this effect: —

"The public is respectfully informed that the Cheap Jack has arrived, bringing with him a large assortment of London, Birmingham, and Sheffield goods, together with a choice collection of glass and earthenware, which he will sell every evening at the most reasonable prices."

On our arrival here we find him on his rostrum surrounded by some flaring naphtha lamps, and thus disposing of some penny books of songs: "Now, ladies and gentlemen, what shall we have the pleasure of saying for this handsome book, containing over a hundred songs sung by all the great singers of the day — Macdermott, Madam Langtry, Sims Reeves, and other eminent vocalists — besides numerous toasts and readings. Well, I won't ask sixpence, and I won't take fivepence, fourpence, threepence, twopence — no, I only ask a penny. Sold again, and got the money. Take care of the ha'pence" (to his assistant), "for we gives them to the blind when they can see to pick 'em up." We of course bought a copy of the famous collection as a "Dickens-item."

Before returning to Rochester we are anxious to identify the blacksmith's shop where the *feu de joie* was fired from "two smuggled cannons," in

honour of the marriage of Miss Kate Dickens to Mr. Charles Collins. Alterations have taken place which render identification impossible; but a local blacksmith, who has established himself here, gives us some interesting particulars of the games in which he took part. He mentions also a circumstance relating to Dickens's favourite horse, Toby. It appears that it was an express wish of the novelist that when he died this horse should be shot; and according to our informant the horse was shod on the Tuesday before the 9th of June (the day of Dickens's death), and shot on the following Monday. The gun was loaded with small shot, and poor Toby died immediately it was fired. The blacksmith thoroughly confirms the opinion of the old labourers as to the kindness of Charles Dickens to his poorer neighbours. A curious episode occurs in our conference with this man: he seems under the impression, which no amount of assertion on our part can overcome, that my friend and fellow tramp, Mr. Kitton, is Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens. Whether there was any facial resemblance or likeness of manner did not transpire, but again and again he kept saying, "Now ain't you Harry Dickens?" Among the names at Higham we notice that of a well-remembered Dickens character — Mr. Stiggins!

On arriving at Higham Railway Station, we chat a bit with the station-master and porter there, but both are comparatively fresh comers and knew not Charles Dickens. After an enjoyable but somewhat fatiguing tramp, we are glad to take a late evening train from Higham to Strood, and thus ends our inspection of the land of "the Meshes."

* * * * *

By the kindness of Mr. Henry Smetham (locally famed as the "Laureate of Strood"), we subsequently had an introduction to Mrs. Taylor, formerly school-mistress at Higham, who came there in 1860, and remained until some years after the death of Charles Dickens. She knew the novelist well, and used to see him almost every day when he was at home. She said, "If I had met him and did not know who he was, I should have set him down as a good-hearted English gentleman." He was very popular and much liked in the neighbourhood. On his return from America, in the first week of May, 1868, garlands of flowers were put by the villagers across the road from the railway station to Gad's Hill. There was a flag at Gad's (a Union Jack, she thinks), which was always hoisted when Dickens was at home. He never read at Higham, and never came to the school; but he always allowed the use of the meadow at the back of Gad's Hill Place for the school treats,

either of church or chapel, and contributed to such treats sweets and what not.

Mrs. Taylor remembers that the carriage was sent down from Gad's Hill Place to the Higham railway station nearly every night at ten o'clock to meet either Charles Dickens or his friends. It passed the school, and she well recollects the pleasant sound made by the bells. She heard Dickens read *Sairey Gamp* in London once, and did not like the dress he wore, but thought the reading very wonderful.

This lady says she was in London at the time of the death of Charles Dickens, the announcement of which she saw on a newspaper placard, and was ill the whole of the day afterwards. It was a sorrowful day for her.

* * * * *

We are much indebted to Mrs. Budden of Gad's Hill Place for the following interesting particulars which she obtained from Mrs. Easedown, of Higham, "who was parlour-maid to Mr. Dickens, and left to be married on the 8th of June, the day he was seized with the fit. She says it was her duty to hoist the flag on the top of the house directly Mr. Dickens arrived at Gad's Hill. It was a small flag, not more than fourteen inches square, and was kept in the billiard-room. She says he was the dearest and best gentleman that ever lived, and the kindest of masters. He asked her to stay and wait at table the night he was taken ill; she said if he wished it she would, and then he said, 'Never mind; I don't feel well.' She saw him after he was dead, laid out in the dining-room, when his coffin was covered with scarlet geraniums — his favourite flower. The flower-beds on the lawns at Gad's Hill in his time were always filled with scarlet geraniums; they have since been done away with. Over the head of the coffin was the oil painting of himself as a young man (probably Maclise's portrait) — on one side a picture of 'Dolly Varden,' and on the other 'Kate Nickleby.' He gave Mrs. Easedown, on the day she left his service, a photograph of himself with his name written on the back. Each of the other servants at Gad's Hill Place was presented with a similar photograph. She said he was unusually busy at the time of his death, as on the Monday morning he ordered breakfast to be ready during the week at 7.30 ('Sharp, mind') instead of his usual time, 9 o'clock, as he said 'he had so much to do before Friday.' But — 'Such a thing was never to be,' for on the Thursday he breathed his last!"

* * * * *

Mrs. Wright, the wife of Mr. Henry Wright, surveyor of Higham, lived four years at Gad's Hill Place as parlour-maid. She is the proud possessor of some interesting relics of her late master. These include his soup-plate, a meerschaum pipe (presented to him, but he chiefly smoked cigars — he was not a great smoker), a wool-worked kettle-holder (which he constantly used), and a pair of small bellows. When she was married Mr. Dickens presented her with a China tea service, “not a single piece of which,” said Mrs. Wright proudly, “has been broken.”

She remembers, at the time of her engagement as parlour-maid, that the servants told her to let a gentleman in at the front door who was approaching. She didn't know who it was, as she had never seen Mr. Dickens before. She opened the door, and the gentleman entered in a very upright manner, and after thanking her, looked hard at her, and then walked up-stairs. On returning to the kitchen the servants asked who it was that had just come in. She replied, “I don't know, but I think it was the master.” “Did he speak?” they asked. “No,” said she, “but he looked at me in a very determined way.” Said they, “He was reading your character, and he now knows you thoroughly,” or words to that effect.

As parlour-maid, it was part of her duty to carve and wait on her master specially. The dinner serviettes were wrapped up in a peculiar manner, and Mrs. Wright remembers that Lord Darnley's servants were always anxious to learn how the folding was done, but they never discovered the secret. At dinner-parties, it was the custom to place a little “button-hole” for each guest. This was mostly made up of scarlet geranium (Dickens's favourite flower), with a bit of the leaf and a frond of maidenhair fern. On one occasion in her early days, the dinner-lift (to the use of which she was unaccustomed) broke and ran down quickly, smashing the crockery and bruising her arm. Mr. Dickens jumped up quickly and said, “Never mind the breakage; is your arm hurt?” As it was painful, he immediately applied arnica to the bruise, and gave her a glass of port wine, “treating me,” Mrs. Wright remarked, “more like a child of his own than a servant.”

When she was married, and left Gad's Hill, she brought her first child to show her former master. He took notice of it, and asked her what he could buy as a present. She thanked him, and said she did not want anything. On leaving he gently put a sovereign into the baby's little hand, and said, “Buy something with that.”

Mrs. Wright spoke of the great interest which Dickens took in the children's treats at Higham, lending his meadow for them, providing sweets and cakes for the little ones, and apples to be scrambled for. He took great delight in seeing the scrambles.

She also referred to the cricket club, and said that when the matches were going on it was a regular holiday at Higham. Dickens used to take the scores, and at the end of the game he gave prizes and made little speeches. Her husband, Mr. Henry Wright, acted as secretary to the club, and is the possessor of a letter written by Mr. Dickens, in reply to an address which had been presented to him, of which letter the following is a copy: —

“Gad's Hill Place,

“Higham by Rochester, Kent.

“*Tuesday, 29th July, 1862.*

“Dear Sir,

”As your name is the first on the list of signatures to the little address I have had the pleasure of receiving — on my return from a short absence — from the greater part of the players in the match the other day, I address my reply to you.

“I beg you to assure the rest that it will always give me great pleasure to lend my meadow for any such good purpose, and that I feel a sincere desire to be a good friend to the working men in this neighbourhood. I am always interested in their welfare, and am always heartily glad to see them enjoying rational and healthful recreation.

“It did not escape my notice that some expressions were used the other day which would have been better avoided, but I dismiss them from my mind as being probably unintentional, and certainly opposed to the general good feeling and good sense.

“Faithfully yours,

“Charles Dickens.

“Mr. H. Wright.”

Both Mrs. Easedown and Mrs. Wright informed us (through Mrs. Budden) that “Mr. Dickens was the best of masters, and a dear good man; that he gave a great deal away in the parish, and was very much missed; that he frequently went to church and sat in the chancel. . . . When he lived in Higham there used to be a great deal of ague, and he gave away an immense quantity of port wine and quinine. Since the Cement Works have been at Cliffe there has been very little ague at Higham.”

* * * * *

Mr. Robert Lake Cobb, of Mockbeggar House, Higham, a land agent of high position and a County Councillor, told us that he took in the *Pickwick Papers* as they appeared in numbers, and he recollected how eagerly he read them, and how tiresome it was to have to wait month by month until the story was finished. The book made a tremendous sensation at the time. Many years afterwards Charles Dickens came to reside at Gad's Hill Place, and the families became intimate. "Mr. Dickens," observed our informant, "was a very pleasant neighbour, and had always got something nice to say. He was a dreadful man to walk — very few could keep up with him."

Mr. Cobb had one son, Herbert, who was a playfellow of Dickens's boys; and as illustrative of the interest he took in his neighbours, on one occasion the novelist and our informant were talking over matters, when the former said, "What are you going to bring your boy up to?" "A land agent," replied Mr. Cobb. "Ah," said the novelist, "whatever you do, make him self-reliant." He thought that of all the sons Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens most resembled his father.

Among the notable people Mr. Cobb met at Gad's Hill Place were Mr. Forster, Mr. Wilkie Collins, Mr. Fechter the actor, and others. When Hans Christian Andersen was visiting there, Dickens took him to Higham Church. Mr. Cobb spoke of the pleasant picnic parties which Dickens gave on Blue Bell Hill. He was of opinion that Cob-Tree Hall in that neighbourhood, about one and a half miles from Aylesford, nearly parallel with the river, suggested the original of Manor Farm, Dingley Dell. It formerly belonged to Mr. Franklin, and is now occupied by Major Trousdell. Mr. Cobb believed that Dickens took the title of *No Thoroughfare* — which he and Wilkie Collins contributed to the 1867 number of *All the Year Round*, and in the dramatizing of which Dickens subsequently was so interested — from the notice-boards which were put up by Lord Darnley in many parts of Cobham Park.

On one occasion our informant remembers a stoppage of the train in Higham tunnel, which caused some consternation to the passengers, as no explanation of the delay was forthcoming from any of the railway officials. The station-master coming up at the time, Dickens remarked — "Ah! an unwilling witness, Mr. Wood."

Mr. Cobb mentioned that Miss Hogarth, Dickens's sister-in-law, was a great favourite in the neighbourhood, from her kindness and thoughtfulness

for all with whom she came in contact, and especially the poor of Higham.

CHAPTER XIII.

COBHAM PARK AND HALL, THE LEATHER BOTTLE, SHORNE, CHALK, AND THE DOVER ROAD.

“It’s a place you may well be fond of and attached to, for it’s the prettiest spot in all the country round.” — *The Village Coquettes*.

“The last soft light of the setting sun had fallen on the earth, casting a rich glow on the yellow corn sheaves, and lengthening the shadows of the orchard trees.” — *The Pickwick Papers*.

We reserve this, our last long tramp in “Dickens-Land,” for the Friday before our departure. Mrs. Perugini, the novelist’s second daughter, had recently told us that this was the most beautiful of all the beautiful parts of Kent, and so indeed it proves to be. Its sylvan scenery is truly unique.

Mr. Charles Dickens the younger, in his valuable annotated Jubilee edition of *Pickwick*, has included this note relating to Cobham: —

“As all the world knows, the neighbourhood of Rochester was dear to Charles Dickens. There it is that Gad’s Hill Place stands, the house to which, as ‘a queer, small boy,’ he looked forward as the possible reward of an industrious career, and in which he passed the later years of his life; and near Rochester, still approached by the ‘delightful walk’ here described, is Cobham, one of the most charming villages in that part of Kent. Down the lanes, and through the park to Cobham, was always a favourite walk with Charles Dickens; and he never wearied of acting as *cicerone* to his guests to its fine church and the quaint almshouses with the disused refectory behind it.”

Happily the weather again favours us on this delightful excursion. It is just such a day as that on which we made our visit to Gad’s Hill. As we have had much tramping about Rochester during the morning, we prudently take an early afternoon train to Higham, to save our legs. The short distance of about four miles consists almost entirely of tunnels cut through the chalk.

Alighting at Higham Station, we make our way for the Dover Road and reach Pear Tree Lane, which turns out of it for Cobham. We notice in

passing through Higham by daylight that the lanes are much closed in by banks, in fact, the tertiary and chalk systems have been cut through to form the roads; but here and there one gets glimpses of the Thames, its course being marked by the white or brown wings of sailing-boats.

The lane above alluded to, a little above Gad's Hill, is the direct road to Cobham, and on entering it we are immediately struck with the different scene presented, as compared with any part of the county we have previously gone over. It is cut through the Thanet Sands, which at first are of ashy gray colour, but after some distance are of a bright red hue, probably owing to infiltration, and the road rises gently until the woods are reached. The vegetation growing on the high banks consists of oak, hazel, beech, sycamore, and Spanish chestnut, in many places intermingled with wild clematis. The branches of the trees are not allowed to grow over into the road, but are kept well cut back so as practically to form a wall on either side, extending in some places to twelve feet high. The effect is to present an almost unbroken surface of various shades of green, deliciously cool and shady in the heat of summer, and brightened here and there in autumn by the rich orange-coloured fruit of the arum, the scarlet berries of the white bryony, and — deeper in the woods — by the pinky-waxen berries of the spindle-tree, described by Lord Tennyson as “the fruit which in our winter woodland looks a flower.”

As the road continually winds in its upward progress, and as no part within view extends beyond a few hundred yards before it turns again, the limit of perspective is frequently arrested by a number of evergreen arches. It was a Devonshire lane, so to speak, in a state of cultivation. Of course in the early spring, the delicacy of the fresh green foliage would give another picture; and again the autumnal tints would present a totally different effect under the influence of the rich colouring of decaying vegetation.

No wonder Dickens and his friends had such admiration for this walk, the last, by the way, that he ever enjoyed, on Tuesday, 7th June, 1870, with his sister-in-law, Miss Hogarth, the day before the fatal seizure. In a letter written from Lausanne, so far back as the year 1846, he says: —

“Green woods and green shades about here are more like Cobham, in Kent, than anything we dream of at the foot of Alpine passes.”

When we reach an elevation and are able to get an extended view of the country we have traversed, a magnificent prospect of the Thames valley on the west side, and of the Medway valley on the east, discloses itself. On a

bank in this lane we find a rather rare plant, the long-stalked crane's-bill (*Geranium columbinum*), its rose-pink flowers standing out like rubies among the green foliage. *Pteris aquilina*, the common brake or bracken, is very luxuriant here; but we have met with few ferns in the part of Kent which we visited. We were afterwards informed that *asplenium*, *lastrea*, *scolopendrium*, and others are to be found in the neighbourhood. We pass at Shorne Ridgway a village inn with a curious sign, "Ye Olde See Ho Taverne." On inquiry, we learn that "See Ho" is the sportsman's cry in coursing, when a hare appears in sight.

The woods surrounding the entrance to the park are presently reached, and here the vegetation, which in the lanes had been kept under, is allowed to grow unchecked. At intervals walks (or "rides," as they are called in some counties) are cut through the woods, the grass being well mown underneath, and each of these walks is a shaded grove, losing itself in the distance. The deep silence of the place is only broken by the cooing of the wood-pigeon, and the occasional piercing note of the green woodpecker. It is said that the nightingales appear here about the 13th of April and continue singing until June, and that the best time for seeing this neighbourhood is during the blossoming season in May.

The temptation to quote Dickens's own description of Cobham Park from *Pickwick* cannot be resisted: —

"A delightful walk it was; for it was a pleasant afternoon in June, and their way lay through a deep and shady wood, cooled by the light wind which gently rustled the thick foliage, and enlivened by the songs of the birds that perched upon the boughs. The ivy and the moss crept in thick clusters over the old trees, and the soft green turf overspread the ground like a silken mat. They emerged upon an open park, with an ancient hall, displaying the quaint and picturesque architecture of Elizabeth's time. Long vistas of stately oaks and elm trees appeared on every side: large herds of deer were cropping the fresh grass; and occasionally a startled hare scoured along the ground with the speed of the shadows thrown by the light clouds, which swept across a sunny landscape like a passing breath of summer."

Another description of Cobham at another time of the year is found in the *Seven Poor Travellers*: —

"As for me, I was going to walk, by Cobham Woods, as far upon my way to London as I fancied. . . . And now the mists began to rise in the most beautiful manner, and the sun to shine; and as I went on through the bracing

air, seeing the hoar-frost sparkle everywhere, I felt as if all Nature shared in the joy of the great Birthday. . . . By Cobham Hall I came to the village, and the churchyard where the dead had been quietly buried ‘in the sure and certain hope’ which Christmastide inspired.”



Cobham

Hall.

We notice in our quiet tramp here a peculiarity in the foliage of the oaks which is worth recording. It will be remembered that in the late spring of 1888, anxiety was expressed by certain newspaper correspondents that the English oak would suffer extermination in consequence of caterpillars denuding it of its leaves. But naturalists who had studied the question knew better. The caterpillar, which is no doubt the larva of the green Tortrix moth (*Tortrix viridana*), spins its cocoon at the end of June or the beginning of July, and the effect of the heavy rains and warm sunny days since that time was to encourage the energy of the tree in putting forth its second growth of leaves. This second growth of delicate green almost covered the oaks in Cobham Park, and effectually concealed the devastation of the caterpillars on the old leaves. The effect was quite spring-like. Truly, as George Eliot says, “Nature repairs her ravages.”

Cobham Park is nearly seven miles round, and its exquisitely varied scenery of wood and glade is conspicuous at the spot where the chestnut tree called “The Four Sisters” is placed. There is a lovely walk from Cobham Hall to Rochester through the “Long Avenue,” so named in contradistinction to the “Grand Avenue,” which opens into Cobham village. This walk, which slopes all the way down from the Mausoleum, leads to a seat placed midway in an open spot where charming views of the Medway

valley are obtained. For rich sylvan scenery in the county of Kent, this is surely unrivalled.

Admission to Cobham Hall, the seat of the Earl of Darnley (whose ancestors have resided here since the time of King John), is on Fridays only, and such admission is obtained by ticket, procurable from Mr. Wildish, bookseller, of Rochester. A nominal charge is made, the proceeds being devoted towards maintaining Cobham schools.

The Hall is a red-brick edifice (temp. Elizabeth, 1587), consisting of two Tudor wings, connected by a central block designed by Inigo Jones. The most noticeable objects in the entrance corridor are a fine pair of columns of Cornish serpentine, nearly ten feet high, tapering from a base some two feet square. The white veining of the steatite (soapstone) is in beautiful contrast to the rich red and black colours of the marble. These columns were purchased at the great Exhibition of 1851. An enormous bath, hewn out of a solid block of granite said to have been brought from Egypt, is also a very noticeable object in this corridor.

The housekeeper — a chatty, intelligent, and portly personage — shows visitors over the rooms and picture-galleries. There is a superb collection of pictures by the Old Masters, about which Dickens had always something facetious to say to his friends. They illustrate the schools of Venice, Florence, Rome, Netherlands, Spain, France, and England, and were formed mainly by purchases from the Orleans Gallery, and the Vetturi Gallery from Florence, and include Titian's 'Rape of Europa,' Rubens's 'Queen Tomyris dipping Cyrus's head into blood,' Salvator Rosa's 'Death of Regulus,' Vandyck's 'Duke of Lennox,' Sir Joshua Reynolds's 'The Call of Samuel,' and others. But the pictures in which we are most interested are the portraits of literary, scientific, and other worthies — an excellent collection, including Shakespeare, John Locke, Hobbes, Sir Richard Steele, Sir William Temple, Dean Swift, Dryden, Betterton, Pope, Gay, Thomson, Sir Hugh Middleton, Martin Luther, and the ill-fated Lord George Gordon.

There is also an ornithological museum, with some very fine specimens of the order of gallatores (or waders). In reply to a letter of inquiry, the Earl of Darnley kindly informs us that the examples of ostrich (*Struthio camelus*), cassowary (*Casuaris galeatus*), and common emu (*Dromaius ater*), were once alive in the menagerie attached to the hall, which was broken up about fifty years ago.

We are shown the music-room (which, by the bye, his late majesty King George IV., is said to have remarked was the finest room in England), a very handsome apartment facing the west, with a large organ, and capable of containing several hundred persons. The decorations are very chaste, being in white and gold; and, as the brilliant sun was setting in the summer evening, a delicate rose-coloured hue was diffused over everything in the room through the medium of the tinted blinds attached to the windows. It had a most peculiar and pretty effect, strongly recalling Mrs. Skewton and her “rose-coloured curtains for doctors.”



Dickens's Châlet, now in Cobham Park.

By the special permission of his lordship, we see the famous Swiss châlet, which is now erected in the terrace flower-garden at the back of Cobham Hall, having been removed to its present position some years ago from another part of the grounds. It stands on an elevated open space surrounded by beautiful trees — the rare *Salisburia*, tulip, cedar, chestnut and others — and makes a handsome addition to the garden, irrespective of its historical associations. The châlet is of dark wood varnished, and has in the centre a large carving of Dickens's crest, which in heraldic terms is described as: “a lion couchant ‘or,’ holding in the gamb a cross patonce ‘sable.’”

There are two rooms in the châlet, each about sixteen feet square, the one below having four windows and a door, and the one above (approached in the usual Swiss fashion by an external staircase), which is much the prettier, having six windows and a door. There are shutters outside, and the overhanging roof at first sight gives the building somewhat of a top-heavy appearance, but this impression wears off after a time, and it is found to be effective and well-proportioned. "The five mirrors" which Dickens placed in the châlet have been removed from the upper room, but they are scarcely necessary, the views of rich and varied foliage and flowers seen from the open windows, through which the balmy air passes, forming a series of pictures in the bright sunlight of the August afternoon delightfully fresh and beautiful. We sit down quietly for a few minutes and enjoy the privilege; we ponder on the many happy and industrious hours spent by its late owner in this now classic building; and we leave it sadly, with the recollection that here were penned the last lines which the "vanished hand" was destined to give to the world.

The Earl of Darnley generously allows his neighbours to have a key of his park, and Dickens had one of such keys, a privilege greatly appreciated by him and his friends. Recently his lordship has erected a staircase round one of the highest trees in the park, called the "crow's nest," from whence a very pretty peep at the surrounding country is obtained.

During our visit we venture to ask the portly housekeeper if she remembers Charles Dickens? The ray of delight that illumines her good-natured countenance is simply magical.

"Oh," she says, "I liked Mr. Dickens very much. He was always so full of fun. Oh! oh! oh!" the recollection of which causes a fit of suppressed laughter, which "communicates a blancmange-like motion to her fat cheeks," and she adds: "He used to dine here, and was always very popular with the family, and in the neighbourhood."

We cannot help thinking that such delightful places as Cobham Hall were in Dickens's mind when, in *Bleak House* (*à propos* of Chesney Wold), he makes the volatile Harold Skimpole say to Sir Leicester Dedlock — "The owners of such places are public benefactors. They are good enough to maintain a number of delightful objects for the admiration and pleasure of us poor men, and not to reap all the admiration and pleasure that they yield, is to be ungrateful to our benefactors."

Leaving the park by a pretty undulating walk, and passing on our way a large herd of deer, their brown and fawn-coloured coats contrasting prettily with the green-sward, we come upon the picturesque village of Cobham, where Mr. Tupman sought consolation after his little affair with the amatory spinster aunt. Of course the principal object of interest is the Leather Bottle, or “Dickens’s old Pickwick Leather Bottle,” as the sign of the present landlord now calls it, wherein Dickens slept a night in 1841, and visited it many times subsequently. There is a coloured portrait of the President of the Pickwick Club on the sign, as he appeared addressing the members. A fire occurred at the Leather Bottle a few years ago, but it was confined to a back portion of the building; unfortunately its restoration and so-called “improvements” have destroyed many of the picturesque features which characterized this quiet old inn when Dickens wrote the famous Papers. Here is his description of it after Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle had walked through Cobham Park to seek their lost friend: —



“‘If this,’ said Mr. Pickwick, looking about him; ‘if this were the place to which all who are troubled with our friend’s complaint came, I fancy their old attachment to this world would very soon return.’

“‘I think so too,’ said Mr. Winkle.

“‘And really,’ added Mr. Pickwick, after half an hour’s walking had brought them to the village, ‘really for a misanthrope’s choice, this is one of

the prettiest and most desirable places of residence I ever met with.'

"In this opinion also, both Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass expressed their concurrence; and having been directed to the Leather Bottle, a clean and commodious village ale-house, the three travellers entered, and at once inquired for a gentleman of the name of Tupman.

"Show the gentlemen into the parlour, Tom,' said the landlady.

"A stout country lad opened a door at the end of the passage, and the three friends entered a long, low-roofed room, furnished with a large number of high-backed leather-cushioned chairs, of fantastic shapes, and embellished with a great variety of old portraits, and roughly-coloured prints of some antiquity. At the upper end of the room was a table, with a white cloth upon it, well covered with a roast fowl, bacon, ale, and etceteras; and at the table sat Mr. Tupman, looking as unlike a man who had taken his leave of the world, as possible.

"On the entrance of his friends, that gentleman laid down his knife and fork, and with a mournful air advanced to meet them.

"I did not expect to see you here,' he said, as he grasped Mr. Pickwick's hand. 'It's very kind.'

"Ah!' said Mr. Pickwick, sitting down, and wiping from his forehead the perspiration which the walk had engendered. 'Finish your dinner, and walk out with me. I wish to speak to you alone.'

"Mr. Tupman did as he was desired; and Mr. Pickwick having refreshed himself with a copious draught of ale, waited his friend's leisure. The dinner was quickly despatched, and they walked out together.

"For half an hour, their forms might have been seen pacing the churchyard to and fro, while Mr. Pickwick was engaged in combating his companion's resolution. Any repetition of his arguments would be useless; for what language could convey to them that energy and force which their great originator's manner communicated? Whether Mr. Tupman was already tired of retirement, or whether he was wholly unable to resist the eloquent appeal which was made to him, matters not; he did *not* resist it at last.

"It mattered little to him,' he said, 'where he dragged out the miserable remainder of his days: and since his friend laid so much stress upon his humble companionship, he was willing to share his adventures.'

"Mr. Pickwick smiled; they shook hands; and walked back to rejoin their companions."



The Old

Parlour of the “Leather Bottle.”



In order to preserve the historical associations of the place, the landlord of the Leather Bottle has added to the art collection in the fine old parlour (that still contains “the high-backed leather-cushioned chairs of fantastic shapes”) many portraits of Dickens and illustrations from his works, including a copy of the life-like coloured Watkins photograph previously

referred to. It has been already suggested that the neighbourhood of Kit's Coty House probably gave rise to the famous archæological episode of the stone with the inscription — "Bill Stumps, his mark," in *Pickwick*, which occurred near here, rivalling the "A. D. L. L." discovery of the sage Monkbarons in Scott's *Antiquary*.

Time presses with us, so, after a refreshing cup of tea, we just have a hasty glance at the beautiful old church, which contains some splendid examples of monumental brasses, which for number and preservation are said to be unique. They are erected to the memory of John Cobham, Constable of Rochester, 1354, his ancestors and others. There are also some fine old almshouses which accommodate twenty pensioners. These almshouses are a survival of the ancient college. We then take our departure, returning through Cobham woods.



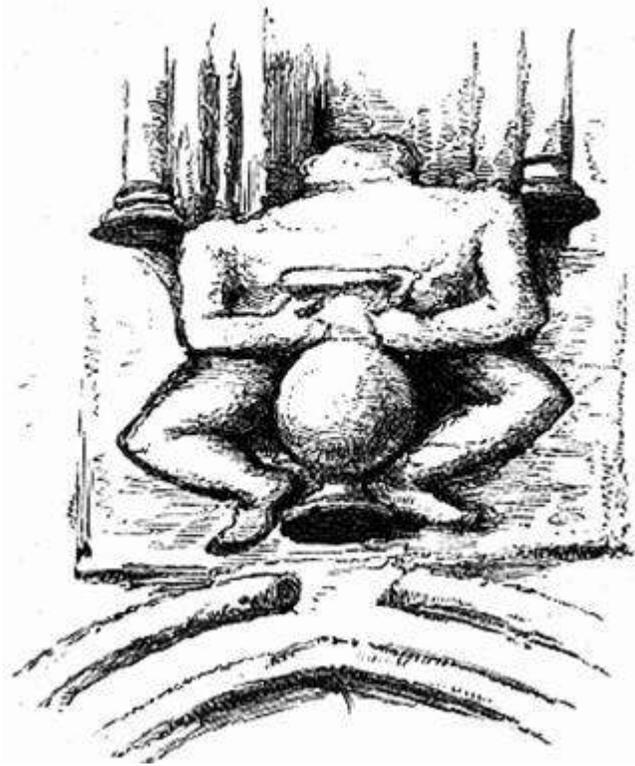
Turning off at some distance on the left, and passing through the little village of Shorne, with its pretty churchyard, a very favourite spot of Charles Dickens, and probably described by him in *Pickwick* as "one of the most peaceful and secluded churchyards in Kent, where wild flowers mingle with the grass, and the soft landscape around, forms the fairest spot in the garden of England" — we make for Chalk church. It will be remembered, that the first number of *Pickwick* appeared on the 31st March, 1836, and on the 2nd of April following Charles Dickens was married, and came to spend his honeymoon at Chalk, and he visited it again in 1837, when doubtless the descriptions of Cobham and its vicinity were written. To

this neighbourhood, “at all times of his life, he returned, with a strange recurring fondness.”

Mr. Kitton has favoured me with permission to quote the following extract from his Supplement to *Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil*, being the late Mr. E. Laman Blanchard’s recollections of this pleasant neighbourhood: —

“In the year Charles Dickens came to reside at Gad’s Hill, I took possession of a country house at Rosherville, which I occupied for some seventeen years. During that period a favourite morning walk was along the high road, of many memories, leading from Gravesend to Rochester, and on repeated occasions I had the good fortune to encounter the great novelist making one of his pedestrian excursions towards the Gravesend or Greenhithe railway station, where he would take the train to travel up to town. Generally, by a curious coincidence, we passed each other, with an interchange of salutations, at about the same spot. This was on the outskirts of the village of Chalk, where a picturesque lane branched off towards Shorne and Cobham. Here the brisk walk of Charles Dickens was always slackened, and he never failed to glance meditatively for a few moments at the windows of a corner house on the southern side of the road, advantageously situated for commanding views of the river and the far-stretching landscape beyond. It was in that house he had lived immediately after his marriage, and there many of the earlier chapters of *Pickwick* were written.”

It is a long walk from Cobham to Chalk church, — the church, by the bye, being about a mile from the village, as is usual in many places in Kent, — and as the shades of evening are coming upon us, and as we are desirous of having a sketch of the curious stone-carved figure over the entrance porch, we hurry on, and succeed in effecting our object, though under the difficulty of approaching darkness.



Curious Old Figure over the Porch, Chalk Church.

This figure represents an old priest in a stooping position, with an upturned vessel (probably a jug), about which we were informed there is probably a legend. Dickens used to be a great admirer of this quaint carving, and it is said that whenever he passed it, he always took off his hat to it, or gave it a friendly nod, as to an old acquaintance. [We regretfully record the fact that since our visit, both porch and figure have been demolished.]

Amid the many strange sounds peculiar to summer night in the country, a very weird and startling effect is produced in this lonely spot, in the dusk of the evening, by the shrill whistle of the common redshank (*Totanus calidris*), so called from the colour of its legs, which are of a crimson-red. This bird, as monotonous in its call-note as the corn-crake, to which it is closely allied, doubtless has its home in the marshes hereabout, in which, and in fen countries, it greatly delights. The peculiar whistle is almost ventriloquial in its ubiquity, and must be heard to be properly appreciated.

We retrace our steps to the Dover road, and by the light of a match applied to our pipes, see that our pedometer marks upwards of fifteen miles for this tramp — "a rather busy afternoon," as Mr. Datchery once said.

Since these lines were written, the third volume of the *Autobiography and Reminiscences* of W. P. Frith, R.A., has been published, in which there is a most interesting reminiscence of Dickens; indeed, there are many scattered throughout the three volumes, but the one in question refers to “a stroll” which Dickens took with Mr. Frith and other friends in July 1868. Mr. Cartwright, the celebrated dentist, was one of the party, and the “stroll” was in reality, as the genial R. A. describes it, “a fearfully long walk” such as he shall never forget; nor the night he passed, without once closing his eyes in sleep, after it. “Dickens,” continues Mr. Frith, “was a great pedestrian. His strolling was at the rate of perhaps a little under four miles an hour. He was used to the place, — I was not, and suffered accordingly.”

Having a shrewd suspicion that this referred to one of the long walks taken in our tramp, the present writer communicated with Mr. Frith on the subject, and he was favoured with the following reply: —

“The stroll I mentioned in my third volume was through Lord Darnley’s park, but after that I remember nothing. As the time spent in walking was four hours at least, we must have covered ground far beyond the length of the park.

“On another occasion, — Dickens, Miss Hogarth, and I went to Rochester to see the Castle, and the famous Pickwickian inn. On another day we went to the Leather Bottle at Cobham, where Dickens was eloquent on the subject of the Dadd parricide, showing us the place where the body was found, with many startling and interesting details of the discovery.”

The subject of the Dadd parricide alluded to by Mr. Frith was a very horrible case; the son — an artist — was a lunatic, and was subsequently confined in Bethlehem Hospital, London. There are two curious pictures by him in the Dyce and Forster collection at South Kensington; one is inscribed “Sketches to Illustrate the Passions — Patriotism. By Richard Dadd, Bethlehem Hospital, London, May 30, 1857, St. George’s-in-the-Fields.” It has much minute writing on it. The other is “Leonidas with the Wood-cutters,” and illustrates Glover’s poem, *Leonidas*. It is inscribed, “Rd. Dadd, 1873.” He died in Bethlehem Hospital in 1887.

The Dover Road! What a magic influence it has over us, as we tramp along it in the quiet summer evening, and recall an incident that happened nearly a hundred years ago, what time the Dover mail struggled up Shooter’s Hill on that memorable Friday night, and Jerry Cruncher, who had temporarily suspended his “fishing” operations, and being free from the

annoyances of the “Aggerawayter,” caused consternation to the minds of coachman, guard, and passengers of the said mail, by riding abruptly up, *à la* highwayman, and demanding to speak to a passenger named Mr. Jarvis Lorry, then on his way to Paris, — as faithfully chronicled in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Again, in the early part of the present century, when a certain friendless but dear and artless boy, named David Copperfield, — who having been first robbed by a “long-legged young man with a very little empty donkey-cart, which was nothing but a large wooden-tray on wheels,” of “half a guinea and his box,” under pretence of “driving him to the pollis,” and subsequently defrauded by an unscrupulous tailor named one Mr. Dolloby (“Dolloby was the name over the shop-door at least”) of the proper price of “a little weskit,” for which he, Dolloby, gave poor David only ninepence, — trudged along that same Dover road footsore and hungry, “and got through twenty-three miles on the straight road” to Rochester and Chatham on a certain Sunday; all of which is duly recorded in *The Personal History of David Copperfield*.

In after years, when happier times came to him, David made many journeys over the Dover road, between Canterbury and London, on the Canterbury Coach. Respecting the earliest of these (readers will remember Phiz’s illustration, “My first fall in life”), he says: —

“The main object on my mind, I remember, when we got fairly on the road, was to appear as old as possible to the coachman, and to speak extremely gruff. The latter point I achieved at great personal inconvenience; but I stuck to it, because I felt it was a grown-up sort of thing.”

In spite of this assumption, he is impudently chaffed by “William the coachman” on his “shooting” — on his “county” (Suffolk), its “dumplings,” and its “Punches,” and finally, at William’s suggestion, actually resigns his box-seat in favour of his (William’s) friend, “the gentleman with a very unpromising squint and a prominent chin, who had a tall white hat on with a narrow flat brim, and whose close-fitting drab trousers seemed to button all the way up outside his legs from his boots to his hips.” In reply to a remark of the coachman this worthy says: — ”There ain’t no sort of ‘orse that I ‘ain’t bred, and no sort of dorg. ‘Orses and dorgs is some men’s fancy. They’re wittles and drink to me — lodging, wife, and children — reading, writing, and ‘rithmetic — snuff, tobacker, and sleep.”

“That ain’t a sort of man to see sitting behind a coach-box, is it, though?” says William in David’s ear. David construes this remark into an indication

of a wish that “the gentleman” should have his place, so he blushinglly offers to resign it.

“Well, if you don’t mind,” says William, “I think it would be more correct.”

Poor David, “so very young!” gives up his box-seat, and thus moralizes on his action: —

“I have always considered this as the first fall I had in life. When I booked my place at the coach-office, I had had ‘Box Seat’ written against the entry, and had given the book-keeper half-a-crown. I was got up in a special great coat and shawl, expressly to do honour to that distinguished eminence; had glorified myself upon it a good deal; and had felt that I was a credit to the coach. And here, in the very first stage, I was supplanted by a shabby man with a squint, who had no other merit than smelling like a livery-stables, and being able to walk across me, more like a fly than a human being, while the horses were at a canter.”

Pip, in *Great Expectations*, also made very many journeys to and from London, along the Dover road (the London road it is called in the novel), but the two most notable were, firstly, the occasion of his ride outside the coach with the two convicts as fellow-passengers on the back-seat — ”bringing with them that curious flavour of bread-poultice, baize, rope-yarn, and hearth-stone, which attends the convict presence;” and secondly, that in which he walked all the way to London, after the sad interview at Miss Havisham’s house, where he learns that Estella is to become the wife of Bentley Drummle: —

“All done, all gone! So much was done and gone, that when I went out at the gate the light of day seemed of a darker colour than when I went in. For awhile I hid myself among some lanes and bypaths, and then started off to walk all the way to London. . . . It was past midnight when I crossed London Bridge.”

One more reference is made to the Dover road in *Bleak House*, where that most lovable of the many lovable characters in Dickens’s novels, Esther Summerson, makes her journey, with her faithful little maid Charley, to Deal, in order to comfort Richard Carstone: —

“It was a night’s journey in those coach times; but we had the mail to ourselves, and did not find the night very tedious. It passed with me as I suppose it would with most people under such circumstances. At one while, my journey looked hopeful, and at another hopeless. Now, I thought that I

should do some good, and now I wondered how I could ever have supposed so.”

When speaking of Dickens’s characters, some critics have said that “he never drew a gentleman.” One ventures to ask, Where is there a more chivalrous, honourable, or kind-hearted gentleman than Mr. John Jarndyce? Sir Leicester Dedlock in the same novel too, with some few peculiarities, is a thoroughly high-minded and noble gentleman of the old school. This by the way.



After walking some distance, we are able to verify one of those sage experiences of Mr. F.’s aunt: — ”There’s milestones on the Dover road!” for, by the light of another match, the darkness closing in, and there being no moon, we read “4 miles to Rochester.” However, we tramp merrily on, with “the town lights right afore us,” our minds being full of pleasant reminiscences of the scenes we have passed through, and this expedition, like many a weightier matter, “comes to an end for the time.”

* * * * *

We had on another occasion the pleasure of a long chat with Mrs. Latter of Shorne, one of the daughters of Mr. W. S. Trood, for many years landlord of the Sir John Falstaff. She said her family came from Somersetshire to reside at Gad’s Mill in the year 1849, and left in 1872. The Falstaff was then a little homely place, but it has been much altered since. She knew

Charles Dickens very well, and saw him constantly during his residence at Gad's Hill Place. Mrs. Latter lost two sisters while she lived at the Falstaff — one died at the age of eleven, and the other at nineteen. The last-mentioned was named Jane, and died in 1862 of brain fever. Dickens was very kind to the family at the time, took great interest in the poor girl, and offered help of "anything that his house could afford." She remembers her mother asking Dickens if it would be well to have the windows of the bedroom open. At those times people were fond of keeping invalids closed up from the air. Dickens said — "Certainly: give her plenty of air." He liked fresh air himself. Mrs. Latter said in proof of this that the curtains were always blowing about the open windows at Gad's Hill Place.

When her sister Jane died, the funeral took place at Higham Church, and was very quiet, there being no show, only a little black pall trimmed with white placed over the coffin, which was carried by young men to the grave. Dickens afterwards commended what had been done, saying: "It showed good sense," and adding — "Not like an army of black beetles."

It will be remembered that in *Great Expectations* and elsewhere the ostentation, mummery, and extravagance of the "undertaking ceremony" are severely criticised. The same feeling, and a desire for funeral reform, no doubt prompted Dickens to insert the following clause in his Will: —

"I emphatically direct that I be buried in an inexpensive, unostentatious, and strictly private manner; that no public announcement be made of the time or place of my burial; that at the utmost not more than three plain mourning-coaches be employed; and that those who attend my funeral wear no scarf, cloak, black bow, long hatband, or other such revolting absurdity." Mrs. Latter then told us the story of the two men with performing bears: —

It appears that soon after Dickens came to Gad's Hill a lot of labourers from Strood — some thirty or forty in number — had been for an outing in breaks to Cobham to a "bean-feast," or something of the kind, and some of them had got "rather fresh." On the return journey they stopped at the Falstaff, and at the time two men, who were foreigners, were there with performing bears, a very large one and a smaller one. The labourers began to lark with the bears, teased them, and made them savage, "becalled" the two men to whom they belonged, and a regular row followed. The owners of the bears became exasperated, and were proceeding to unmuzzle the animals, when Dickens (hearing the noise) came out of his gate holding one of his St. Bernard dogs by a chain. He told Mrs. Latter's father to take the

bears up a back lane, said a few words to the crowd, and remonstrated with the Strood men on their conduct. The effect was magical; the whole affair was stilled in a minute or two.

* * * * *

On a subsequent occasion we called upon the Rev. John Joseph Marsham of Overblow, near Shorne. This venerable clergyman, a bachelor, and in his eighty-fifth year, is totally blind, but in other respects is in the full possession of all his faculties, and remarked that he was much interested to hear anybody talk about old friends and times. He was inducted as Vicar of Shorne in the year 1837, came to live there in 1845, and resigned his cure in 1888, after completing his jubilee. He is a "Kentish man," having been born at Rochester. In our tramp the question of "Kentish man," or "man of Kent," often cropped up, and we had an opportunity of having the difference explained to us. A "Kentish man" is one born on the east side of the river Medway, and a "man of Kent" is one born on the west side.

The position of the residence "Overblow" is delightful. It stands on a little hill, the front having a fine view of the Thames valley and the marshes, the side looking on to the pretty hollow, in the centre of which stands Shorne Church, and the back being flanked in the distance by the beautiful Cobham Woods.

The reverend gentleman told us that he was a schoolfellow of the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone and Sir Thomas Gladstone, his brother, at Eton, and had dined with the former at Hawarden on the occasion of his being thrice Premier, although he helped to turn his old friend out at Oxford in 1865, when he was succeeded by the Right Honourable Gathorne Hardy, now Lord Cranbrook.

Mr. Marsham was a neighbour of Charles Dickens, occasionally dined with him at Gad's Hill, and also met him at dinner sometimes at Mr. Hulkes's at the Little Hermitage. He spoke of him as a nice neighbour and a charming host, but he rarely talked except to his old friends. He frequently met Dickens in his walks, and had many a stroll with him, and always found him very interesting and amusing in his conversation. Once they were coming down from London together in a saloon carriage which contained about twelve or fourteen people. Dickens was sitting quietly in a corner. It was at the time that one of his serial novels was appearing, and most of the passengers were reading the current monthly number. No one noticed Dickens, and when the train stopped at Strood, he said — "We did

not have much talk.” “No,” said Mr. Marsham, “the people were much better engaged,” at which Dickens laughed. Charles Dickens did Mr. Marsham the kindness to send him early proofs of his Christmas stories before they were published.

After Dickens’s death (which he heard of in London, and never felt so grieved in his life) Mr. Charles Dickens the younger, and Mr. Charles Collins, his brother-in-law, came to select a piece of ground on the east side of Shorne churchyard, which was one of Dickens’s favourite spots, but in consequence of the arrangements for the burial in Westminster Abbey this was of course given up.

Mr. Marsham was staying in London, at Lord Penrhyn’s, at the time of Dickens’s death, and Lady Louisa Penrhyn told him that by accident she was in Westminster Abbey at about ten o’clock on the morning of 14th June, the day of the funeral, and noticing some persons standing round an open grave, her ladyship went to see it, and was greatly impressed on looking in to read the name of Charles Dickens on the coffin, on which were numerous wreaths of flowers.

Our venerable friend possesses a souvenir of the novelist in the two exquisite plaster statuettes, about eighteen inches high, of “Night” and “Morning,” which he purchased at the Gad’s Hill sale.

The reverend gentleman spoke of the great improvements in travelling as compared with times within his recollection. He said that before the railways were constructed he went to London by boat from Gravesend, and the river was so bad that he had to keep his handkerchief to his nose all the way to avoid the stench. This was long before the days of Thames Embankments and other improvements in travelling by river and road.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FINAL TRAMP IN ROCHESTER AND LONDON.

“You have been in every line I have ever read, since I first came here, . . . you have been in every prospect I have ever seen since — on the river, on the sails of the ships, on the marshes, in the clouds, in the light, in the darkness, in the wind, in the woods, in the sea, in the streets.” — *Great Expectations*.

“The magic reel, which, rolling on before, has led the Chronicler thus far, now slackens in its pace, and stops. It lies before the goal; the pursuit is at an end. . . . Good-night, and heaven send our journey may have a prosperous ending.” — *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

It is the morning of Saturday, the first of September, 1888, when our wonderfully pleasant week's tramp in “Dickens-Land” comes to an end. We have carried out every detail of our programme, without a single *contretemps* to mar the enjoyment of our delightful holiday; we have visited not only the spots where the childhood and youth of Charles Dickens were passed, and where the influence of the environment is specially traceable in the tone of both his earlier and later writings, but we have gone over and identified (as we proposed to do) a number of places in which he delighted, and often described in those writings, peopling them with airy characters (but to us most real), in whose footsteps we have walked. We have seen the place where he was born; we have seen nearly all the houses in which he lived in after life; and we have been over the charming home occupied by him for fourteen years, where his last moments passed away under the affectionate and reverential solicitude of his sons and daughters, and of Miss Hogarth, his sister-in-law, “the ever-useful, self-denying, and devoted friend.”

And now we linger lovingly about a few of the streets and places in “the ancient city,” and especially in the precincts of the venerable Cathedral, all sanctified by the memory of the mighty dead. We fain would prolong our visit, but the “stern mandate of duty,” as Immanuel Kant called it, prevails, and we bow to the inevitable; or as Mr. Herbert Spencer better puts it, “our

duty is our pleasure, and our greatest happiness consists in achieving the happiness of others.” We feel our departure to-day the more keenly, as everything tempts us to stay. Listening for a moment at the open door — the beautiful west door — of the Cathedral, in this glorious morning in early autumn, we hear the harmonies of the organ and choir softly wafted to us from within; we feel the delicious morning air, which comes over the old Castle and burial-ground from the Kentish hills; we see the bright and beautiful flowers and foliage of the lovely catalpa tree, through which the sunlight glints; a solemn calm pervades the spot as the hum of the city is hushed; and, although we have read them over and over again, now, for the first time, do we adequately realize the exquisitely touching lines on the last page of *Edwin Drood*, written by the master-hand that was so soon to be stilled for ever: —



“A brilliant morning shines on the old City. Its antiquities and ruins are surpassingly beautiful, with the lusty ivy gleaming in the sun, and the rich trees waving in the balmy air. Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods and fields — or, rather, from the one great garden of the whole of the cultivated island in its yielding time — penetrate into the Cathedral, subdue its earthy odour, and preach the Resurrection and the Life. The cold stone tombs of centuries ago

grow warm; and flecks of brightness dart into the sternest marble corners of the building, fluttering there like wings.”

Having time to reflect on our experiences, we are able to understand how greatly our feelings and ideas have been influenced for good, both regarding the personality of the novelist and his writings.

In the course of our rambles we have interviewed many people in various walks of life who knew Dickens well, and their interesting replies, mostly given in their own words, vividly bring before our mental vision the *man* as he actually lived and moved among his neighbours, apart from any glamour with which we, as hero-worshippers, naturally invest him. We see him in his home, beloved by his family, taking kindly interest, as a country gentleman, in the poor of the district, entering into and personally encouraging their sports, and helping them in their distress. To his dependents and tradesmen he was kind, just, and honourable; to his friends genial, hospitable, and true; in himself eager, enthusiastic, and thorough. No man of his day had more friends, and he kept them as long as he lived. His favourite motto, “courage — persevere,” comes before us constantly. All that we heard on the other side was contained in the expression — “rather masterful!” Rather masterful? Of course he was rather masterful — otherwise he would never have been Charles Dickens. What does he say in that unconscious description of himself, which he puts into the mouth of Boots at *The Holly-Tree Inn*, when referring to the father of Master Harry Walmers, Junior?

“He was a gentleman of spirit, and good-looking, and held his head up when he walked, and had what you may call Fire about him. He wrote poetry, and he rode, and he ran, and he cricketed, and he danced, and he acted, and he done it all equally beautiful. . . . He was a gentleman that had a will of his own and a eye of his own, and that would be minded.”

Perfectly true do we find the summing up of his character, in his home at Gad’s Hill, as given by Professor Minto in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (one of the most faithful, just, and appreciative articles ever written about Dickens): — “Here he worked, and walked, and saw his friends, and was loved and almost worshipped by his poorer neighbours, for miles around.”

Although tolerably familiar with most of the writings of Dickens from our youth, and, like many readers, having our favourites which may have absorbed our attention to the exclusion of others, we are bound to say that

our little visit to Rochester and its neighbourhood — our “Dickens-Land” — rendered famous all the world over in the novels and minor works, gives a freshness, a brightness, and a reality to our conceptions scarcely expected, and never before experienced. The faithful descriptions of scenery witnessed by us for the first time in and about the “quaint city” of Rochester, the delightful neighbourhood of Cobham, the glorious old city of Canterbury, the dreary marshes and other localities: the more detailed pictures of particular places, like the Castle, the Cathedral, its crypt and tower, the Bull Inn, the Vines, Richard Watts’s Charity, and others — the point of the situation in many of these cannot be realized without personal inspection and verification.

And further, as by a sort of reflex action, another feeling comes uppermost in our minds, apart from the mere amusement and enjoyment of Dickens’s works: we mean the actual benefits to humanity which, directly or indirectly, arise out of his writings; and we endorse the noble lines of dedication which his friend, Walter Savage Landor, addressed to him in his *Imaginary Conversations of Greeks and Romans* (1853): —

“Friends as we are, have long been, and ever shall be, I doubt whether I should have prefaced these pages with your name, were it not to register my judgment that, in breaking up and cultivating the unreclaimed wastes of Humanity, no labours have been so strenuous, so continuous, or half so successful, as yours. While the world admires in you an unlimited knowledge of mankind, deep thought, vivid imagination, and bursts of eloquence from unclouded heights, no less am I delighted when I see you at the school-room you have liberated from cruelty, and at the cottage you have purified from disease.”

We have before us — its edges browned by age — a reprint of a letter largely circulated at the time, addressed by Dickens to *The Times*, dated “Devonshire Terrace, 13th Novr., 1849,” in which he describes, in graphic and powerful language, the ribald and disgusting scenes which he witnessed at Horsemonger Lane Gaol on the occasion of the execution of the Mannings. The letter is too long to quote in its entirety, but the following extract will suffice: — ”I have seen habitually some of the worst sources of general contamination and corruption in this country, and I think there are not many phases of London life that could surprise me. I am solemnly convinced that nothing that ingenuity could devise to be done in this city in the same compass of time could work such ruin as one public execution,

and I stand astounded and appalled by the wickedness it exhibits.” The letter contains an urgent appeal to the then Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, “as a solemn duty which he owes to society, and a responsibility which he cannot for ever put away,” to originate an immediate legislative change in this respect. Forster says in allusion to the above-mentioned letter: — ”There began an active agitation against public executions, which never ceased until the salutary change was effected which has worked so well.” Dickens happily lived to see the fruition of his labours, for the Private Execution Act was passed in 1868, and the last public execution took place at Newgate on 26th May of that year. As indicative of the new state of feeling at that time, it may be mentioned that the number of spectators was not large, and they were observed to conduct themselves with unusual decorum.

It is valuable to record this as one of many public reforms which Dickens by his writings and influence certainly helped to accomplish. In his standard work on *Popular Government* (1885), Sir Henry Sumner Maine says:-”Dickens, who spent his early manhood among the politicians of 1832, trained in Bentham’s school, [Bentham, by the bye, being quoted in *Edwin Drood*,] hardly ever wrote a novel without attacking an abuse. The procedure of the Court of Chancery and of the Ecclesiastical Courts, the delays of the Public Offices, the costliness of divorce, the state of the dwellings of the poor, and the condition of the cheap schools in the North of England, furnished him with what he seemed to consider, in all sincerity, the true moral of a series of fictions.”

* * * * *

We bid a kindly adieu to the “dear old City” where so many genial friends have been made, so many happy hours have been passed, so many pleasant memories have been stored, and for the time leave

“the pensive glory,
That fills the Kentish hills,”

to take our seats in the train for London, with the intention of paying a brief visit to South Kensington, where, in the Forster Collection of the Museum, are treasured the greater portion of the manuscripts which constitute the principal works of Charles Dickens. It will be remembered that the Will of the great novelist contained the following simple but important clause: — ”I also give to the said John Forster (whom he previously referred to as ‘my dear and trusty friend’) such manuscripts of

my published works as may be in my possession at the time of my decease;" and that Mr. Forster by his Will bequeathed these priceless treasures to his wife for her life, in trust to pass over to the Nation at her decease. Mrs. Forster, who survives her husband, generously relinquished her life interest, in order to give immediate effect to his wishes; and thus in 1876, soon after Mr. Forster's death, they came into the undisturbed possession of the Nation for ever.

Besides the manuscripts there are numbers of holograph letters, original sketches (including "The Apotheosis of Grip the Raven") by D. Maclise, R.A., and other interesting memorials relating to Charles Dickens. *The Handbook to the Dyce and Forster Collections* rightly says that: — "This is a gift which will ever have the highest value, and be regarded with the deepest interest by people of every English-speaking nation, as long as the English language exists. Not only our own countrymen, but travellers from every country and colony into which Englishmen have spread, may here examine the original manuscripts of books which have been more widely read than any other uninspired writings throughout the world. Thousands, it cannot be doubted, who have been indebted for many an hour of pleasurable enjoyment when in health, for many an hour of solace when in weariness and pain, to these novels, will be glad to look upon them as each sheet was sent last to the printer, full of innumerable corrections from the hand of Charles Dickens."

The manuscripts are fifteen in number, bound up into large quarto volumes, and comprise: —

1. *Oliver Twist* — two Volumes, with Preface to the *Pickwick Papers*, and matter relating to *Master Humphrey's Clock*.

2. *Sketches of Young Couples*.

3. *The Lamplighter*, a Farce. This MS. is not in the handwriting of Dickens.

4. *The Old Curiosity Shop* — two Volumes, with Letter to Mr. Forster of 17th January, 1841, and hints for some chapters.

5. *Barnaby Rudge* — two Volumes.

6. *American Notes*.

7. *Martin Chuzzlewit* — two Volumes, with various title-pages, notes as to the names, &c., and dedication to Miss Burdett Coutts.

8. *The Chimes*.

9. *Dombey and Son* — two Volumes, with title-pages, headings of chapters, and memoranda.

10. *David Copperfield* — two Volumes, with various title-pages, and memoranda as to names.

11. *Bleak House* — two Volumes, with suggestions for title-pages and other memoranda.

12. *Hard Times* — with memoranda.

13. *Little Dorrit* — two Volumes, with memoranda, Dedication to Clarkson Stanfield, and Preface.

14. *A Tale of Two Cities* — with Dedication to Lord John Russell, and Preface.

15. *Edwin Drood* — unfinished, with memoranda, and headings for chapters.

John Forster says: — "The last page of *Edwin Drood* was written in the chalet in the afternoon of his last day of consciousness."

Of the above-mentioned, the calligraphy of Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, is seen at a glance to be larger, bolder, and to have fewer corrections. In Nos. 5 to 15 it is smaller, and more confused by numerous alterations. According to Forster — "His greater pains and elaboration of writing became first very obvious in the later parts of *Martin Chuzzlewit*."

The manuscripts of the earliest works of the Author, *Sketches by Boz*, *Pickwick*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, &c., were evidently not considered at the time worth preserving. The manuscript of *Our Mutual Friend*, given by Dickens to Mr. E. S. Dallas — in grateful acknowledgment of an appreciative review which (according to an article in *Scribner*, entitled "Our Mutual Friend in Manuscript") Mr. Dallas wrote of the novel for *The Times*, which largely increased the sale of the book, and fully established its success, — is in the library of Mr. G. W. Childs of Philadelphia; and that of *A Christmas Carol* — given by Dickens to his old friend and school-fellow, Tom Mitton — was for sale in Birmingham a few years ago, and might have been purchased for two hundred and fifty guineas! It is now owned by Mr. Stuart M. Samuel, and has since been beautifully reproduced in fac-simile, with an Introduction by my friend and fellow-tramp, Mr. F. G. Kitton. Mr. Wright, of Paris, is the fortunate possessor of *The Battle of Life*. The proof-sheets of *Great Expectations* are in the Museum at Wisbech. Messrs. Jarvis and Son, of King William Street, Strand, sold some time since four of the MSS. of minor articles contributed by Dickens to *Household Words* in 1855-6, viz.

The Friend of the Lions, Demeanour of Murderers, That other Public, and Our Commission, for £10 each.

At the sale of the late Mr. Wilkie Collins's manuscripts and library by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge, 18th June, 1890, the manuscript of *The Frozen Deep*, by Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens, 1856 (first performed at Tavistock House, 6th January, 1857), together with the narrative written for *Temple Bar*, 1874, and Prompt Book of the same play, was sold for £300. A poem written by Charles Dickens, as a Prologue to the same play, and *The Song of the Wreck*, also written by Charles Dickens, were sold for £11 11s. each. *The Perils of Certain English Prisoners*, a joint production of Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens, for the Christmas number of *Household Words*, 1857, realized £200; and the drama of *No Thoroughfare* (imperfect), also a joint production, fetched £22.

The manuscripts now belonging to the Nation at South Kensington are placed in a glazed cabinet, standing in the middle of the room, on the right of which looks down the life-like portrait of the great novelist, painted by W. P. Frith, R.A., in 1859. The manuscript volumes are laid open in an appropriate manner, so that we have an opportunity of examining and comparing them with one another, and of observing how the precious thoughts which flowed from the fertile brain took shape and became realities.

Where corrections have been made, the original ideas are so obscured that it is scarcely possible to decipher them. This is effected, not by the simple method of an obliteration of the words, as is common with some authors, by means of a line or two run through them at one stroke of the pen, but by a

series of connected circles, or scroll-work flourishes, thus,  which must have caused greater muscular labour in execution. Let any one try the two methods for himself. Dickens was fond of flourishes, as witness his first published autograph, under the portrait which was issued with *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839). Some evidence of "writer's cramp," as it is termed, appears where the C in Charles becomes almost a G, and where the line-like flourishes to the signature thirty years later, under the portrait forming the frontispiece to *Edwin Drood*, are much shorter and less elaborate. All the earlier manuscripts are in black ink — the characteristic blue ink, which he was so fond of using in later years, not appearing until *Hard Times* was written (1854), and this continued to be (with one

exception, *Little Dorrit*) his favourite writing medium, for the reason, it is said, that it was fluent to write with and dried quickly.

From a valuable collection of letters (more than a dozen — recently in the possession of Messrs. Noel Conway and Co., of Martineau Street, Birmingham, and kindly shown to me by Mr. Charles Fendelow), written by the novelist between 1832 and 1833 to a friend of his earlier years — Mr. W. H. Kolle — and not hitherto published, it appears that he had not then acquired that precise habit of inscribing the place, day of the week, month, and the year which marked his later correspondence (as has been pointed out by Miss Hogarth and Miss Dickens in the preface to the *Letters of Charles Dickens*), very few of the letters to Mr. Kolle bearing any record whatever except the day of the week, occasionally preceded by Fitzroy Street or Bentinck Street, where he resided at the time. It would be extremely interesting to ascertain the reason which subsequently led him to adopt the extraordinarily precise method which almost invariably marked his correspondence from the year 1840 until the close of his life. Possibly arrangements with publishers and others may have given him the exact habit which afterwards became automatic.

In addition to the manuscripts in the Forster Collection in the Museum there are corrected proofs of a portion of the *Pickwick Papers*, *Dombey and Son*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, and *Little Dorrit*. Some of the corrections in *Dombey and Son* are said to be in the handwriting of Mr. Forster. All these proofs show marvellous attention to detail — one of the most conspicuous of Dickens's characteristics. Nothing with him was worth doing unless it was done well. As an illustration of work in this direction, it may be mentioned that a proof copy of the speech delivered at the meeting of the Administrative Reform Association at Drury Lane Theatre on Wednesday, June 27th, 1855, in the possession of the writer of these lines, has over a hundred corrections on the nine pages of which it consists, and many of these occur in punctuation. On careful examination, the alterations show that the correction in every case is a decided improvement on the original. The following *fac-similes* from the *Hand-Book* to the *Dyce and Forster Collection*, and from *Forster's Life*, illustrate the earlier, later, and latest handwritings of Charles Dickens as shown in the MSS. of *Oliver Twist*, 1837, *Hard Times*, 1854, and *Edwin Drood*, 1870.

A proof of the fourteenth Chapter of *David Copperfield*, 1850, shows that the allusion to “King Charles the First’s head” — about which Mr. Dick was so much troubled — was *not* contained in the first draft of the story, for the passage originally had reference to “the date when that bull got into the china warehouse and did so much mischief.” The subsequent reference to King Charles’s head was a happy thought of Dickens, and furthered Mr. Dick’s idea of the mistake “of putting some of the trouble out of King Charles’s head” into his own.

Mr. R. F. Sketchley, the able and courteous custodian of the collection, allows us to see some of the other rarities in the museum not displayed in the cabinet — prefaces, dedications, and memoranda relating to the novels; letters addressed by Dickens to Forster, Maclise, and others; rare play-bills; and the originals of invitations to the public dinner and ball at New York, which Dickens received on the occasion of his first visit to America in 1842. After turning these over with reverential care, we regretfully leave behind us one of the most interesting and important literary collections ever presented to the Nation.

We next visit the Prerogative Registry of the United Kingdom at Somerset House, wherein is filed the original Will of Charles Dickens. The search for this interesting document pursued by a stranger under pressure of time, strongly reminds one of the “Circumlocution Office” so graphically described in *Bleak House*. But we are enthusiastic, and at length obtain a clue to it in a folio volume (Letter D), containing the names of testators who died in the year 1870, where the Will is briefly recorded (at number 468) as that of “Dickens, Charles, otherwise Charles John Huffham, Esquire.” We pay our fees, and take our seats in the reading-room, when the original is presently placed in our hands. It is one of a series of three documents fastened together by a bit of green silk cord, and secured by the seal of the office, as is customary when there are two or more papers filed. The first document is the Will itself, dated 12th May, 1869, written throughout by the novelist very plainly and closely in the characteristic blue ink on a medium sheet of faint blue quarto letter paper, having the usual legal folded margin, and exactly covering the four pages. It is free from corrections, and is signed, “Charles Dickens,” under which is the never-to-be-mistaken flourish. The testatum is signed by G. Holsworth, 26 Wellington Street, Strand, and Henry Walker, 26 Wellington Street, Strand, which points to the fact that the Will was written and executed at the office of *All the Year*

Round. He appoints “Georgina Hogarth and John Forster executrix and executor, and guardians of the persons of my children during their respective minorities.”

The second document is the Oath of John Forster, testifying that Charles Dickens, otherwise Charles John Huffham Dickens, is one and the same person. The third document is a Codicil dated 2nd June, 1870 (only a week before his death), in which the novelist bequeaths “to my son Charles Dickens, the younger, all my share and interest in the weekly journal called *All the Year Round*.” The Codicil is witnessed by the same persons. The Will and Codicil are both given in extenso in vol. iii. of Forster’s *Life* — the gross amount of the real and personal estate being calculated at £93,000.

* * * * *

A very short tramp from Somerset House brings us to the last object of our pilgrimage — the grave of Charles Dickens in Westminster Abbey. Surely no admirer of his genius can omit this final mark of honour to the memory of the mighty dead. Many years have rolled by since “the good, the gentle, highly gifted, ever friendly, noble Dickens” passed away; and we stand by the grave in the calm September evening, with “jewels cast upon the pavement of the nave from stained glass by the declining sun,” and look down at the dark flat stone lying at our feet, on which is inscribed “in plain English letters,” the simple record: —

CHARLES DICKENS,

BORN FEBRUARY THE SEVENTH, 1812.

DIED JUNE THE NINTH, 1870.

We recall with profoundly sympathetic interest that quietly impressive ceremony as recorded by Forster in the final pages of his able biography. “Before mid-day on Tuesday, the 14th June, 1870, with knowledge of those only who took part in the burial, all was done. The solemnity had not lost by the simplicity. Nothing so grand or so touching could have accompanied it, as the stillness and the silence of the vast Cathedral.” And he further describes the wonderful gathering subsequently: — “Then later in the day, and all the following day, came unbidden mourners in such crowds that the Dean had to request permission to keep open the grave until Thursday; but after it was closed they did not cease to come, and all day long.” Dean Stanley wrote: — “On the 17th there was a constant pressure to the spot, and many flowers were strewn upon it by unknown hands, many tears shed from unknown eyes.”

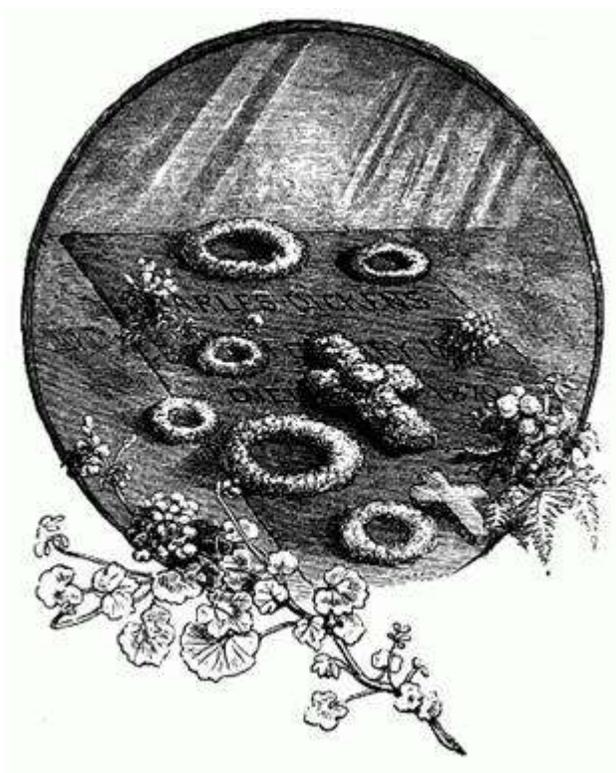
What poet, what philosopher, what monarch even, might not envy this loving tribute to the influence of the great writer, to the personal respect for the man, and to the affection for the friend who, by the sterling nature of his work for nearly thirty-five years, had the power to create and sustain such sympathy?

Forster thus admiringly concludes the memoir of his hero:

“The highest associations of both the arts he loved surround him where he lies. Next to him is Richard Cumberland. Mrs. Pritchard’s monument looks down upon him, and immediately behind is David Garrick’s. Nor is the actor’s delightful art more worthily represented than the nobler genius of the author. Facing the grave, and on its left and right, are the monuments of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dryden, the three immortals who did most to create and settle the language to which Charles Dickens has given another undying name.”

“Of making many books there is no end,” said the wise man of old; and certainly, if we may estimate the popularity of Charles Dickens by the works of all kinds relating to him, written since his death, the number may be counted by hundreds. It may also be said that probably no other English writer save Shakespeare has been the cause of so much posthumous literature. The sayings of his characters permeate our everyday life, and they continue to be as fresh as when they were first recorded. The original editions of his writings in some cases realize high prices which are simply amazing, and — judging by statistics — his readers are as numerous as ever they were. Higher testimony to the worth “of the most popular novelist of the century, and one of the greatest humourists that England has produced,” and to the continued interest which the reading public still evince in the minutest detail relating to him and to his books, can scarcely be uttered; but what is better still — ”his sympathies were generally on the right side;” — he has left an example that all may follow; — he did his utmost to leave the world a little better than he found it; — as he said by one of his characters, “the best of men can do no more” — and now he peacefully rests as one

“Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence.”



L'ENVOI.

We — my fellow-tramp and I — naturally feel a pang of regret now that our pleasant visit to “Dickens-Land” is terminated. With a parting grasp of the hand I express to the companion of my travels a cordial wish that ere long we may, “please God,” renew our delightful experience, and again go over the ground hallowed by Dickens associations; to which my friend, as cordially assenting, replies “surely, surely!”

With these two favourite expressions of Charles Dickens (quoted above) I conclude the book, trusting that it will prove worthy of some kindly appreciation at the hands of my readers.

THE END.

**CHARLES DICKENS AS A READER by Charles
Kent**



*Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. London: Chapman & Hall, 193,
Piccadilly.
1872.*

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JOHN FORSTER,

THE BIOGRAPHER OF CHARLES DICKENS,

These Pages are Inscribed.

PREFACE.

As the title-page of this volume indicates, no more is here attempted than a memorial of Charles Dickens in association with his Readings. It appeared desirable that something in the shape of an accurate record should be made of an episode in many respects so remarkable in the career of the most popular author of his generation. A commemorative volume, precisely of this character, was projected by the writer in the spring of 1870. Immediately after the Farewell Reading in St James's Hall, on the 15th of March, Charles Dickens wrote, in hearty approval of the suggestion, "Everything that I can let you have in aid of the proposed record (which, *of course*, would be far more agreeable to me if done by you than by any other hand) shall be at your service." All the statistics, he added, should be placed freely at the writer's command; all the marked books from which he himself read should be confided to him for reference. In now realising his long-postponed intention, the writer's endeavour has been throughout to restrict the purpose of his book as much as possible to matters either directly or indirectly affecting these famous Readings.

The Biography of Charles Dickens having been undertaken by the oldest and dearest of his friends, all that is here attempted is to portray, as accurately as may be, a single phase in the career and character of one of the greatest of all our English Humorists. What is thus set forth has the advantage, at any rate, of being penned from the writer's own intimate knowledge. With the Novelist's career as a Reader he has been familiar throughout. From its beginning to its close he has regarded it observantly. He has viewed it both from before and from behind the scenes, from the front of the house as well as from within the shelter of the screen upon the platform. When contrasted with the writings of the Master-Humorist, these readings of his, though so remarkable in themselves, shrink, no doubt, to comparative insignificance. But simply considering them as supplementary, and, certainly, as very exceptional, evidences of genius on the part of a great author, they may surely be regarded as having been worthy of the keenest scrutiny at the time, and entitled afterwards to some honest commemoration.

CHARLES DICKENS AS A READER.

A celebrated writer is hardly ever capable as a Reader of doing justice to his own imaginings. Dr. Johnson's whimsical anecdote of the author of *The Seasons* admits, in point of fact, of a very general application. According to the grimly humorous old Doctor, "He [Thomson] was once reading to Doddington, who, being himself a reader eminently elegant, was so much provoked by his odd utterance, that he snatched the paper from his hand, and told him that he did not understand his own verses!" Dryden, again, when reading his *Amphytrion* in the green-room, "though," says Cibber, who was present upon the occasion, "he delivered the plain meaning of every period, yet the whole was in so cold, so flat, and unaffecting a manner, that I am afraid of not being believed when I affirm it." Elsewhere, in his *Apology*, when contrasting the creator with the interpreter, the original delineator with the actual impersonator of character, the same old stage gossip remarks, how men would read Shakspeare with higher rapture could they but conceive how he was played by Betterton! "Then might they know," he exclaims, with a delightful extravagance of emphasis and quaintness of phraseology, "the one was born alone to speak what the other only knew to write!" The simple truth of the matter being that for the making of a consummate actor, reader, or impersonator, not only is there required, to begin with, a certain histrionic instinct or dramatic aptitude, but a combination — very rarely to be met with, indeed — of personal gifts, of physical peculiarities, of vocal and facial, nay, of subtly and yet instantly appreciable characteristics. Referring merely to those who are skilled as conversationalists, Sir Richard Steele remarks, very justly, in the *Spectator* (No. 521), that, "In relations, the force of the expression lies very often more in the look, the tone of voice, or the gesture, than in the words themselves, which, being repeated in any other manner by the undiscerning, bear a very different interpretation from their original meaning." Whatever is said as to all that is requisite in the delivery of an oration by the master of all oratory, applies with equal distinctness to those who are readers or actors professionally. All depends on the countenance, is the *dictum* of Cicero,{*} and even in that, he says, the eyes bear sovereign sway.

- * De Oratore iii., 59.

Elsewhere, in his great treatise, referring to what was all-essential in oratorical delivery, according to Demosthenes, Tully, by a bold and luminous phrase, declares Action to be, as it were, the speech of the body, — "quasi sermo corporis." Voice, eyes, bearing, gesture, countenance, each in turn, all of them together, are to the spoken words, or, rather than that, it should be said, to the thoughts and emotions of which those articulate sounds are but the winged symbols, as to the barbed and feathered arrows are the bowstring. How essential every external of this kind is, as affording some medium of communication between a speaker and his auditors, may be illustrated upon the instant by the rough and ready argument of the *reductio ad absurdum*. Without insisting, for example, upon the impossibility of having a speech delivered by one who is actually blind, and deaf, and dumb, we need only imagine here its utterance, by some wall-eyed stammerer, who has a visage about as wooden and inexpressive as the figure-head of a merchantman. Occasionally, it is true, physical defects have been actually conquered, individual peculiarities have been in a great measure counteracted, by rhetorical artifice, or by the arts of oratorical delivery: instance the lisp of Demosthenes, the stutter of Fox, the brogue of Burke, and the burr of Brougham.

Sometimes, but very rarely, it has so happened that an actor of nearly peerless excellence, that a reader of all but matchless power, has achieved his triumphs, has acquired his reputation, in very despite of almost every conceivable personal disadvantage. Than the renowned actor already mentioned, for example, Thomas Betterton, a more radiant name has hardly ever been inscribed upon the roll of English players, from Burbage to Garrick. Yet what is the picture of this incomparable tragedian, drawn by one who knew him and who has described his person for us minutely, meaning Antony Aston, in his theatrical pamphlet, called the Brief Supplement? Why it is absolutely this, — "Mr. Betterton," says his truthful panegyrist, "although a superlative good actor, laboured under an ill figure, being clumsily made, having a great head, a short, thick neck, stooped in the shoulders, and had fat, short arms, which he rarely lifted higher than his stomach. He had little eyes and a broad face, a little pock-fretten, a corpulent body, and thick legs, with large feet. His voice was low and grumbling. He was incapable of dancing, even in a country dance." And so forth! Yet this was the consummate actor who was regarded by the more

discerning among his contemporaries, but most of all by the brother actors who were immediately around him, as simply inimitable and unapproachable.

There was John Henderson, again, great in his time, both as a tragic and a comic actor, greatest of all as a reader or an impersonator. Hear him described by one who has most carefully and laboriously written his encomium, that is to say, by John Ireland, his biographer. What do we read of him? That in height he was below the common standard, that his frame was uncompacted, that his limbs were short and ill-proportioned, that his countenance had little of that flexibility which anticipates the tongue, that his eye had scarcely anything of that language which, by preparing the spectator for the coming sentence, enchains the attention, that his voice was neither silvery nor mellifluous. Nevertheless, by a subtlety of discrimination, that seemed almost intuitive, by a force of judgment and a fervency of mind, that were simply exquisite and irresistible, this was the very man who could at any moment, by an inflection of his voice or by the syncope of a chuckle, move his audience at pleasure to tears or to laughter. He could haunt their memories for years afterwards with the infinite tenderness of his ejaculation as Hamlet, of "The fair Ophelia!" He could convulse them with merriment by his hesitating utterance as Falstaff of "A shirt — and a half!" Incidentally it is remarked by the biographer of Henderson that the qualifications requisite to constitute a reader of especial excellence seem to be these, "a good ear, a voice capable of inflexion, an understanding of, and taste for, the beauties of the author." Added to this, there must be, of course, a feeling, an ardour, an enthusiasm sufficient at all times to ensure their rapid and vivid manifestation. Richly endowed in this way, however, though Henderson was, his gifts were weighted, as we have seen were those also of Betterton, by a variety of physical defects, some of which were almost painfully conspicuous. Insomuch was this the case, in the latter instance, that Tony Aston has oddly observed, in regard to the all but peerless tragedian, "He was better to meet than to follow; for his aspect [the writer evidently means, here, when met] was serious, venerable, and majestic; in his latter time a little paralytic." Accepting at once as reasonable and as accurate what has thus been asserted by those who have made the art of elocution their especial and chosen study for analysis, it is surely impossible not to recognise at a glance how enormously a reader must, by necessity, be advantaged, who, in addition to the intellectual and

emotional gifts already enumerated, possesses those personal attributes and physical endowments in which a reader, otherwise of surpassing excellence, like Henderson, and an actor, in other respects of incomparable ability, like Betterton, was each in turn so glaringly deficient.

Whatever is here said in regard to Charles Dickens, it should be borne in mind, is written and published during the lifetime of his own immediate contemporaries. He himself, his readings, the sound of his voice, the ring of his footstep, the glance of his eye, are all still vividly within the recollection of the majority of those who will examine the pages of this memorial. Everything, consequently, which is set forth in them is penned with a knowledge of its inevitable revision or endorsement by the reader's own personal remembrance. It is in the full glare of that public remembrance that the present writer refers to the great novelist as an impersonator of his more remarkable creations. Everybody who has seen him, who has heard him, who has carefully watched him, though it may be but at a single one of these memorable readings, will recognise at a glance the accuracy or the inaccuracy of the delineation.

It is observable, in the first instance, in regard to Charles Dickens, that he had in an extraordinary degree the dramatic element in his character. It was an integral part of his individuality. It coloured his whole temperament or idiosyncrasy. Unconsciously he described himself, to a T, in Nicholas Nickleby. "There's genteel comedy in your walk and manner, juvenile tragedy in your eye, and touch-and-go farce in your la'ugh," might have been applied to himself in his buoyant youth quite as readily and directly as to Nicholas. The author, rather than the hero of Nickleby, seems, in that happy utterance of the theatrical manager, to have been photographed. It cannot but now be apparent that, as an unpremeditated preliminary to Dickens's then undreamt-of career as a reader of his own works in public and professionally, the Private Theatricals over which he presided during several years in his own home circle as manager, prepared the way no less directly than his occasional Readings, later on, at some expense to himself (in travelling and otherwise) for purely charitable purposes. His proclivity stagewards, in effect, the natural trending of his line of life, so to speak, in the histrionic or theatrical direction, was, in another way, indicated at a yet earlier date, and not one jot less pointedly. It was so, we mean, at the very opening of his career in authorship, when having just sprung into precocious celebrity as the writer of the Sketches and of the earlier numbers

of Pickwick, he contributed an opera and a couple of farces with brilliant success to the boards of the St. James's Theatre. Braham and Parry and Hullah winged with melody the words of "The Village Coquettes;" while the quaint humour of Harley excited roars of laughter through the whimsicalities of "Is She His Wife?" and "The Strange Gentleman." Trifles light as air though these effusions might be, the radiant bubbles showed even then, as by a casual freak which way with him the breeze in his leisure hours was drifting. A dozen years or more after this came the private theatricals at Tavistock House. Beginning simply, first of all, with his direction of his children's frolics in the enacting of a burletta, of a Cracker Bonbon for Christmas, and of one of Planché's charming fairy extravaganzas, these led up in the end through what must be called circuitously Dickens's emendations of O'Hara's version of Fielding's burlesque of "Tom Thumb," to the manifestation of the novelist's remarkable genius for dramatic impersonation: first of all, as Aaron Gurnock in Wilkie Collins's "Lighthouse," and afterwards as Richard War dour in the same author's "Frozen Deep." Already he had achieved success, some years earlier, as an amateur performer in characters not essentially his own, as, for example, in the representation of the senile blandness of Justice Shallow, or of the gasconading humours of Captain Bobadil. Just, as afterwards, in furtherance of the interests of the Guild of Literature and Art, he impersonated Lord Wilmot in Lytton's comedy of "Not so Bad as we Seem," and represented in a series of wonderfully rapid transformations the protean person of Mr. Gabblewig, through the medium of a delightful farce called "Mr. Nightingale's Diary." Whoever witnessed Dickens's impersonation of Mr. Gabblewig, will remember that it included a whole cluster of grotesque creations of his own. Among these there was a stone-deaf old man, who, whenever he was shouted at, used to sigh out resignedly, "Ah, it's no use your whispering!" Besides whom there was a garrulous old lady, in herself the worthy double of Mrs. Gamp; a sort of half-brother to Sam Weller; and an alternately shrieking and apologetic valetudinarian, who was, perhaps, the most whimsical of them all. Nothing more, however, need here be said in regard to Charles Dickens's share, either in these performances for the Guild or in the other strictly private theatricals. They are simply here referred to, as having prepared the way by practice, for the Readings, still so called, though, in all save costume and

general *mis en scene*, they were from first to last essentially and intensely dramatic representations.

Readings of this character, it is curious to reflect for a moment, resemble somewhat in the simplicity of their surroundings the habitual stage arrangements of the days of Shakspeare. The arena, in each instance, might be described accurately enough as a platform, draped with screens and hangings of cloth or of green baize. The principal difference, in point of fact, between the two would be apparent in this, that whereas, in the one case any reasonable number of performers might be grouped together simultaneously, in the other there would remain from first to last before the audience but one solitary performer. He, however, as a mere matter of course, by the very necessity of his position, would have to be regarded throughout as though he were a noun of multitude signifying many. Slashed doublets and trunk hose, might just possibly be deemed by some more picturesque, if not in outline, at least in colour and material, than the evening costume of now-a-days. But, apart from this, whatever would meet the gaze of the spectator in either instance would bear the like aspect of familiarity or of incongruity, in contrast to or in association with, the characters represented at the moment before actual contemporaries. These later performances partake, of course, in some sense of the nature of a monologue. Besides which, they involve the display of a desk and a book instead of the almost ludicrous exhibition of a board inscribed, as the case might be, "Syracuse" or "Verona." Apart from this, however, a modern reading is, in the very nature of it, like a reverting to the primitive simplicity of the stage, when the stage, in its social influences, was at its highest and noblest, when, for the matter of that, it was all but paramount. Given genius in the author and in the impersonator, and that very simplicity has its enormous advantages.

The greatest of all the law-givers of art in this later civilisation has more than merely hinted at what is here maintained. Goethe has said emphatically, in *Wilhelm Meister*, that a really good actor makes us soon enough forget the awkwardness, even the meanness, of trumpery decorations; whereas, he continues, a magnificent theatre is precisely the very thing that makes us feel the most keenly the want of actors of real excellence. How wisely in this Goethe, according to his wont, has spoken, we all of us, here in England, know by our own experience. Of the truth of his opinion we have had in this country, of late years, more than one

startling illustration. Archaeological knowledge, scenic illusion, gorgeous upholstery, sumptuous costumes, have, in the remembrance of many, been squandered in profusion upon the boards of one of our London theatres in the getting up of a drama by the master-dramatist. All this has tended, however, only to realise the more painfully the inadequacy of the powers, no less of the leading star than of his whole company, to undertake the interpretation of the dramatic masterpiece. The spectacle which we are viewing in such an instance is, no doubt, resplendent; but it is so purely as a spectacle. Everything witnessed is —

- “So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
- We start, for soul is wanting there.”

The result naturally is, that the public is disillusioned and that the management is bankrupt. Another strikingly-contrasted experience of the present generation is this, that, without any decorations whatever, enormous audiences have been assembled together, in the old world and in the new, upon every occasion upon which they have been afforded the opportunity, to hear a story related by the lips of the writer of it. And they have been so assembled not simply because the story itself (every word of it known perfectly well beforehand) was worth hearing again, or because there was a very natural curiosity to behold the famous author by whom it had been penned; but, above all, because his voice, his glance, his features, his every movement, his whole person, gave to his thoughts and his emotions, whether for tears or for laughter, the most vivid interpretation.

How it happened, in this instance, that a writer of celebrity like Charles Dickens became a reader of his own works before large public audiences may be readily explained. Before his first appearance in that character professionally — that is, as a public reader, on his own account — he had enjoyed more than twenty years of unexampled popularity as a novelist. During that period he had not only securely established his reputation in authorship, but had evidenced repeatedly, at intervals during the later portion of it, histrionic powers hardly less remarkable in their way than those gifts which had previously won for him his wholly exceptional fame as a writer of imagination.

Among his personal intimates, among all those who knew him best, it had long come to be recognised that his skill as an impersonator was only second to his genius as a creator of humorous and pathetic character. His success in each capacity sprang from his intense sympathy and his equally

intense earnestness. Whatever with him was worth doing at all, was worth doing thoroughly. Anything he undertook, no matter what, he went in at, according to the good old sea phrase, with a will. He always endeavoured to accomplish whatever had to be accomplished as well as it could possibly be effected within the reach of his capabilities. Whether it were pastime or whether it were serious business, having once taken anything in hand, he applied to it the whole of his energies. Hence, as an amateur actor, he was simply unapproachable. He passed, in fact, beyond the range of mere amateurs, and was brought into contrast by right, with the most gifted professionals among his contemporaries. Hence, again, as an after-dinner speaker, he was nothing less than incomparable. "He spoke so well," Anthony Trollope has remarked, "that a public dinner became a blessing instead of a curse if he were in the chair — had its compensating twenty minutes of pleasure, even if he were called upon to propose a toast or thank the company for drinking his health." He did nothing by halves, but everything completely. How completely he gave himself up to the delivery of a speech or of a reading, Mr. Arthur Helps has summed up in less than a dozen words of singular emphasis. That keen observer has said, indeed quite truly, of Dickens, — "When he read or spoke, the whole man read or spoke." It was thus with him repeatedly, and always delightfully, in mere chance conversation. An incident related by him often became upon the instant a little acted drama. His mimetic powers were in many respects marvellous. In voice, in countenance, in carriage, almost, it might be said, at moments, in stature, he seemed to be a Proteus.

According to a curious account which has been happily preserved for us in the memoirs of the greatest reader of the last century, Henderson first of all exhibited his elocutionary skill by reciting (it was at Islington) an Ode on Shakspeare. So exactly did he deliver this in Garrick's manner, that the acutest ear failed to distinguish the one from the other. One of those present declared, years afterwards, that he was certain the speaker *must be* either Garrick or Antichrist.

Imitative powers not one iota less extraordinary in their way were, at any moment, seemingly, at the command of the subject of this memorial. In one or two instances that might be named the assumption was all but identity. An aptitude of this particular kind, as everyone can appreciate upon the instant, would by necessity come wonderfully in aid of the illusive effect produced by readings that were in point of fact the mere vehicle or medium

for a whole crowd of vivid impersonations. Anyone, moreover, possessing gifts like these, of a very peculiar description, not only naturally but inevitably enjoys himself every opportunity that may arise for displaying them to those about him, to his friends and intimates. "Man is of a companionable, conversing nature," says Goethe in his novel of *The Renunciants*, "his delight is great when he exercises faculties that have been given him, even though nothing further came of it." Seeing that something further readily did come of it in the instance of Charles Dickens, it can hardly be matter for surprise that the readings and impersonations which were first of all a home delight, should at length quite naturally have opened up before the popular author what was for him an entirely new, but at the same time a perfectly legitimate, career professionally.

Recitations or readings of his own works in public by a great writer are, in point of fact, as old as literature itself. They date back to the very origin of polite letters, both prose and poetic. It matters nothing whether there was one Homer, or whether there may have been a score of Homers, so far as the fact of oral publication applies to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, nearly a thousand years (900) before the foundation of Christianity. By the lips of a single bard, or of a series of bards, otherwise of public declaimers or reciters, the world was first familiarised with the many enthralling tales strung together in those peerless masterpieces. Again, at a period of very nearly five hundred years (484) before the epoch of the Redemption, the Father of History came to lay the foundation, as it were, of the whole fabric of prose literature in a precisely similar manner — that is to say, by public readings or recitations. In point of fact, the instance there is more directly akin to the present argument. A musical cadence, or even possibly an instrumental accompaniment, may have marked the Homeric chant about Achilles and Ulysses. Whereas, obviously, in regard to Herodotus, the readings given by him at the Olympic games were readings in the modern sense, pure and simple. Lucian has related the incident, not only succinctly, but picturesquely.

Herodotus, then in his fiftieth year, reflected for a long while seriously how he might, with the least trouble and in the shortest time, win for himself and his writings a large amount of glory and reputation. Shrinking from the fatigue involved in the labour of visiting successively one after another the chief cities of the Athenians, the Corinthians, and the Lacedæmonians, he ingeniously hit upon the notion of appearing in person

at the Olympian Games, and of there addressing himself simultaneously to the very pick and flower of the whole Greek population. Providing himself beforehand with the choicest portions or select passages from his great narrative, he there read or declaimed those fragments of his History to the assembled multitude from the stage or platform of the theatre. And he did this, moreover, with such an evident captivation about him, not only in the style of his composition, but in the very manner of its delivery, that the applause of his hearers interrupted him repeatedly — the close of these recitations by the great author-reader being greeted with prolonged and resounding acclamations. Nay, not only are these particulars related as to the First Reading recorded as having been given by a Great Author, but, further than that, there is the charming incident described of Thucydides, then a boy of fifteen, listening entranced among the audience to the heroic occurrences recounted by the sonorous and impassioned voice of the annalist, and at the climax of it all bursting into tears. Lucian's comment upon that earliest Reading might, with a change of names, be applied almost word for word to the very latest of these kinds of intellectual exhibitions. "None were ignorant," he says, "of the name of Herodotus; nor was there a single person in Greece who had not either seen him at the Olympics, or heard those speak of him that came from thence: so that in what place soever he came the inhabitants pointed with their finger, saying 'This is that Herodotus who has written the Persian Wars in the Ionic dialect, this is he who has celebrated our victories.' Thus the harvest which he reaped from his histories was, the receiving in one assembly the general applause of all Greece, and the sounding his fame, not only in one place and by a single trumpet, but by as many mouths as there had been spectators in that assembly." As recently as within these last two centuries, indeed, both in the development of the career of Molière and in the writing of his biography by Voltaire, the whole question as to the propriety of a great author becoming the public interpreter of his own imaginings has been, not only discussed, but defined with precision and in the end authoritatively proclaimed. Voltaire, in truth, has significantly remarked, in his "Vie de Molière," when referring to Poquelin's determination to become Comedian as well as Dramatist, that among the Athenians, as is perfectly well known, authors not only frequently performed in their own dramatic productions, but that none of them ever felt dishonoured by speaking gracefully in the presence and hearing of their fellow-citizens. {*

- * "On sait que chez les Athéniens, les auteurs jouaient
- souvent dans leurs pièces, et qu'ils n'étoient point
- déshonorés pour parler avec grace devant leurs concitoyens."

In arriving at this decision, however, it will be remarked that one simple but important proviso or condition is indicated — not to be dishonoured they must speak with grace, that is, effectively. Whenever an author can do this, the fact is proclaimed by the public themselves. Does he lack the dramatic faculty, is he wanting in elocutionary skill, is his delivery dull, are his features inexpressive, is his manner tedious, are his readings marked only by their general tameness and mediocrity, be sure of this, he will speedily find himself talking only to empty benches, his enterprise will cease and determine, his name will no longer prove an attraction. Abortive adventures of this kind have in our own time been witnessed.

With Charles Dickens's Readings it was entirely different. Attracting to themselves at the outset, by the mere glamour of his name, enormous audiences, they not only maintained their original *prestige* during a long series of years — during an interval of fifteen years altogether — but the audiences brought together by them, instead of showing any signs of diminution, very appreciably, on the contrary, increased and multiplied. Crowds were turned away from the doors, who were unable to obtain admittance. The last reading of all collected together the largest audience that has ever been assembled, that ever can by possibility be assembled for purely reading purposes, within the walls of St. James's Hall, Piccadilly. Densely packed from floor to ceiling, these audiences were habitually wont to hang in breathless expectation upon every inflection of the author-reader's voice, upon every glance of his eye, — the words he was about to speak being so thoroughly well remembered by the majority before their utterance that, often, the rippling of a smile over a thousand faces simultaneously anticipated the laughter which an instant afterwards greeted the words themselves when they were articulated.

Altogether, from first to last, there must have been considerably more than Four Hundred — very nearly, indeed, Five Hundred — of these Readings, each one among them in itself a memorable demonstration. Through their delightful agency, at the very outset, largess was scattered broadcast, abundantly, and with a wide open hand, among a great variety of recipients, whose interests, turn by turn, were thus exclusively subserved, at

considerable labour to himself, during a period of several years, by this large-hearted entertainer. Eventually the time arrived when it became necessary to decide, whether an exhausting and unremunerative task should be altogether abandoned, or whether readings hitherto given solely for the benefit of others, should be thenceforth adopted as a perfectly legitimate source of income for himself professionally. The ball was at his feet: should it be rolled on, or fastidiously turned aside by reason of certain fantastic notions as to its derogating, in some inconceivable way, from the dignity of authorship? That was the alternative in regard to which Dickens had to decide, and upon which he at once, as became him, decided manfully. The ball was rolled on, and, as it rolled, grew in bulk like a snowball. It accumulated for him, as it advanced, and that too within a wonderfully brief interval, a very considerable fortune. It strengthened and extended his already widely-diffused and intensely personal popularity. By making him, thus, distinctly a Reader himself, it brought him face to face with vast multitudes of his own readers in the Old World and in the New, in all parts of the United Kingdom, and at last, upon the occasion of his second visit to America, an expedition adventured upon expressly to that end, in all parts of the United States.

And these Readings were throughout so conspicuously and so radiantly a success, that even in the recollection of them, now that they are things of the past, it may be said that they have already beneficially influenced, and are still perceptibly advancing, the wider and keener appreciation of the writings themselves. In its gyrations the ball then rolling at the Reader's foot imparted a momentum to one far nobler and more lasting — that of the Novelist's reputation, one that in its movement gives no sign of slackening — "labitur et labetur in omne volubilis seivum."



The long continuance of the remarkable success attendant upon the Readings all through, is only to be explained by the extraordinary care and earnestness the Reader lavished continuously upon his task when once it had been undertaken. In this he was only in another phase of his career,

consistently true to the one simple rule adopted by him as an artist throughout. What that rule was anyone might see at a glance on turning over the leaves of one of his books, it matters not which, in the original manuscript. There, the countless alterations, erasures, interpolations, transpositions, interlineations, shew plainly enough the minute and conscientious thought devoted to the perfecting, so far as might be in any way possible, of the work of composition. What reads so unaffectedly and so felicitously, it is then seen, is but the result of exquisite consideration. It is Sheridan's whimsical line which declares that, —

- "Easy writing's cursed hard reading."

And it is Pope who summarizes the method by which not "easy writing" but "ease in writing" is arrived at, where it is said of those who have acquired a mastery of the craft, —

"They polish all with so much life and ease, You think 'tis nature and a knack to please: But ease in writing flows from art, not chance; As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance."

Precisely the same elaboration of care, which all through his career was dedicated by Charles Dickens to the most delightful labour of his life, that of writing, was accorded by him to the lesser but still eminently intellectual toil of preparing his Readings for representation. It was not by any means that, having written a story years previously, he had, in his new capacity as a reciter, merely to select two or three chapters from it, and read them off with an air of animation. Virtually, the fragmentary portions thus taken from his larger works were re-written by him, with countless elisions and eliminations after having been selected. Reprinted in their new shape, each as "A Reading," they were then touched and retouched by their author, pen in hand, until, at the end of a long succession of revisions, the pages came to be cobwebbed over with a wonderfully intricate network of blots and lines in the way of correction or of obliteration. Several of the leaves in this way, what with the black letter-press on the white paper, being scored out or interwoven with a tracery in red ink and blue ink alternately, present to view a curiously parti-coloured or tessellated appearance. As a specimen page, however, will afford a more vivid illustration upon the instant of what is referred to, than could be conveyed by any mere verbal description, a facsimile is here introduced of a single page taken from the "Reading of Little Dombey."

Whatever thought was lavished thus upon the composition of the Readings, was lavished quite as unstintingly upon the manner of their delivery. Thoroughly natural, impulsive, and seemingly artless, though that manner always appeared at the moment, it is due to the Reader as an artist to assert that it was throughout the result of a scarcely credible amount of forethought and preparation. It is thus invariably indeed with every great proficient in the histrionic art, even with those who are quite erroneously supposed by the outer public to trust nearly everything to the momentary impulses of genius, and who are therefore presumed to disdain anything whatever in the way either of forethought or of actual preparation by rehearsal.

According to what is, even down to this present day, very generally conjectured, Edmund Kean, one of the greatest tragedians who ever trod the stage, is popularly imagined to have always played simply, as might be said, hap-hazard, trusting himself to the spur of the moment for throwing himself into a part passionately; — the fact being exactly the reverse in his regard, according to the earliest and most accurate of his biographers. Erratic, fitful though the genius of Edmund Kean unquestionably was — rendering him peerless as Othello, incomparable as Overreach — we are told in Mr. Procter's life of him, that "he studied long and anxiously," frequently until many hours after midnight.{*} No matter what his occupations previously might have been, or how profound his exhaustion through rehearsing in the forenoon, and performing in the evening, and sharing in convivialities afterwards, Barry Cornwall relates of him that he would often begin to study when his family had retired for the night, practising in solitude, after he had transformed his drawing-room into a stage in miniature.

- * Barry Cornwall's Life of Edmund Kean, Vol. II. p. 85

"Here," says his biographer, "with a dozen candles, some on the floor, some on the table, and some on the chimney-piece, and near the pier-glass, he would act scene after scene: considering the emphasis, the modulation of the verse, and the fluctuations of the character with the greatest care." And this, remember, has relation to one who was presumably about the most spontaneous and impulsive actor who ever flashed meteor-like across the boards of a theatre. Whoever has the soul of an artist grudges no labour given to his art, be he reader or actor, author or tragedian. Charles Dickens certainly spared none to his Readings in his conscientious endeavour to give his own imaginings visible and audible embodiment. The sincerity of his

devotion to his task, when once it had been taken in hand, was in its way something remarkable.

Acting of all kinds has been pronounced by Mrs. Butler — herself in her own good day a rarely accomplished reader and a fine tragic actress — ”a monstrous anomaly.”{*}

- * Fanny Kemble’s Journal, Vol. II. p. 130.

As illustrative of her meaning in which phrase, she then adds, “John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons were always in earnest in what they were about; Miss O’Neil used to cry bitterly in all her tragic parts; whilst Garrick could be making faces and playing tricks in the middle of his finest points, and Kean would talk gibberish while the people were in an uproar of applause at his.” Fanny Kemble further remarks: “In my own individual instance, I know that sometimes I could turn every word I am saying into burlesque,” — immediately observing here, in a reverential parenthesis “(never Shakspeare, by-the-bye) — and at others my heart aches and I cry real, bitter, warm tears as earnestly as if I was in earnest.” Reading which last sentence, one might very safely predicate that in the one instance, where she could turn her words into burlesque, she would be certain to act but indifferently, whereas in the other, with the hot, scalding tears running down her face, she could not by necessity do otherwise than act to admiration.

So thorough and consistent throughout his reading career was the sincerity of Dickens in his impersonations, that his words and looks, his thoughts and emotions were never mere make-believes, but always, so far as the most vigilant eye or the most sensitive ear could detect, had their full and original significance.

With all respect for Miss O’Neil’s emotion, and for that candidly confessed to by Mrs. Butler, as having been occasionally evidenced by herself, the true art, we should have said, subsists in the indication and the repression, far rather than in the actual exhibition or manifestation of the emotions that are to be represented. Better by far than the familiar *si vis me flere* axiom of Horace, who there tells us, “If you would have me weep, you must first weep yourself,” is the sagacious comment on it in the *Tatler*, where (No. 68) the essayist remarks, with subtle discrimination: “The true art seems to be when you would have the person you represent pitied, you must show him at once, in the highest grief, and struggling to bear it with decency and patience. In this case,” adds the writer, “we sigh for him, and give him every groan he suppresses.” As for the extravagant idea of any

artist, however great, identifying himself for the time being with the part he is enacting, who is there that can wonder at the snort of indignation with which Doctor Johnson, talking one day about acting, asked Mr. Kemble, "Are you, sir, one of those enthusiasts who believe yourself transformed into the very character you represent?" Kemble answering, according to Boswell, that he had never himself felt so strong a persuasion — "To be sure not, sir," says Johnson, "the thing is impossible." Adding, with one of his dryly comical extravagances: "And if Garrick really believed himself to be that monster Richard the Third, he deserved to be hanged every time he performed it." What Dickens himself really thought of these wilder affectations of intensity among impersonators, is, with delicious humour, plainly enough indicated through that preposterous reminiscence of Mr. Crummies, "We had a first-tragedy man in our company once, who, when he played Othello, used to black himself all over! But that's feeling a part, and going into it as if you meant it; it isn't usual — more's the pity." Thoroughly giving himself up to the representation of whatever character he was endeavouring at the moment to portray, or rather to impersonate, Charles Dickens so completely held his judgment the while in equipoise, as master of his twofold craft — that is, both as creator and as elocutionist, as author and as reader — that, as an invariable rule, he betrayed neither of those signs of insincerity, by the inadvertent revelation of which all sense of illusion is utterly and instantly dissipated.

Whatever scenes he described, those scenes his hearers appeared to be actually witnessing themselves. He realised everything in his own mind so intensely, that listening to him we realised what he spoke of by sympathy. Insomuch that one might, in his own words, say of him, as David Copperfield says of Mr. Peggotty, when the latter has been recounting little Emily's wanderings: "He saw everything he related. It passed before him, as he spoke, so vividly, that, in the intensity of his earnestness, he presented what he described to me with greater distinctness than I can express. I can hardly believe — writing now long afterwards — but that I was actually present in those scenes; they are impressed upon me with such an astonishing air of fidelity." While, on the one hand, he never repeated the words that had to be delivered phlegmatically, or as by rote; on the other hand, he never permitted voice, look, gesture, to pass the limits of discretion, even at moments the most impassioned; as, for example, where Nancy, in the famous murder-scene, shrieked forth her last gasping and

despairing appeals to her brutal paramour. The same thing may be remarked again in regard to all the more tenderly pathetic of his delineations. His tones then were often subdued almost to a whisper, every syllable, nevertheless, being so distinctly articulated as to be audible in the remotest part of a vast hall like that in Piccadilly.

Whatever may be insinuated in regard to those particular portions of the writings of our great novelist by cynical depreciators, who have not the heart to recognise — as did Lord Jeffrey, for instance, one of the keenest and shrewdest critics of his age — the exquisite pathos of a death-scene like that of little Nell or of little Paul Dombey, in the utterance by himself of those familiar passages nothing but the manliest emotion was visible and audible from first to last. Insomuch was this the case, that the least impressionable of his hearers might readily have echoed those noble words, written years ago, out of an overflowing heart, in regard to Charles Dickens, by his great rival and his intense admirer, W. M. Thackeray: “In those admirable touches of tender humour, who ever equalled this great genius? There are little words and phrases in his books which are like personal benefits to the reader. What a place to hold in the affections of men! What an awful responsibility hanging over a writer!” And so on, Thackeray saying all this! Thackeray speaking thus in ejaculatory sentences indicative of his gratitude and of his admiration! Passages that to men like William Thackeray and Francis Jeffrey were expressive only of inimitable tenderness, might be read dry-eyed by less keen appreciators, from the printed page, might even be ludicrously depreciated by them as mere mawkish sentimentality. But, even among these, there was hardly one who could hear those very passages read by Dickens himself without recognising at last, what had hitherto remained unperceived and unsuspected, the gracious and pathetic beauty animating every thought and every word in the original descriptions. Equally, it may be said, in the delineation of terror and of pathos, in the murder-scene from *Oliver Twist*, and in the death-scene of little Dombey, the novelist-reader attained success by the simple fact of his never once exaggerating.

It has been well remarked by an eminent authority upon the art of elocution, whose opinions have been already quoted in these pages, to wit, John Ireland, that “There is a point to which the passions must be raised to display that exhibition of them which scatters contagious tenderness through the whole theatre, but carried, though but the breadth of a hair,

beyond that point, the picture becomes an overcharged caricature, as likely to create laughter as diffuse distress." Never, perhaps, has that subtle boundary-line been hit with more admirable dexterity, just within the hair's breadth here indicated, than it was, for example, in Macready's impersonation of Virginius, where his scream in the camp-scene betrayed his instantaneous appreciation of the wrong meditated by Appius Claudius against the virginal purity of his daughter. As adroitly, in his way, as that great master of his craft, who was for so many years among his most cherished friends and intimates, Dickens kept within the indicated lines of demarcation, beyond which no impersonator, whether upon the stage or upon the platform, can ever pass for a single instant with impunity.

Speaking of Munden, in one of the most charming of his Essays, Charles Lamb has said, "I have seen him diffuse a glow of sentiment which has made the pulse of a crowded house beat like that of one man; when he has come in aid of the pulpit, doing good to the moral heart of a people." The words, applied thus emphatically to the humorous and often grotesque comedian, are exactly applicable to Dickens as a Reader. And, as Elia remarks of Munden at another moment, "he is not one, but legion; not so much a comedian as a company" — any one might say identically the same of Dickens, who bears in remembrance the wonderful variety of his impersonations.

Attending his Readings, character after character appeared before us, living and breathing, in the flesh, as we looked and listened. It mattered nothing, just simply nothing, that the great author was there all the while before his audience in his own identity. His evening costume was a matter of no consideration — the flower in his button-hole, the paper-knife in his hand, the book before him, that earnest, animated, mobile, delightful face, that we all knew by heart through his ubiquitous photographs — all were equally of no account whatever. We knew that he alone was there all the time before us, reading, or, to speak more accurately, re-creating for us, one and all — while his lips were articulating the familiar words his hand had written so many years previously — the most renowned of the imaginary creatures peopling his books. Watching him, hearkening to him, while he stood there unmistakably before his audience, on the raised platform, in the glare of the gas-burners shining down upon him from behind the pendant screen immediately above his head, his individuality, so to express it, altogether disappeared, and we saw before us instead, just as the case might

happen to be, Mr. Pickwick, or Mrs. Gamp, or Dr. Marigold, or little Paul Dombey, or Mr. Squeers, or Sam Weller, or Mr. Peggotty, or some other of those immortal personages. We were as conscious, as though we saw them, of the bald head, the spectacles, and the little gaiters of Mr. Pickwick — of the snuffy tones, the immense umbrella, and the voluminous bonnet and gown of Mrs. Gamp — of the belcher necktie, the mother-of-pearl buttons and the coloured waistcoat of the voluble Cheap Jack — of little Paul's sweet face and gentle accents — of the one eye and the well-known pair of Wellingtons, adorning the head and legs of Mr. Wackford Squeers — of Sam's imperturbable nonchalance — and of Mr. Peggotty's hearty, briny, sou'-wester of a voice and general demeanour!

Even the lesser characters — those which are introduced into the original works quite incidentally, occupying there a wholly subordinate position, filling up a space in the crowded tableaux, always in the background — were then at last brought to the fore in the course of these Readings, and suddenly and for the first time assumed to themselves a distinct importance and individuality. Take, for instance, the nameless lodging-housekeeper's slavey, who assists at Bob Sawyer's party, and who is described in the original work as "a dirty, slipshod girl, in black cotton stockings, who might have passed for the neglected daughter of a superannuated dustman in very reduced circumstances." No one had ever realised the crass stupidity of that remarkable young person — dense and impenetrable as a London fog — until her first introduction in these Readings, with "Please, Mister Sawyer, Missis Raddle wants to speak to *you!*" — the dull, dead-level of her voice ending in the last monosyllable with a series of inflections almost amounting to a chromatic passage. Mr. Justice Stareleigh, again! — nobody had ever conceived the world of humorous suggestiveness underlying all the words put into his mouth until the author's utterance of them came to the readers of Pickwick with the surprise of a revelation. Jack Hopkins in like manner — nobody, one might say, had ever dreamt of as he was in Dickens's inimitably droll impersonation of him, until the lights and shades of the finished picture were first of all brought out by the Reading. Jack Hopkins! — with the short, sharp, quick articulation, rather stiff in the neck, with a dryly comic look just under the eyelids, with a scarcely expressible relish of his own for every detail of that wonderful story of his about the "neckluss," an absolute and implicit reliance upon Mr. Pickwick's gullibility, and an inborn and ineradicable passion for chorusing.

As with the characters, so with the descriptions. One was life itself, the other was not simply word-painting, but realisation. There was the Great Storm at Yarmouth, for example, at the close of *David Copperfield*. Listening to that Reading, the very portents of the coming tempest came before us! — the flying clouds in wild and murky confusion, the moon apparently plunging headlong among them, “as if, in a dread disturbance of the laws of nature, she had lost her way and were frightened,” the wind rising “with an extraordinary great sound,” the sweeping gusts of rain coming before it “like showers of steel,” and at last, down upon the shore and by the surf among the turmoil of the blinding wind, the flying stones and sand, “the tremendous sea itself,” that came rolling in with an awful noise absolutely confounding to the beholder! In all fiction there is no grander description than that of one of the sublimest spectacles in nature. The merest fragments of it conjured up the entire scene — aided as those fragments were by the look, the tones, the whole manner of the Reader. The listener was there with him in imagination upon the beach, beside David. He was there, lashed and saturated with the salt spray, the briny taste of it on his lips, the roar and tumult in his ears — the height to which the breakers rose, and, looking over one another bore one another down and rolled in, in interminable hosts, becoming at last, as it is written in that wonderful chapter (55) of *David Copperfield*, “most appalling!” There, in truth, the success achieved was more than an elocutionary triumph — it was the realisation to his hearers, by one who had the soul of a poet, and the gifts of an orator, and the genius of a great and vividly imaginative author, of a convulsion of nature when nature bears an aspect the grandest and the most astounding. However much a masterly description, like that of the Great Storm at Yarmouth, may be admired henceforth by those who never had the opportunity of attending these Readings, one might surely say to them, as Æschines said to the Rhodians, when they were applauding the speech of his victorious rival: “How much greater would have been your admiration if only you could have heard him deliver it!”

THE READINGS IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

How it happened that Charles Dickens came to give any readings at all from his own writings has already, in the preceding pages, been explained. What is here intended to be done is to put on record, as simply and as accurately as possible, the facts relating to the labours gone through by the Novelist in his professional character as a Public Reader. It will be then seen, immediately those facts have come to be examined in their chronological order, that they were sufficiently remarkable in many respects, as an episode in the life of a great author, to justify their being chronicled in some way or other, if only as constituting in their aggregate a wholly unexampled incident in the history of literature.

No writer, it may be confidently asserted, has ever enjoyed a wider popularity during his own life-time than Charles Dickens; or rather it might be said more accurately, no writer has ever enjoyed *so* wide a popularity among his own immediate contemporaries. And it was a popularity in many ways exceptional.

It knew no fluctuation. It lasted without fading or faltering during thirty-four years altogether, that is to say, throughout the whole of Dickens's career as a novelist. It began with his very first book, when, as Thackeray put it, "the young man came and took his place calmly at the head of the whole tribe, as the master of all the English humorists of his generation." It showed no sign whatever of abatement, when, in the middle of writing his last book, the pen fell from his hand on that bright summer's day, and through his death a pang of grief was brought home to millions of English-speaking people in both hemispheres. For his popularity had, among other distinctive characteristics, certainly this, — it was so peculiarly personal a popularity, his name being endeared to the vast majority who read his books with nothing less than affectionate admiration.

Besides all this, it was his privilege throughout the whole of his literary career to address not one class, or two or three classes, but all classes of the reading public indiscriminately — the most highly educated and the least educated, young and old, rich and poor. His writings obtained the widest circulation, of course, among those who were the most numerous, such as among the middle classes and the better portion of the artisan population,

but they found at the same time the keenest and cordialest appreciation among those who were necessarily the best qualified to pronounce an opinion upon their merits, among critics as gifted as Jeffrey and Sydney Smith, and among rivals as illustrious as Lytton and Thackeray. It seems appropriate, therefore, that we should be enabled to add now, in regard to the possession of this exceptional reputation, and of a popularity in itself so instant, sustained, personal, and comprehensive, that, thanks entirely to these Readings, he was brought into more intimate relations individually with a considerable portion at least of the vast circle of his own readers, than have ever been established between any other author who could be named and *his* readers, since literature became a profession.

Strictly speaking, the very first Reading given by Charles Dickens anywhere, even privately, was that which took place in the midst of a little home-group, assembled one evening in 1843, for the purpose of hearing the "Christmas Carol," prior to its publication, read by him in the Lincoln's-Inn Square Chambers of the intimate friend to whom, eighteen years afterwards, was inscribed, as "of right," the Library Edition of all the Novelist's works collectively. Thus unwittingly, and as it seems to us not unbecomingly, was rehearsed on the hearth of Dickens's future biographer, the first of the long series of Readings, afterwards to be given very publicly indeed, and to vast multitudes of people on both sides of the Atlantic.

As nearly as possible ten years after this, the public Readings commenced, and during the five next years were continued, though they were so but very intermittingly. Throughout that interval they were invariably given for the benefit of others, the proceeds of each Reading being applied to some generous purpose, the nature of which was previously announced. It was in the Town Hall at Birmingham, that immediately before the Christmas of 1853, the first of all these public Readings took place in the presence of an audience numbering fully two thousand. About a year before that, the Novelist had pledged himself to give this reading, or rather a series of three readings, for the purpose of increasing the funds of a new Literary and Scientific Institution then projected in Birmingham. On Thursday, the 6th of January, 1853, a silver-gilt salver and a diamond ring, accompanied by an address, expressive of the admiration of the subscribers to the testimonial, had been publicly presented in that town to the popular author, at the rooms of the Society of Arts in Temple Row. The kind of feeling inspiring this little incident may be

recognised through the inscription on the salver, which intimated that it, “together with a diamond ring, was presented to Charles Dickens, Esq., by a number of his admirers in Birmingham, on the occasion of the literary and artistic banquet in that town, on the 6th of January, 1853, as a sincere testimony of their appreciation of his varied literary acquirements, and of the genial philosophy and high moral teaching which characterise his writings.” It was upon the morrow of the banquet referred to in this inscription, a banquet which took place at Dee’s Hotel immediately after the presentation of the testimonial to the Novelist, that the latter generously proposed to give later on some public Readings from his own books, in furtherance of the newly meditated Birmingham and Midland Institute.

The proposition, in fact, was thrown out, gracefully and almost apologetically, in a letter, addressed by him to Mr. Arthur Ryland on the following day, the 7th of January. In this singularly interesting communication, which was read by its recipient on the ensuing Monday, at a meeting convened in the theatre of the Philosophical Institution, not only did Charles Dickens offer to read his “Christmas Carol” some time during the course of the next Christmas, in the Town Hall at Birmingham, but referring to the complete novelty of his proposal, he thus plainly intimated that the occasion would constitute his very first appearance upon any public platform as a Reader, while explaining, at the same time, the precise nature of the suggested entertainment. “It would,” he said, “take about two hours, with a pause of ten minutes half-way through. There would be some novelty in the thing, as I have never done it in public, though I have in private, and (if I may say so) with a great effect on the hearers.” He further remarked, “I was so inexpressibly gratified last night by the warmth and enthusiasm of my Birmingham friends, that I feel half ashamed this morning of so poor an offer: but as I decided on making it to you before I came down yesterday, I propose it nevertheless.” As a matter of course the proposition was gratefully accepted, the Novelist formally undertaking to give the proffered Readings in the ensuing Christmas. This promise, before the year was out, Dickens returned from abroad expressly to fulfil — hastening homeward to that end, after a brief autumnal excursion in Italy and Switzerland with two of his friends, the late Augustus Egg, R. A., and Wilkie Collins, the novelist. On the arrival of the three in Paris, they were there joined by Charles Dickens’s eldest son, who, having passed through his course at Eton, had just then been completing his scholastic education at Leipsic. The

party thus increased to a *partie carrée*, hastened homewards more hurriedly than would otherwise have been necessary, so as to enable the author punctually to fulfil his long-standing engagement.

It was on Tuesday, the 27th of December, 1853, therefore, that the very first of these famous Readings came off in the Town Hall at Birmingham. The weather was wretched, but the hall was crowded, and the audience enthusiastic. The Reading, which was the “Christmas Carol,” extended over more than three hours altogether, showing how very little of the original story the then unpractised hand of the Reader had as yet eliminated. Notwithstanding the length of the entertainment, the unflagging interest, more even than the hearty and reiterated applause of those who were assembled, showed the lively sense the author’s first audience had of his newly-revealed powers as a narrator and impersonator. On the next day but one, Thursday, the 29th of December, he read there, to an equally large concourse, the “Cricket on the Hearth.” Upon the following evening, Friday, the 30th of December, he repeated the “Carol” to another densely packed throng of listeners, mainly composed, this time, according to his own express stipulation, of workpeople. So delighted were these unsophisticated hearers with their entertainer — himself so long familiarly known to them, but then for the first time seen and heard — that, at the end of the Reading, they greeted him with repeated rounds of cheering.

Those three Readings at Birmingham added considerably to the funds of the Institute, enhancing them at least to the extent of £400 sterling. In recognition of the good service thus effectively and delightfully rendered to a local institution, to the presidency of which Charles Dickens himself was unanimously elected, an exquisitely designed silver flower-basket was afterwards presented to the novelist’s wife. This graceful souvenir had engraved upon it the following inscription: “Presented to Mrs. Charles Dickens by the Committee of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, as a slight acknowledgment of the debt of gratitude due to her husband, for his generous liberality in reading the ‘Christmas Carol,’ and the ‘Cricket on the Hearth,’ to nearly six thousand persons, in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on the nights-of December 27, 29, and 30, 1853, in aid of the funds for the establishment of the Institute.” The incident of these three highly successful Readings entailed upon the Reader, as events proved, an enormous amount of toil, none of which, however, did he ever grudge, in affording the like

good service to others, at uncertain intervals, in all parts, sometimes the remotest parts, of the United Kingdom.

It would be beside our present purpose to catalogue, one after another, the various Readings given in this-way by the Novelist, before he was driven to the necessity at last of either giving up reading altogether, or coming to the determination to adopt it, as he then himself expressed it, as one of his recognised occupations; that is, by becoming a Reader professionally.. It is with his career in his professional capacity as a Reader that we have here to do. Until he had formally and avowedly assumed that position, his labours in this way were, as a matter of course, in no respect whatever systematised. They were uncertain, and in one sense, as the sequel shewed, purely tentative or preliminary. They yielded a world of delight, however, and did a world of good at the same time; while they were, unconsciously to himself, preparing the way effectually — that is, by ripening his powers and perfecting his skill through practice — for the opening up to himself, quite legitimately, of a new phase in his career as a man of letters. Previously, again and again, with the pen in his hand, he had proved himself to be the master-humorist of his time. He was now vividly to attest that fact by word of mouth, by the glance of his eye, by the application to the reading of his own books, of his exceptional mimetic and histrionic gifts as an elocutionist. Added to all this, by merely observing how readily he could pour through the proceeds of these purely benevolent Readings, princely largess into the coffers of charities or of institutions in which he happened to be interested, he was to realise, what must otherwise have remained for him wholly unsuspected, that he had, so to speak, but to stretch forth his hand to grasp a fortune.

During the lapse of five years all this was at first very gradually, but at last quite irresistibly, brought home to his conviction. A few of the Readings thus given by him, out of motives of kindness or generosity, may here, in passing, be particularised.

A considerable time after the three Readings just mentioned, and which were distinctly inaugurative of the whole of our author's reading career, there was one, which came off in Peterborough, that has not only been erroneously described as antecedent to those three Readings at Birmingham, but has been depicted, at the same time, with details in the account of it of the most preposterous character. The Reader, for example, has been portrayed, — in this purely apocryphal description of what

throughout it is always referred to as though it were the first Reading of all, which it certainly was not, — as in a highly nervous state from the commencement of it to its conclusion! This being said of one who, when asked if he ever felt nervous while speaking in public, is known to have replied, “Not in the least “ — adding, that “when first he took the chair he felt as much confidence as though he had already done the like a hundred times!” As corroborative of which remark, the present writer recalls to recollection very clearly the fact of Dickens saying to him one day, — saying it with a most whimsical air by-the-bye, but very earnestly, — “Once, and but once only in my life, I was — frightened!” The occasion he referred to was simply this, as he immediately went on to explain, that somewhere about the middle of the serial publication of David Copperfield, happening to be out of writing-paper, he sallied forth one morning to get a fresh supply at the stationer’s. He was living then in his favourite haunt, at Fort House, in Broadstairs. As he was about to enter the stationer’s shop, with the intention of buying the needful writing-paper, for the purpose of returning home with it, and at once setting to work upon his next number, not one word of which was yet written, he stood aside for a moment at the threshold to allow a lady to pass in before him. He then went on to relate — with a vivid sense still upon him of mingled enjoyment and dismay in the mere recollection — how the next instant he had overheard this strange lady asking the person behind the counter for the new green number. When it was handed to her, “Oh, this,” said she, “I have read. I want the next one.” The next one she was thereupon told would be out by the end of the month. “Listening to this, unrecognised,” he added, in conclusion, “knowing the purpose for which I was there, and remembering that not one word of the number she was asking for was yet written, for the first and only time in my life, I felt — frightened!” So much for the circumstantial account put forth of this Reading at Peterborough, and of the purely imaginary nervousness displayed by the Reader, who, on the contrary, there, as elsewhere, was throughout perfectly self-possessed.

On Saturday, the 22nd December, 1855, in the Mechanics’ Hall at Sheffield, another of these Readings was given, it being the “Carol,” as usual, and the proceeds being in aid of the funds of that institution. The Mayor of Sheffield, who presided upon the occasion, at the close of the proceedings, presented to the author, as a suitable testimonial from a number of his admirers in that locality, a complete set of table cutlery.

An occasional Reading, moreover, was given at Chatham, to assist in defraying the expenses of the Chatham, Rochester, Strood, and Brompton Mechanics' Institution, of which the master of Gadshill was for thirteen years the President. His titular or official connection with this institute, in effect, was that of Perpetual President. His interest in it in that character ceased only with his life. Throughout the whole of the thirteen years during which he presided over its fortunes, he was in every imaginable way its most effective and energetic supporter. Six Readings in all were given by him at the Chatham Mechanics' Institution, in aid of its funds. The first, which was the "Christmas Carol," took place on the 27th December, 1857, the new Lecture Hall, which was appropriately decorated with evergreens and brilliantly illuminated, being crowded with auditors, conspicuous among whom were the officers of the neighbouring garrison and dockyard. The second, which consisted of "Little Dombey" and "The Trial Scene from Pickwick," came off on the 29th December, 1858. Long before any arrangement had been definitively made in regard to this second Reading, the local newspaper, in an apparently authoritative paragraph, announced, "on the best authority," that another Reading-was immediately to be given, by Mr. Dickens, in behalf of the Mechanics' Institution. It is characteristic of him that he, thereupon, wrote to the Chatham newspaper, "I know nothing of your 'best authority,' except that he is (as he always is) preposterously and monstrously wrong." Eventually this Reading was arranged for, nevertheless, and came off at the date already mentioned. A third Reading at Chatham, comprising within it "The Poor Traveller" (the opening of which had a peculiar local interest),"Boots" at the "Holly Tree Inn," and "Mrs. Gamp," took place in 1860, on the 18th December. A fourth was given there on the 16th January, 1862, when the Novelist read his six selected chapters from "David Copperfield." A fifth, consisting of "Nicholas Nickleby at Dotheboys Hall," and "Mr. Bob Sawyer's-Party," took place in 1863, on the 15th December. Finally, there came off the sixth of these Chatham readings, on the 19th December, 1865, when the "Carol" was repeated, with the addition of the great case of "Bardell versus Pickwick." Upwards of £400 were thus, as the fruit of these exhilarating entertainments, poured into the coffers of the Chatham Institute. It can hardly be wondered at that, in the annual reports issued by the committee, emphatic expression should have been more than once given to the deep sense of gratitude entertained by them for the services rendered to the

institution by its illustrious president—A fragmentary portion of that issued by the committee in the January of 1864 — referring, as it does, to Charles Dickens, in association with his home and his favourite haunts down at Gadshill — we are here tempted to give, as indicative of the feelings of pride and admiration with which the great author was regarded by his own immediate neighbours. After referring to the large sums realised for the institution through the Readings thus generously given by its president, the committee went on to say in this report, at the beginning of 1864, “Simply to have the name of one whose writings have become household words at every home and hearth where the English language is spoken, associated with their efforts for the public entertainment and improvement, must be considered a great honour and advantage. But, when to this is added the large pecuniary assistance derived from such a connection, your committee find that they — and, of course, the members whom they represent — owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Dickens, which words can but poorly express. They trust that the home which he now occupies in the midst of the beautiful woodlands of Kent, and so near to the scene of his boyish memories and associations, may long be to him one of happiness and prosperity. If Shakspeare, our greatest national poet, had before made Gadshill a classic spot, surely it is now doubly consecrated by genius since Dickens, the greatest and most genial of modern humorists, as well as one of the most powerful and pathetic delineators of human character, has fixed his residence there. To those who have so often and so lately been moved to laughter and tears by the humour and pathos of the inimitable writer and reader, and who have profited by his gratuitous services to the institution, your committee feel that they need make no apology for dwelling at some length upon this most agreeable part of their report.” Thus profound were the feelings of respect, affection, and admiration with which the master-humorist was regarded by those who lived, and who were proud of living, in his own immediate neighbourhood.

On the evening of Tuesday, the 30th June, 1857, Charles Dickens read for the first time in London, at the then St. Martin’s Hall, now the Queen’s Theatre, in Long Acre. The occasion was one, in many respects, of peculiar interest. As recently as on the 8th of that month, Douglas Jerrold had breathed his last, quite unexpectedly. Dying in the fulness of his powers, and at little more than fifty years of age, he had passed away, it was felt, prematurely. As a tribute of affection to his memory, and of sympathy

towards his widow and orphan children, those among his brother authors who had been more intimately associated with him in his literary career, organised, in the interests of his bereaved family, a series of entertainments. And in the ordering of the programme it was so arranged that this earliest metropolitan reading of one of his smaller works by Charles Dickens should be the second of these entertainments. Densely crowded in every part, St. Martin's Hall upon this occasion was the scene of as remarkable a reception and of as brilliant a success as was in any way possible. It was a wonderful success financially. As an elocutionary — or, rather, as a dramatic — display, it was looked forward to with the liveliest curiosity. The author's welcome when he appeared upon the platform was of itself a striking attestation of his popularity.

- Upwards of fourteen years have elapsed since the occasion referred to,
- yet we have still as vividly in our remembrance, as though it were but
- an incident of yesterday, the enthusiasm of the reception then accorded
- to the great novelist by an audience composed, for the most part,
- of representative Londoners. The applause with which he was greeted,
- immediately upon his entrance, was so earnestly prolonged and sustained,
- that it threatened to postpone the Reading indefinitely. Silence having
- at last been restored, however, the Reader's voice became audible in the
- utterance of these few and simple words, by way of preliminary: —
-
- "Ladies and gentlemen, I have the honour to read
- "to you 'A Christmas Carol,' in four staves. Stave
- "one, 'Marley's Ghost.'"

The effect, by the way, becoming upon the instant rather incongruous, as the writer of this very well remembers, when, through a sudden and jarring recollection of what the occasion was that had brought us all together, the

Reader began, with a serio-comic inflection, "Marley was dead: to begin with. There's no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed." And so on through those familiar introductory sentences, in which Jacob Marley's demise is insisted upon with such ludicrous particularity. The momentary sense of incongruity here referred to was lost, however, directly afterwards, as everyone's attention became absorbed in the author's own relation to us of his world-famous ghost-story of Christmas.

Whereas the First Reading of the tale down in the provinces had occupied three hours in its delivery, the First Reading of it in the metropolis had been; diminished by half an hour. Beginning at 8 p.m., and ending at very nearly 10.30 p. m., with merely five minutes' interruption about midway, the entertainment so enthralled and delighted the audience throughout, that its close, after two hours and a half of the keenest attention, was the signal for a long outburst of cheers, mingled with the waving of hats and handkerchiefs. The description of the scene there witnessed is in noway exaggerated. It is the record of our own remembrance.

And the enthusiasm thus awakened among Charles Dickens's first London audience can hardly be wondered at, when we recall to mind Thackeray's expression of opinion in regard to that very same story of the Christmas Carol immediately after its publication, when he wrote in *Fraser*, July, 1844, under his pseudonym of M. A. Titmarsh: "It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man and woman who-reads it a personal kindness;" adding, "The last two people I heard speak of it were women; neither knew the other, or the author, and both said, by way of criticism, 'God bless him!'" Precisely in the same way, it may here be said, in regard to that first night of his own public reading of it in St. Martin's Hall, that there was a genial grasp of the hand in the look of every kind face then turned towards the platform, and a "God bless him" in every one of the ringing cheers that accompanied his departure.

A Reading of the "Carol" was given by its author in the following December down at Coventry, in aid of the funds of the local institute. And about a twelvemonth afterwards, on the 4th of December, 1858, in grateful acknowledgment of what was regarded in those cases always as a double benefaction (meaning the Reading itself and its golden proceeds), the novelist was entertained at a public banquet, at the Castle Hotel, Coventry, when a gold watch was presented to him as a testimonial of admiration from the leading inhabitants.

Finally, as the last of all these non-professional readings by our author, there was given on Friday the 26th of March, 1858, a reading of the "Christmas Carol," in the Music Hall at Edinburgh. His audience consisted of the members of, or subscribers to, the Philosophical Institution. At the close of the evening the Lord Provost, who had been presiding, presented to the Reader a massive and ornate silver wassail bowl. Seventeen years prior to that, Charles Dickens had been publicly entertained in Edinburgh, — Professor Wilson having been the chairman of the banquet given then in his honour. He had been at that time enrolled a burgess and guildbrother of the ancient corporation of the metropolis of Scotland. He had, among other incidents of a striking character marking his reception there at the same period, seen, on his chance entrance into the theatre, the whole audience rise spontaneously in recognition of him, the musicians in the orchestra, with a courtly felicity, striking up the cavalier air of "Charley is my Darling." If only out of a gracious remembrance of all this, it seemed not inappropriate that the very last of the complimentary readings should have been given by the novelist at Edinburgh, and that the Lord Provost of Edinburgh should, as if by way of stirrup-cup, have handed to the Writer and Reader of the "Carol," that souvenir from its citizens, in honour of the author himself and of his favourite theme, Christmas.

It was in connection with the organisation of the series of entertainments, arranged during the summer of 1857, in memory of Jerrold, and in the interests of Jerrold's family, that the attention of Charles Dickens was first of all awakened to a recognition of the possibility that he might, with good reason, do something better than carry out his original intention, that, namely, of dropping these Readings altogether, as simply exhausting and unremunerative. He had long since come to realise that it could in no conceivable way whatever derogate from the dignity of his position as an author, to appear thus in various parts of the United Kingdom, before large masses of his fellow-countrymen, in the capacity of a Public Reader. His so appearing was a gratification to himself as an artist, and was clearly enough also a gratification to his hearers, as appreciators of his twofold art, both as Author and as Reader. He perceived clearly enough, therefore, that his labours in those associated capacities were perfectly compatible; that, in other words, he might, if he so pleased, quite reasonably accept the duties devolving upon him as a Reader, as among his legitimate avocations.

Conspicuous among those who had shared in the getting up of the Jerrold entertainments — including among them, as we have seen, the first of his own Readings in London — the novelist had especially observed the remarkable skill or aptitude, as a general organiser, manifested from first to last by the Honorary Secretary, into whose hands, in point of fact, had fallen the responsibility of the entire management. This Honorary Secretary was no other than Albert Smith's brother Arthur — one who was not only the right-hand, as it were, of the Ascender of Mont Blanc, and of the Traveller in China, but who (behind the scenes, and unknown to the public) was the veritable wire-puller, prompter, Figaro, factotum of that *farceur*. among story-tellers, and of that laughter-moving patterer among public entertainers. Arthur Smith, full of resource, of contrivance, and of readiness, possessed in fact all the qualifications essential to a rapid organiser. He was, of all men who could possibly have been hit upon, precisely the very one to undertake in regard to an elaborate enterprise, like that of a long series of Readings in the metropolis, and of a comprehensive tour of Readings in the provinces, the responsible duties of its commercial management. Brought together accidentally at the time of the Jerrold testimonial, the Honorary Secretary of the fund and the Author-reader of the "Carol" came, as it seems now, quite naturally, to be afterwards intimately associated with one another, more in connection with the scheme of professional Readings, which reasonably grew up at last out of the previous five years' Readings, of a purely complimentary character.

Altogether, as has been said on an earlier page, Charles Dickens cannot have given less than some Five Hundred Readings. As a professional Reader alone he gave considerably over Four Hundred. Beginning in the spring of 1858, and ending in the spring of 1870, his career in that capacity extended at intervals over a lapse of twelve years: those twelve years embracing within them several distinct tours in England, Ireland, and Scotland, and in the United States; and many either entirely distinct or carefully interwoven series in London at St. Martin's Hall, at the Hanover Square Rooms, and at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly.

The first series in the metropolis, and the first tour in the United Kingdom, were made in 1858, under Mr. Arthur Smith's management. The second provincial tour, partly in 1861, partly in 1862, and two sets of readings in London, one at the St. James's Hall in 1862, the other at the Hanover Square Rooms in 1863, took place under Mr. Thomas Headland's

management. As many as four distinct, and all of them important tours, notably one on the other side of the Atlantic, were carried out between 1866 and 1869, both years inclusive, under Mr. George Dolby's management. As showing at once the proportion of the enormous aggregate of 423 Readings, with which these three managers were concerned, it may be added here that while the first-mentioned had to do with 111, and the second with 70, the third and last-mentioned had to do with as many as 242 altogether.

It was on the evening of Thursday, the 29th of April, 1858, that Charles Dickens first made his appearance upon a platform in a strictly professional character as a public Reader. Although, hitherto, he had never once read for himself, he did so then avowedly — not merely by printed announcement beforehand, but on addressing himself by word of mouth to the immense audience assembled there in St. Martin's Hall. The Reading selected for the occasion was "The Cricket on the Hearth," but before its commencement, the author spoke as follows, doing so with well remembered clearness of articulation, as though he were particularly desirous that every word should be thoroughly weighed by his hearers, and taken to heart, by reason of their distinctly explaining the relations in which he and they would, thenceforth stand towards each other: —

- "Ladies and Gentlemen, — It may, perhaps, be
- "known to you that, for a few years past I have been
- "accustomed occasionally to read some of my shorter
- "books to various audiences, in aid of a variety of
- "good objects, and at some charge to myself both in
- "time and money. It having at length become im-
- "possible in any reason to comply with these always
- "accumulating demands, I have had definitely to
- "choose between now and then reading on my own
- "account as one of my recognised occupations, or not
- "reading at all. I have had little or no difficulty in
- "deciding on the former course.
-
- "The reasons that have led me to it — besides the
- "consideration that it necessitates no departure what-
- "ever from the chosen pursuits of my life — are three-
- "fold. Firstly, I have satisfied myself that it can
- "involve no possible compromise of the credit and

- "independence of literature. Secondly, I have long
- "held the opinion, and have long acted on the opinion,
- "that in these times whatever brings a public man
- "and his public face to face, on terms of mutual con-
- "fidence and respect, is a good thing. Thirdly, I
- "have had a pretty large experience of the interest
- "my hearers are so generous as to take in these occa-
- "sions, and of the delight they give to me, as a tried
- "means of strengthening those relations, I may
- "almost say of personal friendship, which it is my
- "great privilege and pride, as it is my great respon-
- "sibility, to hold with a multitude of persons who will
- "never hear my voice, or see my face.
-
- "Thus it is that I come, quite naturally, to be here
- "among you at this time. And thus it is that I pro-
- "ceed to read this little book, quite as composedly as
- "I might proceed to write it, or to publish it in any
- "other way."

Remembering perfectly well, as we do, the precision with which he uttered every syllable of this little address, and the unmistakable cordiality with which its close was greeted, we can assert with confidence that Reader and Audience from the very first instant stood towards each other on terms of mutually respectful consideration. Remembering perfectly well, as we do, moreover, the emotion with which his last words were articulated and listened to on the occasion of his very last or Farewell Reading in the great hall near Piccadilly — and more than two thousand others must still perfectly well remember that likewise — we may no less confidently assert that those feelings had known no abatement, but on the contrary, had, during the lapse of many delightful years, come to be not only confirmed but intensified.

Sixteen Readings were comprised in that first series in London, at St. Martin's Hall. Inaugurated, as we have seen, on the 29th of April, 1858, the series was completed on the 22nd of the ensuing July. It may here be interesting to mention that, midway in the course of these Sixteen Readings, he gave for the first time in London, on Thursday the 10th of June, "The Story of Little Dombey," and on the following Thursday, the 17th of June,

also for the first time in London, "The Poor Traveller," "Boots at the Holly Tree Inn," and "Mrs. Gamp." Whatever the subject of the Reading, whatever the state of the weather, the hall was crowded in every part, from the stalls to the galleries. Eleven days after the London season closed, the Reader and his business manager began their enormous round of the provinces.

As many as Eighty-Seven Readings were given in the course of this one provincial excursion. The first took place on Monday, the 2nd of August, at Clifton; the last on Saturday, the 13th of November, at Brighton. The places visited in Ireland included Dublin and Belfast, Cork and Limerick. Those traversed in Scotland comprised Edinburgh and Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth, and Glasgow. As for England, besides the towns already named, others of the first importance were taken in quick succession, an extraordinary amount of rapid railway travelling being involved in the punctual carrying out of the prescribed programme. However different in their general character the localities might be, the Readings somehow appeared to have some especial attraction for each, whether they were given in great manufacturing towns, like Manchester or Birmingham; in fashionable watering-places, like Leamington or Scarborough; in busy outports, like Liverpool or Southampton; in ancient cathedral towns, like York or Durham, or in seaports as removed from each other, as Plymouth and Portsmouth. Localities as widely separated as Exeter from Harrogate, as Oxford from Halifax, or as Worcester from Sunderland, were visited, turn by turn, at the particular time appointed. In a comprehensive round, embracing within it Wakefield and Shrewsbury, Nottingham and Leicester, Derby and Ruddersfield, the principal great towns were taken one after another. At Hull and Leeds, no less than at Chester and Bradford, as large and enthusiastic audiences were gathered together as, in their appointed times also were attracted to the Readings, in places as entirely dissimilar as Newcastle and Darlington, or as Sheffield and Wolverhampton.

The enterprise was, in its way, wholly unexampled. It extended over a period of more than three months altogether. It brought the popular author for the first time face to face with a multitude of his readers in various parts of the three kingdoms. And at every place, without exception throughout the tour, the adventure was more than justified, as a source of artistic gratification alike to himself and to his hearers, no less than as a purely commercial undertaking, the project throughout proving successful far

beyond the most sanguine anticipations. Though the strain upon his energies, there can be no doubt of it, was very considerable, the Reader had brought vividly before him in recompense, on Eighty-Seven distinct occasions, the most startling proofs of his popularity — the financial results, besides this, when all was over, yielding substantial evidence of his having, indeed, won “golden opinions” from all sorts of people.

His provincial tour, it has been seen, closed at Brighton on the 13th of November. Immediately after this, it was announced that three Christmas Readings would be given in London at St. Martin’s Hall — the first and second on the Christmas Eve and the Boxing Day of 1858, those being respectively Friday and Monday, and the third on Twelfth Night, Thursday, the 6th of January, 1859. Upon each of these occasions the “Christmas Carol” and the “Trial from Pickwick,” were given to audiences that were literally overflowing, crowds of applicants each evening failing to obtain admittance. In consequence of this, three other Readings were announced for Thursday, the 13th, for Thursday, the 20th, and for Friday, the 28th of January — the “Carol” and “Trial” being fixed for the last time on the 13th; the Reading on the second of these three supplementary nights being “Little Dombey” and the “Trial from Pickwick;” the last of the three including within it, besides the “Trial,” “Mrs. Gamp” and the “Poor Traveller.” As affording conclusive proof of the sustained success of the Readings as a popular entertainment, it may here be added that advertisements appeared on the morrow of the one last mentioned, to the effect that “it has been found unavoidable to appoint two more Readings of the ‘Christmas Carol’ and the ‘Trial from Pickwick’“ — those two, by the way, being, from first to last, the most attractive of all the Readings. On Thursday, the 3rd, and on Tuesday, the 8th of February, the two last of these supplementary Readings in London, the aggregate of which had thus been extended from Three to Eight, were duly delivered. And in this way were completed the 111 Readings already referred to as having been given under Mr. Arthur Smith’s management.

Upwards of two years and a half then elapsed without any more of the Readings being undertaken, either in the provinces or in the metropolis. During 1860, in fact, *Great Expectations* was appearing from week to week in *All the Year Round*. And it was a judicious rule with our author — broken only at the last, and fatally, at the very end of his twofold career as Writer and as Reader — never to give a series of Readings while one of his serial

stories was being produced. At length, however, in the late summer, or early autumn of 1861, the novelist was sufficiently free from literary preoccupations for another tour, and another series of Readings in London to be projected. The arrangements for each were sketched out by Mr. Arthur Smith, as the one still entrusted with the financial management of the undertaking. His health, however, was so broken by that time, that it soon became apparent that he could not reasonably hope to superintend in person the carrying out of the new enterprise. It was decided, therefore, provisionally, that Mr. Headland, who, upon the former occasion, had acted with him, should now, under his direction and as his representative, undertake the actual management. Before the projected tour of 1861 actually commenced, however, Mr. Arthur Smith had died, in September. The simply provisional arrangement lapsed in consequence, and upon Mr. Headland himself devolved the responsibility of carrying out the plans sketched out by his predecessor.

Although about the same time that had been allotted to the First Tour, namely a whole quarter, had been set apart for the Second, the latter included within it but very little more than half the number of Readings given in the earlier and more rapid round of the provinces. The Second Tour, in point of fact — beginning on Monday, the 28th of October, 1861, at Norwich, and terminating on Thursday, the 30th of January, 1862, at Chester — comprised within it Forty-Seven, instead of, as on the former occasion, Eighty-Seven readings altogether. Many of the principal towns and cities of England, not visited during the more comprehensive sweep made in 1858, through the three kingdoms, were now reached — the tour, this time, being restricted within the English boundaries. Lancaster and Carlisle, for example, Hastings and Canterbury, Ipswich and Colchester, were severally included in the new programme. Resorts of fashion, like Torquay and Cheltenham, were no longer overlooked. Preston in the north, Dover in the south, were each in turn the scene of a Reading. Bury St. Edmund's, in 1861, was reached on the 30th of October, and on the 25th of November an excursion was even made to the far-off border town of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Less hurried and less laborious than the first, this second tour was completed, as we have said, at Chester, just before the close of the first month of 1862, namely, on the 30th of January.

Then came the turn once more of London, where a series of Ten Readings was given in the St. James's Hall, Piccadilly. These ten Readings,

beginning on Thursday, the 13th of March, were distributed over sixteen weeks, ending on Friday, the 27th of June. Another metropolitan series, still under Mr. Headland's management, was given as nearly as possible at the same period of the London season in the following twelvemonth. The Hanover Square Booms were the scene of these Readings of 1863, which began on Monday, the 2nd of March, and ended on Saturday, the 13th of June, numbering in all not ten, as upon the last occasion, but Thirteen.

During the winter of this year, Two notable Readings were given by the Novelist at the British Embassy, in Paris, their proceeds being devoted to the British Charitable Fund in that capital. These Readings were so brilliantly successful, that, by particular desire, they were, a little time afterwards, supplemented by a Third, which was quite as numerous attended as either of its predecessors. The audience upon each occasion, partly English, partly French, comprised among their number many of the most gifted and distinguished of the Parisians. These three entertainments were given under the immediate auspices of the Earl Cowley, then Her Majesty's ambassador to the court of Napoleon III.

A considerable interval now elapsed, extending in fact over nearly three years altogether, before the author again appeared upon the platform in his capacity as a Reader, either in London or in the Provinces. During his last provincial tour, there had been some confusion caused to the general arrangements by reason of the abrupt but unavoidable postponement of a whole week's Readings, previously announced as coming off, three of them at Liverpool, one at Chester, and two at Manchester. These six readings instead, however, of duly taking place, as originally arranged, between the 16th and the 21st of December, 1861, had to be given four weeks later on, between the 13th and the 30th of the following January. The disarrangement of the programme thus caused arose simply from the circumstance of the wholly unlooked-for and lamented death of H. E. H. the Prince Consort. Another confusion in the carefully prepared plans for one of the London series, again, had been caused by an unexpected difficulty, at the last moment, in securing the great Hall in Piccadilly, that having been previously engaged on the required evenings for a series of musical entertainments. Hence the selection for that season of the Hanover Square Rooms, which, at any rate for the West-end public, could not but be preferable to that earliest scene of the London Readings, St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre. Apart from every other consideration, however, the Novelist's

remembrance of the confusions and disarrangements which had been incidental to his last provincial tour, and to the last series of his London Readings, rather disinclined him to hasten the date of his re-appearance in his character as a public Reader. As it happened, besides, after the summer of 1863, nearly two years elapsed, between the May of 1864 and the November of 1865, during which he was in a manner precluded from seriously entertaining any such project by the circumstance that the green numbers of "Our Mutual Friend" were, all that while, in course of publication. Even when that last of his longer serial stories had been completed, it is doubtful whether he would have cared to take upon himself anew the irksome stress and responsibility inseparable from one of those doubly laborious undertakings — a lengthened series of Readings in London, coupled with, or rather interwoven with, another extended tour through the provinces.

As it fortunately happened, however, very soon after the completion of "Our Mutual Friend," Charles Dickens had held out to him a double inducement to undertake once more the duties devolving upon him in his capacity as a Reader. The toil inseparable from the Readings themselves, as well as the fatigue resulting inevitably from so much rapid travelling hither and thither by railway during the period set apart for their delivery, would still be his. But at the least, according to the proposition now made to him, the Reader would be relieved from further care as to the general supervision, and at any rate, from all sense of responsibility in the revived project as a purely financial or speculative undertaking. The Messrs. Chappell, of New Bond Street, a firm skilled in the organizing of public entertainments of various kinds, chiefly if not exclusively until then, entertainments of a musical character, offered, in fact, in 1866 to assume to themselves thenceforth the whole financial responsibility of the Readings in the Metropolis and throughout the United Kingdom. According to the proposal originally submitted to the Novelist by the Messrs. Chappell, and at once frankly accepted by him, a splendid sum was guaranteed to him in remuneration. Twice afterwards those terms were considerably increased, — and upon each occasion, it should be added, quite spontaneously.

Another inducement was held out to the Reader besides that of his being relieved from all further sense of responsibility in the undertaking as a merely speculative enterprise. It related to the chance of his finding himself released also from any further sense of solicitude as to the conduct of the

general business management. The inducement, here, however, was of course in no way instantly recognizable. Experience alone could show the fitness for his post of the Messrs. Chappell's representative. As good fortune would have it, nevertheless, here precisely was an instance in which Mr. Layard's famous phrase about the right man in the right place, was directly applicable. As a thoroughly competent business manager, and as one whose companionship of itself had a heartening influence in the midst of enormous toil, Mr. Dolby speedily came to be recognised as the very man for the position, as the very one who in all essential respects it was most desirable should have been selected.

A series of Thirty Readings was at once planned under his supervision. It consisted for the first time of a tour through England and Scotland, interspersed with Readings every now and then in the Metropolis. The Reader's course in this way seemed to be erratic, but the whole scheme was admirably well arranged beforehand, and once entered upon, was carried out with the precision of clockwork. These thirty Readings, in 1866, began and ended at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly. The opening night was that of Tuesday, the 10th of April, the closing night that of Tuesday, the 12th of June. Between those dates half-a-dozen other Readings were given from the same central platform in London, the indefatigable author making his appearance meanwhile alternately in the principal cities of the United Kingdom. Besides revisiting in this way (some of these places repeatedly) in the north, Edinburgh and Glasgow and Aberdeen, in the south and south-west, Clifton and Portsmouth, as well as Liverpool and Manchester intermediately — Charles Dickens during the course of this tour read for the first time at Bristol, at Greenwich, and in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham.

The inauguration of the series of Readings now referred to had a peculiar interest imparted to it by the circumstance that, on the evening of Tuesday, the 10th of April, 1866, there was first of all introduced to public notice the comic patter and pathetic recollections of the Cheap Jack, Doctor Marigold.

Half a year afterwards a longer series of the Readings began under the organisation of the Messrs. Chappell, and under the direction of Mr. Dolby as their business manager. It took place altogether under precisely similar circumstances as the last, with this only difference that the handsome terms of remuneration originally guaranteed to the author were, as already intimated, considerably and voluntarily increased by the projectors of the

enterprise, the pecuniary results of the first series having been so very largely beyond their expectations. Fifty Readings instead of thirty were now arranged for — Ireland being visited as well as the principal towns and cities of England and Scotland. Six Readings were given at Dublin, and one at Belfast; four were given at Glasgow, and two at Edinburgh. Bath, for the first time, had the opportunity of according a public welcome to the great humorist, some of the drollest scenes in whose earliest masterpiece occur in the city of Bladud, as every true Pickwickian very well remembers. Then, also, for the first time, he was welcomed — by old admirers of his in his capacity as an author, new admirers of his thenceforth in his later and minor capacity as a Reader — at Swansea and Gloucester, at Stoke and Blackburn, at Hanley and Warrington. Tuesday, the 15th of January, 1867, was the inaugural night of the series, when “Barbox, Brothers,” and “The Boy at Mugby,” were read for the first time at St. James’s Hall, Piccadilly. Monday, the 13th of May, was the date of the last night of the season, which was brought to a close upon the same platform, the success of every Reading, without exception, both in London and in the provinces, having been simply unexampled.

It was shortly after this that the notion was first entertained by the Novelist of entering upon that Reading Tour in America, which has since become so widely celebrated. Overtures had been made to him repeatedly from the opposite shores of the Atlantic, with a view to induce him to give a course of Readings in the United States. Speculators would gladly, no doubt, have availed themselves of so golden an opportunity for turning to account his immense reputation. There were those, however, at home here, who doubted as to the advisability of the author entering, under any conceivable circumstances, upon an undertaking obviously involving in its successful accomplishment an enormous amount of physical labour and excitement. Added to this, the project was inseparable in any case — however favourable might be the manner of its ultimate arrangement — from a profound sense of responsibility all through the period that would have to be set apart for its realisation. It was among the more remarkable characteristics of Charles Dickens that, while he was endowed with a brilliant imagination, and with a genius in many ways incomparable, he was at the same time gifted with the clearest and soundest judgment, being, in point of fact, what is called a thoroughly good man of business. Often as he had shewn this to be the case during the previous phases of his career, he

never demonstrated the truth of it so undeniably as in the instance of this proposed Reading Tour in the United States. Determined to understand at once whether the scheme, commended by some, denounced by others, was in itself, to begin with, feasible, and after that advisable, he despatched Mr. Dolby to America for the purpose of surveying the proposed scene of operations. Immediately on his emissary's return, Dickens drew up a few pithy sentences, headed by him, "The Case in a Nutshell." His decision was what those more immediately about him had for some time anticipated. He made up his mind to go, and to go quite independently. The Messrs. Chappell, it should be remarked at once, had no part whatever in the enterprise. The Author-Reader accepted for himself the sole responsibility of the undertaking. As a matter of course, he retained Mr. Dolby as his business manager, despatching him again across the Atlantic, when everything had been arranged between them, to the end that all should be in readiness by the time of his own arrival.

Within the brief interval which then elapsed, Between the business manager's return to, and the Author-Reader's departure for, America, that well-remembered Farewell Banquet was given to Charles Dickens, which was not unworthy of signalling his popularity and his reputation. He himself, upon the occasion, spoke of it as that "proud night," recognising clearly enough, as he could hardly fail to do, in the gathering around him, there in Freemasons' Hall, on the evening of the 2nd of November, 1867, one of the most striking incidents in a career that had been almost all sunshine, both from within and from without, from the date of its commencement. It was there, in the midst of what he himself referred to, at the time, as that "brilliant representative company," while acknowledging the presence around him of so many of his brother artists, "not only in literature, but also in the fine arts," he availed himself of the opportunity to relate very briefly the story of his setting out once more for America. "Since I was there before," he said, "a vast, entirely new generation has arisen in the United States. Since I was there before, most of the best known of my books have been written and published. The new generation and the books have come together and have kept together, until at last numbers of those who have so widely and constantly read me, naturally desiring a little variety in the relations between us, have expressed a strong wish that I should read myself. This wish at last conveyed to me, through public channels and business channels, has gradually become enforced by an

immense accumulation of letters from individuals and associations of individuals, all expressing in the same hearty, homely, cordial, unaffected way a kind of personal interest in me; I had almost said a kind of personal affection for me, which I am sure you will agree with me, it would be dull insensibility on my part not to prize." Hence, as he explained, his setting forth on that day week upon his second visit to America, with a view among other purposes, according to his own happy phrase, to use his best endeavours "to lay down a third cable of intercommunication and alliance between the old world and the new." The illustrious chairman who presided over that Farewell Banquet, Lord Lytton, had previously remarked, speaking in his capacity as a politician, "I should say that no time could be more happily chosen for his visit;" adding, "because our American kinsfolk have conceived, rightly or wrongfully, that they have some cause of complaint against ourselves, and out of all England we could not have selected an envoy more calculated to allay irritation and to propitiate good will." As one whose cordial genius was, in truth, a bond of sympathy between the two great kindred nationalities, Charles Dickens indeed went forth in one sense at that time, it might almost have been said, in a semi-ambassadorial character, not between the rulers, but between the peoples. The incident of his visit to America could in no respect be considered a private event, but, from first to last, was regarded, and reasonably regarded, as a public and almost as an international occurrence. "Happy is the man," said Lord Lytton, on that 2nd of November, when proposing the toast of the evening in words of eloquence worthy of himself and of his theme, "Happy is the man who makes clear his title deeds to the royalty of genius, while he yet lives to enjoy the gratitude and reverence of those whom he has subjected to his sway. Though it is by conquest that he achieves his throne, he at least is a conqueror whom the conquered bless, and the more despotically he enthralls the dearer he becomes to the hearts of men." Observing, in conclusion, as to this portion of his argument, "Seldom, I say, has that kind of royalty been quietly conceded to any man of genius until his tomb becomes his throne, and yet there is not one of us now present who thinks it strange that it is granted without a murmur to the guest whom we receive to-night." As if in practical recognition of the prerogative thus gracefully referred to by his brother-author, a royal saloon carriage on Friday, the 8th of November, conveyed Charles Dickens from London to Liverpool. On the following morning he took his departure on board the

Cuba for the United States, arriving at Boston on Tuesday, the 19th, when the laconic message "Safe and well," was flashed home by submarine telegraph.

The Readings projected in America were intended to number up as many as eighty altogether. They actually numbered up exactly Seventy-Six. They were inaugurated by the first of the Boston Readings on Monday, the 2nd of December, 1867. Extending over an interval of less than five months, they closed in Steinway Hall on Monday, the 20th April, 1868, with the last of the New York Readings. From beginning to end, the enthusiasm awakened by these Readings was entirely unparalleled. Simply to ensure a chance of purchasing the tickets of admission, a queue of applicants a quarter of a mile long would pass a whole winter's night patiently waiting in sleet and snow, out in the streets, to be in readiness for the opening of the office-doors when the sale of tickets should have commenced. Blankets and in several instances mattresses were brought with them by some of the more provident of these nocturnal wayfarers, many of whom of course were notoriously middle-men who simply speculated, with immense profit to themselves, in selling again at enormously advanced prices the tickets which were invariably dispensed by the business manager at the fixed charges originally announced.

As curiously illustrative of the first outburst of this enthusiasm even before the Novelist's arrival — on the very eve of that arrival, as it happened — mention may here be made of the simple facts in regard to the sale of tickets on Monday, the 18th of November. During the whole of that day, from the first thing in the morning to the last thing at night, Mr. Dolby sat there at his desk in the Messrs. Ticknor and Fields' bookstore, literally doing nothing but sell tickets as fast as he could distribute them and take the money. For thirteen hours together, without taking bite or sup, without ever once for a passing moment quitting the office-stool on which he was perched — fortunately for him behind a strong barricade — he answered the rush of applicants that steadily pressed one another onwards to the pigeon-hole, each drifting by exhausted when his claims were satisfied. The indefatigable manager took in moneys paid down within those thirteen consecutive hours as many as twelve thousand dollars.

During the five months of his stay in America, four Readings a week were given by the Novelist to audiences as numerous as the largest building in each town of a suitable character could by any contrivance be made to

contain. The average number of those present upon each of these occasions may be reasonably estimated as at the very least 1500 individuals. Remembering that there were altogether seventy-six Readings, this would show at once that upwards of one hundred thousand souls (114,000) listened to the voice of the great Author reading, what they had so often before read themselves, and raising their own voices in return to greet his ears with their ringing acclamations. At a moderate estimate, again, just as we have seen that each Reading represented 1500 as the average number of the audience, that audience represented, in its turn, in cash, at the lowest computation, nett proceeds amounting to fully \$3000. At Rochester, for example, in the State of New York, was the smallest house anywhere met with in the whole course of these American Readings, and even that yielded \$2500, the largest house in the tour, on the other hand, netting as much as \$6000 and upwards. Multiplying, therefore, the reasonably-mentioned average of \$3000 by seventy-six, as the aggregate number of the Readings, we arrive at the astounding result that in this tour of less than five months the Author-Reader netted altogether the enormous sum of \$228,000. Supposing gold to have been then at par, that lump sum would have represented in our English currency what if spoken of even in a whisper would, according to Hood's famous witticism, have represented something like "the roar of a Forty Thousand Pounder!" Even as it was, then, gold being at 39 1/2 per cent, premium, with 1/4 per cent, more deducted on commission — virtually a drop of nearly 40 per cent, altogether! — the result was the winning of a fortune in what, but for the fatigue involved in it, might have been regarded as simply a holiday excursion.

The fatigue here referred to, however, must have been something very considerable. Its influence was felt all the more, no doubt, by reason of the Novelist having had to contend during upwards of four hard winter months, as he himself laughingly remarked just before his return homewards, with "what he had sometimes been quite admiringly assured, was a true American catarrh!" Nevertheless, even with its depressing and exhausting influence upon him, he not only contrived to carry out the project upon which he had adventured, triumphantly to its appointed close, but even upon one of the most inclement days of an unusually inclement season, namely, on Saturday, the 29th of February, 1868, he actually took part as one of the umpires in the good-humoured frolic of a twelve-mile walking match, up hill and down dale, through the snow, on the Milldam road,

between Boston and Newton, doing every inch of the way, heel and toe, as though he had been himself one of the competitors. The first six miles having been accomplished by the successful competitor in one hour and twenty-three minutes, and the return six in one hour and twenty-five minutes, the Novelist — although, with his light, springy step, he had observantly gone the whole distance himself, as we have seen, in his capacity as umpire, — presided blithely, in celebration of this winter day's frolic, at a sumptuous little banquet, given by him at the Parker House, a banquet that Lucullus would hardly have disdained. Having appeared before his last audience in America on the 20th of April, 1868, at New York, the Author-Reader addressed through them to all his other auditors in the United States, after that final Reading was over, a few genial and generous utterances of farewell. Among other things, he said to them, — "The relations which have been set up between us, while they have involved for me something more than mere devotion to a task, have been sustained by you with the readiest sympathy and the kindest acknowledgment. Those relations must now be broken for ever. Be assured, however, that you will not pass from my mind. I shall often realise you as I see you now, equally by my winter fire, and in the green English summer weather. I shall never recall you as a mere audience, but rather as a host of personal friends, — and ever with the greatest gratitude, tenderness, and consideration." Two days before that last of all these American Readings, he had been entertained at a public banquet in New York, on the 18th of April, at Delmonico's. Two days after the final American Reading and address of farewell, he took his departure from New York on board the *Russia*, on Wednesday, the 22nd of April, arriving on Friday, the 1st of May, at Liverpool.

Scarcely a month had elapsed after his return homewards, when the prospective and definitive close of the great author's career as a public Reader was formally announced. Again the Messrs. Chappell, of New Bond Street, appeared between the Novelist and the public as intermediaries. They intimated through their advertisement, that "knowing it to be the determination of Mr. Dickens finally to retire from public Readings, soon after his return from America, they (as having been honoured with his confidence on former occasions) made proposals to him, while he was still in the United States achieving his recent brilliant successes there, for a final farewell series of Readings in this country." They added that "their

proposals were at once accepted in a manner highly gratifying to them;" and that the series, which would commence in the ensuing autumn, would comprehend, besides London, several of the chief towns and cities of England, Ireland, and Scotland. Looking back to this preliminary advertisement now, there is a melancholy significance in the emphasis with which it was observed — "It is scarcely necessary to add that any announcement made in connection with these Farewell Readings will be strictly adhered to and considered final; and that on no consideration whatever will Mr. Dickens be induced to appoint an extra night in any place in which he shall have been announced to read for the last time." According to promise, in the autumn, these well-remembered Farewell Readings commenced. They were intended to run on to the number of one hundred altogether. Beginning within the first week of October, they were not to end until the third week of the ensuing May. As it happened, Seventy-Four Readings were given in place of the full hundred. On Tuesday, the 6th of October, 1868, the series was commenced. On Thursday, the 22nd of April, 1869, its abrupt termination was announced, by a telegram from Preston, that caused a pang of grief and anxiety to the vast multitude of those to whom the very name of Charles Dickens had, for more than thirty years, been endeared. The intimation conveyed through that telegram was the fact of his sudden and alarming illness. Already, in the two preceding months, though the public generally had taken no notice of the circumstance, three of the Readings had, for various reasons, been unavoidably given up — one at Hull, fixed for the 12th of March, and previously one at Glasgow, fixed for the 18th, and another at Edinburgh, fixed for the 19th of February. Otherwise than in those three instances, the sequence of Readings marked on the elaborate programme had been most faithfully adhered to; the Reader, indeed, only succumbing at last under the nervous exhaustion caused by his own indomitable perseverance.

It is, now, matter of all but absolute certainty that his immense energies, his elastic temperament, and his splendid constitution had all of them, long before this, been cruelly overtaxed and overweighted. Unsuspected by any of us at the time, he had, there can be little doubt of it, received the deadliest shock to his whole system as far back as on the 9th of June, 1865, in that terrible railway accident at Staplehurst, on the fifth anniversary of which fatal day, by a strange coincidence, he breathed his last. His intense vitality deceived himself and everybody else, however, until it was all too

late. The extravagant toil he was going through for months together — whirling hither and thither in express trains, for the purpose of making one exciting public appearance after another, each of them a little world of animated impersonations — he accomplished with such unflinching and unflagging vivacity, with such an easy step, such an alert carriage, with such an animated voice and glittering eye, that for a long while at least we were under the illusion. Hurrying about England, Ireland, and Scotland as he was during almost the whole of the last quarter of 1868 and during the whole of the first quarter of 1869 — dividing his time not only between Liverpool and Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow, Dublin and Belfast, with continual returns to his central reading-platform in the great Hall near Piccadilly, but visiting afterwards as well nearly all the great manufacturing towns and nearly all the fashionable watering-places — the wonder is now not so much that he gave in at last to the exorbitant strain, but that he did not give in much sooner.

A single incident will suffice to show the pace at which he was going before the overwrought system gave the first sign of its *being* overwrought. On the evening of Thursday, the 11th of March, 1869, an immense audience crowded the Festival Concert Room at York, the people there having only that one opportunity of attending a Farewell Reading. As they entered the room, each person received a printed slip of paper, on which was read, “The audience are respectfully informed that carriages have been ordered tonight at half-past nine. Without altering his Reading in the least, Mr. Dickens will shorten his usual pauses between the Parts, in order that he may leave York by train a few minutes after that time. He has been summoned,” it was added, “to London, in connection with a late sad occurrence within the general knowledge, but a more particular reference to which would be out of place here.” His attendance, in point of fact, was suddenly required at the funeral of a dear friend of his in the metropolis. To the funeral he had to go. From the poignantly irksome duty of the Reading he could not escape. Giving the latter even as proposed, he would barely have time to catch the up express, so as to arrive in town by the aid of rapid night travelling, and be true to the melancholy rendezvous at the scene of his friend’s obsequies. The Readings that night were three, and they were given in rapid succession, the Reader, after the first and second, instead of withdrawing, as usual, for ten minutes’ rest into his retiring room at the back of the platform, merely stepping for an instant or two behind the screen at the side

of the platform, putting his lips to some iced champagne, and stepping back at once to the reading-desk. The selected Readings were these — "Boots at the Holly-Tree Inn," the murder scene of "Sikes and Nancy," and the grotesque monologue of "Mrs. Gamp." The Archbishop and the other principal people of York were there conspicuously noticeable in the stalls, eagerly listening and keenly observant, evidently in rapt attention throughout the evening, but more especially during the powerfully acted tragic incident from "Oliver Twist." The Reading, as a whole, was more than ordinarily successful — parts of it were exceptionally impressive. Directly it was over, the Reader, having had a *coupé* previously secured for his accommodation in the express, was just barely enabled, at a rush, to catch the train an instant or so before its starting. Then only, after it had started, could he give a thought to his dress, changing his clothes and snatching a morsel of supper in the railway carriage as he whirled on towards London. The occasion referred to serves, at any rate, to illustrate the wear and tear to which the Author had rendered himself, through these Readings, more or less continually liable.

The jeopardy in which it placed his life at last was alarmingly indicated by the peremptory order of his medical adviser, Mr. Frank Beard, of Welbeck Street — immediately on his arrival in Preston on the 22nd of April, in answer to a telegram summoning him thither upon the instant from London — that the Readings must be stopped then and thenceforth. When this happened, a fortnight had not elapsed after the grand Banquet given in honour of Charles Dickens at St. George's Hall, in Liverpool. As the guest of the evening, he had, there and then, been "cheered to the echo" by seven hundred enthusiastic admirers of his presided over by the Mayor of Liverpool. That was on Saturday, the 10th of April, during a fortnight's blissful rest in the whirling round of the Readings. Immediately that fortnight was over, the whirling round began again its momentarily interrupted gyrations. Three days in succession there was a Reading at Leeds — on Thursday, the 15th, Friday, the 16th, and Saturday, the 17th of April. On Monday, the 19th, there was a Reading at Blackburn; on Tuesday, the 20th, another at Bolton; on Wednesday, the 21st, another at Southport. Then came the morning of the 22nd, on the evening of which Thursday he was to have read at Preston. By the then Dickens's medical adviser had arrived from London, the audience had already begun assembling. Thereupon, not only was that particular Reading prohibited, but, by the

same wise mandate, all thought of resuming the course, or even a portion of it, afterwards, was as peremptorily interdicted. In one sense, it is only matter for wistful regret, now, that that judicious interdict was so far removed, three-quarters of a year afterwards, that the twelve Final Readings of Farewell which were given at the St. James' Hall in the spring of 1870, beginning on Tuesday, the 11th of January, and ending on Tuesday, the 15th of March, were' assented to as in any way reasonable.

That even these involved an enormous strain upon the system, was proved to absolute demonstration by the statistics jotted down with the utmost precision during the Readings, as to the fluctuations of the Reader's pulse immediately before and immediately after each of his appearances upon the platform, mostly two, but often three, appearances in a single evening. The acceleration of his pulse has, to our knowledge, upon some of these occasions been something extraordinary. Upon the occasion of his last and grandest Reading of the Murder, for example, as he stepped upon the platform, resolved, apparently, upon outdoing himself, he remarked, in a half-whisper to the present writer, just before advancing from the cover of the screen to the familiar reading-desk, "I shall tear myself to pieces." He certainly never acted with more impassioned earnestness — though never once, for a single instant, however, overstepping the boundaries of nature. His pulse just before had been tested, as usual, keenly and carefully, by his most sedulous and sympathetic medical attendant. It was counted by him just as keenly and carefully directly afterwards — the rise then apparent being something startling, almost alarming, as it seemed to us under the circumstances.

Those twelve Farewell Readings are all the more to be regretted now when we come to look back at them, on our recalling to remembrance the fact that then, for the first time since he assumed to himself the position of a Public Reader professionally, Dickens consented to give a series of Readings at the very period when he was producing one of his imaginative works in monthly instalments. He appeared to give himself no rest whatever, when repose, at any rate for a while, was most urgently required. He seemed to have become his own taskmaster precisely at the time when he ought to have taken the repose he had long previously earned, by ministering so largely and laboriously to the world's enjoyment.

Summing up in a few words what has already been related in detail, one passing sentence may here recall to recollection the fact, that in addition to

the various works produced by the Novelist during the last three lustres of his energetic life as a man of letters, he had personally, within that busy interval of fifteen years, given in round numbers at a moderate computation some 500 of these Public Readings — 423 in a strictly professional capacity, the rest, prior to 1858, purely out of motives of generosity, in his character as a practical philanthropist. In doing this he had addressed as many as five hundred enormous audiences, whose rapt attention he had always secured, and who had one and all of them, without exception, welcomed his coming and going with enthusiasm. During this period he had travelled over many thousands of miles, by railway and steam-packet. In a single tour, that of the winter of 1867 and 1868, in America, he had appeared before upwards of 100,000 persons, earning, at the same time, over 200,000 dollars within an interval of very little more than four months altogether.

Later on, the circumstances surrounding the immediate close of this portion of the popular author's life, as a Public Reader of his own works, will be described when mention is made of his final appearance in St. James's Hall, on the night of his Farewell Reading. Before any particular reference is made, however, to that last evening, it may be advisable, as tending to make this record more complete, that there should now be briefly passed in review, one after another, those minor stories, and fragments of the larger stories, the simple recounting of which by his own lips yielded so much artistic delight to a great multitude of his contemporaries. Whatever may thus be remarked in regard to these Readings will be written at least from a vivid personal recollection; the writer, throughout, speaking, as before observed, from his intimate knowledge of the whole of this protracted episode in the life of the Novelist.

Whatever aid to the memory besides might have been thought desirable, he has had ready to hand all through, in the marked copies of the very books from which the author read upon these occasions, or from which, at the least, he had the appearance of reading. For, especially towards the last, Charles Dickens hardly ever glanced, even momentarily, at the printed pages, simply turning the leaves mechanically as they lay open before him on the picturesque little reading-desk. Besides the Sixteen Readings actually given, there were Four others which were so far meditated that they were printed separately as "Readings," though the reading copies of them that have been preserved, were never otherwise prepared by their author-

compiler for representation. One of these the writer remembers suggesting to the Novelist, as a characteristic companion or contrast to Dr. Marigold, — meaning “Mrs. Lirriper.” Another, strange to say, — about the least likely of all his stories one would have thought to have been thus selected, — was “The Haunted Man.” A third was “The Prisoner of the Bastile,” which would, for certain, have been one of Dickens’s most powerful delineations. The fourth, if only in remembrance of the Old Bailey attorney, Mr. Jaggers, of the convict Magwitch, and of Joe the blacksmith, the majority would probably have been disposed to regret almost more than Mrs. Lirriper. Though the lodging-house keeper would have been welcome, too, for her own sake, as who will not agree in saying, if merely out of a remembrance of the “trembling lip” put up towards her face, speaking of which the good motherly old soul exclaims, “and I dearly kissed it;” or, bearing in mind, another while, her preposterous reminiscence of the “impertinent little cock-sparrow of a monkey whistling with dirty shoes on the clean steps, and playing the harp on the area railings with a hoop-stick.” Actually given or only meditated, the whole of these twenty Readings — meaning the entire collection of the identical marked copies used by the Novelist himself on both sides of the Atlantic — have, for the verification of this retrospect, been placed for the time being in the writer’s possession. Selecting from among them those merely which are familiar to the public, from their having been actually produced, he here proposes cursorily to glance one by one through the well-known series of Sixteen.

THE CHRISTMAS CAROL.

It can hardly be any matter for wonder that the "Christmas Carol" was, among all the Readings, the author's own especial favourite! That it was so, he showed from first to last unmistakeably. He began with it in 1853, and ended with it in 1870, upon the latter occasion appending to the long since abbreviated narrative, that other incomparable evidence of his powers as a humorist, "The Trial from Pickwick." Whoever went for the first time to see and hear Charles Dickens read one or other of his writings, did well in selecting a night when he was going to relate his immortal ghost story of Christmas. In compliance with the well-known wish of the Novelist, the audience, as a rule, contrived to assemble and to have actually taken their places several minutes before the time fixed for the Reader's appearance upon the platform. Occasionally it happened, nevertheless, that a stray couple or so would be still drifting in, here and there, among the serried ranks of the stalls, when, book in hand, with a light step, a smile on his face, and a flower in his button-hole, the author had already rapidly advanced and taken his place before his quaintly constructed but graceful little reading-desk. Then it was, perhaps, at those very times, that a stranger to the whole scene regarded himself almost as under a personal obligation to these vexatious stragglers. For, until every one of them had quietly settled down, there stood the Novelist, cheerfully, patiently, glancing to the right and to the left, taking the bearings of his night's company, as one might say, with an air of the most perfect ease and self-possession. Whosoever, consequently, was in attendance there for the first time, had an opportunity, during any such momentary pause, of familiarising himself with the appearance of the famous writer, with whose books he had probably been intimately acquainted for years upon years previously, but whom until then he had never had the chance of beholding face to face.

Everyone, even to the illiterate wayfarers in the public streets, had, to a certain extent, long since come to know what manner of man Charles Dickens was by means of his widely-scattered photographs. But, there, better than any photograph, was the man himself, — the master of all English humorists, the most popular author during his own lifetime that ever existed; one whose stories for thirty years together had been read with

tears and with laughter, and whose books had won for him personal affection, as well as fame and fortune. Anyone seeing him at those moments for the first time, would unquestionably think — How like he was to a very few indeed, how utterly unlike the vast majority of his countless cartes-de-visites! To the last there was the bright, animated, alert carriage of the head — phrenologically a noble head — physiognomically a noble countenance. Encountering him within a very few weeks of his death, Mr. Arthur Locker has said, “I was especially struck with the brilliancy and vivacity of his eyes:” adding, “there seemed as much life and animation in them as in twenty ordinary pairs of eyes.” Another keen observer, Mr. Arthur Helps, has in the same spirit exclaimed, “What portrait can do justice to the frankness, kindness, and power of his eyes?” None certainly that ever was painted by the pencil of the sunbeam, or by the brush of a Royal Academician. Fully to realise the capacity for indicating emotion latent in them, and informing his whole frame — his hands for example, in their every movement, being wonderfully expressive — those who attended these Readings soon came to know, that you had but to listen to his variable and profoundly sympathetic voice, and to watch the play of his handsome features.

The different original characters introduced in his stories, when he read them, he did not simply describe, he impersonated: otherwise to put it, for whomsoever he spoke, he spoke in character. Thus, when everything was quiet in the crowded assembly, and when the ringing applause that always welcomed his appearance, but which he never by any chance acknowledged, had subsided — when he began: “A Christmas Carol, in four staves. Stave one, Marley’s Ghost. Marley was dead to begin with.” Having remarked, yet further, that “there was no doubt whatever about that,” the register of his burial being signed by this functionary, that and the other — when he added, “*Scrooge* signed it; and Scrooge’s name was good upon ‘Change for anything he chose to put his hand to’” — Scrooge in the flesh was, through the very manner of the utterance of his name, brought vividly and upon the instant before the observant listener. “Oh! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, was Scrooge!” *That* we knew instinctively, without there being any need whatever for our hearing one syllable of the description of him, admirably given in the book, but suppressed in the Reading, judiciously suppressed enough, because, for that matter, we saw and heard it without any necessity for its being explained.

As one might say — quoting here a single morsel from the animated description of Scrooge, that was actually illustrated by Scrooge's impersonator — it all “spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice!” And it was thus, not merely with regard to the leading personages of the little acted drama, as, turn by turn, they were introduced; precisely the same artistic care was applied by the impersonating realist to the very least among the minor characters, filling in, so to speak, little incidental gaps in the background. A great fat man with a monstrous chin, for example, was introduced just momentarily in the briefest street-dialogue, towards the close of this very Reading, who had only to open his lips once or twice for an instant, yet whose individuality was in that instant or two so thoroughly realised, that he lives ever since then in the hearers' remembrance. When, in reply to some one's inquiry, as to what was the cause of Scrooge's (presumed) death? — this great fat man with the monstrous chin answered, with a yawn, in two words, “God knows!” — he was before us there, as real as life, as selfish, and as substantial. So was it also with the grey-haired rascal, Joe, of the rag-and-bottle shop; with Topper, when he pronounced himself, as a bachelor, to be “a wretched outcast;” with the Schoolmaster, when he “glared on Master Scrooge with ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking hands with him,” all of whom were indicated by the merest touch or two, and yet each of whom was a living and breathing and speaking verisimilitude.

There was produced, to begin with, however, a sense of exhilaration in the very manner with which Dickens commenced the Reading of one of his stories, and which was always especially noticeable in the instance of this particular ghost story of his about Christmas. The opening sentences were always given in those cheery, comfortable tones, indicative of a double relish on the part of a narrator — to wit, his own enjoyment of the tale he is going to relate, and his anticipation of the enjoyment of it by those who are giving him their attention. Occasionally, at any rate during the last few years, his voice was husky just at the commencement, but as he warmed to his work, with him at all times a genuine labour of love, everything of that kind disappeared almost at the first turn of the leaf. The genial inflections of the voice, curiously rising, in those first moments of the Reading, at the end of every sentence, there was simply no resisting. Had there been a wedding guest present, he would hardly have repined in not being able to obey the summons of the loud bassoon. The narrator had his will with one and all.

However large and however miscellaneous the audience, from the front of the stalls to the back of the gallery, every one listened to the familiar words that fell from his lips, from the beginning to the end, with unflagging attention. There could be small room for marvel at this, however, in the instance of the “Carol,” on first reading which, Thackeray spoke of its author as that “delightful genius!” The *Edinburgh* editor, Lord Jeffrey, at the very same time, namely, towards the close of 1843, on the morrow of the little book’s original publication, avowing, in no less glowing terms, that he had been nothing less than charmed by the exquisite apologue: “chiefly,” as he declared, “for the genuine goodness which breathes all through it, and is the true inspiring angel by which its genius has been awakened.” Never since he had first — and that but a very few years previously — taken pen in hand as a story-teller, had this “delightful genius” sat down in a happier vein for writing anything, than when he did so for the purpose of recounting how Scrooge was converted, by a series of ghostly apparitions, from the error of his utterly selfish way in life, until then, as a tough-skinned, ingrained curmudgeon.

Characters and incidents, brought before us anew in the Reading, were all so cordially welcomed, — the former being such old friends, the latter so familiarly within our knowledge! Insomuch that many passages were, almost word for word, remembered by those who, nevertheless, listened as if curious to learn what might follow, yet who could readily, any one of them, have prompted the Reader, that is the Author himself, supposing by some rare chance he had happened, just for one moment, to be at fault. It is curious to observe, on turning over the leaves of the marked copy of this Reading, the sententious little marginal notes for his own guidance, jotted down by the hand of this wonderful master of elocutionary effect. “Narrative” is written on the side of p. 5 where Scrooge’s office, on Christmas Eve, is described, just before mention is made of the Clerk’s dismal little cell seeming to be “a sort of tank,” and of his fire being so small that it looked like “one coal,” and of his trying at last to warm himself by the candle, “in which effort, not being a man of strong imagination, he failed.” Again, “Cheerful” is penned on the side of p. 6, where Scrooge’s Nephew comes in at a burst with “A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!”

After Scrooge’s inhuman retort of “Bah! humbug!” not a word was added of the descriptive sentence immediately following. Admirable though every

word of it is, however, one could hardly regret its suppression. Is it asked why? Well then, for this simple reason — the force of which will be admitted by anyone who ever had the happiness of grasping Charles Dickens's hand in friendship — that his description of Scrooge's Nephew was, quite unconsciously but most accurately, in every word of it, a literal description of himself, just as he looked upon any day in the blithest of all seasons, after a brisk walk in the wintry streets or on the snowy high road. "He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this Nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again." The Novelist himself was depicted there to a nicety. No need, therefore, was there for even one syllable of this in the Reading. Scrooge's Nephew was visibly before us, without a word being uttered.

To our thinking, it has always seemed as if the one chink through which Scrooge's sympathies are got at and his heart-strings are eventually touched, is discernable in his keen sense of humour from the very outset. It is precisely through this that there seems hope, from the very beginning, of his proving to be made of "penetrable stuff." When, after his monstrous "Out upon merry Christmas!" he goes on to say, "If I had my will every idiot who goes about with 'merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly in his heart: he should!" one almost feels as if he were laughing in his sleeve from the very commencement. Instance, as yet more strikingly to the point in respect to what we are here maintaining, the wonderfully comic effect of the bantering remarks addressed by him to the Ghost of Jacob Marley all through their confabulation, even when the spectre's voice, as we are told, was disturbing the very marrow in his bones. True, it is there stated that, all through that portentous dialogue, he was only trying to be smart "as a means of distracting his own attention." But the jests themselves are too delicious, one would say, for mere make-believes. Besides which, hear his laugh at the end of the book! Hardly that of one really so long out of practice — "a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh, the father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs!" A laugh, one might suppose, as contagious as that of his own Nephew when he was "so inexpressibly tickled that he was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp!" Speaking of which our author writes so delectably, "If you should happen by any unlikely chance to know a man more blest in a laugh than Scrooge's Nephew, all I can say is, I should like

to know him too. Introduce him to me, and I'll cultivate his acquaintance." At which challenge one might almost have been tempted anticipatively to say at a venture — Scrooge! Good-humoured argument apart, however, what creatures were those who, one by one — sometimes, it almost seemed, two or three of them together — appeared and disappeared upon the platform, at the Reader's own good-will and pleasure!

After Scrooge's "Good afternoon!" — delivered with irresistibly ludicrous iteration — we caught something more than a distant glimpse of the Clerk in the tank, when — on Scrooge's surly interrogation, if he will want all day to-morrow? — the Reader replied in the thinnest and meekest of frightened voices, "If quite convenient, sir!" It brought into full view instantaneously, and for the first time, the little Clerk whom one followed in imagination with interest a minute afterwards on his "going down a slide at the end of a lane of boys twenty times in honour of Christmas, and then, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no greatcoat) running home as hard as he could pelt to play at blind man's buff." Instantly, upon the heels of this, we find noted on the margin, p. 18, "Tone to mystery." The spectral illusion of the knocker on Scrooge's house-door, looking for all the world not like a knocker, but like Marley's face, "with a dismal light about it like a bad lobster in a dark cellar," prepared the way marvellously for what followed. Numberless little tid-bits of description that anybody else would have struck out with reluctance, as, for instance, that of Scrooge looking cautiously behind the street door when he entered, "as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall," were unhesitatingly erased by the Reader, as, from his point of view, not necessarily to the purpose. Then, after the goblin incident of the disused bell slowly oscillating until it and all the other bells in the house rang loudly for a while — afterwards becoming in turn just as suddenly hushed — we got to the clanking approach, from the sub-basement of the old building, of the noise that at length came on through the heavy door of Scrooge's apartment! "And" — as the Reader said with startling effect, while his voice rose to a hurried outcry as he uttered the closing exclamation — "upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried, '*I know him! Marley's Ghost!*'" The apparition, although the description of it was nearly stenographically abbreviated in the Reading, appeared to be, in a very few words, no less startlingly realised. "Same face, usual waistcoat, tights, boots," even to the spectral illusion being so

transparent that Scrooge (his own marrow, then, we may presume, becoming sensitized) looking through his waistcoat “could see the two back buttons on the coat behind” — with the incorrigible old joker’s cynical reflection to himself that “he had often heard Marley spoken of as having no bowels, but had never believed it until then.” The grotesque humour of his interview with the spectre seemed scarcely to have been realised, in fact, until their colloquy was actually listened to in the Reading.

Scrooge’s entreaty addressed to the Ghost, when the latter demanded a hearing, “Don’t be flowery, Jacob, pray!” was only less laughable, for example, than the expression of the old dreamer’s visage when Marley informed him that he had often sat beside him invisibly! Promised a chance and hope in the fixture — a chance and hope of his dead partner’s procuring — Scrooge’s “Thank ‘ee!” — full of doubt — was a fitting prelude to his acknowledgment of the favour when explained. “You will be haunted,” quoth the Ghost, “by three Spirits.” The other faltering, “I — I think I’d rather not:” and then quietly hinting afterwards, “Couldn’t I take ‘em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?”

As for the revelations made to Ebenezer Scrooge by those three memorable Spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Future, who can ever hope to relate them and impersonate them as they were related and impersonated by the Author himself of this peerless ghost-story! Fezziwig, for example, with his calves shining like moons, who, after going through all the intricacies of the country dance, bow, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place, cut — ”cut so deftly that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger!” The very Fiddler, who “went up to the lofty desk and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches!” Master Peter Cratchit, again, arrayed in his father’s shirt collars, who, rejoicing to find himself so gallantly attired, at one moment “yearned to show his linen in the fashionable parks,” and at another, hearing his sister Martha talk of some lord who “was much about as tall as Peter, pulled up his collars so high that you couldn’t have seen him if you had been there.” As for the pathetic portions of the narrative, it is especially observable in regard to those, that they were anything rather than made too much of. There, more particularly, the elisions were ruthless. Looking through the marked copy, it really would appear that only a very few indeed of the salient points were left in regard to the life and death of Tiny Tim. Bob’s visit to the death-bed was entirely unmentioned. Even the

words “Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God!” were never uttered. Two utterances there *were*, however, the one breathing an exquisite tenderness, the other indicative of a long-suppressed but passionate outburst of grief, that thrilled to the hearts of all who heard them, and still, we doubt not, haunt their recollection. The one — where the mother, laying her mourning needlework upon the table, put her hand up to her face. “‘The colour hurts my eyes,’ she said. The colour? Ah! poor Tiny Tim!” The other, where the father, while describing the little creature’s grave, breaks down in a sudden agony of tears. “It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you’ll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday — *My little, little child! My little child!*” It was a touch of nature that made the Reader and his world of hearers, upon the instant, kin. The tearful outcry brimmed to the eyes of those present a thousand visible echoes. “He broke down all at once. He couldn’t help it,” said the Reader, adding in subdued accents the simple words, “If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been further apart perhaps than they were.” With that ended all reference to the home-grief at Bob Cratchit’s. Everything else in relation to the loss of Tiny Tim was foregone unhesitatingly.

The descriptive passages were cut out by wholesale. While the Christmas dinner at Scrooge’s Clerk’s, and the Christmas party at Scrooge’s Nephew’s, were left in almost in their entirety, the street-scenes and shop-window displays were obliterated altogether. Nothing at all was said about the “great round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen lolling at the doors and tumbling into the streets in their apoplectic opulence.” Nothing about the ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like Spanish friars, and “winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe.” Nothing about the canisters of tea and coffee “rattled up and down like juggling tricks,” or about the candied fruits, “so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint, and subsequently bilious.”

Nay, we were denied even a momentary glimpse, on the snow-crueted pavement at nightfall, of that group of handsome girls, all hooded and fur-booted, and all chattering at once, tripping lightly off to some near neighbour’s house, “where, woe upon the single man who saw them enter — artful witches, well they knew it — in a glow!” Topper was there, however, and the plump sister in the lace tucker, and the game of Yes-and-

No, the solution to which was, “It’s your uncle Scro-o-o-o-oge!” Happiest of all these non-omissions, as one may call them, there was that charming picture of Scrooge’s niece by marriage, which — as brightly, exquisitely articulated by the lips of her imaginer — was like the loveliest girl-portrait ever painted by Greuze. “She was very pretty, exceedingly pretty. With a dimpled, surprised-looking, capital face; a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed — as no doubt it was; all kinds of good little dots about her chin, that melted into one another when she laughed; and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw in any little creature’s head. Altogether she was what you would have called provoking, you know; but satisfactory, too. Oh, perfectly satisfactory.” The grave face and twinkling eyes with which this cordial acquiescence in the conclusion arrived at was expressed were irresistibly exhilarating. Just in the same way there was a sort of parenthetical smack of the lips in the self-communing of Scrooge when, at the very close of the story, after hesitating awhile at his Nephew’s door as to whether he should knock, he made a dash and did it. “Is your master at home, my dear?” said Scrooge. “*Nice girl! very.*” Then, as to the cordiality of his reception by his Nephew, what could by possibility have expressed it better than the look, voice, manner of the Reader. ““Will you let me in, Fred?’ *Let him in! It is a mercy he didn’t shake his arm off.*” The turkey that “never could have stood upon its legs, that bird,” but must have “snapped ‘em short off in a minute, like sticks of sealing-wax!” — the remarkable boy who was just about its size, and who, when told to go and buy it, cried out “Walk-ER!” — Bob Cratchit’s trying to overtake nine o’clock with his pen on his arriving nearly twenty minutes afterwards; his trembling and getting a little nearer the ruler when regenerated Scrooge talks about raising his salary, prior to calling him Bob, and, with a clap on the back, wishing him a merry Christmas! — brought, hilariously, the whole radiant Reading of this wonderful story to its conclusion. It was a feast of humour and a flow of fun, better than all the yule-tide fare that ever was provided — fuller of good things than any Christmas pudding of plums and candied fruit-peel — more warming to the cockles of one’s heart, whatever those may be, than the mellowest wassail-bowl ever brimmed to over-flowing. No wonder those two friends of Thackeray, who have been already mentioned, and who were both of them women, said of the Author of the “Carol,” by way of criticism, “God bless him!” This being exclaimed by them, as will

be remembered, simply after reading it to themselves. If only they had heard him read it!

THE TRIAL FROM PICKWICK.

Reader and audience about equally, one may say, revelled in the “Trial from Pickwick.” Every well-known person in the comic drama was looked for eagerly, and when at last Serjeant Buzfuz, as we were told, “rose with more importance than he had yet exhibited, if that were possible, and said, ‘Call Samuel Weller,’” a round of applause invariably greeted the announcement of perhaps the greatest of all Dickens’s purely humorous characters. The Reading copy of this abbreviated report of the great case of *Bardell v. Pickwick* has, among the complete set of Readings, one very striking peculiarity. Half-bound in scarlet morocco like all the other thin octavos in the collection, its leaves though yellow and worn with constant turning like the rest, are wholly *unlike* those of the others in this, that the text is untouched by pen or pencil. Beyond the first condensation of that memorable 34th chapter of Pickwick, there is introduced not one single alteration by way of after-thought. Struck off at a heat, as it was, that first humorous report of the action for breach of promise of marriage brought by Martha Bardell against Samuel Pickwick admitted in truth in no way whatever of improvement. Anything like a textual change would have been resented by the hearers — every one of them Pickwickian, as the case might be, to a man, woman, or child — as in the estimation of the literary court, nothing less than a high crime and misdemeanour. Once epitomised for the Reading, the printed version, at least of the report, was left altogether intact. Nevertheless, strange to say, there was perhaps no Reading out of the whole series of sixteen, in the delivery of which the Author more readily indulged himself with an occasional gag. Every interpolation of this kind, however, was so obviously introduced on the spur of the moment, so refreshingly spontaneous and so ludicrously *apropos*, that it was always cheered to the very echo, or, to put the fact not conventionally but literally, was received with peals of laughter. Thus it was in one instance, as we very well remember, in regard to Mr. Justice Stareleigh — upon every occasion that we saw him, one of the Reader’s most whimsical impersonations. The little judge — described in the book as “all face and waistcoat” — was presented to view upon the platform as evidently with no neck at all (to speak of), and as blinking with owl-like stolidity whenever he talked, which he always did

under his voice, and with apparently a severe cold in the head. On the night more particularly referred to, Sam Weller, being at the moment in the witness-box, had just replied to the counsel's suggestion, that what he (Sam) meant by calling Mr. Pickwick's "a very good service" was "little to do and plenty to get." — "Oh, quite enough to get, sir, as the soldier said ven they ordered him three hundred and fifty lashes." Thereupon — glowering angrily at Sam, and blinking his eyes more than ever — Mr. Justice Stareleigh remarked, with a heavier cold in the head than hitherto, in a severe monotone, and with the greatest deliberation, "You must not tell us what the soldier says unless the soldier is in court, unless that soldier comes here in uniform, and is examined in the usual way — it's not evidence." Another evening, again, we recall quite as clearly to mind, when the Reader was revelling more even than was his wont, in the fun of this representation of the trial-scene, he suddenly seemed to open up the revelation of an entirely new phase in Mr. Winkle's idiosyncrasy. Under the badgering of Mr. Skimpin's irritating examination, as to whether he was or was not a particular friend of Mr. Pickwick the defendant, the usually placable Pickwickian's patience upon this occasion appeared gradually and at last utterly to forsake him. "I have known Mr. Pickwick now, as well as I can recollect at this moment, nearly — —"

"Pray, Mr. Winkle, do not evade the question. Are you or are you not a particular friend of the defendant's?" "I was just about to say — —" "Will you, or will you not, answer my question, sir?" "Why, God bless my soul, I was just about to say that — — —" Whereupon the Court, otherwise Mr. Justice Stareleigh, blinking faster than ever, blurted out severely, "If you don't answer the question you'll be committed to prison, sir!" And then, but not till then, Mr. Winkle was sufficiently restored to equanimity to admit at last, meekly, "Yes, he was!"

In the Reading of the Trial the first droll touch was the well-remembered reference to the gentlemen in wigs, in the barristers' seats, presenting as a body "all that pleasing variety of nose and whisker for which the bar of England is so justly celebrated." Even the allusion to those among their number who carried a brief "scratching their noses with it to impress the fact more strongly on the observation of the spectators," and the other allusion to those who hadn't a brief, carrying instead red-labelled octavos with "that under-done-pie-crust cover, technically known as law calf," was each, in turn, welcomed with a flutter of amusement. Every point, however

minute, told, and told effectively. More effectively than if each was heard for the first time, because all were thoroughly known, and, therefore, thoroughly well appreciated. The opening address of Serjeant Buzfuz every one naturally enough regarded as one of the most mirth-moving portions of the whole representation. In the very exordium of it there was something eminently absurd in the Serjeant's extraordinarily precise, almost mincing pronunciation. As where he said, that "never in the whole course of his professional experience — never from the first moment of his applying himself to the study and practice of the law — had he approached a case with such a heavy sense of respon-see-bee-lee-ty imposed upon him — a respon-see-bee-lee-ty he could never have supported were he not," and so forth. Again, a wonderfully ridiculous effect was imparted by the Reader to his mere contrasts of manner when, at one moment, in the bland and melancholy accents of Serjeant Buzfuz, he referred to the late Mr. Bardell as having "glided almost imperceptibly from the world to seek elsewhere for that repose and peace which a custom-house can never afford," adding, the next instant in his own voice, and with the most cruelly matter-of-fact precision, "This was a pathetic description of the decease of Mr. Bardell, who had been knocked on the head with a quart-pot in a public-house cellar." The gravity of the Reader's countenance at these moments, with, now and then, but very rarely, a lurking twinkle in the eye, was of itself irresistibly provocative of laughter. Even upon the Serjeant's mention of the written placard hung up in the parlour window of Goswell Street, bearing this inscription, "Apartments furnished for single gentlemen: inquire within," the sustained seriousness with which he added, that there the forensic orator paused while several gentlemen of the jury "took a note of the document," one of that intelligent body inquiring, "There is no date to that, is there, sir?" made fresh ripples of laughter spread from it as inevitably as the concentric circles on water from the dropping of a pebble. The crowning extravagances of this most Gargantuan of comic orations were always of course the most eagerly welcomed, such, for example, as the learned Serjeant's final allusion to Pickwick's coming before the court that day with "his heartless tomato-sauce and warming-pans," and the sonorous close of the impassioned peroration with the plaintiff's appeal to "an enlightened, a high-minded, a right-feeling, a conscientious, a dispassionate, a sympathising, a contemplative jury of her civilised countrymen." It was after this, however, that the true fun of the Reading

began with the examination and cross-examination of the different witnesses. These, as a matter of course, were acted, not described.

Mrs. Cluppins first entered the box, with her feelings, so far as they could be judged from her voice, evidently all but too many for her. Her fluttered reply showed this at the very commencement, in answer to an inquiry as to whether she remembered one particular morning in July last, when Mrs. Bardell was dusting Pickwick's apartment. "Yes, my lord and jury, I do." "Was that sitting-room the first-floor front?" "Yes, it were, sir" — something in the manner of Mrs. Crupp when at her faintest. The suspicious inquiry of the red-faced little Judge, "What were you doing in the back-room, ma'am?" followed — on her replying lackadaisically, "My lord and jury, I will not deceive you" — by his blinking at her more fiercely, "You had better not, ma'am," were only exceeded in comicality by Justice Stareleigh's bewilderment a moment afterwards, upon her saying that she "see Mrs. Bardell's street-door on the jar."

Judge (in immense astonishment). — "On the what?"

Counsel. — "Partly open, my lord."

Judge (with more owl-like stolidity than ever). — "She said on the jar."

Counsel. — "It's all the same, my lord."

Then — blinking more quickly than before, with a furtive glance at witness, and a doubtful look of abstraction into space — the little Judge made a note of it.

As in Mrs. Cluppins' faintness there was a recognizable touch of Mrs. Crupp, when the spasms were engendering in the nankeen bosom of that exemplary female, so also in the maternal confidences volunteered by the same witness, there was an appreciable reminder of another lady who will be remembered as having been introduced at the Coroner's Inquest in Bleak House as "Anastasia Piper, gentlemen." Regarding that as a favourable opportunity for informing the court of her own domestic affairs, through the medium of a brief dissertation, Mrs. Cluppins was interrupted by the irascible Judge at the most interesting point in her revelations, when, having mentioned that she was already the mother of eight children, she added, that "she entertained confident expectations of presenting Mr. Cluppins with a ninth about that day six months" — whereupon the worthy lady was summarily hustled out of the witness-box.

Nathaniel Winkle, however, consoled us immediately. Don't we remember how, even before he could open his lips, he was completely

disconcerted? Namely, when, bowing very respectfully to the little Judge, he had that complimentary proceeding acknowledged snappishly with, "Don't look at me, sir; look at the jury — —" Mr. Winkle, in obedience to the mandate, meekly looking "at the place where he thought that the jury might be." Don't we remember also perfectly well how the worst possible construction was cast by implication beforehand upon his probable reply to the very first question put to him, namely, by the mere manner in which that first question was put? "Now, sir, have the goodness to let his lordship and the jury know what your name is, will you?" Mr. Skimpin, in propounding this inquiry, inclining his head on one side and listening with great sharpness for the answer, "as if to imply that he rather thought Mr. Winkle's natural taste for perjury would induce him to give some name which did not belong to him." Giving in, absurdly, his surname only; and being asked immediately afterwards, if possible still more absurdly, by the Judge, "Have you any Christian name, sir?" the witness, in the Reading, more naturally and yet more confusedly even it seemed than in the book, got that eminent functionary into a great bewilderment as to whether he (Mr. Winkle) were called Nathaniel Daniel, or Daniel Nathaniel. Bewildered himself, in his turn, and that too almost hopelessly, came Mr. Winkle's reply, "No, my lord; only Nathaniel — not Daniel at all." Irascibly, the Judge's, "What did you tell me it was Daniel for, then, sir?" Shamefaced and yet irritably, "I didn't, my lord." "You did, sir!" — with great indignation, topped by this cogent reasoning, — "How could I have got Daniel on my notes, unless you told me so, sir?" Nothing at all was said about it in the Reading; but, again and again, Mr. Winkle, as there impersonated, while endeavouring to feign an easiness of manner, was made to assume, in his then state of confusion, "rather the air of a disconcerted pickpocket."

Better almost than Mr. Winkle himself, however, as an impersonation, was, in look, voice, manner, Mr. Skimpin, the junior barrister, under whose cheerful but ruthless interrogations that unfortunate gentleman was stretched upon the rack of examination. His (Mr. Skimpin's) cheery echoing — upon every occasion when it was at last extorted from his victim — of the latter's answer (followed instantly by his own taunts and insinuations), remains as vividly as anything at all about this Reading in our recollection. When at length Mr. Winkle, with no reluctance in the world, but only seemingly with reluctance, answers the inquiry as to whether he is a particular friend of Pickwick, "Yes, I am!" — "Yes, you are!" said Mr.

Skimpin (audibly to the court, but as if it were only to himself). “And why couldn’t you say that at once, sir? Perhaps you know the plaintiff, too — eh, Mr. Winkle?” “I don’t know her; I’ve seen her!” “Oh, *you don’t know her, but you’ve seen her!* Now have the goodness to tell the gentlemen of the jury what you mean by *that*, Mr. Winkle.” As to how this unfortunate witness, after being driven to the confines of desperation, on being at last released, “rushed with delirious haste” to the hotel, “where he was discovered some hours after by the waiter, groaning in a hollow and dismal manner, with his head buried beneath the sofa cushions” — not a word was said in the Reading.

A flavour of the fun of Mrs. Sanders’s evidence was given, but only a passing flavour of it, in reference to Mr. Sanders having, in the course of their correspondence, often called her duck, but never chops, nor yet tomato-sauce — he being particularly fond of ducks — though possibly, if he had been equally fond of chops and tomato-sauce, he might have called her that instead, as a term of affection.

The evidence of all, however, was that of Sam Weller, no less to the enjoyment of the Author, it was plain to see, than to that of his hearers. After old Weller’s hoarse and guttural cry from the gallery, “Put it down a wee, my lord,” in answer to the inquiry whether the immortal surname was to be spelt with a V. or a W.; Sam’s quiet “I rayther suspect it was my father, my lord,” came with irresistible effect from the Reader, as also did his recollection of something “wery partickler” having happened on the memorable morning, out of which had sprung the whole of this trial of Bardell v. Pickwick, namely, that he himself that day had “a reg’lar new fit out o’ clothes.” Beyond all the other Wellerisms, however, was Sam’s overwhelmingly conclusive answer to counsel’s inquiry in regard to his not having seen what occurred, though he himself, at the time, was in the passage, “Have you a pair of eyes, Mr. Weller?” “Yes, I *have* a pair of eyes; and that’s just it If they wos a pair o’ patent double-million magnifying gas microscopes of hextra power, p’r’aps I might be able to see through two flights o’ stairs and a deal door; but *bein’* only eyes, you see, my wision’s limited.” Better by far, in our estimation, nevertheless, than the smart Cockney facetiousness of the inimitable Sam; better than the old coachman’s closing lamentation, “Vy worn’t there a alleybi?” better than Mr. Winkle, or Mrs. Cluppins, or Serjeant Buzfuz, or than all the rest of those engaged in any capacity in the trial, put together, was the irascible

little Judge, with the blinking eyes and the monotonous voice — himself, in his very *pose*, obviously, “all face and waistcoat.” Than Mr. Justice Stareleigh there was, in the whole of this most humorous of all the Readings, no more highly comic impersonation.

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

The sea-beach at Yarmouth formed both the opening and the closing scene of this Reading, in six chapters, from "David Copperfield." In its varied portraiture of character and in the wonderful descriptive power marking its conclusion, it was one of the most interesting and impressive of the whole series in its delivery. Through it, we renewed our acquaintance more vividly than ever with handsome, curly-headed, reckless, heartless Steerforth! With poor, lone, lorn Mrs. Gummidge, not only when everythink about her went contrary, but when her better nature gushed forth under the great calamity befalling her benefactor. With pretty little Emily, and bewitching little Dora. With Mr. Micawber, his shirt-collar, his eye-glass, the condescending roll in his voice, and his intermittent bursts of confidence. With Mrs. Micawber, who, as the highest praise we can bestow upon her, is quite worthy of her husband, and who is always, it will be remembered, so impassioned in her declaration that, come what may, she never *will* desert Mr. Micawber! With Traddles, and his irrepressible hair, even a love-lock from which had to be kept down by Sophy's preservation of it in a clasped locket! With Mr. Peggotty, in fine, who, in his tender love for his niece, is, according to his own account, "not to-look at, but to think on," nothing less than a babby in the form of a great sea Porkypine! Remembering the other originals, crowding the pages of the story in its integrity, how one would have liked to have seen even a few more of them impersonated by the protean Novelist! That "most wonderful woman in the world," Aunt Betsey, for example; or that most laconic of carriers, Mr. Barkis; or, to name yet one other, Uriah Heep, that reddest and most writhing of rascally attorneys. As it was, however, there were abundant realizations within the narrow compass of this Reading of the principal persons introduced in the autobiography of David Copperfield. The most loveable, by the way, of all the young heroes portrayed in the Dickens' Gallery was there, to begin with, for example — the peculiar loveableness of David being indicated as plainly as by any means through the extraordinary variety of pet names given to him by one or another in the course of the narrative. For, was he not the "Daisy" of Steerforth, the "Doady" of Dora, the "Trotwood" of Aunt Betsy, and the "Mas'r Davy" of the Yarmouth boatmen, just as surely as he was the "Mr.

Copper-full” of Mrs. Crupp, the “Master Copperfield” of Uriah Heep, and the “Dear Copperfield” of Mr. Wilkins Micawber?

That “The Personal History and Experiences of David Copperfield the Younger” was, among all its author’s works, his own particular favourite, he himself, in his very last preface to it, in 1867, formally acknowledged. Several years previously, while sauntering with him to and fro one evening on the grass-plot at Gadshill, we remember receiving from him that same admission. “Which of all your books do you think I regard as incomparably your best?” “Which?” “David Copperfield.” A momentary pause ensuing, he added, readily and without the smallest reservation, “You are quite right.” The acknowledgment then made as to this being in fact his own opinion was thus simply but emphatically expressed. Pen in hand, long afterwards, he made the same admission, only with yet greater emphasis, when the Preface to the new edition of the story in 1867 was thus closed by Charles Dickens — ”Of all my books, I like this the best. It will be easily believed that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can ever love that family as dearly as I love them. But, like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child. And his name is ‘David Copperfield.’“ Having that confession from his own lips and under his own hand, it will be readily understood that the Novelist always took an especial delight when, in the course of his Readings, the turn came for that of “David Copperfield.”

One of the keenest sensations of pleasure he ever experienced as a Reader — as he himself related to us with the liveliest gratification, evidently, even in the mere recollection of the incident — occurred in connection with this very Reading. Strange to say, moreover, it occurred, not in England or in America, in the presence of an English-speaking audience, but in Paris, and face to face with an audience more than half of which was composed of Frenchmen. And the hearer who caused him, there, that artistic sense, one might almost call it thrill of satisfaction — -was a Frenchman! All that was expressed on the part of this appreciative listener, being uttered by him instantaneously in a half-whispered, monosyllabic ejaculation. As we have already explained upon an earlier page, the Readings which took place in Paris, and which were in behalf of the British Charitable Fund in that capital, were given there before a densely crowded but very select audience at the British Embassy, Lord Cowley being then her Majesty’s ambassador. The Reading on the occasion referred to was

“David Copperfield,” and the Reader became aware in the midst of the hushed silence, just after he had been saying, in the voice of Steerforth, giving at the same moment a cordial grasp of the hand to the briny fisherman he was addressing: “Mr. Peggotty, you are a thoroughly good fellow, and deserve to be as happy as you are to-night. My hand upon it!” when, turning round, he added, still as Steerforth, but speaking in a very different voice and offering a very different hand-grip, as though already he were thinking to himself what a chuckle-headed fellow the young shipwright was — ”Ham, I give you joy, my boy. My hand upon that too!” The always keenly observant Novelist became aware of a Frenchman, who was eagerly listening in the front row of the stalls, suddenly exclaiming to himself, under his breath, “Ah — h!” — having instantly caught the situation! The sound of that one inarticulate monosyllable, as he observed, when relating the circumstance, gave the Reader, as an artist, a far livelier sense of satisfaction than any that could possibly have been imparted by mere acclamations, no matter how spontaneous or enthusiastic.

As a Reading, it always seemed to us, that “David Copperfield” was cut down rather distressingly. That, nevertheless, was unavoidable. Turning in off Yarmouth sands, we went straight at once through the “delightful door” cut in its side, into the old black barge or boat, high and dry there on the sea-beach, and which was known to us nearly as familiarly as to David himself, as the odd dwelling-house inhabited by Mr. Peggotty. All the still-life of that beautifully clean and tidy interior we had revealed to us again, as of old: lockers, boxes, table, Dutch clock, chest of drawers — even tea-tray, only that we failed to hear anything said about the painting on the tea-tray, representing “a lady with a parasol, taking a walk with a military-looking child, who was trundling a hoop.” The necessities of condensation in the same way restricted the definition of Mr. Peggotty’s occupation in the Reading, to the simple mention of the fact that he dealt in lobsters, crabs, and craw-fish, without any explanation at all as to those creatures being heaped together in a little wooden out-house “in a state of wonderful conglomeration with one another, and never leaving off pinching whatever they laid hold of.” Little Emily appeared as a beautiful young woman, and no longer as the prattling lassie who, years before had confided to her playfellow, David, how, if ever she were a lady, she would give uncle Dan, meaning Mr. Peggotty, “a sky-blue coat, with diamond buttons, nankeen trousers, a red velvet waistcoat, a cocked hat, a large gold watch, a silver

pipe, and a box of money.” Mrs. Gummidge, as became a faithful widow, was still fretting after the Old ‘Un. Ham, something of Mr. Peggotty’s own build, as the latter described him, “a good deal o’ the sou-wester in him, wery salt, but on the whole, a honest sort of a chap, too, with his ‘art in the right place,” had just made good his betrothal to the little creature he had seen grow up there before him, “like a flower,” when, at the very opening of the Reading, into the old Yarmouth boat, walked “Mas’r Davy” and his friend Steerforth. Mr. Peggotty’s explanation to his unexpected but heartily welcomed visitors as to how the engagement between Ham and Emily, had but just then been brought about, opened up before the audience in a few words the whole scheme of the tragic little dramatic tale about to be revealed to them through a series of vivid impersonations.

The idiomatic sentences of the bluff fisherman, as in their racy vernacular they were blithely given utterance to by the manly voice of the Reader, seemed to supply a fitting introduction to the drama, as though from the lips of a Yarmouth Chorus. Scarcely had the social carouse there in the old boat, on that memorable evening of Steerforth’s introduction, been recounted, when the whole drift of the story was clearly foreshadowed in the brief talk which immediately took place between him and David as they walked townwards across the sands towards their hotel. “Daisy, — for though that’s not the name your godfathers and godmothers gave you, you’re such a fresh fellow, that it’s the name I best like to call you by — and I wish, I wish, I wish you could give it to me!” That of itself had its-significance. But still more significant was David’s mention of his looking in at Steerforth’s bedroom on the following morning, before himself going away alone, and of his there finding the handsome scapegrace fast asleep, “lying easily, with his head upon his-arm,” as he had often seen him lie in the old school dormitory. “Thus in this silent hour I left him,” with mournful tenderness, exclaimed the Reader, in the words and accents of his young hero. “Never more, O God forgive you, Steerforth! to touch that passive hand in love and friendship. Never, never more!” The revelation of his treachery, towards the pretty little betrothed of the young shipwright, followed immediately afterwards, on the occasion of David’s next visit, some months later, to the old boat on the flats at Yarmouth.

The wonder still is to us, now that we are recalling to mind the salient peculiarities of this Reading, as we do so, turning over leaf by leaf the marked copy of it, from which the Novelist read; the wonder, we repeat,

still is to us how, in that exquisite scene, the very words that have always moved us most in the novel were struck out in the delivery, are rigidly scored through here with blue inkmarks in the reading copy, by the hand of the Reader-Novelist. Those words we mean which occur, where Ham, having on his arrival, made a movement as if Em'ly were outside, asked Mas'r Davy to "come out a minute," only for him, on his doing so, to find that Em'ly was not there, and that Ham was deadly pale. "Ham! what's the matter?" was gasped out in the Reading. But — *not* what follows, immediately on that, in the original narrative: "'Mas'r Davy!' Oh, for his broken heart, how dreadfully he wept!" Nor yet the sympathetic exclamations of David, who, in the novel, describes himself as paralysed by the sight of such grief, not knowing what he thought or what he dreaded; only able to look at him, — yet crying out to him the next moment, "Ham! Poor, good fellow! For heaven's sake tell me what's the matter?" Nothing of this: only — "My love, Mas'r Davy — the pride and hope of my 'art, her that I'd have died for, and would die for now — she's gone!" "Gone?" "Em'ly's run away!" Ham, *not* then adding in the Reading, "Oh, Mas'r Davy, think *how* she's run away, when I pray my good and gracious God to kill her (her that is so dear above all things) sooner than let her come to ruin and disgrace!" Yet, for all that, in spite of these omissions — it can hardly by any chance have been actually by reason of them — the delivery of the whole scene was singularly powerful and affecting. Especially in the representation of Mr. Peggotty's profound grief, under what is to him so appalling a calamity. Especially also in the revelation of Mrs. Gummidge's pity for him, her gratitude to him, and her womanly tender-heartedness.

In charming relief to the sequel of this tragic incident of the bereavement of the Peggottys, came David's love passages with Dora, and his social unbendings with Mr. Micawber. Regaling the latter inimitable personage, and his equally inimitable wife, together with David's old schoolfellow, Traddles, on a banquet of boiled leg of mutton, very red inside and very pale outside, as well as upon a delusive pigeon-pie, the crust of which was like a disappointing phrenological head, "full of lumps and bumps, with nothing particular underneath," David afforded us the opportunity of realising, within a very brief interval, something at least of the abundant humour associated with Mrs. Micawber's worldly wisdom, and Mr. Micawber's ostentatious impecuniosity. A word, that last, it always seems to us — describing poverty, as it does, with such an air of pomp —

especially provided beforehand for Mr. Micawber (out of a prophetic anticipation or foreknowledge of him) by the dictionary.

The mere opening of the evening's entertainment at David Copperfield's chambers on this occasion, enabled the Humorist to elicit preliminary roars of laughter from his audience by his very manner of saying, with a deliciously ridiculous prolongation of the liquid consonant forming the initial of the last word — "As to Mrs. Micawber, I don't know whether it was the effect of the cap, or the lavender water, or the phis, or the fire, or the wax-candles, but she came out of my room comparatively speaking l-l-lovely!"

As deliciously ridiculous was the whole scene between Dora and David, where the latter, at length, takes courage to make his proposal — "Jip barking madly all the time " — Dora crying the while and trembling. David's eloquence increasing, the more he raved, the more Jip barked — each, in his own way, getting more mad every moment! Even when they had got married by licence, "the Archbishop of Canterbury invoking a blessing, and doing it as cheap as it could possibly be expected," their domestic experiences were sources of unbounded merriment.

As, for example, in connection with their servant girl's cousin in the Life Guards, "with such long legs that he looked like the afternoon shadow of somebody else." Finally, closing the whole of this ingenious epitome of the original narrative, came that grand and wonderfully realistic description of the stupendous storm upon the beach at Yarmouth, upon the extraordinary power of which as a piece of declamation we have already at some length commented. There, in the midst of the dying horrors of that storm — there, on those familiar sands, where Mas'r Davy and Little Em'ly had so often looked for shells when they were children, on the very spot where some lighter fragments of the old boat, blown down the night before, had been scattered by the tempest, David Copperfield was heard describing, in the last mournful sentence of the Reading, how he saw *him* lying with his curly head upon his arm, as he had often seen him lie when they were at school together.

THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH.

A Fairy Tale of Home was here related, that in its graceful and fantastic freaks of fancy might have been imagined by the Danish poet, Hans Christian Andersen. In its combination of simple pathos and genial drollery, however, it was a story that no other could by possibility have told than the great English Humorist. If there was something really akin to the genius of Andersen, in the notion of the Cricket with its shrill, sharp, piercing voice resounding through the house, and seeming to twinkle in the outer darkness like a star, Dickens, and no other could, by any chance, have conjured up the forms of either Caleb Plummer, or Gruff-and-Tackleton. The cuckoo on the Dutch clock, now like a spectral voice, now hiccoughing on the assembled company, as if he had got drunk for joy; the little haymaker over the dial mowing down imaginary grass, jerking right and left with his scythe in front of a Moorish palace; the hideous, hairy, red-eyed jacks-in-boxes; the flies in the Noah's arks, that "an't on that scale neither as compared with elephants;" the giant masks, having a certain furtive leer, "safe to destroy the peace of mind of any young gentlemen between the ages of six and eleven, for the whole Christmas or Midsummer vacation," were all of them like dreams of the Danish poet, coloured into a semblance of life by the grotesque humour of the English Novelist. But dear little Dot, who was rather of the dumpling's shape — "but I don't myself object to that" — and good, lumbering John Peerybingle, her husband, often so near to something or another very clever, according to his own account, and Boxer, the carrier's dog, "with that preposterous nothing of a fag-end of a tail of his, describing circles of barks round the horse, making savage rushes at his mistress, and facetiously bringing himself to sudden stops," — all bear upon them unmistakably the sign-manual of Boz.

As originally recounted in the Christmas story-book, the whole narrative was comprised within a very few pages, portioned out into three little chirps. Yet the letter-press was illustrated profusely by pencils as eminent as those of Daniel Maclise, of Clarkson Stanfield, of Richard Doyle, of John Leech, of Sir Edwin Landseer. The charming little fairy tale, moreover, was inscribed to Lord Jeffrey. It was a favourite of his, as it still is of many another critic north and south of the Tweed, light, nay trivial, though the

materials out of which the homely apologue is composed. It can hardly be wondered at, however, remembering how less than four years prior to its first publication, a literary reviewer, no less formidable than Professor Wilson — while abstaining, in his then capacity as chairman of the public banquet given to Charles Dickens at Edinburgh, from attempting, as he said, anything like “a critical delineation of our illustrious guest” — nevertheless, added emphatically, “I cannot but express in a few ineffectual words the delight which every human bosom feels in the benign spirit which pervades all his creations.” Christopher North thus further expressed his admiration then of the young English Novelist — “How kind and good a man he is,” the great Critic exclaimed, laying aside for a while the crutch with which he had so often, in the *Ambrosian Nights*, brained many an arrant pretender to the title of genius or of philanthropist, and turning his lion-like eyes, at the moment beaming only with cordiality, on the then youthful face of Dickens, — “How kind and good a man he is I need not say, nor what strength of genius he has acquired by that profound sympathy with his fellow-creatures, whether in prosperity and happiness, or overwhelmed with unfortunate circumstances.” Purely and simply, in his capacity as an imaginative writer, the Novelist had already (then in the June of 1841) impressed thus powerfully the heart and judgment of John Wilson, of Christopher North, of the inexorable Rhadamanthus of *Blackwood* and the “Noctes.” Afterwards, but a very little more than two years afterwards, came the “Carol.” The following winter rang out the “Chimes.” The Christmas after that was heard the chirping of the “Cricket.”

Four years previously Professor Wilson, on the occasion referred to, had remarked of him most truly, — “He has not been deterred by the aspect of vice and wickedness, and misery and guilt, from seeking a spirit of good in things evil, but has endeavoured by the might of genius to transmute what was base into what is precious as the beaten gold;” observing, indeed, yet further — “He has mingled in the common walks of life; he has made himself familiar with the lower orders of society.” As if in supplementary and conclusive justification of those words, Dickens, within less than five years afterwards, had woven his graceful and pathetic fancies about the homely joys and sorrows of Bob Cratchit, of Toby Veck, and of Caleb Plummer, of a little Clerk, a little Ticket-porter, and a little Toy-maker. His pen at these times was like the wand of Cinderella’s fairy godmother,

changing the cucumber into a gilded chariot, and the lizards into glittering retainers.

At the commencement of this Reading but very little indeed was said about the Cricket, hardly anything at all about the kettle. Yet, as everybody knows, “the kettle began it” in the story-book. The same right of precedence was accorded to the kettle in the author’s delivery of his fairy tale by word of mouth, but otherwise its comfortable purring song was in a manner hushed. One heard nothing about its first appearance on the hearth, when “it would lean forward with a drunken air, and dribble, a very idiot of a kettle,” any more than of its final pæan, when, after its iron body hummed and stirred upon the fire, the lid itself, the recently rebellious lid, performed a sort of jig, and clattered “like a deaf and dumb young cymbal that had never known the use of its twin brother.” Here, again, in fact, as with so many other of these Readings from his own books by our Novelist, the countless good things scattered abundantly up and down the original descriptions — inimitable touches of humour that had each of them, on the appreciative palate, the effect of that verbal bon-bon, the bon-mot — were sacrificed inexorably, apparently without a qualm, and certainly by wholesale. What the Reader looked to throughout, was the human element in his imaginings when they were to be impersonated.

Let but one of these tid-bits be associated directly with the fanciful beings introduced in the gradual unfolding of the incidents, and it might remain there untouched, Thus, for example, when the Carrier’s arrival at his home came to be mentioned, and the Reader related how John Peerybingle, being much taller, as well as much older than his wife, little Dot, “had to stoop a long way down to kiss her” — the words that followed thereupon were happily *not* omitted: “but she was worth the trouble, — six foot six with the lumbago might have done it.” Several of John’s choicest — all-but jokes were also retained. As, where Dot is objecting to be called by that pet diminutive, ““Why, what else are you?” returned John, looking down upon her with a smile, and giving her waist as light a squeeze as his huge hand and arm could give, ‘A dot and’ — here he glanced at the baby — ‘a dot and carry’ — I won’t say it, for fear I should spoil it; but I was very near a joke. I don’t know as ever I was nearer.” Tilly Slowboy and her charge, the baby, were, upon every mention of them in the Reading, provocative of abundant laughter. The earliest allusion to Miss Slowboy recording these characteristic circumstances in regard to her costume, that it “was

remarkable for the partial development, on all possible and impossible occasions, of some flannel vestment of a singular structure, also for affording glimpses in the region of the back of a pair of stays, in colour a dead green." On the introduction of the Mysterious Stranger — apparently all but stone deaf — from the Carrier's cart, where he had been forgotten, the comic influence of the Reading became irresistible.

Stranger (on noticing Dot) interrogatively to John. — "Your Daughter?"

Carrier, with the voice of a boatswain. — "Wife."

Stranger, with his hand to his ear, being not quite certain that he has caught it. — "Niece?"

Carrier, with a roar. — "Wife."

Satisfied at last upon that point, the stranger asks of John, as a new matter of curiosity to him, "Baby, yours?" Whereupon the Reader, *as* John, "gave a gigantic nod, equivalent to an answer in the affirmative, delivered through a speaking-trumpet."

Stranger, still unsatisfied, inquiring, — "Girl?". — "Bo-o-oy!" was bellowed back by John Peerybingle. It was when Mrs. Peerybingle herself took up the parable, however, that the merriment excited among the audience became fairly irrepressible. Scarcely had the nearly stone-deaf stranger added, in regard to the "Bo-o-oy," — "Also very young, eh?" (a comment previously applied by him to Dot) when the Reader, *as* Mrs. Peerybingle, instantly struck in, at the highest pitch of his voice, that is, of her voice (the comic effect of this being simply indescribable) — "Two months and three da-ays! Vaccinated six weeks ago-o! Took very fine-ly! Considered, by the doctor, a remarkably beautiful chi-ild! Equal to the general run of children at five months o-old! Takes notice in a way quite won-der-ful! May seem impossible to you, but feels his feet al-ready!" Directly afterwards, Caleb Plummer appeared upon the scene, little imagining that in the Mysterious-Stranger would be discovered, later on, under the disguise of that nearly stone-deaf old gentleman, his (Caleb's) own dear boy, Edward, supposed to have died in the golden South Americas. Little Caleb's inquiry of Mrs. Peerybingle, — "You couldn't have the goodness to let me pinch Boxer's tail, Mum, for half a moment, could you?" was one of the welcome whimsicalities of the Reading. "Why, Caleb! what a question!" naturally enough was Dot's instant exclamation. "Oh, never mind, Mum!" said the little toy-maker, apologetically, "He mightn't like it perhaps" — adding, by way of explanation — "There's a

small order just come in, for barking dogs; and I should wish to go as close to Natur' as I could, for sixpence!" Caleb's employer, Tackleton, in his large green cape and bull-headed looking mahogany tops, was then described as entering pretty much in the manner of what one might suppose to be that of an ogrish toy-merchant. His character came out best perhaps — meaning, in another sense, that is, at its worst — when the fairy spirit of John's house, the Cricket, was heard chirping; and Tackleton asked, grumpily, — "Why don't you kill that cricket? I would! I always do! I hate their noise!" John exclaiming, in amazement, — "You kill your crickets, eh?" "Scrunch 'em, sir!" quoth Tackleton. One of the most wistfully curious thoughts uttered in the whole of the Reading was the allusion to the original founder of the toy-shop of Gruff and Tackleton, where it was remarked (such a quaint epitome of human life!) that under that same crazy roof, beneath which Caleb Plummer and Bertha, his blind daughter, found shelter as their humble home, — "the Gruff before last had, in a small way, *made toys for a generation of old boys and girls, who had played with them, and found them out, and broken them, and gone to sleep.*" Another wonderfully comic minor character was introduced later on in the eminently ridiculous person of old Mrs. Fielding — in regard to in-door gloves, a foreshadowing of Mrs. Wilfer — in the matter of her imaginary losses through the indigo trade, a spectral precursor, or dim prototype, as one might say, of Mrs. Pipchin and the Peruvian mines. Throughout the chief part of the dreamy, dramatic little story, the various characters, it will be remembered, are involved in a mazy entanglement of cross purposes. Mystery sometimes, pathos often, terror for one brief interval, rose from the Reading of the "Home Fairy-Tale." There was a subdued tenderness which there was no resisting in the revelation to the blind girl, Bertha, of the illusions in which she had been lapped for years by her sorcerer of a lather, poor little Caleb, the toy-maker. There was at once a tearful and a laughing earnestness that took the Reader's audience captive, not by any means unwillingly, when little Dot was, at the last, represented as "clearing it all up at home" (indirectly, to the great honour of the Cricket's reputation, by the way) to her burly husband — good, stupid, worthy, "clumsy man in general," — John Peerybingle, the Carrier. The one inconsistent person in the whole story, it must be admitted, was Tackleton, who turned out at the very end to be rather a good fellow than otherwise. Fittingly enough, in the Reading as in the book, when the "Fairy Tale of Home" was related to its close, when

Dot and all the rest were spoken of as vanished, a broken child's-toy, we were told, yet lay upon the ground, and still upon the hearth was heard the song of the Cricket.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.

A variety of attractive Readings might readily have been culled from Nicholas Nickleby's Life and Adventures. His comical experiences as a strolling-player in the Company of the immortal Crummleses — his desperate encounter with Sir Mulberry Hawk on the footboard of the cabriolet — his exciting rescue of Madeline from an unholy alliance with Gride, the miser, on the very morning fixed for the revolting marriage — his grotesque association for a while with the Kenwigses and their uncle Lilliyick — his cordial relations with the Brothers Cheeryble and old Tim Linkinwater — any one of these incidents in the career of the most high spirited of all the young heroes of our Novelist, would have far more than simply justified its selection as the theme of one of these illustrative entertainments. Instead of choosing any one of those later episodes in the fictitious history of Nicholas Nickleby, however, the author of that enthralling romance of everyday life, picked out, by preference, the earliest of all his young hero's experiences — those in which, at nineteen years of age, he was brought into temporary entanglement with the domestic economy of Dotheboys Hall, and at the last into personal conflict with its one-eyed principal, the rascally Yorkshire school-master.

The Gadshill collection of thin octavos, comprising the whole series of Readings, includes within it two copies of "Mrs. Gamp" and two copies of "Nicholas Nickleby." Whereas, on comparing the duplicates of Mrs. Gamp, the two versions appear to be so slightly different that they are all but identical, a marked contrast is observable at a glance between the two Nicklebys. Each Reading is descriptive, it is true, of his sayings and doings at the Yorkshire school. But, even externally, one of the two copies is marked "Short Time," — the love-passages with Miss Squeers being entirely struck out, and no mention whatever being made of John Browdie, the corn-factor. The wretched school, the sordid rascal who keeps it, Mrs. Squeers, poor, forlorn Smike, and a few of his scarecrow companions — these, in the short-time version, and these alone, constitute the young usher's surroundings. In here recalling to recollection the "Nicholas Nickleby" Reading at all, however, we select, as a matter of course, the completer version, the one for which the generality of hearers had an

evident preference: the abbreviated version being always regarded as capital, so far as it went; but even at the best, with all the go and dash of its rapid delivery, insufficient.

Everything, even, we should imagine, to one un-acquainted with the novel, was ingeniously explained by the Reader in a sentence or two at starting. Nicholas Nickleby was described as arriving early one November morning, at the Saracen's Head, to join, in his new capacity (stripling though he was) as scholastic assistant, Mr. Squeers, "the cheap — the terribly cheap" Yorkshire schoolmaster. The words just given in inverted commas are those written in blue ink in the Novelist's handwriting on the margin of his longer Reading copy. As also are the following words, epitomising in a breath the position of the young hero when the story commences — "Inexperienced, sanguine, and thrown upon the world with no adviser, and his bread to win," the manuscript interpolation thus intimates: the letterpress then relating in its integrity that Nicholas had engaged himself as tutor at Mr. Wackford Squeers's academy, on the strength of the memorable advertisement in the London newspapers. The advertisement, that is, comprising within it the long series of accomplishments imparted to the students at Dotheboys Hall, including "single-stick" (if required), together with "fortification, and every other branch of classical literature." The Reader laying particular stress, among other items in the announcement, upon "No extras, no vacations, and diet unparalleled;" and upon the finishing touch (having especial reference to the subject in hand), "An able assistant wanted: annual salary, £5! A master of arts would be preferred!" Immediately after this, in the Reading, came the description of Mr. Squeers, several of the particulars in regard to whose villainous appearance always told wonderfully: as, where it was said "he had but one eye, and the popular prejudice runs in favour of two;" or, again, where in reference to his attire — it having been mentioned that his coat-sleeves were a great deal too-long and his trousers a great deal too short — it was added that "he appeared ill at ease in his clothes, and as if he were in a perpetual state of astonishment at finding himself so respectable." Listening to the Reader, we were there, in the coffee-room of the Saracen's Head — the rascal Squeers in the full enjoyment of his repast of hot toast and cold round of beef, the while five little boys sat opposite hungrily and thirstily expectant of their share in a miserable meal of two-penn'orth of milk and thick bread and butter for three. "Just fill that mug up with

lukewarm water, William, will you?" "To the very top, sir? Why the milk will be drowned!" "*Serve it right for being so dear!*" Squeers adding with a chuckle, as he pounded away at his own coffee and viands, — "Conquer your passions, boys, and don't be eager after wittles." To see the Reader as Squeers, stirring the mug of lukewarm milk and water, and then smacking his lips with an affected relish after tasting a spoonful of it, before reverting to his own fare of buttered toast and beef, was to be there with Nicholas, a spectator on that wintry morning in the Snow Hill Tavern, watching the guttling pedagogue and the five little famished expectants. Only when Squeers, immediately before the signal for the coach starting, wiped his mouth, with a self-satisfied "Thank God for a good breakfast," was the mug rapidly passed from mouth to mouth at once ravenously and tantalizingly. The long and bitter journey on the north road, through the snow, was barely referred to in the Reading; due mention, however, being made, and always tellingly, of Mr. Squeers's habit of getting down at nearly every stage — "to stretch his legs, he said, — and as he always came back with a very red nose, and composed himself to sleep directly, the stretching seemed to answer." Immediately on the wayfarers' arrival at Dotheboys, Mrs. Squeers, arrayed in a dimity night-jacket, herself a head taller than Mr. Squeers, was always introduced with great effect, as seizing her Squeery by the throat and giving him two loud kisses in rapid succession, like a postman's knock. The audience then scarcely had time to laugh over the interchange of questions and answers between the happy couple, as to the condition of the cows and pigs, and, last of all, the boys, ending with Madame's intimation that "young Pitcher's had a fever," followed up by Squeers's characteristic exclamation, "No! damn that chap, he's always at something of that sort" — when there came the first glimpse of poor Smike, in a skeleton suit, and large boots originally made for tops, too patched and ragged now for a beggar; around his throat "a tattered child's frill only half concealed by a coarse man's neckerchief." Anxiously observing Squeers, as he emptied his overcoat of letters and papers, the boy did this, we were told, with an air so dispirited and hopeless, that Nicholas could hardly bear to watch him. "Have you — did anybody — has nothing been heard — about me?" were then (in the faintest, frightened voice!) the first stammered utterances of the wretched drudge. Bullied into silence by the brutal schoolmaster, Smike limped away with a vacant smile, when we heard the female scoundrel in

the dimity night-jacket saying, — "I'll tell you what, Squeers, I think that young chap's turning silly."

Inducted into the loathsome school-room on the following morning by Squeers himself, Nicholas, first of all, we were informed, witnessed the manner in which that arrant rogue presided over "the first class in English spelling and philosophy," practically illustrating his mode of tuition by setting the scholars to clean the w-i-n win, d-e-r-s ders, winders — to weed the garden — to rub down the horse, or get rubbed down themselves if they didn't do it well. Nicholas assisted in the afternoon, moreover, at the report given by Mr. Squeers on his return homewards after his half-yearly visit to the metropolis. Beginning, though this last-mentioned part of the Reading did, with Squeers's ferocious slash on the desk with his cane, and his announcement, in the midst of a death-like silence —

"Let any boy speak a word without leave, and I'll take the skin off that boy's back!" many of the particulars given immediately afterwards by the Reader were, in spite of the surrounding misery, irresistibly provocative of laughter. Ample justification for this, in truth, is very readily adduceable. Mr. Squeers having, through his one eye, made a mental abstract of Cobbey's letter, for example, Cobbey and the whole school were thus feelingly informed of its contents — "Oh! Cobbey's grandmother is dead, and his uncle John has took to drinking. Which is all the news his sister sends, except eighteen-pence — which will just pay for that broken square of glass! Mrs. Squeers, my dear, will you take the money?" Another while, Graymarsh's maternal aunt, who "thinks Mrs. Squeers must be a angel," and that Mr. Squeers is too good for this world, "would have sent the two pairs of stockings, as desired, but is short of money, so forwards a tract instead," and so on; "Ah-! a delightful letter — very affecting, indeed!" quoth Squeers. "It was affecting in one sense!" observed the Reader; "for Graymarsh's maternal aunt was strongly supposed by her more intimate friends to be his maternal parent!" Perhaps the epistle from Mobbs's mother-in-law was the best of all, however — the old lady who "took to her bed on hearing that he wouldn't eat fat;" and who "wishes to know by an early post where he expects to go to, if he quarrels with his vittles?" adding, "This was told her in the London newspapers — not by Mr. Squeers, for he is too kind and too good to set anybody against anybody!"

As an interlude, overflowing with fun, came Miss Squeers's tea-drinking — the result of her suddenly falling in love with the new usher, and that

chiefly by reason of the straightness of his legs, “the general run of legs at Dotheboys Hall being crooked.” How John Browdie (with his hair damp from washing) appeared upon the occasion in a clean shirt — ”whereof the collars might have belonged to some giant ancestor,” — and greeted the assembled company, including his intended, Tilda Price, “with a grin that even the collars could not conceal,” the creator of the worthy Yorkshireman went on to describe, with a gusto akin to the relish with which every utterance of John Browdie’s was caught up by the listeners. Whether he spoke in good humour or in ill humour, the burly cornfactor was equally delightful. One while saying, laughingly, to Nicholas, across the bread-and-butter plate which they had just been emptying between them, “Ye wean’t get bread-and-butther ev’ry neight, I expect, mun. Ecod, they dean’t put too much intif ‘em. Ye’ll be nowt but skeen and boans if you stop here long eneaf. Ho! ho! ho!” — all this to Nicholas’s unspeakable indignation. Or, another while, after chafing in jealousy for a long time over the coquetries going on between Tilda Price and Nicholas — the Yorkshireman flattening his own nose with his clenched fist again and again, “as if to keep his hand in till he had an opportunity of exercising it on the nose of some other gentleman,” — until asked merrily by his betrothed to keep his glum silence no longer, but to say something: “Say summat?” roared John Browdie, with a mighty blow on the table; “Weal, then! what I say ‘s this — Dang my boans and boddy, if I stan’ this ony longer! Do ye gang whoam wi’ me; and do yon loight and toight young whipster look sharp out for a brokken head next time he cums under my hond. Cum whoam, tell’e, cum whoam!” After Smike’s running away, and his being brought back again, had been rapidly recounted, what nearly every individual member of every audience in attendance at this Reading was eagerly on the watch for all along, at last, in the fullness of time, arrived, — the execrable Squeers receiving, instead of administering, a frightful beating, in the presence of the whole school; having carefully provided himself beforehand, as all were rejoiced to remember, with “a fearful instrument of flagellation, strong, supple, wax-ended, and new!”

So real are the characters described by Charles Dickens in his life-like fictions, and so exactly do the incidents he relates as having befallen them resemble actual occurrences, that we recall to recollection at this moment the delight with which the late accomplished Lady Napier once related an exact case in point, appealing, as she did so, to her husband, the author of

the “Peninsular War,” to corroborate the-accuracy of her retrospect! Telling how she perfectly well remembered, when the fourth green number of “Nicholas Nickleby” was just out, one of her home group, who had a moment before caught sight of the picture of the flogging in a shop-window, rushed in with the startling announcement — as though he were bringing with him the news of some great victory — ”What do you think? *Nicholas has thrashed Squeers!*” As the Novelist read this chapter, or rather the condensation of this chapter, it was for all the world like assisting in person at that sacred and refreshing rite!

“Is every boy here?”

Yes, every boy was there, and so was every observant listener, in eager and — knowing what was coming — in delighted expectation. As Squeers was represented as “glaring along the lines,” to assure himself that every boy really *was* there, what time “every eye drooped and every head cowered down,” the Reader, instead of uttering one word of what the ruffianly schoolmaster ought then to have added: “Each boy keep to his place. Nickleby! you go to your desk, sir!” — instead of saying one syllable of this, contented himself with obeying his own manuscript marginal direction, in one word — Pointing! The effect of this simple gesture was startling — particularly when, after the momentary hush with which it was always accompanied, he observed quietly, — ”There was a curious expression in the usher’s face, but he took his seat without opening his lips in reply.” Then, when the schoolmaster had dragged in the wretched Smike by the collar, “or rather by that fragment of his jacket which was nearest the place where his collar ought to have been,” there was a horrible relish in his saying, over his shoulder for a moment, “Stand a little out of the way, Mrs. Squeers, my dear; *I’ve hardly got room enough!*” The instant one cruel blow had fallen — ”Stop!” was cried in a voice that made the rafters ring — even the lofty rafters of St. James’s Hall.

Squeers, with the glare and snarl of a wild beast. — ”Who cried stop?”

Nicholas. — ”I did! This must not go on!”

Squeers, again, with a frightful look. — ”Must not go on?”

Nicholas. — ”Must not! Shall not! I will prevent it!”

Then came Nicholas Nickleby’s manly denunciation of the scoundrel, interrupted one while for an instant by Squeers screaming out, “Sit down, you — beggar!” and followed at its close by the last and crowning outrage, consequent on a violent outbreak of wrath on the part of Squeers, who spat

at him and struck him a blow across the face with his instrument of torture: when Nicholas, springing upon him, wrested the weapon from his hand, and pinning him by the throat — don't we all exult in the remembrance of it? — "beat the ruffian till he roared for mercy."

After that climax has been attained, two other particulars are alone worthy of being recalled to recollection in regard to this Reading. First, the indescribable heartiness of John Browdie's cordial shake-of-the-hand with Nicholas Nickleby on their encountering each other by accident upon the high road. "Shake honds? Ah! that I weel!" coupled with his ecstatic shout (so ecstatic that his horse shyed at it), "Beatten schoolmeasther! Ho! ho! ho! Beatten schoolmeasther! Who ever heard o' the loike o' that, noo? Give us thee hond agean, yoongster! Beatten schoolmeasther! Dang it, I loove thee for 't!" Finally, and as the perfecting touch of tenderness between the two cousins, then unknown to each other as such, in the early morning light at Boroughbridge, we caught a glimpse of Nicholas and Smike passing, hand in hand, out of the old barn together.

MR. BOB SAWYER'S PARTY.

Quite as exhilarating in its way as the all-but dramatised report of the great breach of promise case tried before Mr. Justice Stareleigh, was that other condensation of a chapter from "Pickwick," descriptive of Mr. Bob Sawyer's Party. It was a Reading, in the delivery of which the Reader himself had evidently the keenest sense of enjoyment. As a humorous description, it was effervescent with fun, being written throughout in the happiest, earliest style of the youthful genius of Boz, when the green numbers were first shaking the sides of lettered and unlettered Englishmen alike with Homeric laughter. Besides this, when given by him as a Reading, it comprised within it one of his very drollest impersonations. If only as the means of introducing us to Jack Hopkins, it would have been most acceptable. But, inimitable though Jack was, he was, at the least, thoroughly well companioned.

As a relish of what was coming, there was that preliminary account of the locality in which the festivities were held, to wit, Lant Street, in the borough of Southwark, the prevailing repose of which, we were told, "sheds a gentle melancholy upon the soul" — fully justifying its selection as a haven of rest by any one who wished "to abstract himself from the world, to remove himself from the reach of temptation, to place himself beyond the possibility of any inducement to look out of window!" As specimens of animated nature, familiarly met with in the neighbourhood, "the pot-boy, the muffin youth, and the baked potato man," had about them a perennial freshness. Whenever we were reminded, again, in regard to the principal characteristics of the population that it was migratory, "usually disappearing on the verge of quarter-day, and generally by night," her Majesty's revenues being seldom collected in that happy valley, its rents being pronounced dubious, and its water communication described as "frequently cut off," we found in respect to the whole picture thus lightly-sketched in, that age did not wither nor custom stale its infinite comicality.

It was when the familiar personages of the story were, one after another, introduced upon the scene, however, that the broad Pickwickian humour of it all began in earnest to be realised. After we had listened with chuckling enjoyment to the ludicrously minute account given of the elaborate

preparations made for the reception of the visitors, even in the approaches to Mr. Bob Sawyer's apartment, down to the mention of the kitchen candle with a long snuff, that "burnt cheerfully on the ledge of the staircase window," we had graphically rendered the memorable scene between poor, dejected Bob and his little spitfire of a landlady, Mrs. Raddle. *So* dejected and generally suppressed was Bob in the Reading, however, that we should hardly have recognised that very archetype of the whole *genus* of rollicking Medical Students, as originally described in the pages of Pickwick, where he is depicted as attired in "a coarse blue coat, which, without being either a great-coat or a surtout, partook of the nature and qualities of both," having about him that sort of slovenly smartness and swaggering gait peculiar to young gentlemen who smoke in the streets by day, and shout and scream in the same by night, calling waiters by their Christian names, and altogether bearing a resemblance upon the whole to something like a dissipated Robinson Crusoe. Habited, Bob still doubtless was, in the plaid trousers and the large, rough coat and double-breasted waistcoat, but as for the "swaggering gait" just mentioned not a vestige of it remained. Nor could that be wondered at, indeed, for an instant, beholding and hearing, as we did, the shrill ferocity with which Mrs. Raddle had it out with him about the rent immediately before the arrival of his guests.

It is one of the distinctive peculiarities of Charles Dickens as a humorous Novelist, that the cream or quintessence of a jest is very often given by him quite casually in a parenthesis. It was equally distinctive of his peculiarities as a Reader, that the especial charm of his drollery was often conveyed by the merest aside. Thus it was with him in reference to Mrs. Raddle's "confounded little bill," when — in between Ben Allen's inquiry, "How long has it been running?" and Bob Sawyer's reply, "Only about a quarter and a month or so" — the Reader parenthetically remarked, with a philosophic air, "A bill, by the way, is the most extraordinary locomotive engine that the genius of man ever produced: it would keep on running during the longest lifetime without ever once stopping of its own accord." Thus also was it, when he added meditatively to Bob's hesitating explanation to Mrs. Raddle, "the fact is that I have been disappointed in the City to-day" — "Extraordinary place that City: astonishing number of men always *are* getting disappointed there." Hereupon it was that that fiercest of little women, Mrs. Raddle, who had entered "in a tremble with passion and pale with rage," fairly let out at her lodger. Her incidental bout with Mr.

Ben Allen, when he soothingly(!) interpolated, “My good soul,” was, in the Reading, in two senses, a memorable diversion. Beginning with a sarcastic quivering in her voice, “I am not *aweer*, sir, that you have any right to address your conversation to *me*. I don’t think I let these apartments to *you*, sir — ” Mrs. Raddle’s anger rose through an indignant *crescendo*, on Ben Allen’s remonstrating, “But you are such an unreasonable woman” — to the sharp and biting interrogation, “I beg your parding, young man, but will you have the goodness to call me that again, sir?”

Ben Allen, meekly and somewhat uneasy on his own account, — ”I didn’t make use of the word in any invidious sense, ma’am.”

Landlady, louder and more imperatively, — ”I beg your parding, young man, but *who* do you call a woman? Did you make that remark to me, sir?”

“*Why, bless my heart!*”

“Did you apply that name to me, I ask of you, sir?”

On his answering, Well, of course he did! — then, as she retreated towards the open room-door, came the last outburst of her invectives, high-pitched in their voluble utterance, against him, against them both, against everybody, including Mr. Raddle in the kitchen — ”a base, faint-hearted, timorous wretch, that’s afraid to come upstairs and face the ruffinly creaturs — that’s *afraid* to come — that’s afraid!” Ending with her screaming descent of the stairs in the midst of a loud double-knock, upon the arrival just then of the Pickwickians, when, “in an uncontrollable burst of mental agony,” Mrs. Raddle threw down all the umbrellas in the passage, disappearing into the back parlour with an awful crash. In answer to the cheerful inquiry from Mr. Pickwick, — ”Does Mr. Sawyer live here?” came the lugubrious and monotonously intoned response, all on one note, of the aboriginal young person, the gal Betsey (one of the minor characters in the original chapter, and yet, as already remarked, a superlatively good impersonation in the Reading) — ”Yes; first-floor. It’s the door straight afore you when you get’s to the top of the stairs” — with which the dirty slipshod in black cotton stockings disappeared with the candle down the kitchen stair-case, leaving the unfortunate arrivals to grope their way up as they best could. Welcomed rather dejectedly by Bob on the first-floor landing, where Mr. Pickwick put, not, as in the original work, his hat, but, in the Reading, “his foot” in the tray of glasses, they were very soon followed, one after another, by the remainder of the visitors. Notably by a sentimental young gentleman with a nice sense of honour, and, most

notably of all (with a heavy footstep, very welcome indeed whenever heard) by Jack Hopkins. Jack was at once the Hamlet and the Yorick of the whole entertainment — all-essential to it — whose very look (with his chin rather stiff in the stock), whose very words (short, sharp, and decisive) had about them a drily and all-but indescribably humorous effect. As spoken by the Novelist himself, Jack Hopkins's every syllable told to perfection. His opening report immediately on his arrival, of "rather a good accident" just brought into the casualty ward — only, it was true, a man fallen out of a four-pair-of-stairs window; but a very fair case, *very* fair case indeed! — was of itself a dexterous forefinger between the small ribs to begin with. Would the patient recover? Well, no — with an air of supreme indifference — no, he should rather say he wouldn't. But there must be a splendid operation, though, on the morrow — magnificent sight if Slasher did it! Did he consider Mr. Slasher a good operator? "Best alive: took a boy's leg out of the socket last week — boy ate five apples and a gingerbread cake exactly two minutes after it was all over; — boy said he wouldn't lie there to be made game of; and he'd tell his mother if they didn't begin." To hear Dickens say this in the short, sharp utterances of Jack Hopkins, to see his manner in recounting it, stiff-necked, and with a glance under the drooping eyelids in the direction of Mr. Pickwick's listening face, was only the next best thing to hearing him and seeing him, still in the person of Jack Hopkins, relate the memorable anecdote about the child swallowing the necklace — pronounced in Jack Hopkins's abbreviated articulation of it, *neck-luss* — a word repeated by him a round dozen times at the least within a few seconds in the reading version of that same anecdote. How characteristically and comically the abbreviations were multiplied for the delivery of it, by the very voice and in the very person, as it were, of Jack Hopkins, who shall say! As, for example — "Sister, industrious girl, seldom treated herself to bit of finery, cried eyes out, at loss of — neck-luss; looked high and low for — neck-luss. Few days afterwards, family at dinner — baked, shoulder of mutton and potatoes, child wasn't hungry, playing about the room, when family suddenly heard devil of a noise like small hail-storm." How abbreviated passages like these look, as compared with the original — could only be rendered comprehensible upon the instant, by giving in this place a facsimile of one of the pages relating to Jack Hopkins's immortal story about the — neck-luss, exactly as it appears in the marked copy of the Reading of "Mr. Bob Sawyer's Party," a page covered

all over, as will be observed, with minute touches in the Novelist's own handwriting.

Nothing at all in the later version of this Reading was said about the prim person in cloth boots, who unsuccessfully attempted all through the evening to make a joke. Of him the readers of "Pickwick" will very well remember it to have been related that he commenced a long story about a great public character, whose name he had forgotten, making a particularly happy reply to another illustrious individual whom he had never been able to identify, and, after enlarging with great minuteness upon divers collateral circumstances distantly connected with the anecdote, could not for the life of him recollect at that precise moment what the anecdote was — although he had been in the habit, for the last ten years, of telling the story with great applause! While disposed to regret the omission of this preposterously natural incident from the revised version of the Reading, and especially Bob Sawyer's concluding remark in regard to it, that he should very much like to hear the end of it, for, *so far as it went*, it was, without exception, the very best story he had ever heard — we were more than compensated by another revisive touch, by which Mr. Hopkins, instead of Mr. Gunter, in the pink shirt, was represented as one of the two interlocutors in the famous quarrel-scene: the other being Mr. Noddy, the scorbutic youth, with the nice sense of honour. Through this modification the ludicrous effect of the squabble was wonderfully enhanced, as where Mr. Noddy, having been threatened with being "pitched out o' window" by Mr. Jack Hopkins, said to the latter, "I should like to see you do it, sir," Jack Hopkins curtly retaliating — "You shall *feel* me do it, sir, in half a minute." The reconciliation of the two attained its climax of absurdity in the Reading, when Mr. Noddy, having gradually allowed his feelings to overpower him, professed that he had ever entertained a devoted personal attachment to Mr. Hopkins. Consequent upon this, Mr. Hopkins, we were told, replied, that, "on the whole, he rather preferred Mr. Noddy to his own *mother*" — the word standing, of course, as "brother" in the original. Summing it all up, the Reader would then add, with a rise and fall of the voice at almost every other word in the sentence, the mere sound of which was inexpressibly ludicrous — "Everybody said the whole dispute had been conducted in a manner" (here he would sometimes gag) "that did equal credit to the head and heart of both parties concerned."

Another gag, of which there is no sign in the marked copy, those who attended any later delivery of this Reading will well remember he was fond of introducing. This was immediately after Mrs. Raddle had put an end to the evening's enjoyment in the very middle of Jack Hopkins' song (with a chorus) of "The King, God bless him," carolled forth by Jack to a novel air compounded of the "Bay of Biscay" and "A Frog he would a-wooing go" — when poor, discomfited Bob (after turning pale at the voice of his dreaded landlady, shrilly calling out, "Mr. Saw-yer! Mr. Saw-yer!") turned reproachfully on the over-boisterous Jack Hopkins, with, "I *thought* you were making too much noise, Jack. You're such a fellow for chorusing! You're always at it. You came into the world chorusing; and I believe you'll go out of it chorusing." Through their appreciation of which — more even than through their remembrance of Mrs. Raddle's withdrawal of her nightcap, with a scream, from over the staircase banisters, on catching sight of Mr. Pickwick, saying, "Get along with you, you old wretch! Old enough to be his grandfather, you willin! You're worse than any of 'em!" — the hearers paid to the Reader of Bob Sawyer's Party their last tribute of laughter.

THE CHIMES.

As poetical in its conception, and also, intermittently, in its treatment, as anything he ever wrote, this Goblin Story of Some Bells that Rang an Old Year Out and a New Year In, was, in those purely goblin, or more intensely imaginative portions of it, one of the most effective of our Author's Readings. Hence its selection by him for his very first Reading on his own account in St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre. Listening, as we did, then and afterwards, to the tale, as it was told by his own sympathetic lips, much of the incongruity, otherwise no doubt apparent in the narrative, seemed at those times to disappear altogether. The incongruity, we mean, observable between the queer little ticket-porter and the elfin phantoms of the belfry; between Trotty Veck, in his "breezy, goose-skinned, blue-nosed, red-eyed, stony-toed, tooth-chattering" stand-point by the old church-door, and the Goblin Sight beheld by him when he had clambered up, up, up among the roof-beams of the great church-tower. As the story was related in its original form, it was rung out befittingly from the Chimes in four quarters. As a Reading it was subdivided simply into three parts.

Nothing whatever was preserved (by an error as it always seemed to us) of the admirable introduction. The story-teller piqued no one into attention by saying — to begin with — "There are not many people who would care to sleep in a church." Adding immediately, with delightful particularity, "I don't mean at sermon time in warm weather (when the thing has actually been done once or twice), but in the night, and alone." Not a word was uttered in the exordium of the Reading about the dismal trick the night-wind has in those ghostly hours of wandering round and round a building of that sort, and moaning as it goes; of its trying with a secret hand the windows and the doors, fumbling for some crevice by which to enter, and, having got in, "as one not finding what it seeks, whatever that may be," of its wailing and howling to issue forth again; of its stalking through the aisles and gliding round and round the pillars, and "tempting the deep organ;" of its soaring up to the roof, and after striving vainly to rend the rafters, flinging itself despairingly upon the stones below, and passing mutteringly into the vaults! Anon, coming up stealthily — the Christmas book goes on to say — "It has a ghostly sound, lingering within the Altar,

where it seems to chant in its wild way of Wrong and Murder done, and false Gods worshipped, in defiance of the Tables of the Law, which look so fair and smooth, but are so flawed and broken. Ugh! Heaven preserve us, sitting snugly round the fire! — it has an awful voice that Wind at Midnight, singing in a church!” Of all this and of yet more to the like purpose, not one syllable was there in the Reading, which, on the contrary, began at once point-blank: “High up in the steeple of an old church, far above the town, and far below the clouds, dwelt the ‘Chimes’ I tell of.” Directly after which the Reader, having casually mentioned the circumstance of their just then striking twelve at noon, gave utterance to Trotty Yeck’s ejaculatory reflection: “Dinner-time, eh? Ah! There’s nothing more regular in its coming round than dinner-time, and there’s nothing less regular in its coming round than dinner.” Followed by his innocently complacent exclamation: “I wonder whether it would be worth any gentleman’s while, now, to buy that observation for the Papers, or the Parliament!” The Reader adding upon the instant, with an explanatory aside, that “Trotty was only joking,” striving to console himself doubtless for the exceeding probability there was before him, at the moment, of his going, not for the first time, dinnerless.

In the thick of his meditations Trotty was startled — those who ever attended this Reading will remember how pleasantly — by the unlooked-for appearance of his pretty daughter Meg. “And not alone!” as she told him cheerily. “Why you don’t mean to say,” was the wondering reply of the old ticket-porter, looking curiously the while at a covered basket carried in Margaret’s hand, “that you have brought — — — ”

Hadn’t she! It was burning hot — scalding! He must guess from the steaming flavour what it was! Thereupon came the by-play of the Humorist — after the fashion of Munden, who, according to Charles Lamb, “understood a leg of mutton in its quiddity.” It was thus with the Reader when he syllabled, with watering lips, guess after guess at the half-opened basket. “It ain’t — I suppose it ain’t polonies? [sniffing]. No. It’s — it’s mellowier than polonies. It’s too decided for trotters. Liver? No. There’s a mildness about it that don’t answer to liver. Pettitoes? No. It ain’t faint enough for pettitoes. It wants the stringiness of cock’s heads. And I know it ain’t sausages. I’ll tell you what it is. No, it isn’t, neither. Why, what am I thinking of! I shall forget my own name next. It’s tripe!” Forthwith, to reward him for having thus hit it off at last so cleverly, Meg, as she

expressed it, with a flourish, laid the cloth, meaning the pocket-handkerchief in which the basin of tripe had been tied up, and actually offered the sybarite who was going to enjoy the unexpected banquet, a choice of dining-places! "Where will you dine, father? On the post, or on the steps? How grand we are: two places to choose from!" The weather being dry, and the steps therefore chosen, those being rheumatic only in the damp, Trotty Veck was not merely represented by the Reader as feasting upon the tripe, but as listening meanwhile to Meg's account of how it had all been arranged that she and her lover Eichard should, upon the very next day, that is, upon New Year's Day, be married.

In the midst of this agreeable confabulation — Richard himself having in the interim become one of the party — the little old ticket-porter, the pretty daughter, and the sturdy young blacksmith, were suddenly scattered. The Reader went on to relate how this happened, with ludicrous accuracy, upon the abrupt opening of the door, around the steps of which they were gathered — a flunkey nearly putting his foot in the tripe, with this indignant apostrophe, "Out of the vays, here, will you? You must always go and be a settin' on our steps, must you? You can't go and give a turn to none of the neighbours never, can't you?" Adding, even, a moment afterwards, with an aggrieved air of almost affecting expostulation, "You're always a being begged and prayed upon your bended knees, you are, to let our door-steps be? Can't you let 'em be?" Nothing more was seen or heard of that footman, and yet in the utterance of those few words of his the individuality of the man somehow was thoroughly realised. Observing him, listening to him, as he stood there palpably before us, one seemed to understand better than ever Thackeray's declaration in regard to those same menials in plush breeches, that a certain delightful "quivering swagger" of the calves about them, had for him always, as he expressed it, "a frantic fascination!" Immediately afterwards, however, as the Reader turned a new leaf, in place of the momentary apparition of that particular flunkey, three very different persons appeared to step across the threshold on to the platform. Low-spirited, Mr. Filer, with his hands in his trousers-pockets. The red-faced gentleman who was always vaunting, under the title of the "good old times," some undiscoverable past which he perpetually lamented as his deceased Millennium. And finally — as large as life, and as real — Alderman Cute. As in the original Christmas book, so also in the Reading, the one flagrant improbability was the consumption by Alderman Cute of

the last lukewarm tid-bit of tripe left by Trotty Veck down at the bottom of the basin — its consumption, indeed, by any alderman, however prying or gluttonous. Barring that, the whole of the first scene of the “Chimes” was alive with reality, and with a curious diversity of human character. In the one that followed, and in which Trotty conveyed a letter to Sir Joseph Rowley, the impersonation of the obese hall-porter, later on identified as Tugby, was in every way far beyond that of the pompous humanitarian member of parliament. A hall-porter this proved to be whose voice, when he had found it — ”which it took him some time to do, for it was a long way off, and hidden under a load of meat” — was, in truth, as the Author’s lips expressed it, and as his pen had long before described it in the book, “a fat whisper.” Afterwards when re-introduced, Tugby hardly, as it appeared to us, came up to the original description. When the stout old lady, his supposititious wife, formerly, or rather really, all through, Mrs. Chickenstalker, says, in answer to his inquiries as to the weather, one especially bitter winter’s evening, “Blowing and sleeting hard, and threatening snow. Dark, and very cold” — Tugby’s almost apoplectic reply was delicious, no doubt, in its suffocative delivery. “I’m glad to think we had muffins for tea, my dear. It’s a sort of night that’s meant for muffins. Likewise crumpets; also Sally Lunns.” But, for all that, we invariably missed the sequel — which, once missed, could hardly be foregone contentedly. We recalled to mind, for example, such descriptive particulars in the original story as that, in mentioning each successive kind of eatable, Tugby did so “as if he were musingly summing up his good actions,” or that, after this, rubbing his fat legs and jerking them at the knees to get the fire upon the yet unroasted parts, he laughed as if somebody had tickled him! We bore distinctly enough in remembrance, and longed then to have heard from the lips of the Reader — in answer to the dream-wife’s remark, “You’re in spirits, Tugby, my dear!” — Tugby’s fat, gasping response, “No, — No. Not particular. I’m a little elewated. The muffins came so pat!” Though, even if that addition had been vouchsafed, we should still, no doubt, have hungered for the descriptive particulars that followed, relating not only how the former hall-porter chuckled until he was black in the face — having so much ado, in fact, to become any other colour, that his fat legs made the strangest excursions into the air — but that Mrs. Tugby, that is, Chickenstalker, after thumping him violently on the back, and shaking him as if he were a bottle, was constrained to cry out, in great terror, “Good

gracious, goodness, lord-a-mercy, bless and save the man! What's he a-doing?" To which all that Mr. Tugby can faintly reply, as he wipes his eyes, is, that he finds himself a little "elewated!"

Another omission in the Reading was, if possible, yet more surprising, namely, the whole of Will Fern's finest speech: an address full of rustic eloquence that one can't help feeling sure would have told wonderfully as Dickens could have delivered it. However, the story, foreshortened though it was, precisely as he related it, was told with a due regard to its artistic completeness. Margaret and Lilian, the old ticket-porter and the young blacksmith, were the principal interlocutors. Like the melodrama of Victorine, it all turned out, of course, to be no more than "the baseless fabric of a vision," the central incidents of the tale, at any rate, being composed of "such stuff as dreams are made of." How it all came to be evolved by the "Chimes" from the slumbering brain of the queer, little old ticket-porter was related more fully and more picturesquely, no doubt, in the printed narrative, but in the Reading, at the least, it was depicted with more dramatic force and passion. The merest glimmering, however, was afforded of the ghostly or elfin spectacle, as seen by the "mind's eye" of the dreamer, and which in the book itself was so important an integral portion of the tale, as there unfolded, constituting, as it did, for that matter, the very soul or spirit of what was meant by "The Chimes."

Speaking of the collective chimes of a great city, Victor Hugo has remarked in his prose masterpiece that, in an ordinary way, the noise issuing from a vast capital is the talking of the city, that at night it is the breathing of the city, but that when the bells are ringing it is the singing of the city. Descanting upon this congenial theme, the poet-novelist observes, in continuation, that while at first the vibrations of each bell rise straight, pure, and in a manner separate from that of the others, swelling by degrees, they blend, melt, and amalgamate in magnificent concert until they become at length one mass of sonorous vibrations, which, issuing incessantly from innumerable steeples, float, undulate, bound, whirl over the city, expanding at last far beyond the horizon the deafening circle of their oscillations. What has been said thus superbly, though it may be somewhat extravagantly, by Hugo, in regard to "that *tutti* of steeples, that column of sound, that cloud or sea of harmony," as he variously terms it, has been said less extravagantly, but quite as exquisitely, by Charles Dickens, in regard to the chimes of a single belfry. After this New Year's tale of his was first told, there rang out

from the opposite shores of the Atlantic, that most wonderful tintinnabulation in all literature, “The Bells” of Edgar Poe — which is, among minor poems, in regard to the belfry, what Southey’s “Lodore” is to the cataract, full, sonorous, and exhaustive. And there it is, in that marvellous little poem of “The Bells,” that the American lyricist, as it has always seemed to us, has caught much of the eltrich force and beauty and poetic significance of “The Chimes” as they were originally rung forth in the prose-poetry of the English novelist: —

- “And the people — ah, the people —
- They that dwell up in the steeple,
- All alone,
- And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
- In that muffled monotone,
- Feel a glory in so rolling
- On [or from] the human heart a stone —
- They are neither man nor woman —
- They are neither brute nor human —
- They are Ghouls:
- And their king it is who tolls;
- And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
- Rolls
- A pæan from the hells.”

Charles Dickens, in his beautiful imaginings in regard to the Spirits of the Bells — something of the grace and goblinry of which, Maclise’s pencil shadowed forth in the lovely frontispiece to the little volume in the form in which it was first of all published — has exhausted the vocabulary of wonder in his elvish delineation of the Goblin Sight beheld in the old church-tower on New Year’s Eve by the awe-stricken ticket-porter.

In the Reading one would naturally have liked to have caught some glimpse at least of the swarming out to view of the “dwarf-phantoms, spirits, elfin creatures of the Bells;” to have seen them “leaping, flying, dropping, pouring from the Bells,” unceasingly; to have realised them anew as a listener, just as the imaginary dreamer beheld them all about him in his vision — ”round him on the ground, above him in the air, clambering from him by the ropes below, looking down upon him from the massive iron-girded beams, peeping in upon him through the chinks and loopholes in the walls, spreading away and away from him in enlarging circles, as the water-

ripples give place to a huge stone that suddenly comes plashing in among them." In their coming and in their going, the sight, it will be remembered, was equally marvellous. Whether — as the Chimes rang out — we read of the dream-haunted, "He saw them [these swarming goblins] ugly, handsome, crippled, exquisitely formed. He saw them young, he saw them old, he saw them kind, he saw them cruel, he saw them merry, he saw them grim, he saw them dance, he heard them sing, he saw them tear their hair, and heard them howl" — diving, soaring, sailing, perching, violently active in their restlessness — stone, brick, slate, tile, transparent to the dreamer's gaze, and pervious to their movements — the bells all the while in an uproar, the great church tower vibrating from parapet to basement! Or, whether — when the Chimes ceased — there came that instantaneous transformation! "The whole swarm fainted; their forms collapsed, their speed deserted them; they sought to fly, but in the act of falling died and melted into air. One straggler," says the book, "leaped down pretty briskly from the surface of the Great Bell, and alighted on his feet, but he was dead and gone before he could turn round." After it has been added that some thus gambolling in the tower "remained there, spinning over and over a little longer," becoming fainter, fewer, feebler, and so vanishing — we read, "The last of all was one small hunchback, who had got into an echoing corner, where he twirled and twirled, and floated by himself a long time; showing such perseverance, that at last he dwindled to a leg, and even to a foot, before he finally retired; but he vanished in the end, and then the tower was silent." Nothing of this, however, was given in the Reading, the interest of which was almost entirely restricted to the fancied fluctuation of fortunes among the human characters. All of the pathetic and most of the comic portions of the tale were happily preserved. When, in the persons of the Tugbys, "fat company, rosy-cheeked company, comfortable company," came to be introduced, there was an instant sense of exhilaration among the audience.

A roar invariably greeted the remark, "They were but two, but they were red enough for ten." Similarly pronounced was the reception of the casual announcement of the "stone pitcher of terrific size," in which the good wife brought her contribution of "a little flip" to the final merry-making. "Mrs. Chicken-stalker's notion of a little flip did honour to her character," elicited a burst of laughter that was instantly renewed when the Reader added, that "the pitcher reeked like a volcano," and that "the man who carried it was

faint.” The Drum, by the way — braced tight enough, as any one might admit in the original narrative — seemed rather slackened, and was certainly less effective, in the Reading. One listened in vain for the well-remembered parenthesis indicative of its being the man himself, and not the instrument. “The Drum (who was a private friend of Trotty’s) then stepped forward, and” offered — evidently with a hiccough or two — his greeting of good fellowship, “which,” as we learn from the book, “was received with a general shout.” The Humorist added thereupon, in his character as Storyteller, not in his capacity as Reader, “The Drum was rather drunk, by-the-bye; but never mind.” A band of music, with marrow-bones and cleavers and a set of hand-bells — clearly all of them under the direction of the Drum — then struck up the dance at Meg’s wedding. But, after due mention had been made of how Trotty danced with Mrs. Chickenstalker “in a step unknown before or since, founded on his own peculiar trot,” the story closed in the book, and closed also in the Reading, with words that, in their gentle and harmonious flow, seemed to come from the neighbouring church-tower as final echoes from “The Chimes” themselves.

THE STORY OF LITTLE DOMBEY.

The hushed silence with which the concluding passages of this Reading were always listened to, spoke more eloquently than any applause could possibly have done, of the sincerity of the emotions it awakened. A cursory glance at the audience confirmed the impression produced by that earlier evidence of their rapt and breathless attention. It is the simplest truth to say that at those times many a face illustrated involuntarily the loveliest line in the noblest ode in the language, where Dryden has sung even of a warrior —

- “And now and then a sigh he heaved,
- And tears began to flow.”

The subdued voice of the Reader, moreover, accorded tenderly with one's remembrance of his own acknowledgment ten years after his completion of the book from which this story was extracted, that with a heavy heart he had walked the streets of Paris alone during the whole of one winter's night, while he and his little friend parted company for ever! Charles Young's son, the vicar of Ilminster, has, recently, in his own Diary appended to his memoir of his father, the tragedian, related a curious anecdote, illustrative, in a very striking way, of the grief — the profound and overwhelming grief — excited in a mind and heart like those of Lord Jeffrey, by the imaginary death of another of these dream-children of Charles Dickens. The editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, we there read, was surprised by Mrs. Henry Siddons, seated in his library, with his head on the table, crying. “Delicately retiring,” we are then told, “in the hope that her entrance had been unnoticed,” Mrs. Siddons observed that Jeffrey raised his head and was kindly beckoning her back. The Diary goes on: “Perceiving that his cheek was flushed and his eyes suffused with tears, she apologised for her intrusion, and begged permission to withdraw. When he found that she was seriously intending to leave him, he rose from his chair, took her by both hands, and led her to a seat.” Then came the acknowledgment prefaced by Lord Jeffrey's remark that he was “a great goose to have given way so.” Little Nell was dead! The newly published number of “Master Humphrey's

Clock” (No. 44) was lying before him, in which he had just been reading of the general bereavement!

Referring to another of these little creatures’ deaths, that of Tiny Tim, Thackeray wrote in the July number of *Fraser*, for 1844, that there was one passage regarding it about which a man would hardly venture to speak in print or in public “any more than he would of any other affections of his private heart.”

It has been related, even of the burly demagogue, O’Connell, that on first reading of Nell’s death in the Old Curiosity Shop, he exclaimed — his eyes running over with tears while he flung the leaves indignantly out of the window — ”he should not have killed her — he should not have killed her: she was too good!”

Finally, another Scotch critic and judge, Lord Cockburn, writing to the Novelist on the very morrow of reading the memorable fifth number of “*Dombey and Son*,” in which the death of Little Paul is so exquisitely depicted — offering his grateful acknowledgments to the Author for the poignant grief he had caused him — added, “I have felt my heart purified by those tears, and blessed and loved you for making me shed them.”

Hardly can it be matter for wonder, therefore, remarking how the printed pages would draw such tokens of sympathy from men like Cockburn, and Jeffrey, and Thackeray, and O’Connell, that a mixed audience showed traces of emotion when the profoundly sympathetic voice of Dickens himself related this story of the Life and Death of Little Dombey. Yet the pathetic beauty of the tale, for all that, was only dimly hinted at throughout, — the real pathos of it, indeed, being only fully indicated almost immediately before its conclusion. Earlier in the Reading, in fact, the drollery of the comic characters introduced — of themselves irresistible — would have been simply paramount, but for the incidental mention of the mother’s death, when clinging to that frail spar within her arms, her little daughter, “she drifted out upon the dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world.” Paul’s little wistful face looked out every now and then, it is true, from among the fantastic forms and features grouped around him, with a growing sense upon the hearer of what was really meant by the child being so “old-fashioned.” But the ludicrous effect of those surrounding characters was nothing less than all-mastering in its predominance.

There was Mrs. Pipchin, for example, that grim old lady with a mottled face like bad marble, who acquired an immense reputation as a manager of

children, by the simple device of giving them everything they didn't like and nothing that they did! Whose constitution required mutton chops hot and hot, and buttered toast in similar relays! And with whom one of Little Dombey's earliest dialogues in the Reading awakened invariably such bursts of hearty laughter! Seated in his tall, spindle-legged arm-chair by the fire, staring steadily at the exemplary Pipchin, Little Paul, we were told, was asked [in the most snappish voice possible], by that austere female, What he was thinking about?

"You," [in the gentlest childlike voice] said Paul, without the least reserve.

"And what are you thinking about me?"

"I'm — thinking — how old — you must be."

"You mustn't say such things as that, young gentleman. That'll never do."

"Why not [slowly and wonderingly]?"

"Never you mind, sir [shorter and sharper than ever]. Remember the story of the little boy that was gored to death by a mad bull for asking questions."

"If the bull [in a high falsetto voice and with greater deliberation than ever] was mad, how did he know that the boy asked questions? Nobody can go and whisper secrets to a mad bull. I don't believe that story."

Little Dombey's fellow-sufferers at Mrs. Pipchin's were hardly less ludicrous in their way than that bitter old victim of the Peruvian mines in her perennial weeds of black bombazeen. Miss Pankey, for instance, the mild little blue-eyed morsel of a child who was instructed by the Ogress that "nobody who sniffed before visitors ever went to heaven!" And her associate in misery, one Master Bitherstone, from India, who objected so much to the Pipchinian system, that before Little Dombey had been in the house five minutes, he privately consulted that gentleman if he could afford him any idea of the way back to Bengal! What the Pipchinian system was precisely, the Reader indicated perhaps the most happily by his way of saying, that instead of its encouraging a child's mind to develop itself, like a flower, it strove to open it by force, like an oyster. Fading slowly away while he is yet under Mrs. Pipchin's management, poor little Paul, as the audience well knew, was removed on to Doctor Blimber's Academy for Young Gentlemen. There the humorous company gathered around Paul immediately increased. But, before his going amongst them, the Reader enabled us more vividly to realise, by an additional touch or two, the

significance of the peculiarity of being “old fashioned,” for which the fading child appeared in everybody’s eyes so remarkable.

Wheeled down to the beach in a little invalid-carriage, he would cling fondly to his sister Florence. He would say to any chance child who might come to bear him company [in a soft, drawling, half-querulous voice, and with the gravest look], “Go away, if you please. Thank you, but I don’t want you.” He would wonder to himself and to Floy what the waves were always saying — always saying! At about the middle of the 47th page of the Reading copy of this book about Little Dombey, the copy from which Dickens Read, both in England and America, there is, in his handwriting, the word — “Pause.” It occurs just in between Little Dombey’s confiding to his sister, that if she were in India he should die of being so sorry and so lonely! and the incident of his suddenly waking up at another time from a long sleep in his little carriage on the shingles, to ask her, not only “What the rolling waves are saying so constantly, but What place is over there? — far away! — looking eagerly, as he inquires, towards some invisible region beyond the horizon!” That momentary pause will be very well remembered by everyone who attended this Reading.

One single omission we are still disposed to regret in the putting together of the materials for this particular Reading from the original narrative. In approaching Dr. Blimber’s establishment for the first time, we would gladly have witnessed the sparring-match, as one may say, on the very threshold, between Mrs. Pipchin the Ogress in bombazeen and the weak-eyed young man-servant who opens the door! The latter of whom, having “the first faint streaks or early dawn of a grin on his countenance — (it was mere imbecility)” as the Author himself explains parenthetically — Mrs. Pipchin at once takes it into her head, is inspired by impudence, and snaps at accordingly. Of this we saw nothing, however, in the Reading. We heard nothing of Mrs. Pipchin’s explosive, “How dare you laugh behind the gentleman’s back?” or of the weak-eyed young man’s answering in consternation, “I ain’t a laughing at nobody, ma’am.” Any more than of the Ogress saying a while later, “You’re laughing again, sir!” or of the young man, grievously oppressed, repudiating the charge with, “I *ain’t*. I never see such a thing as this!” The old lady as she passed on with, “Oh! he was a precious fellow,” leaving him, who was in fact all meekness and incapacity, “affected even to tears by the incident.” If we saw nothing, however, of that retainer of Dr. Blimber, we were introduced to another, meaning the blue-

coated, bright-buttoned butler, “who gave quite a winey flavour to the table-beer — he poured it out so superbly!” We had Dr. Blimber himself, besides, with his learned legs, like a clerical pianoforte — a bald head, highly polished, and a chin so double, it was a wonder how he ever managed to shave into the creases. We had Miss Blimber, in spectacles, like a ghoul, “dry and sandy with working in the graves of deceased languages.” We had Mrs. Blimber, not learned herself, but pretending to be so, which did quite as well, languidly exclaiming at evening parties, that if she could have known Cicero, she thought she could have died contented. We had Mr. Feeder, clipped to the stubble, grinding out his classic stops like a barrel-organ of erudition. Above all, we had Toots, the head boy, or rather “the head and shoulder boy,” he was so much taller than the rest! Of whom in that intellectual forcing-house (where he had “gone through” everything so completely, that one day he “suddenly left off blowing, and remained in the establishment a mere stalk”) people had come at last to say, “that the Doctor had rather overdone it with young Toots, and that when he began to have whiskers he left off having brains.” From the moment when Young Toots’s voice was first heard, in tones so deep, and in a manner so sheepish, that “if a lamb had roared it couldn’t have been more surprising,” saying to Little Dombey with startling suddenness, “How are you?” — every time the Reader opened his lips, as speaking in that character, there was a burst of merriment. His boastful account always called forth laughter — that his tailor was Burgess and Co., “fash’nable, but very dear.” As also did his constantly reiterated inquiries of Paul — always as an entirely new idea — “I say — it’s not of the slightest consequence, you know, but I should wish to mention it — how are you, you know?” Hardly less provocative of mirth was Briggs’s confiding one evening to Little Dombey, that his head ached ready to split, and “that he should wish himself dead if it wasn’t for his mother and a blackbird he had at home.”

Wonderful fun used to be made by the Reader of the various incidents at the entertainment given upon the eve of the vacations by Doctor and Mrs. Blimber to the Young Gentlemen and their Friends, when “the hour was half-past seven o’clock, and the object was quadrilles.” The Doctor pacing up and down in the drawing-room, full dressed, before anybody had arrived, “with a dignified and unconcerned demeanour, as if he thought it barely possible that one or two people might drop in by-and-by!” His exclaiming, when Mr. Toots and Mr. Feeder were announced by the butler,

and as if he were extremely surprised to see them, “Aye, aye, aye! God bless my soul!” Mr. Toots, one blaze of jewellery and buttons, so undecided, “on a calm revision of all the circumstances,” whether it were better to have his waistcoat fastened or unfastened both at top and bottom, as the arrivals thickened, so influencing him by the force of example, that at the last he was “continually fingering that article of dress as if he were performing on some instrument!” Thoroughly enjoyable though the whole scene was in its throng of ludicrous particulars, it merely led the way up appreciably and none the less tenderly, for all the innocent laughter, to the last and supremely pathetic incidents of the story as related thenceforth (save only for one startling instant) *sotto voce*, by the Reader.

The exceptional moment here alluded to, when his voice was suddenly raised, to be hushed again the instant afterwards, came at the very opening of the final scene by Little Dombey’s death-bed, where the sunbeams, towards evening, struck through the rustling blinds and quivered on the opposite wall like golden water. Overwhelmed, as little Paul was occasionally, with “his only trouble,” a sense of the swift and rapid river, “he felt forced,” the Reader went on to say, “to try and stop it — to stem it with his childish hands, or choke its way with sand — and when he saw it coming on, resistless, he cried out!” Dropping his voice from that abrupt outcry instantly afterwards, to the gentlest tones, as he added, “But a word from Florence, who was always at his side, restored him to himself” — the Reader continued in those subdued and tender accents to the end.

The child’s pity for his father’s sorrowing, was surpassed only, as all who witnessed this Reading will readily recollect, by the yet more affecting scene with his old nurse. Waking upon a sudden, on the last of the many evenings, when the golden water danced in shining ripples on the wall, waking mind and body, sitting upright in his bed —

“And who is this? Is this my old nurse?” asked the child, regarding with a radiant smile a figure coming in.

“Yes, yes. No other stranger would have shed those tears at sight of him, and called him her dear boy, her pretty boy, her own poor blighted child. No other woman would have stooped down by his bed and taken up his wasted hand and put it to her lips and breast, as one who had some right to fondle it. No other woman would have so forgotten everybody there but him and Floy, and been so full of tenderness and pity.”

The child's words coming then so lovingly: "Floy! this is a kind good face! I am glad to see it again. Don't go away, old nurse! Stay here! Good bye!" prepared one exquisitely for the rest. "Not good-bye?" "Ah, yes! good-bye!"

Then the end! The child having been laid down again with his arms clasped round his sister's neck, telling her that the stream was lulling him to rest, that now the boat was out at sea and that there was shore before him, and — Who stood upon the bank! Putting his hands together "as he had been used to do at his prayers" — not removing his arms to do it, but folding them so behind his sister's neck — "Mamma is like you, Floy!" he cried; "I know her by the face! But tell them that the picture on the stairs at school is not Divine enough. The light about the head is shining on me as I go!"

Then came two noble passages, nobly delivered.

First — when there were no eyes unmoistened among the listeners —

"The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old fashion! The fashion that came in with our first garments, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion — Death!"

And lastly — with a tearful voice —

"Oh, thank God, all who see it, for that older fashion yet of Immortality! And look upon us, Angels of young children, with regards not quite estranged, when the swift river bears us to the ocean!"

Remembering which exquisite words as he himself delivered them, having the very tones of his voice still ringing tenderly in our recollection, the truth of that beautiful remark of Dean Stanley's comes back anew as though it were now only for the first time realised, where, in his funeral sermon of the 19th June, 1870, he said that it was the inculcation of the lesson derived from precisely such a scene as this which will always make the grave of Charles Dickens seem "as though it were the very grave of those little innocents whom he created for our companionship, for our instruction, for our delight and solace." The little workhouse-boy, the little orphan girl, the little cripple, who "not only blessed his father's needy home, but softened the rude stranger's hardened conscience," were severally referred to by the preacher when he gave this charming thought its affecting application. But, foremost among these bewitching children of the

Novelist's imagination, might surely be placed the child-hero of a story closing hardly so much with his death as with his apotheosis.

MR CHOPS, THE DWARF.

It remains still a matter of surprise how so much was made out of this slight sketch by the simple force of its humorous delivery. "Mr. Chops, the Dwarf," as, indeed, was only befitting, was the smallest of all the Readings. The simple little air that so caught the dreamer's fancy, when played upon the harp by Scrooge's niece by marriage, is described after all, as may be remembered by the readers of the Carol, to to have been intrinsically "a mere nothing; you might learn to whistle it in two minutes." Say that in twenty minutes, or, at the outside, in half-an-hour, any ordinarily glib talker might have rattled through these comic recollections of Mr. Magsman, yet, when rattled through by Dickens, the laughter awakened seems now in the retrospect to have been altogether out of proportion. In itself the subject was anything but attractive, relating, as it did, merely to the escapade of a monstrosity. The surroundings are ignoble, the language is illiterate, the narrative from first to last is characterised by its grotesque extravagance. Yet the whole is presented to view in so utterly ludicrous an aspect, that one needs must laugh just as surely as one listened. Turning over the leaves now, and recalling to mind the hilarity they used to excite even among the least impressionable audience whenever they were fluttered (there are not a dozen of them altogether) on the familiar reading-desk, one marvels over the success of such an exceedingly small oddity as over the remembrance, let us say, of the brilliant performance of a fantasia on the jew's-harp by Rubenstein.

Nevertheless, slight though it is, the limning all through has touches of the most comic suggestiveness. Magsman's account of the show-house during his occupancy is sufficiently absurd to begin with — "the picter of the giant who was himself the heighth of the house," being run up with a line and pulley to a pole on the roof till "his 'ed was coeval with the parapet;" the picter of the child of the British Planter seized by two Boa Constrictors, "not that we never had no child, nor no Constrictors either;" similarly, the picter of the Wild Ass of the Prairies, "not that *we* never had no wild asses, nor wouldn't have had 'em at a gift." And to crown all, the picter of the Dwarf — who was "a uncommon small man, he really was. Certainly not so small as he was made out to be; but where *is* your Dwarf as

is?" A picture "like him, too considering, with George the Fourth, in such a state of astonishment at him as his Majesty couldn't with his utmost politeness and stoutness express." Wrote up the Dwarf was, we are told by Mr. Magsman, as Major Tpschoffski — "nobody couldn't pronounce the name," he adds, "and it never was intended anybody should." Corrupted into Chopski by the public, he gets called in the line Chops, partly for that reason, "partly because his real name, if he ever had any real name (which was dubious), was Stakes." Wearing a diamond ring "(or quite as good to look at)" on his forefinger, having the run of his teeth, "and he was a Woodpecker to eat — but all dwarfs are," receiving a good salary, and gathering besides as his perquisites the ha'pence collected by him in a Chaney sarsar at the end of every entertainment, the Dwarf never has any money somehow. Nevertheless, having what his admiring proprietor considers "a fine mind, a poetic mind," Mr. Chops indulges himself in the pleasing delusion that one of these days he is to Come Into his Property, his ideas respecting which are never realised by him so powerfully as when he sits upon a barrel-organ and has the handle turned! "Arter the wibration has run through him a little time," says Mr. Magsman, "he screeches out, 'Toby, I feel my property a-coming — gr-r-rind away! I feel the Mint a-jingling in me. I'm a-swelling out into the Bank of England!' Such," reflectively observes his proprietor, "is the influence of music on a poetic mind!" Adding, however, immediately afterwards, "Not that he was partial to any other music but a barrel-organ; on the contrary, hated it." Indulging in day-dreams about Coming Into his Property and Going Into Society, for which he feels himself formed, and to aspire towards which is his avowed ambition, the mystery, as to where the Dwarf's salary and ha'pence all go, is one day cleared up by his winning a prize in the Lottery, a half-ticket for the twenty-five thousand pounder.

Mr. Chops Comes Into his Property — twelve thousand odd hundred. Further than that, he Goes Into Society "in a chay and four greys with silk jackets." It was at this turning-point in the career of his large-headed but diminutive hero that the grotesque humour of the Reader would play upon the risible nerves of his hearers, as, according to Mr. Disraeli's phrase, Sir Robert Peel used to play upon the House of Commons, "like an old fiddle." Determined to Go Into Society in style, with his twelve thousand odd hundred, Mr. Chops, we are told, "sent for a young man he knowed, as had a very genteel appearance, and was a Bonnet at a gaming-booth. Most

respectable brought up,” adds Mr. Magsman — ”father having been imminent in the livery-stable line, but unfortunate in a commercial crisis through painting a old grey ginger-bay, and sellin’ him with a pedigree.” In intimate companionship with this Bonnet, “who said his name was Normandy, which it warn’t,” Mr. Magsman, on invitation by note a little while afterwards, visits Mr. Chops at his lodgings in Pall Mall, London, where he is found carousing not only with the Bonnet but with a third party, of whom we were then told with unconscionable gravity, “When last met, he had on a white Roman shirt, and a bishop’s mitre covered with leopard-skin, and played the clarionet all wrong in a band at a Wild Beast Show.” How the reverential Magsman, finding the three of them blazing away, blazes away in his turn while remaining in their company, who, that once heard it, has forgotten? “I made the round of the bottles,” he says — evidently proud of his achievement — ”first separate (to say I had done it), and then mixed ‘em altogether (to say I had done it), and then tried two of ‘em as half-and-half, and then t’other two; altogether,” he adds, “passin’ a pleasin’ evenin’ with a tendency to feel muddled.” How all Mr. Chop’s blazing away is to terminate everybody but himself perceives clearly enough from the commencement.

Normandy having bolted with the plate, and “him as formerly wore the bishop’s mitre” with the jewels, the Dwarf gets out of society by being, as he significantly expresses it, “sold out,” and in this plight returns penitently one evening to the show-house of his still-admiring proprietor. Mr. Magsman happens at the moment to be having a dull *tête-à-tête* with a young man without arms, who gets his living by writing with his toes, “which,” says the low-spirited narrator, “I had taken on for a month — though he never drawed — except on paper.” Hearing a kicking at the street-door, “‘Halloa!’ I says to the young man, ‘what’s up?’ He rubs his eyebrows with his toes, and he says, ‘I can’t imagine, Mr. Magsman’ — which that young man [with an air of disgust] never *could* imagine nothin’, and was monotonous company.” Mr. Chops — ”I never dropped the ‘Mr.’ with him,” says his again proprietor; “the world might do it, but not me” — eventually dies. Having sat upon the barrel-organ over night, and had the handle turned through all the changes, for the first and only time after his fall, Mr. Chops is found on the following morning, as the disconsolate Magsman expresses it, “gone into much better society than either mine or Pall Mall’s.” Out of such unpromising materials as these could the alembic

of a genius all-embracing in its sympathies extract such an abundance of innocent mirth — an illiterate showman talking to us all the while about such people as the Bonnet of a gaming-booth, or a set of monstrosities he himself has, for a few coppers, on exhibition. Yet, as Mr. Magsman himself remarks rather proudly when commenting on his own establishment, “as for respectability, — if threepence ain’t respectable, what is?”

THE POOR TRAVELLER.

Apart altogether from the Readings of Charles Dickens, has the reader of this book any remembrance of the original story of "The Poor Traveller"? If he has, he will recognise upon the instant the truth of the words in which we would here speak of it, as of one of those, it may be, slight but exquisite sketches, which are sometimes, in a happy moment, thrown off by the hand of a great master. Comparatively trivial in itself — carelessly dashed off, apparently hap-hazard — having no pretension about it in the least, it is anything, in short, but a finished masterpiece. Yet, for all that, it is marked, here and there, by touches so felicitous and inimitable in their way, that we hardly find the like in the artist's more highly elaborated and ambitious productions. Not that one would speak of it, however, as of a drawing upon toned paper in neutral tint, or as of a picture pencilled in sepia or with crayons; one would rather liken it to a radiant water-colour, chequered with mingled storm and sunshine, sparkling with lifelike effects, and glowing with brilliancy. And yet the little work is one, when you come to look into it, that is but the product of a seemingly artless *abandon*, in which without an effort the most charming results have been arrived at, obviously upon the instant, and quite unerringly.

Trudging down to Chatham, footsore and without a farthing in his pocket, it is in this humble guise first of all that he comes before us, this Poor Traveller. Christian name, Eichard, better known as Dick, his own surname dropped upon the road, he assumes that of Doubledick — being thenceforth spoken of all through the tale, even to the very end of it, by his new name, as Eichard Doubledick. A scapegrace, a ne'er-do-well, an incorrigible, hopeless of himself, despaired of by others, he has "gone wrong and run wild." His heart, still in the right place, has been sealed up. "Betrothed to a good and beautiful girl whom he had loved better than she — or perhaps even he — believed," he had given her cause, in an evil hour, to tell him solemnly that she would never marry any other man; that she would live single for his sake, but that her lips, "that Mary Marshall's lips," would never address another word to him on earth, bidding him in the end — Go! and Heaven forgive him! Hence, in point of fact, this journey of his on foot down to Chatham, for the purpose of enlisting, if possible, in a cavalry

regiment, his object being to get shot, though he himself thinks in his devil-may-care indifference, that “he might as well ride to death as be at the trouble of walking.” Premising simply that his hero’s age is at this time twenty-two, and his height five foot ten, and that, there being no cavalry at the moment in Chatham, he enlists into a regiment of the line, where he is glad to get drunk and forget all about it, the Author readily made the path clear for the opening up of his narrative.

Whenever Charles Dickens introduced this tale among his Readings, how beautifully he related it! After recounting how Private Doubledick was clearly going to the dogs, associating himself with the dregs of every regiment, seldom being sober and constantly under punishment, until it became plain at last to the whole barracks that very soon indeed he would come to be flogged, when the Reader came at this point to the words — “Now the captain of Doubledick’s company was a young gentleman not above five years his senior, whose eyes had an expression in them which affected Private Doubledick in a very remarkable way” — the effect was singularly striking. Out of the Reader’s own eyes would look the eyes of that Captain, as the Author himself describes them: “They were bright, handsome, dark eyes, what are called laughing eyes generally, and, when serious, rather steady than severe.” But, he immediately went on to say, they were the only eyes then left in his narrowed world that could not be met without a sense of shame by Private Doubledick. Insomuch that if he observed Captain Taunton coming towards him, even when he himself was most callous and unabashed, “he would rather turn back and go any distance out of the way, than encounter those two handsome, dark, bright eyes.” Here it was that came, what many will still vividly remember, as one of the most exquisitely portrayed incidents in the whole of this Reading — the interview between Captain Taunton and Private Doubledick!

The latter, having passed forty-eight hours in the Black Hole, has been just summoned, to his great dismay, to the Captain’s quarters. Having about him all the squalor of his incarceration, he shrinks from making his appearance before one whose silent gaze even was a reproach. However, not being so mad yet as to disobey orders, he goes up to the officers’ quarters immediately upon his release from the Black Hole, twisting and breaking in his hands as he goes along a bit of the straw that had formed its decorative furniture.

““Come in!”

“Private Doubledick pulled off his cap, took a stride forward and stood in the light of the dark bright eyes.”

From that moment until the end of the interview, the two men alternately were standing there distinctly before the audience upon the platform.

“Doubledick! do you know where you are going to?”

“To the devil, sir!”

“Yes, and very fast.”

Thereupon one did not hear the words simply, one saw it done precisely as it is described in the original narrative: “Private Richard Doubledick turned the straw of the Black Hole in his mouth and made a *miserable* salute of acquiescence.” Captain Taunton then remonstrates with him thus earnestly: “Doubledick, since I entered his Majesty’s service, a boy of seventeen, I have been pained to see many men of promise going that road; but I have never been *so* pained to see a man determined to make the shameful journey, as I have been, ever since you joined the regiment, to see *you*.” At this point in the printed story, as it was originally penned, one reads that “Private Richard Doubledick began to find a film stealing over the floor at which he looked; also to find the legs of the Captain’s breakfast-table turning crooked as if he saw them through water.” Although those words are erased in the reading copy, and were not uttered, pretty nearly the effect of them was visible when, after a momentary pause, the disheartened utterance was faltered out —

“I am only a common soldier, sir. It signifies very little what such a poor brute comes to.”

In answer to the next remonstrance from his officer, Doubledick’s words are blurted out yet more despairingly —

“I hope to get shot soon, sir, and then the regiment, and the world together, will be rid of me!”

What are the descriptive words immediately following this in the printed narrative? They also were visibly expressed upon the platform. “Looking up he met the eyes that had so strong an influence over him. He put his hand before his own eyes, and the breast of his disgrace-jacket swelled as if it would fly asunder.” His observant adviser thereupon quietly but very earnestly remarks, that he “would rather see this in him (Doubledick) than he would see five thousand guineas counted out upon the table between them for a gift to his (the Captain’s) good mother,” adding suddenly, “Have you a mother?” Doubledick is thankful to say she is dead. Reminded by the

Captain that if his praises were sounded from mouth to mouth through the whole regiment, through the whole army, through the whole country, he would wish she had lived to say with pride and joy, "He is my son!" Doubledick cries out, "Spare me, sir! She would never have heard any good of me. She would never have had any pride or joy in owning herself my mother. Love and compassion she might have had, and would always have had, I know; but not — spare me, sir! I am a broken wretch quite at your mercy." By this time, according to the words of the writing, according only to the eloquent action of the Reading, "He had turned his face to the wall and stretched out his *imploring* hand." How eloquently that "imploring hand" spoke in the agonised, dumb supplication of its movement, coupled as it was with the shaken frame and the averted countenance, those who witnessed this Reading will readily recall to their recollection. As also the emotion expressed in the next broken utterances exchanged by the interlocutors: —

"My friend — — —"

"God bless you, sir!"

Captain Taunton, interrupted for the moment, adding —

"You are at the crisis of your fate, my friend. Hold your course unchanged a little longer, and you know what must happen, *I* know better than ever you can imagine, that after that has happened you are a lost man. No man who could shed such tears could bear such marks."

Doubledick, replying in a low shivering voice, "I fully believe it, sir," the young Captain adds —

"But a man in any station can do his duty, and in doing it can earn his own respect, even if his case should be so very unfortunate and so very rare, that he can earn no other man's. A common soldier, poor brute though you called him just now, has this advantage in the stormy times we live in, that he always does his duty before a host of sympathising witnesses. Do you doubt that he may so do it as to be extolled through a whole regiment, through a whole army, through a whole country? Turn while you may yet retrieve the past and try."

With a nearly bursting heart Richard cries out, "I will! I ask but one witness, sir!" The reply is instant and significant, "I understand you. I will be a watchful and a faithful one." It is a compact between them, a compact sealed and ratified. "I have heard from Private Doubledick's own lips," said the narrator, and in tones how manly and yet how tender in their vibration,

“that he dropped down upon his knee, kissed that officer’s hand, arose, and went out of the light of the dark bright eyes, an altered man.” From the date to them both of this memorable interview he followed the two hither and thither among the battle-fields of the great war between England in coalition with the other nations of Europe and Napoleon.

Wherever Captain Taunton led, there, “close to him, ever at his side, firm as a rock, true as the sun, brave as Mars,” would for certain be found that famous soldier Sergeant Doubledick. As Sergeant-Major the latter is shown, later on, upon one desperate occasion cutting his way single-handed through a mass of men, recovering the colours of his regiment, and rescuing his wounded Captain from the very jaws of death “in a jungle of horses’ hoofs and sabres” — for which deed of gallantry and all but desperation, he is forthwith raised from the ranks, appearing no longer as a non-commissioned officer, but as Ensign Doubledick. At last, one fatal day in the trenches, during the siege of Badajos, Major Taunton and Ensign Doubledick find themselves hurrying forward against a party of French infantry. At this juncture, at the very moment when Doubledick sees the officer at the head of the enemy’s soldiery — “a courageous, handsome, gallant officer of five-and-thirty” — waving his sword, and with an eager and excited cry rallying his men, they fire, and Major Taunton has dropped. The encounter closing within ten minutes afterwards on the arrival of assistance to the two Englishmen, “the best friend man ever had” is laid upon a coat spread out upon the wet clay by the heart-riven subaltern, whom years before his generous counsel had rescued from ignominious destruction. Three little spots of blood are visible on the shirt of Major Taunton as he lies there with the breast of his uniform opened.

“Dear Doubledick, — I am dying.”

“For the love of Heaven, no! Taunton! My preserver, my guardian angel, my witness! Dearest, truest, kindest of human beings! Taunton! For God’s sake!”

To listen to that agonised entreaty as it started from the trembling and one could almost have fancied whitened lips of the Reader, was to be with him there upon the instant on the far-off battle-field. Taunton dies “with his hand upon the breast in which he had revived a soul.” Doubledick, prostrated and inconsolable in his bereavement, has but two cares seemingly for the rest of his existence — one to preserve a packet of hair to be given to the mother of the friend lost to him; the other, to encounter that French officer who had

rallied the men under whose fire that friend had fallen. "A new legend," quoth the narrator, "now began to incubate among our troops; and it was, that when he and the French officer came face to face once more, there would be weeping in France." Failing to meet him, however, through all the closing scenes of the great war, Doubledick, by this time promoted to his lieutenancy, follows the old regimental colours, ragged, scarred, and riddled with shot, through the fierce conflicts of Quatre Bras and Ligny, falling at last desperately wounded — all but dead — upon the field of Waterloo.

How, having been tenderly nursed during the total eclipse of an appallingly lengthened period of unconsciousness, he wakes up at last in Brussels to find that during a little more than momentary and at first an utterly forgotten interval of his stupor, he has been married to the gentle-handed nurse who has been all the while in attendance upon him, and who is no other, of course, than his faithful first love, Mary Marshall! How, returning homewards, an invalided hero, Captain Doubledick becomes, in a manner, soon afterwards, the adopted son of Major Taunton's mother! How the latter, having gone, some time later, on a visit to a French family near Aix, is followed by her other son, her other self, he has almost come to be, "now a hardy, handsome man in the full vigour of life," on his receiving from the head of the house a gracious and courtly invitation for "the honour of the company of cet homme si justement célèbre, Monsieur le Capitaine Richard Double-dick!" These were among the incidents in due sequence immediately afterwards recounted!

Arriving at the old chateau upon a fête-day, when the household are scattered abroad in the gardens and shrubberies at their rejoicings, Captain Double-dick passes through the open porch into the lofty stone hall. There, being a total stranger, he is almost scared by the intrusive clanking of his boots. Suddenly he starts back, feeling his face turn white! For, in the gallery looking down at him, is the French officer whose picture he has carried in his mind so long and so far. The latter, disappearing in another instant for the staircase, enters directly afterwards with a bright sudden look upon his countenance, "Such a look as it had worn in that fatal moment," so well and so terribly remembered! All this was portrayed with startling vividness by the Author of the little sketch in his capacity as the sympathetic realizer of the dreams of his own imagination.

Exquisite was the last glimpse of the delineation, when the Captain — after many internal revulsions of feeling, while he gazes through the

window of the bed-chamber allotted to him in the old château, “whence he could see the smiling prospect and the peaceful vineyards “ — thinks musingly to himself, “Spirit of my departed friend, is it through thee these better thoughts are rising in my mind! Is it thou who hast shown me, all the way I have been drawn to meet this man, the blessings of the altered time! Is it thou who hast sent thy stricken mother to me, to stay my angry hand! Is it from thee the whisper comes, that this man only did his duty as thou didst — and as I did through thy guidance, which saved me, here on earth — and that he did no more!” Then it was, we were told, there came to him the second and crowning resolution of his life: “That neither to the French officer, nor to the mother of his departed friend, nor to any soul while either of the two was living, would he breathe what only *he* knew.” Then it was that the author perfected his Reading by the simple utterance of its closing words — ”And when he touched that French officer’s glass with his own that day at dinner, he secretly forgave him — forgave him in the name of the Divine Forgiver.” With a moral no less noble and affecting, no less grand and elevating than this, the lovely idyll closed. The final glimpse of the scene at the old Aix château was like the view of a sequestered orchard through the ivied porchway of a village church. The concluding words of the prelection were like the sound of the organ voluntary at twilight, when the worshippers are dispersing.

MRS. GAMP.

A whimsical and delightful recollection comes back to the writer of these pages at the moment of inscribing as the title of this Reading the name of the preposterous old lady who is the real heroine of "Martin Chuzzlewit." It is the remembrance of Charles Dickens's hilarious enjoyment of a casual jest thrown out, upon his having incidentally mentioned — as conspicuous among the shortcomings of the first acting version of that story upon the boards of the Lyceum — the certainly surprising fact that Mrs. Gamp's part, as originally set down for Keeley, had not a single "which" in it. "Why, it ought actually to have begun with one!" was the natural exclamation of the person he was addressing, who added instantly, with affected indignation, "Not one? Why, next they'll be playing Macbeth without the Witches!" The joyous laugh with which this ludicrous conceit was greeted by the Humorist, still rings freshly and musically in our remembrance. And the recollection of it is doubtless all the more vivid because of the mirthful retrospect having relation to one of the most recent of Dickens's blithe home dinners in his last town residence immediately before his hurried return to Gad's Hill in the summer of 1870. Although we were happily with him afterwards, immediately before the time came when we could commune with him no more, the occasion referred to is one in which we recall him to mind as he was when we saw him last at his very gayest, radiant with that sense of enjoyment which it was his especial delight to diffuse around him throughout his life so abundantly.

Among all his humorous creations, Mrs. Gamp is perhaps the most intensely original and the most thoroughly individualised. She is not only a creation of character, she is in herself a creator of character. To the Novelist we are indebted for Mrs. Gamp, but to Mrs. Gamp herself we are indebted for Mrs. Harris. That most mythical of all imaginary beings is certainly quite unique; she is strictly, as one may say, *sui generis* in the whole world of fiction. A figment born from a figment; one fancy evolved from another; the shadow of a shadow. If only in remembrance of that one daring adumbration from Mrs. Gamp's sinner consciousness, that purely supposititious entity "which her name, I'll not deceive you, is Harris," one would say that Mr. Mould, the undertaker, has full reason for exclaiming, in

regard to Mrs. Gamp, "I'll tell you what, that's a woman whose intellect is immensely superior to her station in life. That's a woman who observes and reflects in a wonderful manner." Mr. Mould becomes so strongly impressed at last with a sense of her exceptional merits, that in a deliciously ludicrous outburst of professional generosity he caps the climax of his eulogium by observing, "She's the sort of woman, now, that one would almost feel disposed to bury for nothing — and do it neatly, too!" Thoroughly akin, by the way, to which exceedingly questionable expression of goodwill on the part of Mr. Mould, is Mrs. Gamp's equally confiding outburst of philanthropy from *her* point of view, where she remarks — of course to her familiar, as Socrates when communing with his Daemon — "Mrs. Harris," I says to her, 'don't name the charge, for if I could afford to lay my fellow-creeturs out for nothink, I would gladly do it, sich is the love I bears 'em.'"

A benevolent unbosoming, or self-revelation, that last, on the part of Mrs. Gamp, so astoundingly outspoken of its kind, that it forces upon one, in regard to her whole character, the almost inevitable reflection that her grotesque and inexhaustible humour, like Falstaff's irrepressible and exhilarating wit, redeems what would be otherwise in itself utterly irredeemable. For, as commentators have remarked, in regard to Shakspeare's Fat Knight, that Sir John is an unwieldy mass of every conceivable bad quality, being, among other things, a liar, a coward, a drunkard, a braggart, a cheat, and a debauchee, one might bring, if not an equally formidable, certainly an equally lengthened, indictment against the whole character of Mrs. Gamp, justifying the validity of each disreputable charge upon the testimony of her own evidence.

In its way, the impersonation of Mrs. Gamp by her creator was nearly as surprising as his original delineation of her in his capacity as Novelist. Happily, to bring out the finer touches of the humorous in her portraiture, there were repeated asides in the Reading, added to which other contrasting characters were here and there momentarily introduced. Mr. Pecksniff — hardly recognisable, by the way, *as* Mr. Pecksniff — took part, but a very subordinate part, in the conversation, as did Mr. Mould also, and as, towards the close of it, likewise did Mrs. Prig of Bartlemy's. But, monopolist though Mrs. Gamp showed herself to be in her manner of holding forth, her talk never degenerated into a monologue.

Mr. Pecksniff setting forth in a hackney cabriolet to-arrange, on behalf of Jonas Chuzzlewit, for the funeral of the latter's father, in regard to which he

is enjoined to spare no expense, arrives, in due course, in Kings-gate-street, High Holborn, in quest of the female functionary — "a nurse and watcher, and performer of nameless offices about the dead, whom the undertaker had recommended." His destination is reached when he stands face to face with the lady's lodging over the bird-fancier's, "next door but one to the celebrated mutton-pie shop, and directly opposite to the original cats'-meat warehouse." Here Mr. Pecksniff's performance upon the knocker naturally arouses the whole neighbourhood, it, the knocker, being so ingeniously constructed as to wake the street with ease, without making the smallest impression upon the premises to which it was addressed. Everybody is at once under the impression that, as a matter of course, he is "upon an errand touching not the close of life, but the other end" — the married ladies, especially, crying out with uncommon interest, "Knock at the winder, sir, knock at the winder! Lord bless you, don't lose no more time than you can help, — knock at the winder!" Mrs. Gamp herself, when roused, is under the same embarrassing misapprehension. Immediately, however, Mr. Pecksniff has explained the object of his mission, Mrs. Gamp, who has a face for all occasions, thereupon putting on her mourning countenance, the surrounding matrons, while rating her visitor roundly, signify that they would be glad to know what he means by terrifying delicate females with "his corpses!" The unoffending gentleman eventually, after hustling Mrs. Gamp into the cabriolet, drives off "overwhelmed with popular execration."

Here it is that Mrs. Gamp's distinctive characteristics begin to assert themselves conspicuously. Her labouring under the most erroneous impressions as to the conveyance in which she is travelling, evidently confounding it with mail-coaches, insomuch that, in regard to her luggage, she clamours to the driver to "put it in the boot," her absorbing anxiety about the pattens, "with which she plays innumerable games of quoits upon Mr. Pecksniff's legs," her evolutions in that confined space with her most prominently visible chattel, "a species of gig umbrella," prepare the way for her still more characteristic confidences. Then in earnest — she had spoken twice before that from her window over the bird-fancier's — but then in earnest, on their approaching the house of mourning, her voice, in the Reading, became recognisable. A voice snuffy, husky, unctuous, the voice of a fat old woman, one so fat that she is described in the book as having had a difficulty in looking over herself — a voice, as we read elsewhere in

the novel, having borne upon the breeze about it a peculiar fragrance, “as if a passing fairy had hiccupped, and had previously been to a wine-vaults.”

““And so the gentleman’s dead, sir! Ah! the more’s the pity!’ — (*She didn’t even know his name.*) — ’But it’s as certain as being born, except that we can’t make our calc’lations as exact. Ah, dear!’“

Simply to hear those words uttered by the Reader — especially the interjected words above italicised — was to have a relish of anticipation at once for all that followed. Mrs. Gamp’s pathetic allusion, immediately afterwards, to her recollection of the time “when Gamp was summonsed to his long home,” and when she “see him a-laying in the hospital with a penny-piece on each eye, and his wooden leg under his left arm,” not only confirmed the delighted impression of the hearers as to their having her there before them in her identity, but was the signal for the roars of laughter that, rising and falling in volume all through the Reading, terminated only some time after its completion.

Immediately after came the first introduction by her of the name of Mrs. Harris. “At this point,” observed the narrator, “she was fain to stop for breath. And,” he went on directly to remark, with a combination of candour and seriousness that were in themselves irresistibly ludicrous, “advantage may be taken of the circumstance to state that a fearful mystery surrounded this lady of the name of Harris, whom no one in the circle of Mrs. Gamp’s acquaintance had ever seen; neither did any human being know her place of residence — the prevalent opinion being that she was a phantom of Mrs. Gamp’s brain, created for the purpose of holding complimentary dialogues with her on all manner of subjects.” Eminently seasonable, as a preliminary flourish in this way, is the tribute paid by her to Mrs. Gamp’s abstemiousness, on the understanding that is, that the latter’s one golden rule of life, is complied with — ”‘Leave the bottle on the chimbley-piece, and don’t ast me to take none, but let me put my lips to it when I am so dispoed, and then, Mrs. Harris, I says, I will do what I am engaged to, according to the best of my ability.’ ‘Mrs. Gamp’ she says, in answer, ‘if ever there was a sober creetur to be got at eighteen-pence a day for working people, and three-and-six for gentlefolks, — night-watching being a extra charge, — you are that inwallable person. Never did I think, till I know’d you, as any woman could sick-nurse and monthly likeways, on the little that you takes to drink.’ ‘Mrs. Harris, ma’am,’ I says to her, ‘none on us knows what we can do till we tries; and wunst *I* thought so too. But now,’ I says,

‘my half a pint of porter fully satisfies; perwisin’, Mrs. Harris, that it’s brought reg’lar, and draw’d mild.’“ Not but occasionally even that modest “sip of liquor” she finds so far “settling heavy on the chest” as to necessitate, every now and then, a casual dram by way of extra quencher.

It was so arranged in the Reading that, immediately upon the completion of Mrs. Gamp’s affecting narrative of the confidential opinions of her sobriety entertained by Mrs. Harris, Mr. Mould, the undertaker, opportunely presented to the audience his well-remembered countenance — “a face in which a queer attempt at melancholy was at odds with a smirk of satisfaction.” The impersonation, here, was conveyed in something better than the unsatisfactory hint by which that attempted in regard to Mr. Pecksniff was alone to be expressed. Speaking of Old Chuzzlewit’s funeral, as ordered by his bereaved son, Mr. Jonas, with “no limitation, positively no limitation in point of expense,” the undertaker observes to Mr. Pecksniff, “This is one of the most impressive cases, sir, that I have seen in the whole course of my professional experience. Anything so filial as this — anything so honourable to human nature, anything *so* expensive, anything so calculated to reconcile all of us to the world we live in — never yet came under my observation. It only proves, sir, what was so forcibly expressed by the lamented poet, — buried at Stratford, — that there is good in everything.” Even the very manner of his departure was delicious: “Mr. Mould was going away with a brisk smile, when he remembered the occasion,” we read in the narrative and saw on the platform. “Quickly becoming depressed again, he sighed; looked into the crown of his hat, as if for comfort; put it on without finding any; and slowly departed.”

The spirit and substance of the whole Reading, however, were, as a matter of course, Mrs. Gamp and her grotesque remembrances, drawn, these latter from the inexhaustible fund of her own personal and mostly domestic experiences. “Although the blessing of a daughter,” she observed, in one of her confiding retrospects, “was deniged me, which, if we had had one, Gamp would certainly have drunk its little shoes right off its feet, as with one precious boy he did, and arterwards sent the child a errand to sell his wooden leg for any liquor it would fetch as matches in the rough; which was truly done beyond his years, for ev’ry individgie penny that child lost at tossing for kidney pies, and come home arterwards quite bold, to break the news, and offering to drown’d himself if such would be a satisfaction to his parents.” At another moment, when descanting upon all her children

collectively in one of her faithfully reported addresses to her familiar: “‘My own family,’ I says, ‘has fallen out of three-pair backs, and had damp doorsteps settled on their lungs, and one was turned up smilin’ in a bedstead unbeknown. And as to husbands, there’s a wooden leg gone likeways home to its account, which in its constancy of walking into public-’ouses, and never coming out again till fetched by force, was quite as weak as flesh, if not weaker.’”

Somehow, when those who were assisting at this Reading, as the phrase is, had related to them the manner in which Mrs. Gamp entered on her official duties in the sick chamber, they appeared to be assisting also at her toilette: as, for example, when “she put on a yellow nightcap of prodigious size, in shape resembling a cabbage, having previously divested herself of a row of bald old curls, which could scarcely be called false they were so innocent of anything approaching to deception.” One missed sadly at this point in the later version of this Reading what was included in her first conversation on the doormat as to her requirements for supper enumerated after this fashion, “in tones expressive of faintness,” to the housemaid: “I think, young woman, as I could peck a little bit of pickled salmon, with a little sprig of fennel and a sprinkling o’ white pepper. I takes new bread, my dear, with jest a little pat o’ fledge butter and a mossel o’ cheese. With respect to ale, if they draws the Brighton Tipper at any ‘ouse nigh here, I takes that ale at night, my love; not as I cares for it myself, but on accounts of its being considered wakeful by the doctors; and whatever you do, young woman, don’t bring me more than a shilling’s worth of gin-and-water, warm, when I rings the bell a second time; for that is always my allowange, and I never takes a drop beyond. In case there should be sich a thing as a cucumber in the ‘ouse, I’m rather partial to ‘em, though I am but a poor woman.” Winding all up, — with one of those amazing confusions of a Scriptural recollection which prompts her at another time in the novel to exclaim, in regard to the Ankworks package, “‘I wish it was in Jonadge’s belly, I do,’ appearing to confound the prophet with the whale in that mysterious aspiration,” — by observing at this point, “Rich folks may ride on camels, but it ain’t so easy for ‘em to see out of a needle’s eye. That is my comfort, and I hope I knows it.” One whole chapter of “Martin Chuzzlewit,” with the exception of the merest fragment of it — *the* chapter pre-eminently in relation to Mrs. Gamp — we always regretted as having been either overlooked or purposely set aside in the compilation both of the

earlier and the later version of this Reading, the chapter, that is, in which Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Prig converse together in the former's sleeping apartment.

The mere description of the interior of that chamber, related by the Author's lips, would have been so irresistibly ridiculous — the tent bedstead ornamented with pippins carved in timber, that tumbled down on the slightest provocation like a wooden shower-bath — the chest of drawers, from which the handles had long been pulled off, so that its contents could only be got at either by tilting the whole structure until all the drawers fell out together, or by opening each of them singly with knives like oysters — the miscellaneous salad bought for twopence by Betsey Prig on condition that the vendor could get it all into her pocket (including among other items a green vegetable of an expansive nature, of such magnificent proportions that before it could be got either in or out it had to be shut up like an umbrella), which was happily accomplished in High Holborn, to the breathless interest of a hackney-coach stand.

One inestimable portion, however, of this memorable occasion of festivity between those frequend pardners, Betsey Prig and Sairey Gamp, was, by a most ingenious dovetailing together of two disjointed parts, incorporated with the adroitly compacted materials of a Reading that was as brief as the laughter provoked by it was boisterous and inextinguishable. As to the manner of the dovetailing, it will be readily recalled to recollection. Immediately upon Mrs. Gamp's awaking at the close of her night watch, we were told that Mrs. Prig relieved punctually, but that she relieved in an ill temper. "The best among us have their failings, and it must be conceded of Mrs. Prig," observed the Reader with a hardly endurable gravity of explanation, "that if there were a blemish in the goodness of her disposition, it was a habit she had of not bestowing all its sharp and acid properties upon her patients (as a thoroughly amiable woman would have done), but of keeping a considerable remainder for the service of her friends." Looking offensively at Mrs. Gamp, and winking her eye, as Mrs. Prig does immediately upon her entrance, it is felt by the former to be necessary that Betsey should at once be made sensible of her exact station in society; wherefore Mrs. Gamp prefaced a remonstrance with —

"Mrs. Harris, Betsey — — —"

"Bother Mrs. Harris!"

Then it was that the Reader added: —

“Mrs. Gamp looked at Betsey with amazement, incredulity, and indignation. Mrs. Prig, winking her eye tighter, folded her arms and uttered these tremendous words: —

““I don’t believe there’s no sich a person!”

“With these expressions, she snapped her fingers, once, twice, thrice, each time nearer to Mrs. Gamp, and then turned away as one who felt that there was now a gulf between them that nothing could ever bridge across.”

The most comic of all the Readings closed thus abruptly with a roar.

BOOTS AT THE HOLLY TREE INN.

Even the immortal Boots at the White Hart, Borough, who was first revealed to us in a coarse striped waistcoat with black calico sleeves and blue glass buttons, drab breeches and gaiters, and who answered to the name of Sam, would not, we are certain, have disdained to have been put in friendly relations with Cobbs, as one in every way worthy of his companionship. The Boots at the Holly Tree Inn, though more lightly sketched, was quite as much of an original creation in his way as that other Christmas friend of ours, the warm-hearted and loquacious Cheap Jack, Doctor Marigold. And each of those worthies, it should be added, had really about him an equal claim to be regarded, as an original creation, as written, or as impersonated by the Author. As a character orally portrayed, Cobbs was fully on a par with Doctor Marigold. Directly the Reader opened his lips, whether as the Boots or as the Cheap Jack, the Novelist seemed to disappear, and there instead, talking glibly to us from first to last just as the case might happen to be, was either the patterer on the cart footboard or honest Cobbs touching his hair with a bootjack. His very first words not only lead up to his confidences, but in the same breath struck the key-note of his character. "Where had he been? Lord, everywhere! What had he been? Bless you, everything a'most. Seen a good deal? Why, of course he had. Would be easier for him to tell what he hadn't seen than what he had. Ah! A deal, it would. What was the curiosest thing he'd seen? Well! He didn't know — couldn't name it momentarily — unless it was a Unicorn, and he see *him* over at a Fair. But" — and here came the golden retrospect, a fairy tale of love told by a tavern Boots, and told all through, moreover, as none but a Boots could tell it — "Supposing a young gentleman not eight year'old, was to run away with a fine young woman of seven, might I think *that* a queer start? Certainly! Then, that was a start as he himself had had his blessed eyes on — and he'd cleaned the shoes they run away in — and they was so little he couldn't get his hand into 'em." Whereupon, following up the thread of his discourse, Boots would take his crowd of hearers, quite willingly on their part, into the heart of the charming labyrinth.

The descriptive powers of Cobbs, it will be admitted, were for one thing very remarkable. Master Harry Walmers' father, for instance, he hits off to a

nicety in a phrase or two. “He was a gentleman of spirit, and good looking, and held his head up when he walked, and had what you may call Fire about him:” adding, that he wrote poetry, rode, ran, cricketed, danced and acted, and “done it all equally beautiful.” Another and a very significant touch, by the way, was imparted to that same portraiture later on, just, in point of fact before the close of Cobbs’s reminiscence, and one so lightly given that it was conveyed through a mere passing parenthesis — namely, where the young father was described by Boots as standing beside Master Harry Walmers’ bed, in the Holly Tree Inn, looking down at the little sleeping face, “looking wonderfully like it,” says Cobbs, who adds, “(they do say as he ran away with Mrs. Walmers).” Although Boots described Master Harry’s father from the first as “uncommon proud of him, as his only child, you see,” the worthy fellow took especial care at once to add, that “he didn’t spoil him neither.” Having a will of his own, and a eye of his own, and being one that would be minded, while he never tired of hearing the fine bright boy “sing his songs about Young May Moons is beaming, love, and When he who adores thee has left but the name, and that: still,” said Boots, “he kept the command over the child, and the child *was* a child, and it’s very much to be wished more of ‘em was.” At the particular period referred to in this portion of his narrative, Boots informed us pleasantly, that he came to know all about it by reason of his being in his then capacity as Mr. Walmers’ under-gardener, always about in the summer time, near the windows, on the lawn “a-mowing and sweeping, and weeding and pruning, and this and that” — with his eyes and ears open, of course, we may presume, in a manner befitting his intelligence.

Perhaps, there was after all nothing better in the delivery of the whole of this Reading, than the utterance of the two words italicised below in the first dialogue, reported by Boots as having taken place between himself and Master Harry Walmers, junior, when “that mite,” as Boots calls him, stops one day, along with the fine young woman of seven already mentioned, where Boots (then under-gardener, remember) was hoeing weeds in the gravel: —

“‘Cobbs,’ he says, ‘I like *you*.’ ‘Do you, sir? I’m proud to hear it.’ ‘Yes, I do, Cobbs. Why do I like you, do you think, Cobbs?’ ‘Don’t know, Master Harry, I’m sure.’ ‘Because Norah likes you, Cobbs.’ ‘Indeed, sir? That’s very gratifying.’ ‘Gratifying, Cobbs? It is better than millions of the brightest diamonds, to be liked by Norah?’ ‘*Certainly*, sir.’“

Confirmed naturally enough in his good opinion of Cobbs by this thorough community of sentiment, Master Harry, who has been given to understand from the latter that he is going to leave, and, further than that, on inquiring, that he wouldn't object to another situation "if it was a good 'un," observes, while tucking that other mite in her little sky-blue mantle under his arm, "Then, Cobbs, you shall be our head gardener when we are married." Boots, thereupon, in the person of the Reader, went on to describe how "the babies with their long bright curling hair, their sparkling eyes, and their beautiful light tread, rambled about the garden deep in love," sometimes here, sometimes there, always under his own sympathetic and admiring observation, until one day, down by the pond, he heard Master Harry say, "Adorable Norah, kiss me and say you love me to distraction." Altogether Cobbs seemed exactly, and with delicious humour, to define the entire situation when he declared, that "on the whole the contemplation of them two babies had a tendency to make him feel as if he was in love himself — only he didn't know who with!"

The delightful gravity of countenance (with a covert sparkle in the eye where the daintiest indications of fun were given by the Reader) lent a charm of its own to the merest nothing, comparatively, in the whimsical dialogues he was reporting. Master Harry, for example, having confided to Cobbs one evening, when the latter was watering the flowers, that he was going on a visit to his grandmama at York — "'Are you indeed, sir? I hope you'll have a pleasant time. I'm going into Yorkshire myself, when I leave here.' 'Are you going to your grandmama's, Cobbs?' 'No, sir. I haven't got such a thing.' 'Not as a grandmama, Cobbs?' 'No, sir.'" "Immediately after which, on the boy observing to his humble confidant, that he shall be so glad to go because "Norah's going," Cobbs, naturally enough, as it seemed, took occasion to remark, "You'll be all right then, sir, with your beautiful sweetheart by your side." Whereupon we realised more clearly than ever the delicate whimsicality of the whole delineation, when we saw, as well as heard, the boy return a-flushing, "Cobbs, I never let anybody joke about that when I can prevent them," Cobbs immediately explaining in all humility, "It wasn't a joke, sir — wasn't so meant." No wonder, Boots had exclaimed previously: "And the courage of that boy! Bless you, he'd have throwed off his little hat and tucked up his little sleeves and gone in at a lion, he would — if they'd happened to meet one, and she [Norah] had been frightened." At the close of Boots's record of this last-quoted conversation

with Master Harry, came one of the drollest touches in the Reading — ”“Cobbs,” says that boy, ‘I’ll tell you a secret. At Norah’s house, they have been joking her about me, and [with a wondering look] pretending to laugh at our being engaged! Pretending to make game of it, Cobbs!’ ‘Such, sir,’ I says, ‘is the depravity of human natur.’“ A glance during the utterance of which words, either at the Reader himself or at his audience, was something enjoyable.

Hardly less inspiriting in its way was the incidental mention, directly after this by Cobbs, of the manner in which he gave Mr. Walmers notice, not that he’d anything to complain of — ”“Thanking you, sir, I find myself as well sitiwated here as I could hope to be anywheres. The truth is, sir, that I’m a going to seek my fortun.’ ‘O, indeed, Cobbs?’ he says, ‘I hope you may find it.’“ Boots hereupon giving his audience the assurance, with the characteristic touch of the bootjack to his forehead, that “he hadn’t found it yet!”

Then came the delectable account of the elopement — full, true, and particular — from the veracious lips of Cobbs himself, at that time, and again some years afterwards, when he came to call up his recollections, Boots at the Holly Tree Inn. Passages here and there in his description of the incident were irresistibly laughable. Master Harry’s going down to the old lady’s in York, for example, “which old lady were so wrapt up in that child as she would have give that child the teeth in her head (if she had had any).” The arrival of “them two children,” again at the Holly Tree Inn, he, as bold as brass, tucking her in her little sky-blue mantle under his arm, with the memorable dinner order, “Chops and cherry pudding for two!” Their luggage, even, when gravely enumerated — the lady having “a parasol, a smelling bottle, a round and a half of cold buttered toast, eight peppermint drops, and a doll’s hair-brush;” the gentleman having “about half a dozen yards of string, a knife, three or four sheets of writing paper folded up surprisingly small, a orange, and a chaney mug with his name on it.” Several of the little chance phrases, the merest atoms of exclamation here and there, will still be borne in mind as having had an intense flavour of fun about them, as syllabled in the Reading. Boots’s “Sir, to you,” when his governor, the hotel-keeper, proposes to run over to York to quiet their friends’ minds, while Cobbs keeps his eye upon the innocents! Master Harry’s replying to Boots’ suggestion, that they should wile away the time by a walk down Love-lane — ”“Get out with you, Cobbs!’ — that was that

there boy's expression." The glee of the children was prettily told too on their finding "Good Cobbs! Dear Cobbs!" among the strangers around them at their temporary halting-place. They themselves appearing smaller than ever in his eyes, by reason of his finding them "with their little legs entirely off the ground, of course — and it really is not possible to express how small them children looked! — on a e-normous sofa;" immense at any time, but looking like a Great Bed of Ware then by comparison.

How, during the governor's absence in search of their friends, Cobbs, feeling himself all the while to be "the meanest rascal for deceiving 'em, that ever was born," gets up a cock and a bull story about a pony he's acquainted with, who'll take them on nicely to Gretna Green — but who was not at liberty the first day, and the next was only "half clipped, you see, and couldn't be took out in that state for fear it should strike to his inside" — was related with the zest of one who had naturally the keenest relish possible for every humorous particular. Finding the lady in tears one time when Boots goes to see how the runaway couple are getting on, "Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior, fatigued, sir?" asks Cobbs. "Yes, she is tired, Cobbs; but she is not used to be away from home, and she has been in low spirits again. Cobbs, do you think you could bring a biffin, please?" — "I ask your pardon, sir, What was it you — — — ?" "I think a Norfolk biffin would rouse her, Cobbs." Restoratives of that kind, Boots would seem to have regarded as too essential to Mrs. Harry Walmers junior's happiness. Hence, when he comes upon the pair over their dinner of "biled fowl and bread-and-butter pudding," Boots privately owns that "he could have wished to have seen her more sensible to the voice of love, and less abandoning of herself to the currants in the pudding." According to Cobbs's own account of the gentleman, however, it should be added that *he* too could play his part very effectively at table, for — having mentioned another while, how the two of them had ordered overnight sweet milk-and-water and toast and currant jelly for breakfast — when Cobbs comes upon them the next morning at their meal, he describes Master Harry as sitting behind his breakfast cup "a tearing away at the jelly as if he had been his own father!"

Remorseful in the thought of betraying them, Boots at one moment declared, that rather than combine any longer against them, he would by preference "have had it out in half-a-dozen rounds with the governor!" And at another time, when the said governor had returned from York, "with Mr. Walmers and a elderly lady," Boots, while conducting Mr. Walmers

upstairs, could not for the life of him help pausing at the room door, with, "I beg your pardon, sir, I hope you are not angry with Master Harry. For Master Harry's a fine boy, sir, and will do you credit and honour." Boots signifying while he related the circumstance, that "if the fine boy's father had contradicted him in the state of mind in which he then was, he should have 'fetched him a crack' and took the consequences." As for the appreciation of Master Harry by the female dependents at the Holly Tree, there were two allusions to *that* — one general, as may be said, the other particular — that were always the most telling hits, the two chief successes of the Reading. Who that once heard it, for example, has forgotten the Author's inimitable manner of saying, as the Boots — "The way in which the women of that house — *without* exception — *every* one of 'em — married *and* single — took to that boy when they heard the story, is surprising. It was as much as could be done to keep 'em from dashing into the room and kissing him. They climbed up all sorts of places, at the risk of their lives, to look at him through a pane of glass. *They was seven deep at the key-hole!*" The climax of fun came naturally at the close, however, when, having described how Mr. Walmers lifted his boy up to kiss the sleeping "little warm face of little Mrs. Harry Walmers, junior," at the moment of their separation, Boots, that is the Reader, cried out in the shrill voice of one of the chambermaids, "*It's a shame to part 'em!*"

Two reflections indulged in by Boots during the course of his narrative, being among the pleasantest in connection with this most graceful of all the purely comic Readings, may here, while closing these allusions to it, be recalled to mind not inappropriately. One — where Cobbs "wished with all his heart there was any impossible place where them two babies could have made an impossible marriage, and have lived impossibly happy ever afterwards." The other — where, with genial sarcasm, Boots propounds this brace of opinions by way of general summing up — "Firstly, that there are not many couples on their way to be married who are half as innocent as them two children. Secondly, that it would be a jolly good thing for a great many couples on their way to be married, if they could only be stopped in time, and brought back separate." With which cynical scattering of sugar-plums in the teeth, of married and single, the blithe Reading was laughingly brought to its conclusion.

BARBOX BROTHERS.

Nobody but the writer of this little freak of fancy could possibly have rendered the Reading of it in public worthy even of toleration. Perhaps no Reading that could be selected presents within the same compass so many difficulties to the audience who are listening, and to the Reader who is hardy enough to adventure upon its delivery. The closing incidents of the narrative are in themselves so improbable, we had all but said so impossible! Polly, at once so quaint and so captivating, when her words are perused upon the printed page, is so incapable of having her baby-prattle repeated by anybody else, without the imminent risk, the all but certainty, of its degenerating into mere childishness. It can scarcely be wondered, therefore, that "Barbox Brothers," though it actually was Read, and Read successfully, was hardly ever repeated. Everybody who has once looked into the story will bear in mind how, quite abruptly, almost haphazard, it comes to be narrated.

The lumbering, middle-aged, grey-headed hero of it, in obedience to the whim of a moment, gets out of a night train at the great central junction of the whole railway system of England. A drenching rain-storm and a windy platform, darkness and solitude are, to begin with, the agreeable surroundings of this eccentric traveller. He is stranded there, not high and dry, anything but that — on the contrary, soaked through and through, and at very low level indeed — during what the local officials regard as their deadeest time in all the twenty-four hours: what one of them, later on, terms emphatically their deadeest and buriedest time.

Already, even here, before the tale itself is in any way begun, the Author of it, in his capacity as Reader, somehow, by the mere manner of his delivery of a descriptive sentence or two, contrived to realise to his hearers in a wonderfully vivid way the strange incidents of the traffic in a scene like this, at those blackest intervals between midnight and daybreak. Now revealing — "Mysterious goods trains, covered with palls, and gliding on like vast weird funerals, conveying themselves guiltily away, as if their freight had come to a secret and unlawful end." Now, again — "Half miles of coal pursuing in a Detective manner, following when they led, stopping when they stopped, backing when they backed." One while the spectacle,

conjured up by a word or two was that of — "Unknown languages in the air, conspiring in red, green, and white characters." Another, with startling effect, it was — "An earthquake, with thunder and lightning, going up express to London." Here it is that Barbox Brothers, in the midst of these ghostly apparitions, is eventually extricated from the melancholy plight in which he finds himself saturated and isolated in the middle of a spiderous web of railroads.

His extricator is — Lamps! A worthy companion portrait to that of cinderous Mr. Toodles, the stoker, familiar to the readers of *Dombey*. Characters, those two, quite as typical, after their fashion, of the later railway period of Dickens, as even Sam Weller, the boots, and Old Weller, the coachman, were of his earlier coaching period in the days of *Pickwick*. To see him, in his capacity as Lamps, when excited, take what he called "a rounder" — that is to say, giving himself, with his oily handkerchief rolled up in the form of a ball, "an elaborate smear from behind the right ear, up the cheek, across the forehead, and down the other cheek, behind his left ear," after which operation he is described as having shone exceedingly — was to be with him, again, at once, in his greasy little cabin, which was suggestive to the sense of smell of a cabin in a whaler. How it came to pass that Lamps sang comic songs, of his own composition, to his bed-ridden daughter Phoebe, by way of enlivening her solitude, and how Phoebe, while manipulating the threads on her lace-pillow, as though she were playing a musical instrument, taught her little band of children to chant to a pleasant tune the multiplication-table, and so fix it and other useful knowledge indelibly upon the tablets of their memory, the Author-Reader would then relate, as no other Reader, however gifted, who was not also the Author, would have been allowed to do, supposing this latter had had the hardihood to attempt the relation.

As the Reading advanced, the difficulties not only increased, they became tenfold, immediately upon the introduction of Polly. Dickens, however, conquered them all somehow. But to anybody else, setting forth the story histrionically, impersonating the characters as they appeared, these difficulties would by necessity have been insuperable or simply overwhelming. Catching the very little fair-haired girl's Christian name readily enough, when she comes up to him in the street, with the surprising announcement, "O! if you please, I am lost!" Barbox Brothers can't for the life of him conjecture what her surname is, — carefully imitating, though

he does, the sound that comes from the childish lips, each time on its repetition. Hazarding "Trivits," first of all, then "Paddens," then "Tappitarver." Eventually, when the two arrive hand-in-hand at Barbox Brothers' hotel, nobody there could make out her name as she set it forth, "except one chambermaid, who said it was Constantinople — which it wasn't."

No wonder Barbox feels bigger and heavier in person every minute when he is being catechised by Polly! Asked by her if he knows any stories, and compelled to answer, "No! What a dunce you must be, mustn't you?" says Polly. Frightened nearly out of his wits at the dinner-table, when they are feasting together, by her getting on her feet upon her chair to reward him with a kiss, and then toppling forward among the dishes — he himself crying out in dismay, "Gracious angels! Whew! I thought we were in the fire, Polly!" — "What a coward you are, ain't you?" says Polly, when replaced.

Upon the next morning, when brought down to breakfast, after a comfortable night's sleep, passed by the child in a bed shared with "the Constantinopolitan chambermaid," Polly, "by that time a mere heap of dimples," poses poor, unwieldy Barbox by asking him, in a wheedling manner, "What are we going to do, you dear old thing?" On his suggesting their having a sight, at the Circus, of two long-tailed ponies, speckled all over — "No, no, no!" cries Polly, in an ecstasy. When he afterwards throws out a proposition that they shall also look in at the toy-shop, and choose a doll — "Not dressed," ejaculates Polly; "No, no, no — not dressed!" Barbox replying, "Full dressed; together with a house, and all things necessary for housekeeping!" Polly gives a little scream, and seems in danger of falling into a swoon of bliss. "What a darling you are!" she languidly exclaims, leaning back in her chair: "Come and be hugged." All this will indicate plainly enough the difficulties investing every sentence of this Reading, capped as they all are by the astounding *denouement* of the plot — Polly turning out to be (sly little thing!) the purposely-lost daughter of Barbox Brothers' old love, Beatrice, and of her husband, Tresham, for whom Barbox had not only been jilted, but by whom Barbox had been simultaneously and rather heavily defrauded.

Perhaps the pleasantest recollection of the whole Reading is, not Polly — the small puss turns out to be such a cunningly reticent little emissary — but her Doll, a "lovely specimen of Circassian descent, possessing as much boldness of beauty as was reconcileable with extreme feebleness of mouth,"

and combining a sky-blue pelisse with rose-coloured satin trousers, and a black velvet hat, “the latter seemingly founded on the portraits of the late Duchess of Kent.” One is almost reconciled to Polly, however, — becoming oblivious for the moment of her connivance in her mother’s secret device, and reminiscent only of her own unsophisticated mixture of prattle and impertinence — on learning, immediately after this elaborate description of the gorgeous doll of her choice, that “the name of this distinguished foreigner was (on Polly’s authority) Miss Melluka.”

THE BOY AT MUGBY.

Several *gamins* have been contributed to our literature by Dickens — quite as typical and quite as truthful in their way, each of them, as Hugo's Gavroche. There is Jo the poor crossing-sweeper. There is the immortal Dodger. There is his pal the facetious Charley Bates. And there is that delightful boy at the end of "The Carol," who conveys such a world of wonder through his simple reply of "Why, Christmas Day!" The boy who is "as big," he says himself, as the prize turkey, and who gets off at last quicker than a shot propelled by the steadiest hand at a trigger! Scattered up and down the Boz fictions, there are abundant specimens of a *genus* that, in one instance, is actually termed by the Humorist, "a town-made little boy" — this is in the memorable street scene where Squeers hooks Smike by the coat-collar with the handle of his umbrella. He is always especially great in his delineation of what one might call the human cock-sparrows of London. Kit, at the outset of his career, is another example; and Tom Scott yet another.

Sloppy carries us away into the suburbs, thereby taking us in a manner off the stones, and otherwise represents in his own proper person, buttons and all, less one of the dapper urchins we are now more particularly referring to, than the shambling hobbledohoy. Even in the unfinished story with which the Author's voluminous writings were closed, there was portrayed an entirely novel specimen, one marked by the most grotesque extravagance, in the shape of that impish malignant, "the Deputy," whose pastime at once and whole duty in life seemed to be making a sort of vesper cock-shy of Durdles and his dinner-bundle.

Conspicuous among these comic boys of Dickens may be remembered one who, instead of being introduced in any of the Novelist's larger works, from the Pickwick Papers clown to Edwin Drood, interpolates himself, as may be said, among one of the groups of Christmas stories, through the medium of a shrill monologue. "The Boy at Mugby," to wit, the one exhilarated and exhilarating appreciate of the whole elaborate system of Refreshmenting in this Isle of the Brave and Land of the Free, by which he means to say Britannia.

Laconically, "I am the Boy at Mugby," he announces. "That's about what I am." His exact location he describes almost with the precision of one giving latitude and longitude — explaining to a nicety where his stand is taken. "Up in a corner of the Down Refreshment Room at Mugby Junction," in the height of twenty-seven draughts [he's counted 'em, he tells us parenthetically, as they brush the First Class, hair twenty-seven ways], bounded on the nor'-west by the beer, and so on. He himself, he frankly informs you — in the event of your ever presenting yourself there before him at the counter, in quest of nourishment of any kind, either liquid or solid — will seem not to hear you, and will appear "in a absent manner to survey the Line through a transparent medium composed of your head and body," determined evidently not to serve you, that is, as long as you can possibly bear it! "That's me!" cries the Boy at Mugby, exultantly, — adding, with an intense relish for his occupation, "what a delightful lark it is!" As for the eatables and drinkables habitually set forth upon the counter, by what he generally speaks of as the Refreshmenters, quoth the Boy at Mugby, in a *naif* confidence, addressed to you in your capacity at once as applicant and victim, "when you're telegraphed, you should see 'em begin to pitch the stale pastry into the plates, and chuck the sawdust sang-wiches under the glass covers, and get out the — ha, ha! — the sherry — O, my eye, my eye! — for your refreshment." Once or twice in a way only, "The Boy at Mugby" was introduced among the Readings, and then merely as a slight stop-gap or interlude. Thoroughly enjoying the delivery of it himself, and always provoking shouts of laughter whenever this colloquial morsel was given, the Novelist seemed to be perfectly conscious himself that it was altogether too slight and trivial of its kind, to be worthy of anything like artistic consideration; that it was an "airy nothing" in its way, to which it was scarcely deserving that he should give more than name and local habitation.

Critically regarded, it had its inconsistencies too, both as a writing and as a Reading. There was altogether too much precocity for a genuine boy, in the nice discrimination with which the Boy at Mugby hit off the contrasting nationalities. The foreigner, for example, who politely, hat in hand, "beseech'd Our Young Ladies, and our Missis," for a "leetel gloss hoif prarndee," and who, after being repelled, on trying to help himself, exclaims, "with hands clasped and shoulders riz: 'Ah! is it possible this; that these disdainous females are placed here by the administration, not

only to empoison the voyagers, but to affront them! Great Heaven! How arrives it? The English people. Or is he then a slave? Or idiot?" "Hardly would a veritable boy, even an urchin so well "to the fore" with his epoch, as the Boy at Mugby, depict so accurately, much less take off, with a manner so entirely life-like, the astounded foreigner, any more than he would the thoroughly wide-awake and gaily derisive American. The latter he describes as alternately trying and spitting out first the sawdust and then the — ha, ha! — the sherry, until finally, on paying for both and consuming neither, he says, very loud, to Our Missis, and very good tempered, "I tell Yew what 'tis ma'arm. I la'af. Theer! I la'af, I Dew. I oughter ha' seen most things, for I hail from the unlimited side of the Atlantic Ocean, and I haive travelled right slick over the Limited, head on, through Jeerusalem and the East, and likeways France and Italy, Europe, Old World, and I am now upon the track to the Chief European Village; but such an Institution as Yew and Yewer fixins, solid *and* liquid, afore the glorious Tarnal I never did see yet! And if I hain't found the eighth wonder of Monarchical Creation, in finding Yew and Yewer fixins, solid and liquid, in a country where the people air not absolute Loo-naticks, I am Extra Double Darned with a nip and frizzle to the innermost grit! Wheerfore — Theer! — I la'af! I Dew, ma'arm. I la'af!" A calotype, or rather, literally, a speaking likeness, so true to the life as that, would be a trifle, we take it, beyond the mimetic powers and the keenly observant faculties even of a Boy whose senses had been wakened up by the twenty-seven cross draughts of the Refreshment Room at Mugby.

As to the fun made of the bandolining by Our Young Ladies, and of Our Missis's lecture on Foreign Refreshmenting, and of Sniff's corkscrew and his servile disposition, it is intentionally fooling, no doubt, but it is — excellent fooling! As was admirably said in the number of *Macmillan* for January, 1871, by the anonymous writer of a Reminiscence of the Amateur Theatricals at Tavistock House, — the remark following immediately after Charles Dickens's version of the Ghost's Song in Henry Fielding's burlesque of Tom Thumb, — "Nonsense, it may be said, all this; but the nonsense of a great genius has always something of genius in it." Had not Swift his "little language" to Stella, to "Stellakins," to "roguish, impudent, pretty M. D.?" Than some of which little language, quoth Thackeray, in commenting upon it, "I know of nothing more manly, more tender, more exquisitely touching." Again, had not Pope, in conjunction with the Dean, his occasional unbending also as a *farceur*, in the wilder freaks and oddities

of Martinus Scriblerus? So was it here with one who was beyond all doubt, more intensely a Humorist than either, when he wrote or read such harmless sarcasms and innocent whimsicalities, as those alternately underlying, and overlaying the boyish fun of this juvenile Refreshment at Mugby Junction.

DOCTOR MARIGOLD.

Already mention has been made of the extraordinary care lavished, as a general rule, by the Novelist upon the preparation of these Readings before they were, each in turn, submitted for the first time to public scrutiny. A strikingly illustrative instance of this may be here particularised. It occurred upon the occasion of a purely experimental Reading of "Doctor Marigold," which came off privately, on the evening of the 18th of March, 1866, in the drawing-room of Charles Dickens's then town residence, in Southwick Place, Tyburnia. Including, among those present, the members of his own home circle, his entire audience numbered no more than ten persons altogether. Four, at any rate, of that party may be here identified, each of whom doubtless still bears the occasion referred to vividly in his remembrance, — Robert Browning the poet, Charles Fechter the actor, Wilkie Collins the novelist, and John Forster the historian of the Commonwealth. Even in private, Dickens had never Read "Doctor Marigold" until that evening. Often as he Read it afterwards, he never Read it with a more contagious air of exhilaration. He hardly ever, in fact, gave one of his almost wholly comic and but incidentally pathetic Readings *so* effectively. In every sentence there was a zest or relish that was irresistible. The volubility of the "poor chap in the sleeved-waistcoat" sped the Reading on with a rapidity quite beyond anticipation, when the time, which had been carefully marked at the commencement of the Reading, came to be notified at its conclusion. That the merest first rehearsal should have run off thus glibly seemed just simply incomprehensible. With the sense of this surprise still fresh upon us, the tentative Reading being at the time only a few seconds completed, everything was explained, however, by a half-whispered remark made, to the present writer, in passing, by the Novelist — made by him half-weariedly, yet half-laughingly — "There! If I have gone through that already to myself once, I have gone through it two — hundred — times!" It was not lightly or carelessly therefore, as may now be seen, that Charles Dickens, in his later capacity — not pen-in-hand, or through green monthly numbers, but standing at a reading-desk upon a public platform — undertook the office of a popular entertainer.

Resolved throughout his career as a Reader to acquit himself of those newly-assumed responsibilities to the utmost of his powers, to the fullest extent of his capabilities, both physical and intellectual, he applied his energies to the task, with a zeal that, it is impossible not to recognise now, amounted in the end to nothing less than (literally) self-sacrifice. But for the devotion of his energies thus unstintingly to the laborious task upon which he had adventured — a task involving in its accomplishment an enormous amount of rapid travelling by railway, keeping him for months together, besides, in one ceaseless whirl of bodily and mental excitement — his splendid constitution, sustained and strengthened as it was by his wholesome enjoyment of out-of-door life, and his habitual indulgence in bathing and pedes-trianism, gave him every reasonable hope of reaching the age of an octogenarian.

Bearing in mind in addition to the wear-and-tear of the Readings in England and America, the nervous shock of that terrible railway accident at Staplehurst, on the 9th of June, 1865, the lamentable catastrophe of exactly five years afterwards to the very day, that of the 9th of June, 1870, becomes readily comprehensible. Because of his absorption in his task, however, all through, he was unconscious for the most part of the wasting influence of his labours, or, if he was so at all towards the close of his career, he was so, even then, only fitfully and at the rarest intervals. Precisely in the same way, it may be remarked, in regard to those who watched his whole course as a Reader, that so facile and so pleasureable to himself, as well as to them, appeared to be the novel avocation which had come of late years to be alternated with his more accustomed toil as an author, that it rendered even the most observant amongst them unconscious in their turn of the disastrously exhausting influence of this unnatural blending together of two professions. A remorseful sense of this comes back upon us now, when it is all too late, in our remembrance of that remark made by the Novelist immediately after the Private Reading of "Doctor Marigold," a remark then regarded as simply curious and interesting, but now having about it an almost painful significance. Never was work more thoroughly or more conscientiously done, from first to last, than in the instance of these Readings.

In the minute elaboration of the care with which they were prepared, in the vivacity with which they were one and all of them delivered, in the punctuality with which, whirled like a shuttle in a loom, to and fro, hither

and thither, through all parts of the United Kingdom and of the United States, the Reader kept, link by link, an immensely-lengthened chain of appointments, until the first link was broken suddenly at Preston — one can recognise at length the full force of those simple words uttered by him upon the occasion of his Farewell Reading, where he spoke of himself as “a faithful servant of the public, always imbued with a sense of duty to them, and always striving to do his best.” Among the many radiant illustrations that have been preserved of how thoroughly he did his best, not the least brilliant in its way was this eminently characteristic Reading of “Doctor Mari-gold.”

All through it, from the very beginning down to the very end of his Confidences, the Cheap Jack, in his belcher neckcloth and his sleeved-waistcoat with the mother-o’-pearl buttons, was there talking to us, as only he could talk to us, from the foot-board of his cart. He remained thus before us from his first mention of his own father having always consistently called himself Willum to the moment when little Sophy — the third little Sophy — comes clambering up the steps, and reveals that she at least is not deaf and dumb by crying out to him, “Grandfather!” As for the patter of Doctor Marigold, it is among the humorous revelations of imaginative literature. Hear him when he is perhaps the best worth listening to, when he is in his true rostrum, when his bluchers are on his native foot-board, and his name is, more intensely than ever, Doctor Marigold! Don’t we all remember him there, for example, on a Saturday night in the market-place — “Here’s a pair of razors that’ll shave you closer than the board of guardians; here’s a flat-iron worth its weight in gold; here’s a frying-pan artificially flavoured with essence of beefsteaks to that degree that you’ve only got for the rest of your lives to fry bread and dripping in it and there you are replete with animal food; here’s a genuine chronometer-watch, in such a solid silver case that you may knock at the door with it when you come home late from a social meeting, and rouse your wife and family and save up your knocker for the postman; and here’s half a dozen dinner-plates that you may play the cymbals with to charm the baby when it’s fractious. Stop! I’ll throw you in another article, and I’ll give you that, and it’s a rolling-pin; and if the baby can only get it well into it’s mouth when its teeth is coming, and rub the gums once with it, they’ll come through double in a fit of laughter equal to being tickled.” And so on, ringing the changes on a thousand wonderful conceits and whimsicalities that come tumbling

out one after another in inexhaustible sequence and with uninterrupted volubility.

The very Prince of Cheap Jacks, surely, is this Doctor Marigold! And, more than that, one who makes good his claim to the title of wit, humorist, satirist, philanthropist, and philosopher.

As for his philosophic contentment, what can equal that as implied in his summing up of his own humble surroundings? “A roomy cart, with the large goods hung outside, and the bed slung underneath it when on the road; an iron-pot and a kettle, a fireplace for the cold weather, a chimney for the smoke, a hanging-shelf and a cupboard, a dog and a horse. What more do you want? You draw off on a bit of turf in a green lane or by the roadside, you hobble your old horse and turn him grazing, you light your fire upon the ashes of the last visitors, you cook your stew, and you wouldn’t call the Emperor of France your father.”

As for his wit, hear him describe — “What? Why, I’ll tell you! It’s made of fine gold, and it’s not broke, though there’s a hole in the middle of it, and it’s stronger than any fetter that was ever forged. What else is it? I’ll tell you. It’s a hoop of solid gold wrapped in a silver curl-paper that I myself took off the shining locks of the ever-beautiful old lady in Threadneedle Street, London city. I wouldn’t tell you so, if I hadn’t the paper to show, or you mightn’t believe it even of me. Now, what else is it? It’s a man-trap, and a hand-cuff, the parish stocks and a leg-lock, all in gold and all in one. Now, what else is it? It’s a wedding-ring!”

As for something far better than any mere taste of his skill as a satirist, see the whole of his delectable take off — in contradistinction to himself, the itinerant Cheap Jack — of the political Dear Jack in the public marketplace.

As for his philanthropy, it is unobtrusively proclaimed by the drift of his whole narrative, and especially by two or three among the more remarkable of its closing incidents.

As for his powers as a humorist, they may be found there *passim*, being scattered broadcast all through his autobiographic recollections.

To those recollections are we not indebted for a whole gallery of inimitable delineations? The Cheap Jack’s very dog, for instance, who had taught himself out of his own head to growl at any person in the crowd that bid as low as sixpence! Or Pickleson the giant, with a little head and less in it. Of whom, observes Doctor Marigold, “He was a languid young man,

which I attribute to the distance betwixt his extremities.” About whom, when a sixpence is given to him by Doctor Marigold, the latter remarks in a preposterous parenthesis, “(for he was kept as short as he was long!)” As for Dickens’s high falsetto, when speaking in the person of this same Pickleson, with a voice that, as Doctor Marigold says, seemed to come from his eyebrows, it was only just a shade more excruciatingly ridiculous than his guttural and growling objurgations in the character of the giant’s proprietor, the fe-rocious Mim.

With all his modest appetite for the simpler pleasures of existence, Doctor Marigold betrays in one instance, by the way, the taste of a *gourmet*. “I knocked up a beefsteak-pudding for one,” he says, “with two kidneys, a dozen oysters, and a couple of mushrooms thrown in:” adding, with a fine touch of nature drawn from experience, “It’s a pudding to put a man in good humour with everything, except the two bottom buttons of his waistcoat.”

Incomparably the finest portion of all this wonderfully original sketch of Doctor Marigold, both in the Writing and in the Reading, was that in which the poor Cheap Jack is represented as going through his customary patter on the foot-board with his poor little Sophy — the first of the three Sophies, his own by birth, and not simply by adoption — the while she is slowly dying on his shoulder. Thackeray was right when he said of the humour of Dickens, “It is a mixture of love and wit.” Laughter and tears, with him, lay very near — speaking of him as an author, we may say by preference — lie very near indeed together. It is in those passages in which they come in astonishingly rapid alternation, and at moments almost simultaneously, that he is invariably at his very best. The incident here alluded to is one of these more exquisite descriptions, and it was one, that, by voice and look and manner, he himself most exquisitely delineated. When the poor Cheap Jack, with Sophy holding round his neck, steps out from the shelter of the cart upon the foot-board, and the waiting crowd all set up a laugh on seeing them — “one chuckle-headed Joskin (that I hated for it) making a bid ‘tuppence for her!’“ — Doctor Marigold begins his tragi-comic allocution. It is sown thickly all through with the most whimsical of his conceits, but it is interrupted also here and there with infinitely pathetic touches of tenderness.

Fragmentary illustrations of either would but dimly shadow forth, instead of clearly elucidating, what is here meant in the recollection of those who can still recall this Reading of “Doctor Marigold” to their remembrance.

Those who never heard it as it actually fell from the Author's lips, by turning to the original sketch, and running through that particular portion of it to themselves, may more readily conjecture than by the aid of mere piecemeal quotation, all that the writer of those riant and tearful pages would be capable of accomplishing by its utterance, bringing to its delivery, as he could, so many of the rarer gifts of genius, and so many also of the rarest accomplishments of art.

SIKES AND NANCY.

On Saturday, the 14th of November, 1868, there were assembled together in front of the great platform in St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, as fit audience, but few, somewhere about fifty of the critics, artists, and literary men of London. A card of invitation, stamped with a facsimile of the well-known autograph of Charles Dickens, and countersigned by the Messrs. Chappell and Company, had, with a witty significance, bidden them to that rendezvous for a "Private Trial of the Murder in Oliver Twist." The occasion, in point of fact, was a sort of experimental rehearsal of the last and most daring of all these vividly dramatic Readings by the popular Novelist.

Conscious himself that there was a certain amount of audacity in his adventuring thus upon a delineation so really startling in its character, he was not unnaturally desirous of testing its fitness for representation before the public, first of all in the presence of those who were probably the best qualified to pronounce a perfectly dispassionate opinion. It certainly appeared somewhat dubious at the first, that question as to the suitability for portrayal before mixed assemblages, of one of the most powerfully tragic incidents ever depicted by him in the whole range of his voluminous contributions to imaginative literature. The passages selected to this end from his famous story of Oliver Twist were those relating more particularly to the Murder of Nancy by Bill Sikes. A ghastlier atrocity than that murder could hardly be imagined. In the book itself, as will be remembered, the crime is painted as with a brush dipped in blood rather than pigment. The infamous deed is there described in language worthy of one of the greatest realists in fictitious narrative. Henri de Balzac, even in his more sanguinary imaginings, never showed a completer mastery of the horrible.

Remembering all this, and feeling perfectly assured at the same time, that the scene then about to be depicted by the Author in person, would most certainly lose nothing of its terror in the representation, the acknowledgment may here be made by the writer of these pages, that, on entering the Hall that evening, he was in considerable doubt as to what might be the result of the experiment. Compared with the size of the enormous building, the group of those assembled appeared to be the merest

handful of an audience clustered together towards the front immediately below the platform of the orchestra. Standing at the back of this group, the writer recalls to mind, in regard to that evening, a circumstance plainly enough indicating how fully his own unexpressed uncertainty was akin to that of the Author-Reader himself. The circumstance, namely, that Charles Dickens, immediately on entering the hall, before taking his place at his reading-desk upon the platform, came round, and after exchanging a few words with him, uttered this earnest Aside, — "I want you to watch this particularly, for I am very doubtful about it myself!" Before that Experimental Reading was half over, however, all doubt upon the matter was utterly dissipated. In the powerful effect of it, the murder-scene immeasurably surpassed anything he had ever achieved before as an impersonator of his own creations. In its climax, it was as splendid a piece of tragic acting as had for many years been witnessed.

What, in effect, was Macready's comment upon it some months afterwards, when, with an especial eye to the great tragedian's opinion, "Sikes and Nancy" was given at Cheltenham? It was laconic enough, but it afforded a world of pleasure to the Author-Actor when his old friend — himself the hero of so many tragic triumphs — summed up his estimate, by saying, characteristically, "Two Macbeths!"

Four of the imaginary beings of the novel were introduced, or, it should rather be said, were severally produced before us as actual embodiments. Occasionally, during one of the earlier scenes, it is true that the gentle voice of Rose Maylie was audible, while a few impressive words were spoken there also at intervals by Mr. Brownlow. But, otherwise, the interlocutors were four, and four only: to wit — Nancy, Bill Sikes, Morris Bolter, otherwise Noah Claypole, and the Jew Fagin. Than those same characters no four perhaps in the whole range of fiction could be more widely contrasted. Yet, widely contrasted, utterly dissimilar, though they are, in themselves, the extraordinary histrionic powers of their creator, enabled him to present them to view, with a rapidity of sequence or alternation, so astonishing in its mingled facility and precision, that the characters themselves seemed not only to be before us in the flesh, but sometimes one might almost have said were there simultaneously. Each in turn as portrayed by him — meaning portrayed by him not simply in the book but by himself in person — was in its way a finished masterpiece.

Looking at the Author as he himself embodied these creations — Fagin, the Jew, was there completely, audibly, visibly before us, by a sort of transformation! Here, in effect — as several years previously in the midst of his impersonation of Wilmot in Lord Lytton's comedy of *Not so Bad as we Seem*, namely, where, in the garret, the young patrician affects for a while to be Edmund Curll the bookseller — the impersonator's very stature, each time Fagin opened his lips, seemed to be changed instantaneously. Whenever he spoke, there started before us — high-shouldered, with contracted chest, with birdlike claws, eagerly anticipating by their every movement the passionate words fiercely struggling for utterance at his lips — that most villainous old tutor of young thieves, receiver of stolen goods, and very devil incarnate: his features distorted with rage, his penthouse eyebrows (those wonderful eyebrows!) working like the antennæ of some deadly reptile, his whole aspect, half-vulpine, half-vulture-like, in its hungry wickedness.

Whenever *he* spoke, again, Morris Bolter — quite as instantly, just as visibly and as audibly — was there upon the platform. Listening to him, though we were all of us perfectly conscious of doing, through the Protean voice, and looking at him through the variable features of the Novelist, we somehow saw, no longer the Novelist, but — each time Noah Clay-pole said a word — that chuckle-headed, long-limbed, clownish, sneaking varlet, who is the spy on Nancy, the tool of Fagin, and the secret evil-genius of Sikes, hounding the latter on, as he does, unwittingly, to the dreadful deed of homicide.

As for the Author's embodiment of Sikes — the burly ruffian with thews of iron and voice of Stentor — it was only necessary to hear that infuriated voice, and watch the appalling blows dealt by his imaginary bludgeon in the perpetration of the crime, to realise the force, the power, the passion, informing the creative mind of the Novelist at once in the original conception of the character, and then, so many years afterwards, in its equally astonishing representation.

It was in the portrayal of Nancy, however, that the genius of the Author-Actor found the opportunity, beyond all others, for its most signal manifestation. Only that the catastrophe was in itself, by necessity so utterly revolting, there would have been something exquisitely pathetic in many parts of that affecting delineation. The character was revealed with perfect consistency throughout — from the scene of suppressed emotion upon the

steps of London Bridge, when she is scared with the eltrich horror of her forebodings, down to her last gasping, shrieking apostrophes, to “Bill, clear Bill,” when she sinks, blinded by blood, under the murderous blows dealt upon her upturned face by her brutal paramour.

Then, again, the horror experienced by the assassin afterwards! So far as it went, it was as grand a reprehension of all murderers as hand could well have panned or tongue have uttered. It had about it something of the articulation of an avenging voice not against Sikes only, but against all who ever outraged, or ever dreamt of outraging, the sanctity of human life. And it was precisely this which tended to sublimate an incident otherwise of the ghastliest horror into a homily of burning eloquence, the recollection of which among those who once saw it revealed through the lips, the eyes, the whole aspect of Charles Dickens will not easily be obliterated. The moral drawn from it — and there was this moral interpenetrating or impregnating the whole — became appreciable, it might even have been by Sikes himself, from the first moment the ruffian realised that the crime had been actually accomplished. It spoke trumpet-tongued from the very instant when he recoiled from “it!” Nancy no more, but thenceforth flesh and blood — “But such flesh, and so much blood!” Nevertheless, in that Experimental Reading of the 14th of November, 1868, the effect of all this appeared, in the estimation of the present writer, to have been in a great measure marred by the abruptness with which, almost the instant after the crime had been committed, the Reading was terminated. Sikes burnt upon the hearth the blood-stained weapon with which the murder had been perpetrated — -was startled for a moment by the hair upon the end of the club shrinking to a light cinder and whirling up the chimney — and then, dragging the dog (whose very feet were bloody) after him, and locking the door, left the house. There, the Experimental Reading abruptly terminated. It seemed not only insufficient, but a lost opportunity. Insomuch, that the writer, on the following day, remonstrated with the Novelist as earnestly as possible, urging him to append to the Reading as it then stood some fragmentary portion, at least, of the chapter descriptive of the flight, so that the remorseful horror of Sikes might be more fully realised. Of the reasonableness of this objection, however, Dickens himself was so wholly unconvinced, that, in the midst of his arguments against it, he wrote, in a tone of good-humoured indignation, “My dear fellow, believe me that no audience on earth could be held for ten minutes after the girl’s death. Give

them time, and they would be revengeful for having had such a strain put upon them. Trust me to be right. I stand there, and I know.” Than this nothing could very well have been more strongly expressed, as indicative of the conclusion at which he had deliberately arrived.

So frankly open to conviction was he, nevertheless, that, not disdaining to defer to the judgment of another when his own had been convinced, the Reading was eventually, after all, lengthened out by a very remarkable addition. The printed copy of this fragment of *Oliver Twist*, artistically compacted together as “A Reading,” has, appended to it, in blue ink, three pages of manuscript in the Novelist’s familiar handwriting, in which, with a cunning mastery of all the powers of condensation, he has compacted together in a few sentences what he always gave with wonderful effect before the public, the salient incidents of the murderer’s flight, ending with his own destruction, and even his dog’s, from the housetop.

Nothing that could most powerfully realise to the audience the ruffian’s sense of horror and abhorrence has been there overlooked. The ghastly figure follows him everywhere. He hears its garments rustling in the leaves. “If *he* stopped, *it* stopped. If *he* ran, *it* followed.” Turning at times to beat the phantom off, though it should strike him dead, the hair rises on his head, and his blood stands still, for it has turned with him and is behind him! Throwing himself on his back upon the road — ”At his head it stood, silent, erect, and still: a human gravestone with its epitaph in Blood.”

What is as striking as anything in all this Reading, however — that is, in the Reading copy of it now lying before us as we write — is the mass of hints as to byplay in the stage directions for himself, so to speak, scattered up and down the margin. “Fagin raised his right hand, and shook his trembling forefinger in the air,” is there, on p. 101, in print. Beside it, on the margin in MS., is the word “Action.” Not a word of it was said. It was simply *done*. Again, immediately below that on the same page — Sikes’ loquitur — ”“Oh! you haven’t, haven’t you?” passing a pistol into a more convenient pocket [‘Action,’ again, in MS. on the margin.]” That’s lucky for one of us — which one that is don’t matter.”“ Not a word was said about the pistol — the marginal direction was simply attended to. On the opposite page, in print, “Fagin laid his hand upon the bundle, and locked it in the cupboard. But he did not take his eyes off the robber for an instant.” On the margin in MS., oddly but significantly underlined, are the words, “Cupboard Action.” So again afterwards, as a rousing self-direction, one

sees notified in manuscript, on p. 107, the grim stage direction, “Murder Coming.”

As certainly as the “Trial from Pickwick” was the most laughter-moving of all the Readings, and as the “Story of Little Dombey,” again, was the most pathetic, “Sikes and Nancy” was in all respects the most powerfully dramatic and, in the grand tragic force of it, in many ways, the most impressive and remarkable.

THE FAREWELL READING.

In recording the incident of his Farewell Reading, there comes back to us a yet later recollection of the great Novelist; and illustrating, as it does, his passionate love for the dramatic art, it may here be mentioned not inappropriately.

It relates simply to a remark suddenly made by him — and which had been suggested, so far as we can remember, by nothing we had been talking about previously — towards the close of our very last suburban walk together. Going round by way of Lambeth one afternoon in the early summer of 1870, we had skirted the Thames along the Surrey bank, had crossed the river higher up, and on our way back were returning at our leisure through Westminster; when, just as we were approaching the shadow of the old Abbey at Poet's Corner, under the roof-beams of which he was so soon to be laid in his grave, with a rain of tears and flowers, he abruptly asked —

“What do you think would be the realisation of one of my most cherished day-dreams?” Adding, instantly, without waiting for airy answer, “To settle down now for the remainder of my life within easy distance of a great theatre, in the direction of which I should hold supreme authority. It should be a house, of course, having a skilled and noble company, and one in every way magnificently appointed. The pieces acted should be dealt with according to my pleasure, and touched up here and there in obedience to my own judgment; the players as well as the plays being absolutely under my command. There,” said he, laughingly, and in a glow at the mere fancy, “*that's* my daydream!”

Dickens's delighted enjoyment, in fact, of everything in any way connected with the theatrical profession, was second only to that shown by him in the indulgence of the master-passion of his life, his love of literature.

The way in which he threw himself into his labours, as a Reader, was only another indication of his intense affection for the dramatic art. For, as we have already insisted, the Readings were more than simply Readings, they were in the fullest meaning of the words singularly ingenious and highly elaborated histrionic performances. And his sustained success in them during fifteen years altogether, and, as we have seen, through as many

as five hundred representations, may be accounted for in the same way as his still more prolonged success, from the beginning of his career as a Novelist down to its very close, from the Pickwick Papers to Edwin Drood, otherwise, during an interval of four-and-thirty consecutive years, as the most popular author of his generation.

The secret of his original success, and of the long sustamment of it in each of these two careers — as Writer and as Reader — is in a great measure discoverable in this, that whatever powers he possessed he applied to their very uttermost. Whether as Author or as Impersonator, he gave himself up to his appointed task, not partially or intermittingly, but thoroughly and indefatigably.

His rule in life, in this way, he has himself clearly explained in the forty-second chapter of David Copperfield. What he there says about David's industry and perseverance, applies as directly to himself, as what he also relates in regard to his young hero's earlier toils as a parliamentary reporter, and his precocious fame as a writer of fiction. Speaking at once for David and for himself, he there writes for both or for either, "Whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do well; whatever I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely; in great aims and in small I have always been thoroughly in earnest. I have never believed it possible that any natural or improved ability can claim immunity from the companionship of the steady, plain, hard-working qualities, and hope to gain its end. There is no substitute for thorough-going, ardent, and sincere earnestness. Never to put one hand to anything on which I could throw my whole self; and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was, I find now to have been my golden rules." What is there said applies far more recognisably to the real Charles Dickens than to the imaginary David Copperfield.

Attestations of the truth of this were discoverable, at every turn, in regard to his regular system, his constant method, nay, his minutest tricks of habit, so to speak, both as Reader and as Novelist. It was so when as an Author, for example, note was taken, now of his careful forecast of a serial tale on as many slips as there were to be green monthly numbers; now of his elaborately corrected and recorrected manuscripts; now of the proof-sheets lying about, for revision at any and every spare moment, during the month immediately before publication. Or, when, on the other hand, in his capacity as a Reader, regard was had to the scrupulous exactitude with which the

seemingly trivial minutiae of what one might call the mere accompaniments, were systematically cared for or methodised. Announced to read, for instance, for the first time in some town he had never before visited for that purpose, or in some building in which his voice had never before been raised, he would go down to the empty hall long before the hour appointed for the Reading, to take the bearings, as he would say, or, in other words, to familiarise himself with the place beforehand. His interest in his audience, again, was something delightful. He was hardly less keenly observant of them than they of him. Through a hole in the curtain at the side, or through a chink in the screen upon the platform, he would eagerly direct your attention to what never palled upon his own, namely, the effect of the suddenly brightened sea of faces on the turning up of the gas, immediately before the moment of his own appearance at the reading-desk.

The evening at length came for his very last appearance at that familiar little reading-desk, on Tuesday, the 15th of March, 1870, on the platform of the St. James's Hall, Piccadilly. The largest audience ever assembled in that immense building, the largest, as already intimated, that ever can be assembled there for purely Reading purposes, namely, when the orchestra and the upper end of the two side-galleries have necessarily to be barred or curtained off from the auditorium, were collected together there under the radiant pendants of the glittering ceiling, every available nook and corner, and all the ordinary gangways of the Great Hall being completely occupied. The money value of the house that night was £422. Crowds were unable to obtain admittance at the entrances in the Quadrant and in Piccadilly, long before the hour fixed for the Farewell Reading. Inside the building 2034 persons were seated there, eagerly awaiting the Novelist's appearance. The enthusiasm of his reception when eight o'clock came, and he advanced to the centre of the platform, of itself told plainly enough, as plainly as the printed hills announcing the fact in red, black, and yellow, that it was his last appearance.

The Readings selected were, as the very best that could have been chosen, his own favourites — "The Christmas Carol," and the "Trial from Pickwick." He never read better in his life than he did on that last evening. Evidently enough, he was nerved to a crowning effort. And by sympathy his audience — his last audience — responded to him throughout by their instant and intense appreciation. Not a point was lost. Every good thing told to the echo, that is, through the echoing laughter. Scrooge, Fezziwig, the

Fiddler, Topper, every one of the Cratchits, everybody in "The Carol," including the Small Boy who is so great at repartee, all were welcomed in turn, as became them, with better than acclamations. It was the same exactly with the "Trial from Pickwick" — Justice Stareleigh, Serjeant Buzfuz, Mr. Winkle, Mrs. Cluppins, Sam Weller, one after another appearing for a brief interval, and then disappearing for ever, each of them a delightfully humorous, one of them in particular, the Judge, a simply incomparable impersonation.

Then came the moment of parting between the great Author and his audience — that last audience who were there as the representatives of his immense public in both hemispheres. When the resounding applause that greeted the close of that Final Reading had died out, there was a breathless hush as Charles Dickens, who had for once lingered there upon the platform, addressed to his hearers, with exquisitely clear articulation, but with unmistakably profound emotion, these few and simple words of farewell: —

- "Ladies and Gentlemen, — It would be worse than
- "idle, for it would be hypocritical and unfeeling, if I
- "were to disguise that I close this episode in my life
- "with feelings of very considerable pain. For some
- "fifteen years in this hall, and in many kindred places,
- "I have had the honour of presenting my own che-
- "rished ideas before you for your recognition, and in
- "closely observing your reception of them have en-
- "joyed an amount of artistic delight and instruction,
- "which perhaps it is given to few men to know. In
- "this task and in every other I have ever undertaken
- "as a faithful servant of the public, always imbued
- "with the sense of duty to them, and always striving
- "to do his best, I have been uniformly cheered by the
- "readiest response, the most generous sympathy, and
- "the most stimulating support. Nevertheless, I have
- "thought it well, at the full flood-tide of your favour,
- "to retire upon those older associations between us,
- "which date from much further back than these,
- "thenceforth to devote myself exclusively to the art
- "that first brought us together. Ladies and gentle-

- "men, in two short weeks from this time I hope that
- "you may enter, in your own homes, on a new series
- "of readings at which my assistance will be indispen-
- "sable ; but from these garish lights I vanish now for
- "evermore, with a heartfelt, grateful, respectful, and
- "affectionate fare well."

The manly, cordial voice only faltered once at the very last. The mournful modulation of it in the utterance of the words, "From these garish lights I vanish now for evermore" lingers to this moment like a haunting melody in our remembrance. Within a few weeks afterwards those very words were touchingly inscribed on the Funeral Card distributed at the doors of Westminster Abbey on the day of the Novelist's interment in Poet's Corner. As he moved from the platform after the utterance of the last words of his address and, with his head drooping in emotion, passed behind the screen on his way to his retiring-room, a cordial hand was placed for one moment with a sympathetic grasp upon his shoulder. The popularity won by Charles Dickens, even among the million who never saw him or spoke with him, amounted to nothing less than personal affection. Among his friends and intimates no great author has ever been more truly or more tenderly beloved. The prolonged thunder of applause that followed him to his secluded room at the back of the platform, whither he had withdrawn alone, recalled him after the lapse of some minutes for another instant into the presence of his last audience, from whom, with a kiss of his hand, he then indeed parted for evermore.

THE END.

THE INNS AND TAVERNS OF “PICKWICK” by

B.W. Matz



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PICKWICK AND THE “GEORGE” INN

PREFACE

It is not claimed for this book that it supplies a long-felt want, or that it is at all necessary to the better understanding of the immortal work which inspired it. Nor does the author offer any apology for adding yet another volume to the long list of books, already existing, which deal in some way or other with England's classic book of humour, because it isn't so much his fault as might appear on the surface.

A year or two ago he contributed to an American paper a series of twenty articles on some of the prominent inns mentioned in the works of Dickens, and before the series was completed he received many overtures to publish them in volume form. To do so would have resulted in producing an entirely inadequate and incomplete book, whose sins of omission would have far outrun its virtues, whatever they might have been.

As an alternative, he set himself the task of dealing with the inns and taverns mentioned in *The Pickwick Papers* alone, grafting certain of those articles into their proper place in the scheme of the book, and leaving, perhaps, for a future volume, should such be warranted, the inns mentioned in other books of the novelist. If the reading of this volume affords half the pleasure and interest the writer has derived from compiling it, the overtures would then seem to have been justified, and the book's existence proved legitimate.

Needless to say, numerous works of reference have been consulted for facts, and the writer's indebtedness to them is hereby acknowledged.

He also desires to record his grateful thanks to Mr. Charles G. Harper for permission to reproduce several of his drawings from his invaluable book on *The Old Inns of Old England*; to the proprietors of *The Christian Science Monitor* for allowing him to reproduce some of the pictures drawn by Mr. L. Walker for the series of articles which appeared in that paper; to Mr. T. W. Tyrrell, Mr. Anthony J. Smith, and Mr. T. Fisher Unwin for the loan of photographs and pictures of which they own the copyright.

THE INNS AND TAVERNS OF “PICKWICK”

CHAPTER I

“PICKWICK” AND THE COACHING AGE

Dickens, like all great authors, had a tendency to underestimate the value of his most popular book. At any rate, it is certainly on record that he thought considerably more of some of his other works than he did of the immortal Pickwick. But *The Pickwick Papers* has maintained its place through generations, and retains it to-day, as the most popular book in our language — a book unexampled in our literature. There are persons who make a yearly custom of reading it; others who can roll off pages of it from memory; scores who can answer any meticulous question in an examination of its contents; and a whole army ready and waiting to correct any misquotation that may appear in print from its pages. All its curiosities, lapses, oddities, anachronisms, slips and misprints have been discovered by commentators galore, and the number of books it has brought into existence is stupendous.

What the secret of its popularity is would take a volume to make manifest; but in a word, one might attribute it to its vividness of reality — to the fact that every character seems to be a real living being, with whose minute peculiarities we are made familiar in a singularly droll and happy manner. With each we become close friends on first acquaintance, and as episode succeeds episode the friendship deepens, with no thought that our friends are mere imaginary creatures of the author's brain.

It does not matter if the adventures of these amiable and jovial beings are boisterously reckless at times, or if they indulge in impossible probabilities. Their high spirited gaiety and inexhaustible fun and humour and their overflow of good-nature stifles criticism.

Dickens's object in writing *The Pickwick Papers* he assured us in the preface was “to place before the reader a constant succession of characters and incidents; to paint them in as vivid colours as he could command, and to render them, at the same time, life-like and amusing.” All this he succeeded in doing with such amazing success that we have a masterly

picture of English life of the period to be found in no other book. The secret of the book's popularity and fame is in its unaffected and flowing style, its dramatic power, and, of course, its exuberant humour.

But there is much for serious reflection in its pages as well, and one could dilate at length on the propaganda which is so thinly camouflaged throughout; propaganda against lawyers, prisons, corruption in Parliament, celebrity hunting, pomposity, fraud, hypocrisy and all uncharitableness in the abstract; but all this is wrapped up in the same way that such things are done in all the fairy tales of which *Pickwick* is one of the best.

There are, as a fact, innumerable reasons why *Pickwick* is so popular, so necessary to-day. The one which concerns us more at the moment is its appeal as a mirror of the manners and customs of a romantic age which has fast receded from us. It is, perhaps, the most accurate picture extant of the old coaching era and all that was corollary to it. No writer has done more than Dickens to reflect the glory of that era, and the glamour and comfort of the old inns of England which in those days were the havens of the road to every traveller. All his books abound in pleasant and faithful pictures of the times, and alluring and enticing descriptions of those old hostelries where not only ease was sought and expected, but obtained; *Pickwick* is packed with them.

The outside appearance of an inn alone was in those times so well considered that it addressed a cheerful front towards the traveller "as a home of entertainment ought, and tempted him with many mute but significant assurances of a comfortable welcome." Its very signboard promised good cheer and meant it; the attractive furnishing of the homely windows, the bright flowers on the sills seemed to beckon one to "come in"; and when one did enter, one was greeted and cared for as a guest and not merely as a customer.

We all know, as Dickens has reminded us elsewhere, the great station hotel, belonging to the company of proprietors which has suddenly sprung up in any place we like to name, ". . . in which we can get anything we want, after its kind, for money; but where nobody is glad to see us, or sorry to see us, or minds (our bill paid) whether we come or go, or how, or when, or why, or cares about us . . . where we have no individuality, but put ourselves into the general post, as it were, and are sorted and disposed of according to our division." That is more the modern method and is in direct

contrast to the old coaching method, which, alas! may never return, of which the inns in Pickwick furnish us with glowing examples.

We certainly are coming back to these roadside inns in the present age of rapid motor transit; yet we are in too much of a tearing hurry to make the same use of the old inns as they did in the more leisurely age.

We believe these old inns attract to-day not only because of their quaintness and the old-world atmosphere which adheres to them, but because of the tradition which clings to them; and the most popular tradition of all, and the one of which the proprietors are most proud, is the Dickens tradition.

There are scores of such inns in the city of London and throughout the country whose very names immediately conjure up some merry scene in his books and revive never-to-be-forgotten memories of exhilarating incidents.

Time, the devastating builder, and the avaricious landlord have played havoc with many. Several, however, remain to tell their own tale, whilst the memory of others is sustained by a modern building bearing the old name, all of which are landmarks for the Dickens lover.

Many of them, of course, existed only in the novelist's fertile imagination; but most of them had foundation in reality, and most of them, particularly in Pickwick, are mentioned by name and have become immortal in consequence; and were it not for the popularity of his writings, their fame in many instances would have deserted them and their glory have departed.

Inns, hotels and wayside public-houses play a most important part in The Pickwick Papers, and many of the chief scenes are enacted within their walls. The book, indeed, opens in an hotel and ends in one. The first scene arising from the projected "journeys and investigations" of those four distinguished members of the Club took place in an hotel, or — to speak correctly — outside one, namely, the "Golden Cross" at Charing Cross. There is even an earlier reference to a public-house near St. Martin's le Grand, from where the "first cab was fetched," whilst the last important incident of the book was enacted in another, the Adelphi Hotel off the Strand, when Mr. Pickwick announced his determination to retire into private life at Dulwich.

In the ensuing pages, the Pickwickians are followed in the tours they made in pursuit of adventure, and the inns and taverns they stopped at are taken in the order of their going and coming. With each is recalled the story,

adventure, or scene associated with it, and if it has any history of its own apart from that gained through the book, record is made of the facts concerning it.

The Pickwick Papers was completed in 1837, and a dinner was given to celebrate the event, at which Dickens himself presided and his friend, Serjeant T. N. Talfourd, to whom the book was dedicated, acted as vice-chairman. Ainsworth, Forster, Lover, Macready, Jerdan and other close friends were invited, and the dinner took place at The Prince of Wales Coffee House and Hotel in Leicester Place, Leicester Square.

It is very curious that no extended account of this historic event exists. Forster, in his biography of the novelist, beyond saying that “everybody in hearty good-humour with every other body,” and that “our friend Ainsworth was of the company,” is otherwise silent over the event. There is certainly a reference to the dinner in a letter from Dickens to Macready, dated from “48 Doughty Street, Wednesday Evening,” with no date to it, in which he says:

“There is a semi-business, semi-pleasure little dinner which I intend to give at the ‘Prince of Wales,’ in Leicester Place, Leicester Square, on Saturday, at five for half-past precisely, at which Talfourd, Forster, Ainsworth, Jerdan, and the publishers will be present. It is to celebrate (that is too great a word, but I can think of no better) the conclusion of my Pickwick labours; and so I intend, before you take that roll upon the grass you spoke of, to beg your acceptance of one of the first complete copies of the work. I shall be much delighted if you will join us.”

[illustration: The Prince of Wales Hotel, where the Pickwick dinner was held. Drawn by Arch. Webb]

We have seen a similarly worded letter written to Samuel Lover, and no doubt each guest received such an invitation from the novelist.

The only real account of the function is contained in a letter from Ainsworth to his friend, James Crossley, which is as follows:

“On Saturday last we celebrated the completion of The Pickwick Papers. We had a capital dinner, with capital wine and capital speeches. Dickens, of course, was in the chair. Talfourd was the Vice, and an excellent Vice he made. . . . Just before he was about to propose THE toast of the evening the headwaiter — for it was at a tavern that the carouse took place — entered, and placed a glittering temple of confectionery on the table, beneath the canopy of which stood a little figure of the illustrious Mr. Pickwick. This was the work of the landlord. As you may suppose, it was received with

great applause. Dickens made a feeling speech in reply to the Serjeant's eulogy. . . . Just before dinner Dickens received a cheque for L750 from his publishers."

Although this hotel cannot rightly be termed a Pickwick inn in the same sense that the others in this book can, it certainly has a claim to honourable mention.

In 1823 the building in which this notable historic dinner took place was known as The Prince of Wales Coffee House and Hotel. When it ceased to be an hotel we are unable to state, but in 1890 it was a French Hospital and Dispensary, ten years later it was let out as offices, and in 1913 it was a foreign club; but the building is practically the same as it was in 1837.

CHAPTER II

THE “GOLDEN CROSS,” CHARING CROSS

Before the “Golden Cross” was given such prominence in *The Pickwick Papers*, it formed the subject of one of the chapters in Dickens’s previous book, *Sketches by Boz*. But although there is a “Golden Cross” still standing at Charing Cross to-day, and a fairly old inn to boot, it is not the actual one which figures in these two books and in *David Copperfield*.

As a matter of fact, there have been several “Golden Crosses” at Charing Cross; one, perhaps the first, stood in the village of Charing in 1643. But the one which claims our attention stood on the exact spot where now towers the Nelson Monument in Trafalgar Square, and was the busiest coaching inn in the west end of London. In front of it was the King Charles statue and the ancient cross of Charing. Close at hand was Northumberland House with its famous lion overlooking the scene.

This “Golden Cross” was either rebuilt in 1811 or in that year had its front altered to the Gothic style. Whichever is the case, it was this Gothic inn that Dickens knew and described in his books. It was demolished in 1827, or thereabouts, to make room for the improvements in the neighbourhood which developed, into the Trafalgar Square we all know to-day. It was then that the present building, facing Charing Cross Station, was erected, which, also in its turn, has had a new frontage.

Dickens in his early youth, whilst employed in a blacking warehouse at Hungerford Stairs and during his youthful wanderings, became intimately acquainted with the district. When, therefore, in the early ‘thirties he commenced his literary career, he recalled those early days and placed on permanent record his impressions of what he then saw, amongst which was the Golden Cross Hotel.

And so we find that in writing the chapter in *Sketches by Boz* on “Early Coaches” he chooses the “Golden Cross” of his boyhood for its chief incident, an incident which no doubt happened to himself in his early

manhood. He had risen early on a certain cold morning to catch the early coach to Birmingham — perhaps to fulfil one of his reporting engagements:

“It strikes 5:15,” he says, “as you trudge down Waterloo Place on your way to the ‘Golden Cross,’ and you discover for the first time that you were called an hour too early. You have no time to go back, and there is no place open to go into, and you have therefore no recourse but to go forward. You arrive at the office. . . . You wander into the booking office. . . . There stands the identical book-keeper in the same position, as if he had not moved since you saw him yesterday. He informs you that the coach is up the yard, and will be brought round in about 15 minutes. . . . You retire to the tap-room. . . . for the purpose of procuring some hot brandy and water, which you do — when the kettle boils, an event which occurs exactly two and a half minutes before the time fixed for the starting of the coach. The first stroke of six peals from St. Martin’s Church steeple as you take the first sip of the boiling liquid. You find yourself in the booking office in two seconds, and the tap waiter finds himself much comforted by your brandy and water in about the same period. . . . The horses are in. . . . The place which a few minutes ago was so still and quiet is all bustle. ‘All right,’ sings the guard. . . . and off we start as briskly as if the morning were all right as well as the coach.”

One of Cruikshank’s pictures illustrates the above scene in the booking office, and in it one of the figures represents Dickens himself as he appeared at the period. Dotted about on the walls are bills in which the name of the hotel is very conspicuous.

In chapter two of *The Pickwick Papers* we get a further glimpse of the inn, centering in a more exhilarating and epoch-making incident. The Pickwickians were to start on their memorable peregrinations from the “Golden Cross” for Rochester by the famous “Commodore” coach; and Mr. Pickwick having hired a cabriolet in the neighbourhood of his lodgings in Goswell Street arrived at the hotel in order to meet his friends for the purpose. On alighting, and having tendered his fare, an animated incident with the cabman, who accused him of being an informer, ensued, and ended in the assault and battery described in the following words:

“The cabman dashed his hat upon the ground with a reckless disregard of his own private property, and knocked Mr. Pickwick’s spectacles off, and followed up the attack with a blow on Mr. Pickwick’s nose and another on Mr. Pickwick’s chest; and a third in Mr. Snodgrass’s eye; and a fourth, by

way of variety, in Mr. Tupman's waistcoat, and then danced into the road and then back again to the pavement, and finally dashed the whole temporary supply of breath out of Mr. Winkle's body; and all in half a dozen seconds."

The embarrassing situation was only saved by the intervention of Mr. Jingle, who quickly settled the cabman and escorted Mr. Pickwick into the travellers' waiting-room and had a raw beefsteak applied to Mr. Pickwick's eye, which had been badly mauled by the irate cabman. All things righted themselves, however, and the merry party left the "Golden Cross" on the coach for their journey to Rochester, to the accompaniment of Mr. Jingle's staccato tones as they drove through the archway, warning the company to take care of their heads:

"Terrible place — dangerous work — other day — five children — mother- tall lady, eating sandwiches-forgot the arch — crash — knock — children look round — mother's head off — sandwich in her hand — no mouth to put it in — head of family off — shocking — shocking."

The arch referred to by our jesting friend can be seen in the picture here shown.

The "Golden Cross" also figures prominently in David Copperfield on the occasion of the arrival of the hero of the book from Canterbury:

"We went to the 'Golden Cross,'" he says, "then a mouldy sort of establishment in a close neighbourhood. A waiter showed me into the coffee-room, and a chambermaid introduced me to my small bedchamber, which smelt like a hackney coach and was shut up like a family vault."

Later in the evening he met his old school friend, Steerforth, who was evidently on better and more familiar terms with the waiter, for he not only demanded, but secured a better bedroom for David.

[illustration: The Golden Cross Hotel, Charing Cross, in 1828. From an engraving]

"I found my new room a great improvement on my old one," he says, "it not being at all musty and having a fourpost bedstead in it, which was quite a little landed estate. Here, among pillows enough for six, I soon fell asleep in a blissful condition, and dreamed of ancient Rome, Steerforth and friendship, until the early morning coaches rumbling out of the archway underneath made me dream of thunder and the gods."

This comfortable new aspect of the inn did not stop at his bedroom, for he took breakfast the next morning "in a snug private apartment, red-

curtained and Turkey carpeted, where the fire burnt bright and a fine hot breakfast was set forth on a table covered with a clean cloth. . . . I could not enough admire the change Steerforth had wrought in the 'Golden Cross'; or compose the dull, forlorn state I had held yesterday with this morning's comfort and this morning's entertainment."

It was on another occasion later in the story that David Copperfield, then lodging in Buckingham Street close by, encountered poor old Peggotty on the steps of St. Martin's Church. It was a snowy, dismal night and Peggotty was resting on his journey in search for Little Emily.

"In those days," says Dickens, "there was a side entrance to the stable yard of the 'Golden Cross' nearly opposite to where we stood. I pointed out the gateway, put my arm through his, and we went across. Two or three public rooms opened out of the stable yard; and looking into one of them, and finding it empty, and a good fire burning, I took him in there."

The side entrance here referred to was at the time in St. Martin's Lane — that part of it which then ran down from St. Martin's Church to the Strand. It led into the stable yard, backing into what is now Trafalgar Square, and was part of the old inn of Pickwick and The Sketches, and not of the present one, which many topographers have asserted.

But the "Golden Cross" had its fame apart from Dickens, although it is Dickens who has immortalized its name for the general public.

As we have pointed out it was the most popular of the West End coaching inns of London. This remark applies to the various houses which have borne its name. It is recorded that as far back as 1757 coaches plied between Brighton, or Brighthelmstone as it was then called, and the "Golden Cross." The fare was 13s. — (children in lap and outside passengers half price). For years afterwards it was the favourite starting-place for the famous Brighton coaches, and in 1821 forty were running to and fro daily.

Coaches from the same inn served Exeter, Salisbury, Blandford, Dorchester and Bridport; Hastings and Tunbridge Wells; Cambridge, Cheltenham, Dover, Norwich and Portsmouth. It was from here that the historic "Comet" and "Regent" to Brighton and the "Tally Ho" for Birmingham set out on their journeys, and although the "Golden Cross" which stands to-day cannot boast the glory of the old days of the coaching era, it is still a busy centre, situated as it is in the very heart of London opposite one of its busiest railway termini.

To-day new Dickensian associations circle round it, for on certain days during the summer months motor coaches, chartered by the Dickens Fellowship, make this the starting point for their pilgrimages into Dickensland, often taking the route the Pickwickians did, as recorded in their chronicles.

CHAPTER III

THE “BULL,” ROCHESTER, “WRIGHT’S NEXT HOUSE” AND THE “BLUE LION,” MUGGLETON

To the accompaniment of the “stranger’s” breathless eloquence, the Pickwickians’ first journey from London passed with no untoward adventure. Although the “Commodore” coach stopped occasionally to change horses and incidentally to refresh the passengers, no mention of an inn by name or any other designation is made, however, until The Bull Inn in the High Street, Rochester, is reached.

“Do you remain here, sir?” enquired Nathaniel Winkle of the “stranger.”

“Here — not I — but you’d better — good house — nice beds — Wright’s next house, dear — very dear — half a crown in the bill if you look at the waiter — charge you more if you dine at a friend’s than they would if you dined in the coffee room — rum fellows — very.”

After consultation with his friends Mr. Pickwick invited the “stranger” to dine with them, which he accepted with alacrity.

“Great pleasure — not presume to dictate, but boiled fowl and mushrooms — capital thing! What time?”

The hour being arranged they parted for the time being.

Dickens knew his Rochester well, even in the days when he was writing Pickwick — a knowledge gained doubtless when a lad at Chatham, and Jingle’s reference to “Wright’s next house” is evidence of this, for there was such an hotel at the time, the owner’s name of which was Wright. It was a few doors away, but was actually the next public-house, which, of course, was what was meant.

Its original name was the “Crown,” but in 1836 the said Wright, on becoming proprietor, altered the name it then bore to that of his own. He also changed its appearance to suit his own fancies. In the earlier days it was a typical coaching inn, and had the reputation of once having been favoured with a visit of Queen Elizabeth, as well of Hogarth and his friends. It claimed to have been built in 1390, and was then owned by Simon Potyn, who was several times member of Parliament for the city.

In an old engraving of Rochester Bridge the inn can be seen with the word “Wright’s” distinctly showing in prominent letters emblazoned on its frontage, if such proof that Jingle was not romancing were necessary.

The inn was rebuilt in 1864, and has been identified as the “Crozier” of Edwin Drood, where Datchery, on his first arrival in the town “announced himself . . . as an idle dog living on his means . . . as he stood with his back to the empty fire-place, waiting for his fried sole, veal cutlet and pint of sherry.”

In the meantime Mr. Pickwick and his friends, after having engaged and inspected a private sitting-room and bedrooms and ordered their dinner at “The Bull,” set out to inspect the city and adjoining neighbourhood.

Before the days of Pickwick, the “Bull” presumably was merely a comfortable roadside coaching inn between Dover and London, with no claim to fame other than that of being a favoured resort of the military from the adjacent town of Chatham. It is true that Queen Victoria — then but a Princess — was compelled, because of a mishap to the bridge across the Medway and the stormy weather, to stay in the inn with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, for one night only. They were on their way to London from Dover. The event happened on the 29th of November, 1836, and caused a flutter of excitement in the city and inspired the proprietor to add the words “Royal Victoria” to the inn’s name, and to justify the adornment of the front of the building with the royal crest of arms.

But it remained for the Pickwickians to draw the inn out from the ruck of the commonplace, and to spread its fame to all corners of the globe; and the fact that it once had royal patronage is nothing in comparison to the other fact that it was the headquarters of the Pickwickians on a certain memorable occasion. That is the attraction to it; that is the immutable thing that makes its name a household word wherever the English language is spoken. Indeed, that was the one notable event in its history which filled the proprietor with pride, and in his wisdom, in order to lure visitors into its comfortable interior, he could find no more magnetic announcement for the signboard on each side of the entrance than the plain unvarnished statement: “Good House. Nice Beds. Vide Pickwick.”

[illustration: The Bull Hotel, Rochester. From a photograph by T.W.Tyrrell]

It may have boasted a history before then: it is difficult to say. It existed in 1827 when Dickens housed the famous four within its hospitable walls;

and he doubtless knew it long before then when, as a lad, he lived in Chatham; anyway, it was always a favourite of his, and furnishes the scene of many incidents in his books, in addition to the part it plays in the early portion of *The Pickwick Papers*; it no doubt is the original of the “Winglebury Arms” in “The Great Winglebury Duel” in *Sketches by Boz*, and is certainly the “Blue Boar” of *Great Expectations*.

Dickens frequented it himself, and the room he occupied on those occasions is known as the Dickens room and is furnished with pieces of furniture from his residence at Gad’s Hill. We know, too, that he conducted his friends over it, on those occasions when he made pilgrimages with them around the neighbourhood.

The house has been slightly altered since those days, but it practically remains the same as when Dickens deposited the *Pickwickians* in its courtyard that red-letter day in 1827. Its outside is dull and sombre-looking, but its interior comfort and spaciousness soon dispel any misgivings which its exterior might have created.

The entrance hall is as spacious as it was when Dickens described it, in “The Great Winglebury Duel,” as ornamented with evergreen plants terminating in a perspective view of the bar, and a glass case, in which were displayed a choice variety of delicacies ready for dressing, to catch the eye of a new-comer the moment he enters, and excite his appetite to the highest possible pitch. “Opposite doors,” he says, “lead to the ‘coffee’ and ‘commercial’ rooms; and a great wide rambling staircase — three stairs and a landing — four stairs and another landing — one step and another landing — and so on — conducts to galleries of bedrooms and labyrinths of sitting-rooms, denominated ‘private,’ where you may enjoy yourself as privately as you can in any place where some bewildered being or other walks into your room every five minutes by mistake, and then walks out again, to open all the doors along the gallery till he finds his own.”

And so the visitor finds it to-day, although the interior of the coffee-room may have been denuded of its compartments which the interview between Pip and Bentley Drummle in *Great Expectations* suggests were there on that occasion. It was in this room that the *Pickwickians* breakfasted and awaited the arrival of the chaise to take them to Dingley Dell; and it was over its blinds that Mr. Pickwick surveyed the passers-by in the street, and before which the vehicle made its appearance with the very amusing result known to all readers of the book.

The commercial room is across the yard, over which on one occasion Mr. Wopsle was reciting Collin's ode to Pip in *Great Expectations* with such dramatic effect that the commercials objected and sent up their compliments with the remark that "it wasn't the Tumbler's Arms."

From the hall runs the staircase upon which took place the famous scene between Dr. Slammer and Jingle, illustrated so spiritedly by Phiz. Those who remember the incident — and who does not? — can visualize it all again as they mount the stairs to the bedrooms above, which the Pickwickians occupied. They remain as Dickens described them, even in some cases to the very bedsteads and furniture, and are still shown to the interested visitor.

"Winkle's bedroom is inside mine," is how Mr. Tupman put it. That is to say, the one led out of the other, and they are numbered 13 and 19; but which is which no one knows. Number 18, by the way, is the room the Queen slept in on the occasion of her visit, eight months after the appearance of the first part of *Pickwick*.

Number 17 is claimed as Mr. Pickwick's room, which is also the one Dickens occupied on one occasion, and the one spoken of in *Seven Poor Travellers*, from which the occupant assured us that after the cathedral bell struck eight he "could smell the delicious savour of turkey and roast beef rising to the window of my adjoining room, which looked down into the yard just where the lights of the kitchen reddened a massive fragment of the castle wall"

[illustrations: Staircase at the "Bull." Orchestra in Ballroom at the "Bull"]

An important feature in those days, and presumably to-day, was the ballroom, "the elegant and commodious assembly rooms to the Winglebury Arms." In *The Pickwick Papers* Dickens thus describes it: "It was a long room, with crimson-covered benches, and wax candles in glass chandeliers. The musicians were securely confined in an elevated den, and quadrilles were being systematically got through by two or three sets of dancers. Two card tables were made up in the adjoining card-room, and two pair of old ladies and a corresponding number of stout gentlemen were executing whist therein."

The room itself is little altered; although the glass chandeliers have been removed, there still remains at the end the veritable elevated den where the fiddlers fiddled. During the war it was turned into a dining-room on account

of the military and naval demands of the town; but there may come a time when it will revert to its old glory and tradition.

On the evening of the Pickwickians' arrival Jingle remarks that there is a "Devil of a mess on the staircase, waiter. Forms going up — carpenters coming down — lamps, glasses, harps. What's going forward?"

"Ball, sir," said the waiter.

"Assembly, eh?"

"No, sir, not assembly, sir. Ball for the benefit of charity, sir."

This was the famous ball at which the incident occurred resulting in the challenge to a duel between Dr. Slammer and Winkle, the details of which require no reiteration here.

But the pleasant fact remains that the Bull Inn exists to-day and the Dickens tradition clings to it still. One instinctively goes there as the centre of the Dickensian atmosphere with which the old city of Rochester is permeated.

The Bull Inn should never lose its fame. Indeed, as long as it lasts it never will, because Pickwick can never be forgotten. The present-day traveller will go by rail, or some day by an aerial 'bus, and may forget the old days during his journey; but when he arrives there and walks into the inn yard, whole visions of the coaching days will come back to him, and prominent amongst them will be the arrival of the "Commodore" coach with the Pickwickians on board, and the departure of the chaise with the same company with Winkle struggling with the tall mare, on their way to Dingley Dell, which resulted so disastrously. He might be curious enough to want to discover the "little roadside public-house with two elm trees, horse-trough and a sign-post in front," where the travellers attempted to put up the horse. That, however, has not been discovered, although Dickens no doubt had a particular one in his mind at the time.

During their stay at Manor Farm, Dingley Dell, the Pickwickians visited Muggleton to witness the cricket match between Dingley Dell and all Muggleton. "Everybody whose genius has a topographical bent," says Dickens, "knows perfectly well that Muggleton is a corporate town, with a mayor, burgesses and freeman," but so far no topographer has discovered which corporate town it was. Some say Maidstone, others Town Malling. Until that vexed question has been settled, however, the identification of the "large inn with a sign-post in front, displaying an object very common in art, but very rarely met with in nature — to wit, a Blue Lion with three legs

in the air, balancing himself on the extreme point of the centre claw of his fourth foot," cannot definitely be verified. The same remark applies to the Crown Inn, where Jingle stopped on the same occasion.

[illustration: The Swan Inn, Town Malling. Drawn by C. G. Harper]

At Maidstone there is a "White Lion," and at Town Malling there is the "Swan." Which of these is the original of the inn where Mr. Wardle hired a chaise and four to pursue Jingle and Miss Rachael, and on whose steps, the following Christmas, the Pickwickians, on their second visit to Dingley Dell, were deposited "high and dry, safe and sound, hale and hearty," by the Muggleton Telegraph, when they discovered the Fat Boy just aroused from a sleep in front of the tap-room fire, must be left to the choice of the reader.

CHAPTER IV

THE “WHITE HART,” BOROUGH

The pursuit of Jingle and Miss Wardle by the lady's father and Mr. Pickwick, culminates in the “White Hart,” which, in days gone by, was one of the most famous of the many famous inns that then stood in the borough of Southwark. Long before Dickens began to write, the “White Hart” was the centre of the coaching activity of the metropolis south of the Thames, and was one of the oldest inns in the country.

Travellers from the Continent and the southern and eastern counties of England to London made it their halting-place, whilst from a business standpoint it had scarcely a rival. Coaches laden with passengers and wagons full of articles of commerce made the courtyard of the inn always a bustling and busy corner of a hustling and busy neighbourhood. In the coaching era, therefore, the “White Hart” was a household word to travellers and business men. Dickens, with his magic pen and inventive genius, made it a household word to the inhabitants of the whole globe, who never had occasion to visit it either for business or pleasure.

Its history goes back many centuries: as far back as 1400, and possibly earlier than that. Its sign was taken from the badge of Richard II, who adopted the emblem of the “White Hart” from the crest of his mother, Joanna of Kent. A fine old inn of the highest type, the “White Hart” no doubt was the resort of the most prominent nobles and retainers of the time, public men of the period and ambassadors of commerce. It is not surprising, therefore, that it figures in English history generally, and was particularly mentioned by Shakespeare. It certainly was the centre of many a stirring scene, and events of feasting and jollity, besides being a place where great trade was transacted.

It is often mentioned in the Paston Letters in reference to Jack Cade, who made it his headquarters in 1450. In Hall's Chronicles it is recorded that the Captain, being made aware of the King's absence, came first to Southwark, and there lodged at the “White Hart.” In Henry VI, Part II, Jack Cade is

made to say, "Hath my sword therefore broke through London gates, that you should leave me at the 'White Hart' in Southwark?"

Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's most able minister, was also associated with the borough of Southwark, and on one occasion (in 1529) it is recorded that he received a message to the effect that one R. awaited him at the "White Hart" on important business. Again the inn has mention in connection with the rebellion brought about by Archbishop Laud's attitude to the Scottish and Puritan Churches, when we are told that the populace and soldiers associated with it lodged at the "White Hart." And in a like manner mention might be made of other occasions during which, in those far-off days, the "White Hart" played some notable part in history and in the social round of the period.

In 1676 it was entirely destroyed by the great fire of Southwark, but was rebuilt immediately afterward on the old site and on the old model. It was described by Strype about this time as a very large inn, and we believe that it was able to accommodate between one and two hundred guests and their retinue, with ample rooms left for their belongings, horses and goods. It did a considerable trade and was esteemed one of the best inns in Southwark, and so it continued as a favourite place of resort for coaches and carriers until the end of the coaching days.

When, therefore, Mr. Pickwick set all the world agog with his adventures, the "White Hart" was recognized as a typical old English inn, and was really at its best. It had arrived at this prosperous state by easy stages during its previous 180 years, and had a reputation for comfort and generous hospitality during the best days of the coaching era, which had reached the golden age when Mr. Pickwick discovered Sam Weller cleaning boots in its coach yard one historic morning in the early nineteenth century.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that Dickens, who knew this district so well and intimately, should introduce the "White Hart" into his book as a setting for one of his most amusing scenes. After speaking of London's inns in general, he makes special mention of those in the Borough, where, he says, there still remained some half-dozen old inns, "which have preserved their external features unchanged, and which have escaped alike the rage for public improvement and the encroachments of private speculation." Since these words were written public improvement has "improved" all of them, except one, the "George," right out of existence.

But let us use Dickens's own words to describe these inns in general and the "White Hart" in particular, for none of ours can improve his picture.

"Great, rambling, queer old places they are, with galleries and passages and staircases, wide enough and antiquated enough to furnish materials for a hundred ghost stories, supposing we should ever be reduced to the lamentable necessity of inventing any, and that the world should exist long enough to exhaust the innumerable veracious legends connected with old London Bridge and its adjacent neighbourhood on the Surrey side.

"It was in the yard of one of these inns — of no less celebrated a one than the 'White Hart' — that a man was busily employed in brushing the dirt off a pair of boots, early on the morning succeeding the events narrated in the last chapter. He was habited in a coarse-striped waistcoat, with black calico sleeves, and blue glass buttons, drab breeches and leggings. A bright red handkerchief was wound in a very loose and unstudied style round his neck, and an old white hat was carelessly thrown on one side of his head. There were two rows of boots before him, one cleaned and the other dirty, and at every addition he made to the clean row, he paused from his work, and contemplated its results with evident satisfaction."

This, we need hardly say, was the inimitable Sam Weller, and it was his first introduction to the story with which his name is now inseparable.

[illustration: The White Hart Inn, Southwark, in 1858. From an engraving by Fairholt, after a drawing by J. Sachs]

Dickens then goes on to give further particulars of how the yard looked on the particular morning of which he writes:

"The yard presented none of that bustle and activity which are the usual characteristics of a large coach inn. Three or four lumbering wagons, each with a pile of goods beneath its ample canopy, about the height of the second-floor window of an ordinary house, were stowed away beneath a lofty roof which extended over one end of the yard; and another, which was probably to commence its journey that morning, was drawn out into the open space. A double tier of bedroom galleries, with old, clumsy balustrades, ran round two sides of the straggling area, and a double row of bells to correspond, sheltered from the weather by a little sloping roof, hung over the door. . . . Two or three gigs and chaise-carts were wheeled up under different little sheds and penthouses; and the occasional heavy tread of a carhorse or rattling of a chain at the further end of the yard announced to anybody who cared about the matter that the stable lay in that direction.

When we add that a few boys in smock frocks were lying asleep on heavy packages, wool-packs and other articles that were scattered about on heaps of straw, we have described as fully as need be the general appearance of the yard of the White Hart Inn, High Street, Borough, on the particular morning in question.”

This was the inn, then, to which Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Wardle came in search of the runaway couple, and Sam Weller was the first person they interviewed on the subject. The reader will refer to Chapter X of the book should he want his memory refreshed regarding the amusing scene with Sam, which has been so faithfully pictured by Phiz in one of his illustrations. How they discovered the misguided Rachael, how they bought off the adventurer, Jingle, and how Mr. Pickwick, Wardle and the deserted lady set forth the next day by the Muggleton heavy coach is duly set forth in Dickens’s own way.

The “White Hart” remained very much as Dickens found it and described it in 1836 until it was finally demolished in 1889. Following the advent of railways it lost a good deal of its glamour, and in its last years the old galleries on two of its sides were let out in tenements, and the presence of the occupants gave a certain animation to the scene. In the large inner yard were some quaint old house which were crowded with lodgers, but it still hung on to its old traditions of the coaching times, and even up to its last days the old inn was the halting-place of the last of the old-fashioned omnibuses which plied between London Bridge and Clapham.

Nothing now remains to remind us of the old inn which Dickens and Sam Weller have made immortal in the annals of coaching but a narrow turning bearing its name, where is established a Sam Weller Club.

CHAPTER V

“LA BELLE SAUVAGE” AND THE “MARQUIS OF GRANBY,” DORKING

“La Belle Sauvage” has, like many other historic inns, gone into the limbo of past, if not of forgotten, things, leaving nothing but its name denoting a cul-de-sac, to remind the present generation of its one-time fame.

This was the inn where Tony Weller, resplendent in many layers of cloth cape and huge brimmed hat, stopped “wen he drove up” on the box seat of one of the stage coaches of the period. For Tony was, as everybody knows, a coachman typical of the period of the book, and the “Belle Savage” (the spelling of “savage” here follows the fashion of the period referred to) was where he started and ended his journeys in London. But the anecdote related by his son of how he was hoodwinked into taking out a licence to marry Mrs. Clarke contains the chief of the only two actual references to the fact that his head-quarters were the “Belle Savage,” as he called it. It is certainly recorded that he started from the “Bull” in Whitechapel when he drove the Pickwickians to Ipswich, but it is the “Belle Savage” that is associated with his name.

“‘What’s your name, sir?’ says the lawyer.

“‘Tony Weller,’ says my father. ‘Parish?’ says the lawyer. ‘Belle Savage,’ says my father; for he stopped there wen he drove up, and he know’d nothing about parishes, he didn’t.”

Now it seems to us a curious fact that Dickens never made any further use of this famous inn, either in Pickwick or in his other books; indeed, we can only recall one other reference to it, and that when Sam’s father rather despondently told him that “a thousand things may have happened by the time you next hears any news of the celebrated Mr. Veller o’ the ‘Bell Savage:”“ It is particularly curious in regard to Pickwick, for the inn was not only close to the Fleet Prison, which figures so prominently in the book, but its outbuildings actually adjoined it. Meagre as is the reference, it is, nevertheless, retained in the memory, and the inn proclaimed a Pickwickian

one with as much satisfaction as if it had been the scene of many an incident such as connect others with the book.

Unfortunately there are only one or two landmarks remaining to show that it ever existed. One of these is the archway out of Ludgate Hill, just beyond the hideous bridge which runs across the road, at the side of No. 68, which in Pickwickian days was No. 38. Perhaps the shape of the yard which still bears the inn's name may be considered as a trace of its former glory. This yard is now surrounded by the business premises of Messrs. Cassell and Co., the well-known publishers, which occupy the whole site of the old building.

We can find no earlier reference to the inn than that in the reign of Henry VI, when a certain John French in a deed (1453) made over to his mother for her life "all that tenement or inn, with its appurtenances, called Savage's Inn, otherwise called 'le Bell on the Hope' in the parish of Fleet Street, London." Prior to that it may be surmised that it belonged to a citizen of the name of Savage, probably the "William Savage of Fleet Street in the Parish of St. Bridget," upon whom, it is recorded in 1380, an attempt was made "to obtain by means of forged letter, twenty shillings."

It would be clear from this that its sign was the "Bell and Hoop," before it became the property of the Savage family, from whom there can be no doubt it got its name of "La Belle Sauvage." According to Stow, Mrs. Isabella Savage gave the inn to the Cutlers' Company, but this would seem to be incorrect, for more recent research has proved definitely that it was a John Craythorne who did so in 1568. The crest of the Cutlers' Company is the Elephant and Castle, and a stone bas-relief of it, which once stood over the gateway of the inn under the sign of the Bell, is still to be seen on the east wall of La Belle Sauvage Yard to-day. It was placed there some fifty years ago when the old inn was demolished.

[illustration: La Belle Sauvage Inn, Ludgate Hill. From a drawing by T. Hosmer Shepherd]

Years before Craythorne presented the inn to the Cutlers' Company, however, it was known as "La Belle Sauvage," for we are told that Sir Thomas Wyatt, the warrior poet, in 1554 made his last stand with his Kentish men against the troops of Mary just in front of the ancient inn, "La Belle Sauvage." He was attempting to capture Ludgate and was driven back with some thousands of rebel followers to Temple Bar, where he

surrendered himself to Sir Maurice Berkeley, and so sealed his own fate and that of poor Lady Jane Grey.

Again, in 1584, the inn was described as “Ye Belle Sauvage,” and there have been many speculations as to the origin of the name, and some doubt as to the correct spelling.

In 1648 and 1672 exhibitions of landlords’ tokens of various inns were held, whereat were shown two belonging to “La Belle Sauvage,” the sign of one being that of an Indian woman holding a bow and arrow, and the other, of Queen Anne’s time, that of a savage standing by a bell, and it has been conjectured that this latter sign may have suggested the name. But as the inn was known as “Ye Belle Savage” some sixty years previously this is hardly likely. Another conjecture as to its origin was made by Addison in *The Spectator*, who, having read an old French romance which gives an account of a beautiful woman called in French “La Belle Sauvage” and translated into English as “Bell Savage,” considered the name was derived from that source. Alderman Sir W. P. Treloar, in his excellent little book on “Ludgate Hill,” puts forth another idea. “As the inn,” he says, “was the mansion of the Savage family, and near to Bailey or Ballium, it is at least conceivable that it would come to be known as the Bail or Bailey Savage Inn, and afterward the Old Bail or Bailey Inn.” We prefer, however, to favour the Isabella Savage theory as the likely one.

Long before Elizabeth’s time and long after-wards the inn was a very famous one. In the days before Shakespeare the actors gave performances of their plays in the old inn yard, using the courtyards as the pit in theatres is used to-day, and the upper and lower galleries for what are now the boxes and galleries of modern theatres. In 1556, the old inns, such as the “Cross Keys,” the “Bull” and “Belle Sauvage” were used extensively for this purpose, the latter, we are told, almost ranking as a permanent theatre. We find Collier also stating that the “Belle Sauvage” was a favourite place for these performances.

Originally the old inn consisted of two courts, an inner and outer one. The present archway from Ludgate Hill led into the latter, which at one time contained private houses. A distinguished resident in one of these (No. 11) was Grinling Gibbons. According to Horace Walpole, Gibbons carved an exquisite pot of flowers in wood, which stood on his window-sill there, and shook surprisingly with the motion of the coaches that passed beneath. The

inn proper, surrounded by its picturesque galleries, stood in a corner of the inner court, entered by a second archway about half-way up the yard.

Part of the inn abutted on to the back of Fleet Prison, and Mr. Tearle in his Rambles with an American, bearing this fact in mind, ingeniously suggests that the conception of the idea for smuggling Mr. Pickwick from the prison by means of a piano without works may have been conceived in Mr. Weller's brain while resting in the "Belle Sauvage" and contemplating the prison wall.

In 1828, the period of *The Pickwick Papers*, J. Pollard painted a picture of the Cambridge coach ("The Star") leaving the inn. A portion of this picture showing the coach and the north side of Ludgate Hill, was published as a lithograph by Thomas McLean of the Haymarket. It gives the details of the inn entrance and the coach on a large scale. The inn at the time was owned by Robert Nelson. He was a son of Mrs. Ann Nelson, the popular proprietor of the "Bull," Whitechapel. Besides the coaches for the eastern counties, those also for other parts of the country started from its precincts, for such names as Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, Oxford, Gloucester, Coventry, Carlisle, Manchester were announced on the signboard at the side of the archway.

In spite of the fact that Dickens only once refers to the inn, its name and fame, nevertheless, will always be associated with him and with Tony Weller, who was so familiar with it and so attached to it, as to name it as the parish he resided in.

[illustration: The Cambridge Coach leaving Belle Sauvage yard. From a lithograph]

The relating of the story of how Tony Weller was driven into his second marriage, which reveals "La Belle Sauvage" as his headquarters, also first brings into prominence the "Markis o' Granby," Dorking, as the residence of Mrs. Susan Clarke, and incidentally the scene of more than one amusing incident after she became Mrs. Weller, senior. "The 'Marquis of Granby' in Mrs. Weller's time," we are informed, "was quite a model of a roadside public-house of the better class — just large enough to be convenient, and small enough to be snug."

In the chapter describing how Sam displayed his high sense of duty as a son, by paying a visit to his "mother-in-law," as he called her, and how he

discovered Mr. Stiggins indulging in “hot pine-apple rum and water,” we get a little pen-picture of the inn.

“On the opposite side of the road was a signboard on a high post representing the head and shoulders of a gentleman with an apoplectic countenance, in a red coat with deep blue facings, and a touch of the same over his three-cornered hat, for a sky . . . an undoubted likeness of the Marquis of Granby of glorious memory. The bar window displayed a choice collection of geranium plants, and a well-dusted row of spirit phials. The open shutters bore a variety of golden inscriptions, eulogistic of good beds and neat wines; and the choice group of countrymen and hostlers lounging about the stable door and horse-trough afforded presumptive proof of the excellent quality of the ale and spirits which were sold within.”

Phiz’s picture, forming the vignette on the title-page, hardly does justice to this description, although the incident of old Weller performing the “beautiful and exhilarating” act of immersing Mr. Stiggins’s head in the horse-trough full of water, is spirited enough.

The “Markis Gran by Dorken,” as the elder Weller styled it in his letter to Sam, is another of those inns, which figure prominently in the book, that have never been actually identified. Robert Allbut, in 1897, claimed to have found the original in the High Street opposite the Post Office at the side of Chequers’ Court. Only a part of it then existed, and was being used as a grocer’s shop.

Herbert Railton gave an artistic picture of the courtyard in the Jubilee edition of the book, but we are not able to state on what authority it was based.

There were, however, two inns at Dorking, the “King’s Head” and the “King’s Arms,” over which speculation has been rife as to which was the original of the inn so favoured by the Revd. Mr. Stiggins. Of the two, perhaps, the latter, still existing, seems to fit Dickens’s description best.

CHAPTER VI

THE “LEATHER BOTTLE,” COBHAM, KENT

The charming Kentish village of Cobham was familiar to Dickens in his early boyhood days, as was the whole delightful countryside surrounding it. That he loved it throughout his whole life there is ample evidence in his letters. It was inevitable, therefore, that his enthusiasm for it should find vent in his stories, and the first references to its green woods and green shady lanes are to be found in charming phrases in *The Pickwick Papers*, with the “Leather Bottle” as the centre of attraction.

The inn is first named in the book in Mr. Tupman’s pathetic letter to Mr. Pickwick written on a certain historic morning at Dingley Dell:

“MY DEAR PICKWICK, “You, my dear friend, are placed far beyond the reach of many mortal frailties and weaknesses which ordinary people cannot over come. You do not know what it is, at one blow, to be deserted by a lovely and fascinating creature, and to fall a victim to the artifices of a villain, who hid the grin of cunning beneath the mask of friendship. I hope you never may. “Any letter, addressed to me at the ‘Leather Bottle,’ Cobham, Kent, will be forwarded — supposing I still exist. I hasten from the sight of the world, which has become odious to me. Should I hasten from it altogether, pity — forgive me. Life, my dear Pickwick, has become insupportable to me. The spirit which burns within us, is a porter’s knot, on which to rest the heavy load of worldly cares and troubles; and when that spirit fails us, the burden is too heavy to be borne. We sink beneath it. You may tell Rachel — Ah, that name! “TRACY TUPMAN.”

[illustration: The “Leather Bottle,” Cobham, Kent. From a photograph]

No sooner had Mr. Pickwick read this plaintive missive than he decided to follow, with his two other companions, Winkle and Snodgrass, in search of their depressed friend. On the coach journey to Rochester “the violence of their grief had sufficiently abated to admit of their making a very excellent early dinner,” and having discovered the right road all three set forward again in the after-noon to walk to Cobham.

“A delightful walk it was; for it was a pleasant afternoon in June, and their way lay through a deep and shady wood, cooled by the light wind which gently rustled the thick foliage, and enlivened by the songs of the birds that perched upon the boughs. The ivy and the moss crept in thick clusters over the old trees, and the soft green turf overspread the ground like a silken mat. They emerged upon an open park, with an ancient hall, displaying the quaint and picturesque architecture of Elizabeth’s time. Long vistas of stately oaks and elm trees appeared on every side; large herds of deer were cropping the fresh grass; and occasionally a startled hare scoured along the ground, with the speed of the shadows thrown by the light clouds which sweep across a sunny landscape like a passing breath of summer.”

Dickens wrote that charming descriptive passage in 1836, probably whilst spending his honeymoon at Chalk near by, and anyone taking the same walk will find that the words paint the scene perfectly and faithfully to-day, so unspoiled and unaltered is it. The spot will delight the traveler as much as it did Mr. Pickwick, who exclaimed, as it all came in view: “If this were the place to which all who are troubled with our friend’s complaint came, I fancy their old attachment to this world would very soon return”; at any rate, his other companions were all agreed upon the point. “And really,” added Mr. Pickwick, after half an hour’s walking had brought them to the village, “really for a misanthrope’s choice, this is one of the prettiest and most desirable places of residence I ever met with.”

Having been directed to the “Leather Bottle,” “a clean and commodious village ale-house,” the three travellers entered, and at once inquired for a gentleman of the name of Tupman. In those days the inn was managed by a landlady, who promptly told Tom to “show the gentlemen into the parlour.”

“A stout country lad opened the door at the end of the passage, and the three friends entered a long, low-roofed room, furnished with a large number of high-backed, leather-cushioned chairs, of fantastic shapes, and embellished with a great variety of old portraits and roughly coloured prints of some antiquity. At the upper end of the room was a table, with a white cloth upon it, well covered with a roast fowl, bacon, ale and et ceteras; and at the table sat Mr. Tupman, looking as unlike a man who had taken his leave of the world as possible.

“On the entrance of his friends, that gentleman laid down his knife and fork, and with a mournful air advanced to meet them.”

Mr. Tupman was quite affected by his friends' anxiety for his welfare, but any demonstration was nipped in the bud by Mr. Pickwick's insisting on Mr. Tupman finishing his delicate repast first. At the conclusion thereof, Mr. Pickwick, "having refreshed himself with a copious draft of ale," conducted poor Tracy to the churchyard opposite, and pacing to and fro eventually combated his companion's resolution with a successfully eloquent appeal to him once again to join his friends.

On their way back to the inn, Mr. Pickwick made that great discovery "which had been the pride and boast of his friends, and the envy of every antiquarian in this or any other country," of a small broken stone, partially buried in the ground in front of a cottage door, which, as everybody knows, bore the inscription:

- | -
B I L S T
U M
P S H I
S.M.
A R K

The exultation and joy of the Pickwickians knew no bounds and they carefully carried the important stone into the inn, where Mr. Pickwick's eyes sparkled with a delight as he sat and gloated over the treasure he had discovered, the detailed adventure with which need not be related here. Having carefully packed his prize, its discovery and the happy meeting were duly celebrated in an evening of festivity and conversation.

"It was past 11 o'clock — a late hour for the little village of Cobham — when Mr. Pickwick retired to the bedroom which had been prepared for his reception. He threw open the lattice-window, and, setting his light upon the table, fell into a train of meditation on the hurried events of the two preceding days.

"The hour and the place were both favourable to contemplation; Mr. Pickwick was roused by the church clock striking twelve. The first stroke of the hour sounded solemnly in his ear, but when the bell ceased the stillness seemed insupportable; he almost felt as if he had lost a companion. He was nervous and excited; and hastily undressing himself, and placing his light in the chimney, got into bed."

But Mr. Pickwick could not sleep following the excitement of the day's adventure, so "after half an hour's tumbling about, he came to the

unsatisfactory conclusion that it was of no use trying to sleep, so he got up and partially dressed himself. Anything, he thought, was better than lying there fancying all kinds of horrors. He looked out of the window — it was very dark. He walked about the room — it was very lonely.”

Suddenly he thought of The Madman’s Manuscript which he had brought from Dingley Dell, and, trimming his light, he put on his spectacles and composed himself to read that blood-curdling narrative. On reaching the end, Mr. Pickwick’s candle “went suddenly out” and he once more scrambled into bed.

Next morning, with the coveted antiquarian treasure, the four gentlemen travelled to London by coach.

That is the story of the association of the “Leather Bottle,” Cobham, with The Pickwick Papers, which has spread its fame to the uttermost parts of the world. That is the chief reason why in certain seasons of the year the “Leather Bottle” and Cobham are visited by thousands of admirers of the novelist, and also why the ideal Kentish village has become a magnet to lovers of England’s rural lanes and arable fields; but the charm of it all is that when it is reached both it and the inn are to be found exactly as Dickens so faithfully described them many years ago.

The inn is just an inn; a commodious village ale-house; that is the best description of it. Its picturesque exterior, with its hanging sign bearing a portrait of Mr. Pickwick in the act of addressing the club, and the legend, “Dickens’s Old Pickwick Leather Bottle,” and its red-tiled roof, its small windows with their old-fashioned shutters, is no less quaint and attractive than its old-time interior. Its original sign — the Leather Bottle — hangs in the tiny bar which is on the immediate right of the passage, and behind a glass window, looking as unlike a bar as anything imaginable. From this curious little receptacle refreshment for travellers and villagers is dispensed in stone mugs embellished with the sign of the inn; and its “low-roofed room” is at the end of the passage as Mr. Pickwick found it, with its oak beams across the ceiling adding to its picturesqueness. In this room the “high back leather-cushioned chairs” are still to be seen, together with a grandfather clock and other antique pieces of furniture in thorough keeping with tradition.

There, too, is the great “variety of old portraits” which decorated the wall in Mr. Pickwick’s time, with every other available inch of wall space now covered with portraits of the novelist and his memorable characters,

pictures of scenes from his books, Dickensian relics and knickknacks, either associated with the book which brought it fame or with other books of the famous Boz. In a word, it is a veritable Dickens museum, in which every lover of the novelist lingers with pleasure and amazement, oblivious of the fact that possibly his tea is getting cold.

Here the visitor can have his meal as did Mr. Tupman, not perhaps in such solitude, for the “Leather Bottle” to-day is often a busy centre for pedestrians from the neighbouring villages, and cyclists and motorists from far-distant towns and cities.

Upstairs, overlooking the churchyard, is the identical front bedroom where Mr. Pickwick spent the night, and where he sat reading long into the early and eerie hours of the morning. The present landlord is a true Dickensian in knowledge and character, and endeavours to make everybody comfortable and welcome, no matter who he be. A glance at the visitors’ book will show how the inn has been sought out by every grade of society from all over the world. Indeed, we doubt if Shakespeare’s birthplace can surpass this inn in popularity.

[illustration: The Coffee Room, “Leather Bottle,” Cobham, Kent. From a photograph]

But it is not merely a Pickwickian inn. It is a Dickensian inn for which the novelist himself had a warm place in his heart for its own sake, spending many pleasant hours within its comfortable walls. Long before he came to live at Gad’s Hill, close by, he loved the place. As a boy at Chatham, probably he walked over in company with his father; and when spending his honeymoon at Chalk, he no doubt roamed in the beautiful lanes around the village. In 1840, after spending a vacation at Broadstairs, he posted back to London with Maclise and Forster by way of Chatham, Rochester and Cobham, and the three spent two agreeable days in revisiting well-remembered scenes.

Again in 1841 Dickens and Forster passed a day and night in Cobham and its neighbourhood, sleeping at the “Leather Bottle,” and when he ultimately became a resident at Gad’s Hill the whole district was the greatest pleasure to him. His biographer, writing of the year 1856, says: “Round Cobham, skirting the park and village and passing the ‘Leather Bottle,’ famous in the pages of Pickwick, was a favourite walk with Dickens.”

He would often take his friends and visitors with him on these walks, and would never miss the old village inn. W. P. Frith has told us of how, when he formed one of the party on one of these occasions, “we went to the ‘Leather Bottle,’“ and, no doubt, the company was merry and reminiscent on the association of the village with the novelist and his immortal book.

The happy thing to be remembered to-day is that neither the village, park, nor inn have changed since those historic days, so that little imagination is required by the pilgrim to recall to his mind the scenes and characters which have made them familiar to lovers of Dickens in every English-speaking country.

CHAPTER VII

THE “TOWN ARMS,” EATANSWILL, AND THE INN OF “THE BAGMAN’S STORY”

Following the Pickwickians in the sequence of their peregrinations, we become confronted with the problem, “which was the prototype of Eatanswill?” Having weighed the evidence of each of the other claimants for the honour, we favour that of Sudbury in Suffolk, for which so good a case has been presented. That being so, the “Rose and Crown” undoubtedly would be the original of the “Town Arms,” the headquarters of the Blues and the inn at which Mr. Pickwick and his friends alighted on their arrival in the town.

First let us briefly state the case for Sudbury.

In the opening paragraph of Chapter XIII of the book, Dickens writes:

“We will frankly acknowledge, that up to the period of our being first immersed in the voluminous papers of the Pickwick Club, we had never heard of Eatanswill; we will with equal candour admit, that we have in vain searched for proof of the actual existence of such a place at the present day. . . . We are therefore led to believe, that Mr. Pickwick, with that anxious desire to abstain from giving offence to any, and with those delicate feelings for which all who knew him well know he was so eminently remarkable, purposely substituted a fictitious designation, for the real name of the place in which his observations were made. We are confirmed in this belief by a little circumstance, apparently slight and trivial in itself, but when considered from this point of view, not undeserving of notice. In Mr. Pickwick’s notebook, we can just trace an entry of the fact, that the places of himself and followers were booked by the Norwich coach; but this entry was afterwards lined through, as if for the purpose of concealing even the direction in which the borough is situated.”

That description fits Sudbury admirably and faithfully, but does not by any means fit either Ipswich or Norwich, the two other claimants, and the evidence of Mr. C. Finden Waters, a one-time proprietor of the “Rose and

Crown” at Sudbury, makes it almost certain that Sudbury was the place Dickens had in mind.

Mr. Waters, in 1906, devoted much time and research in order to establish his claim, and in March, 1907, read a paper, setting forth in detail the various points which led him to that conclusion, to the members of a then newly formed coterie who called themselves “The Eatanswill Club.” It appears that this evidence established the fact that Dickens visited Sudbury in 1834. On the 25th and 26th July in the same year, a Parliamentary by-election took place there, the incidents of which, as reported by the Essex Standard of that period, coincided remarkably with those recorded in connexion with the “Eatanswill” election in *The Pickwick Papers*. In 1835, Dickens visited Ipswich for *The Morning Chronicle*, and reported the election at that place. It is now tolerably certain that he went on to Sudbury for a similar purpose.

A further point is, Mr. Pickwick left by the Norwich coach. “Eatanswill,” as we have seen, being a small borough near Bury St. Edmunds, and on the Norwich coach route, as was Sudbury, the latter’s claim gains strength indeed, if it does not actually settle the question. At any rate, no other small borough could be named with any assurance that Dickens had it in his mind. Indeed, in the year 1834, there were only four Parliamentary boroughs in Suffolk, viz. Sudbury, Ipswich, Bury St. Edmunds and Eye. Ipswich, Mr. Pickwick visited AFTER the “Eatanswill” election, and does not hesitate to describe it under its right name. Moreover, the claims of Ipswich have been relinquished by even local literary men, who in 1905 actually proved that town to be topographically impossible and named Sudbury as the original. Bury St. Edmunds is the place to which Mr. Pickwick travelled AFTER leaving “Eatanswill,” and as that borough figures prominently in the book undisguised, it cannot be that. Eye is off the Norwich coach road, and no one has ever suggested that it has any claim to the honour. Sudbury alone, therefore, remains as presenting all the main features required for the original.

[illustration: The “Rose and Crown,” Sudbury. From a photograph]

In 1834 the “Rose and Crown,” Sudbury, was the headquarters of the “Blue” candidate, and so its claim to be the original of the “Town Arms,” Eatanswill, would seem to be well made out; and so serious and certain were the citizens of Sudbury on the point that they established an

“Eatanswill Club” there, and revived the Eatanswill Gazette devoted to “Pickwickian, Dickensian and Eatanswillian humour and research.”

Accepting this evidence, we naturally assume the “Rose and Crown” to be the “Town Arms,” which, late in the evening, Mr. Pickwick and his companions, assisted by Sam, dismounting from the roof of the Eatanswill coach, entered through an excited crowd assembled there. They found, however, the inn had no accommodation to offer, but through the friendliness of Mr. Pott, Mr. Pickwick and Winkle accompanied that gentleman to his home, whilst Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass and Sam repaired to the “Peacock.” They all first dined together at the “Town Arms” and arranged to reassemble there in the morning. It was here the barmaid was reported to have been bribed to “hocus the brandy and water of fourteen unpolluted electors as was a stopping in the house,” and where most of the exciting scenes of the election either took place, or had their rise in its precincts.

On the same authority we locate the “Swan” as being the original of the “Peacock,” the headquarters of the “buffs,” where Tupman and Snodgrass lodged, and where was told the Bagman’s story which brings us up against yet another problem — ”which was the inn on Marlborough Downs that plays so important a part in that narrative?”

We think, however, Mr. Charles G. Harper has solved the knotty point in his valuable book *The Old Inns of Old England*. He comes to the conclusion, by a process of elimination, that the “Waggon and Horses” at Beckhampton, which exists to-day, nearly realises the description of the inn given in the story. “It is,” he says, “just the house a needy bagman such as Tom Smart would have selected. It was in coaching days a homely yet comfortable inn, that received those travellers who did not relish either the state or the expense of the great Beckhampton Inn opposite, where post-horses were kept, and where the very elite of the roads resorted.”

[illustration: The “Waggon and Horses,” Beckhampton. Drawn by C. G. Harper]

If its comfort, as described in the following paragraph, is to-day equal to that found by Tom Smart, it is a place to seek for personal pleasure, as well as a Pickwickian landmark.

“In less than five minutes’ time, Tom was ensconced in the room opposite the bar — the very room where he had imagined the fire blazing — before a substantial matter-of-fact roaring fire, composed of something

short of a bushel of coals, and wood enough to make half a dozen decent gooseberry bushes, piled half-way up the chimney, and roaring and crackling with a sound that of itself would have warmed the heart of any reasonable man. This was comfortable, but this was not all, for a smartly dressed girl, with a bright eye and a neat ankle, was laying a very clean white cloth on the table; and as Tom sat with his slippers on the fender, and his back to the open door, he saw a charming prospect of the bar reflected in the glass over the chimney-piece, with delightful rows of green bottles and gold labels, together with jars of pickles and preserves, and cheeses and boiled hams, and rounds of beef, arranged on shelves in the most tempting and delicious array. Well, that was comfortable, too; but even this was not all — for in the bar, seated at tea at the nicest possible little table, drawn close up before the brightest possible little fire, was a buxom widow of somewhere about eight-and- forty or thereabouts, with a face as comfortable as the bar, who was evidently the landlady of the house, and the supreme ruler over all these agreeable possessions.”

What happened afterwards is another story. Many other incidents occurred at Eatanswill during the Pickwickians’ stay there, the narration of which is not our purpose in these pages. One, however, led Sam and his master hurriedly to leave the town on a certain morning in pursuit of Alfred Jingle, who had put in an appearance at Mrs. Leo Hunter’s fancy-dress fete, and on seeing Mr. Pickwick there, had as quickly left it as he had entered it. Mr. Pickwick, on enquiry, discovering that Alfred Jingle, alias Charles Fitz Marshall, was residing at the “Angel,” Bury, set off in hot haste to hunt him down, determined to prevent him from deceiving anyone else as he had deceived him; and so we follow him in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

THE “ANGEL,” BURY ST. EDMUNDS

“Beg your pardon, sir, is this Bury St. Edmunds?”

The words were addressed by Sam Weller to Mr. Pickwick as the two sat on top of a coach as it “rattled through the well-paved streets of a handsome little town, of thriving appearance.” Eventually stopping before “a large inn situated in a wide street, nearly facing the old Abbey,” Mr. Pickwick, looking up, added, ““and this is the “Angel.” We alight here, Sam. But some caution is necessary. Order a private room, and do not mention my name. You understand?”

““Right as a trivet, sir,’ replied Mr. Weller, with a wink of intelligence; and having dragged Mr. Pickwick’s portmanteau from the hind boot, into which it had been hastily thrown when they joined the coach at Eatanswill, Mr. Weller disappeared on his errand. A private room was speedily engaged; and into it Mr. Pickwick was ushered without delay.” Having been settled comfortably therein, partaken of dinner and listened to Sam’s philosophy about a good night’s rest, he allowed that worthy to go and “worm ev’ry secret out o’ the boots’ heart” regarding the whereabouts of Fitz Marshall, as he assured Mr. Pickwick he could do in five minutes. As good as his word he returned with his information that the gentleman in question also had a private room in the “Angel,” but was dining out that night and had taken his servant with him. It was accordingly arranged that Sam should have a talk with the said servant in the morning with a view of learning what he could about his master’s plans.

“As it appeared that this was the best arrangement that could be made, it was finally agreed upon. Mr. Weller, by his master’s permission, retired to spend his evening in his own way; and was shortly afterwards elected, by the unanimous voice of the assembled company, into the tap-room chair, in which honourable post he acquitted himself so much to the satisfaction of the gentlemen-frequenters, that the roars of laughter and approbation penetrated to Mr. Pickwick’s bedroom, and shortened the term of his natural rest by at least three hours. Early on the ensuing morning Mr. Weller was

dispelling all the feverish remains of the previous evening's conviviality, through the instrumentality of a halfpenny shower-bath (having induced a young gentleman attached to the stable department, by the offer of a coin, to pump over his head and face, until he was perfectly restored), when he was attracted by the appearance of a young fellow in mulberry-coloured livery, who was sitting on a bench in the yard, reading what appeared to be a hymn-book, with an air of deep abstraction, but who occasionally stole a glance at the individual under the pump, as if he took some interest in his proceedings, nevertheless."

This was no other than Job Trotter, the servant to Mr. Alfred Jingle of No Hall, No Where, and in a few moments the two were in animated conversation over a little liquid refreshment at the bar. How Job Trotter and Alfred Jingle not only got the better of the usually astute Sam and the innocent Mr. Pickwick, and entangled the latter into a very embarrassing situation at the Young Ladies' School in the district; and how the latter extricated himself from the awkward predicament only to find that the instigators of it had again hurriedly left the town, is best gathered from the pages of the book itself.

"The process of being washed in the night air, and rough-dried in a closet is as dangerous as it is peculiar." This having been the case with Mr. Pickwick, he suffered as a consequence, and was laid up with an attack of rheumatism, and had to spend a couple of days in his bed at the hotel. To pass away the time, he devoted himself to "editing" the love story of Nathaniel Pipkin, which he read to his friends, who, having by this time arrived at the hotel, gathered at his bedside and took their wine there with him.

It was whilst staying at the "Angel" that Mr. Pickwick received the first intimation that a writ for breach of promise had been issued against him at the instance of Mrs. Bardell, much to the alarm and amusement of his friends. He did not, however, hasten back to London, but accepted Mr. Wardle's invitation to a shooting party in the neighbourhood, where he again involved himself in a further misadventure.

[illustration: The Angel Hotel, Bury St. Edmunds. Drawn by C. G. Harper]

Now all these little untoward events happened whilst Mr. Pickwick was staying at the "Angel," and not only have they caused much amusement to the readers of the book, but incidentally have added fame and importance to

the “Angel” at Bury to such an extent that the faithful reader of Pickwick who finds himself in the neighbourhood would no more think of passing the “Angel” than would the pilgrim to the town omit visiting the famous abbey. He will find the hotel little altered since the day when Mr. Pickwick visited it, either as regards its old-time atmosphere or its Victorian hospitality.

It is a very plain and severe-looking building from the outside, suggesting a gigantic doll’s house with real steps up to the front door all complete. Although it does not look as inspiring on approaching it as most Dickensian inns do, its interior, nevertheless, makes up in comfort what its exterior lacks in picturesqueness.

It has stood since 1779 and occupies the site of three ancient inns known at the time as the “Angel,” the “Castle” and the “White Bear,” respectively. In such an ancient town as Bury St. Edmunds, with so many years behind it, the “Angel” could tell a story worth narrating. Fronting the gates of the ancient Abbey, it occupies the most prominent place in the town. In the wide space before it the Bury fair was held, and a famous and fashionable festivity it was, which lasted in the olden time for several days. Latterly, however, one day is deemed sufficient, and that is September 21 in each year.

In spite of its sombre appearance from the outside, it is considered one of the most important hotels in West Suffolk, and is still a typical old English inn, “a byword for comfort and generous hospitality throughout the eastern counties.” The spacious coffee-room, its well-appointed drawing and sitting-rooms, its many bedrooms, have an appeal to those desiring ease rather than the luxuriousness of the modern style. In addition it has extensive yards and stables, survivals of the old posting days, with a cosy tap-room and bar, to say nothing of all the natural little nooks and corners and accessories which pertain only to old-world hostelries.

There still remains the pump under which Sam had his “halfpenny shower-bath.” And in the tap-room one can be easily reminded of the scene over which Sam presided and acquitted himself with so much satisfaction.

As to which was the room occupied by Mr. Pickwick, history is silent; but when Dickens was on his reporting expedition in Suffolk during the electoral campaign of 1835, he stayed at the “Angel” and, tradition says, slept in room No. 11. Mr. Percy FitzGerald, on visiting it some years ago, ventured to seek of the “gnarled” waiter information on the momentous question of Mr. Pickwick and his adventure.

“Pickwick, sir? Why, HE knew all about it,” was the reply. “No. 11 was Mr. Pickwick’s room, and the proprietor would tell us everything. A most quaint debate arose,” says Mr. FitzGerald, “on Mr. Pickwick’s stay at the hotel. The host pronounced EX CATHEDRA and without hesitation about the matter. . . . The power and vitality of the Pickwickian legend are extraordinary indeed; all day long we found people bewildered, as it were, by this faith, mixing up the author and his hero.”

This is not unusual, and even in these days we find that Dickens’s characters have become so real that no one stops to discuss whether this or that really happened to them, but just simply accepts their comings and goings as the comings and goings of the heroes and heroines of history are accepted, with perhaps just a little more belief in them. And so we can be assured that the “Angel” at Bury will be chiefly remembered as the hotel where Mr. Pickwick and his companions stayed, whoever before or since may have honoured it with a visit, or whatever else in its history may be recalled as important.

In 1861 Dickens again visited the town to give his famous readings from his works, and put up at the “Angel,” so that the county hotel has many reasons for the proud title of being a Dickensian inn.

CHAPTER IX

THE “BLACK BOY,” CHELMSFORD, THE “MAGPIE AND STUMP,” AND THE “BULL,” WHITECHAPEL

After Mr. Pickwick and Sam had been so cleverly outwitted by Jingle and Job Trotter at Bury, they returned to London. Taking liquid refreshment one day afterwards in a city hostelry they chanced upon the elder Weller, who, in the course of conversation, revealed the fact that, whilst “working” an Ipswich coach, he had taken up Jingle and Job Trotter at the “Black Boy” at Chelmsford: “I took ‘em up,” he emphasised, “right through to Ipswich, where the manservant — him in the mulberries — told me they was a-going to put up for a long time.” Mr. Pickwick decided to follow them, and started, as will be seen presently, from the Bull Inn, Whitechapel, for that town.

The reference to the “Black Boy” is but a passing one, and it is not even recorded that Mr. Pickwick stopped there on his journey out; but the inn where Jingle was “taken up” was then one of the best known on the Essex road, and was not demolished until 1857, when it was replaced by a modern public-house which still displays the old signboard. In an article in *The Dickensian** Mr. G. O. Rickwood gives some interesting particulars concerning its history, from which we gather that originally the “Black Boy” was the town house of the de Veres, the famous Earls of Oxford, whose principal seat, Hedingham Castle, was within a short distance of Chelmsford. It was converted into a hostelry in the middle of the seventeenth century, and was first known as the Crown or New Inn. It was an ancient timber structure house, and some of the carved woodwork, with the well-known device of the boar’s head taken from one of the rooms of the old inn, is still preserved in Chelmsford Museum.

[* 1917, p.214.]

At the close of the eighteenth century the “Black Boy” was recognised as the leading hostelry of the town, and was known far and wide. In the

Pickwickian days it was a busy posting-house for the coaches from London to many parts of Norfolk.

[illustration: The “Black Boy,” Chelmsford. From an old engraving]

Before Mr. Pickwick carried out his determination to pursue Jingle, he had occasion to visit the “Magpie and Stump,” “situated in a court, happy in the double advantage of being in the vicinity of Clare Market and closely approximating to the back of New Inn.” This was the favoured tavern, sacred to the evening orgies of Mr. Lowten and his companions, and by ordinary people would be designated a public-house. The object of Mr. Pickwick’s visit was to discover Mr. Lowten, and on enquiry, found him presiding over a sing-song and actually engaged in obliging with a comic song at the moment. After a brief interview with that worthy, Mr. Pickwick was prevailed upon to join the festive party.

[illustration: The “George the Fourth,” Clare Market. Drawn by C. G. Harper]

There were, at the time, two taverns, either of which might have stood as the original for the “Magpie and Stump”; the “Old Black Jack” and the “George the Fourth,” both in Portsmouth Street, and both were demolished in 1896. Which was the one Dickens had in mind it is difficult to say. His description of its appearance runs as follows: “In the lower windows, which were decorated with curtains of a saffron hue, dangled two or three printed cards, bearing reference to Devonshire cyder and Dantzic spruce, while a large blackboard, announcing in white letters to an enlightened public that there were 500,000 barrels of double stout in the cellars of the establishment, left the mind in a state of not unpleasing doubt and uncertainty, as to the precise direction in the bowels of the earth in which this mighty cavern might be supposed to extend. When we add that the weather-beaten signboard bore the half-obliterated semblance of a magpie intently eyeing a crooked streak of brown paint, which the neighbours had been taught from infancy to consider as the ‘stump,’ we have said all that need be said of the exterior of the edifice.”

The “Old Black Jack” has been identified as the original of the “Magpie and Stump” by some topographers, whilst Robert Allbut in his *Rambles in Dickens-land* favoured the “Old George the Fourth,” adding that Dickens and Thackeray were well-remembered visitors there.

The Bull Inn, Whitechapel, the starting-place of Tony Weller’s coach which was to take Mr. Pickwick to Ipswich, was actually at No. 25 Aldgate,

and was perhaps the most famous of the group of inns of the neighbourhood whence many of the Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk coaches set out on their journeys. At the time of which we write it was owned by Mrs. Ann Nelson, whose antecedents had been born and bred in the business, while she herself had interests in more than one city hostelry, as well as owned coaches.

Mr. Charles G. Harper has several references to, and interesting anecdotes about, Mrs. Ann Nelson and her inns in his "Road" books. In one such reference he tells us Mrs. Ann Nelson was "one of those stern, dignified, magisterial women of business, who were quite a remarkable feature of the coaching age, who saw their husbands off to an early grave and alone carried on the peculiarly exacting double business of inn-keeping and coach-proprietorship, and did so with success." She was the "Napoleon and Caesar" combined of the coaching business. Energetic, she spared neither herself nor her servants. The last to bed she was also the first to rise, "looking after the stable people and seeing that the horses had their feeds and were properly cared for." Insistent as she was on rigid punctuality in all things, and hard as she was on those who served her, she, nevertheless, treated them very well, and gave the coachmen and guards a special room, where they dined as well at reduced prices as any of the coffee-room customers. This room was looked upon as their private property, and there they regaled themselves with the best the house could provide. It was more sacred and exclusive than the commercial-rooms of the old Bagmen days, and was strictly unapproachable by any but those for whom it was set apart.

[illustration: The Bull Inn, Whitechapel. From the water-colour drawing by P. Palfrey]

The "Bull" began to decline when the railway was opened in 1839, and in 1868 it was demolished.

There is no doubt that Dickens knew it well, and probably used it in his journalistic days when having to take journeys to the eastern counties to report election speeches. In *The Uncommercial Traveller* he speaks of having strolled up to the empty yard of the "Bull," "who departed this life I don't know when, and whose coaches had all gone I don't know where."

When, therefore, he wanted a starting-point for Mr. Pickwick's adventure to Ipswich, the "Bull," which was nothing less than an institution at the time, readily occurred to him.

There is an anecdote about Dickens and the coachmen's private apartment, told by Mr. Charles G. Harper. "On one occasion Dickens had a

seat at a table, and ‘the Chairman,’ after sundry flattering remarks, as a tribute to the novelist’s power of describing a coach Journey, said, ‘Mr. Dickens, we knows you knows wot’s wot, but can you, sir, ‘andle a vip?’ There was no mock modesty in Dickens. He acknowledged he could describe a journey down the road, but he regretted that in the management of a ‘vip’ he was not expert.”

Here Sam arrived one morning with his master’s travelling bag and portmanteau, to be closely followed by Mr. Pickwick himself, who, as Sam told his father, was “cabbin’ it . . . havin’ two mile o’ danger at eightpence.” In the inn yard he was greeted by a red-haired man who immediately became friendly and enquired if Mr. Pickwick was going to Ipswich. On learning that he was, and that he, too, had taken an outside seat, they became fast friends. Little did Mr. Pickwick suppose that his newly made friend and he would meet again later under less congenial circumstances.

“Take care o’ the archway, gen’l’men,” was Sam’s timely warning as the coach, under the control of his father, started out of the inn yard on its memorable journey down Whitechapel Road to the “Great White Horse,” Ipswich, an hostelry which forms the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER X

THE “GREAT WHITE HORSE,” IPSWICH

“In the main street of Ipswich, on the left-hand side of the way, a short distance after you have passed through the open space fronting the Town Hall, stands an inn known far and wide by the appellation of the ‘Great White Horse,’ rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart horse, which is elevated above the principal door.”

With these identical words Dickens introduces his readers to, and indicates precisely, the position of the famous Great White Horse Inn at Ipswich, and a visitor to the popular city of Suffolk need have no better guide to the spot than the novelist. He will be a little surprised at the description of the white horse, which in reality is quite an unoffending and respectable animal, in the act of simply lifting its fore leg in a trotting action, that is all; but he will be well repaid if when he arrives there he reads again Chapter XXII of *The Pickwick Papers* before he starts to make himself acquainted with the intricacies of the interior.

That chapter, telling of the extraordinary adventure Mr. Pickwick experienced with the middle-aged lady in the double-bedded room, is one of the most amusing in the book, and one which has made the “Great White Horse” as familiar a name as any in fiction or reality.

There are few inns in the novelist’s books described so fully. He must have known it well; indeed, he is supposed to have stayed there when, in his early days, he visited Ipswich to report an election for *The Morning Chronicle*; and probably a similar mistake happened to him to that which Mr. Pickwick experienced. So when he says, “The ‘Great Horse’ is famous in the neighbourhood, in the same degree as a prize ox, or county paper-chronicled turnip, or unwieldy pig — for its enormous size,” he evidently was recalling an impression of those days.

[illustration: The White Horse Hotel, Ipswich. Drawn by L. Walker]

It is an imposing structure viewed from without, with stuccoed walls, and a pillared entrance, over which stands the sign which so attracted the

novelist's attention. The inside is spacious, with still the air of the old days about it, and contains fifty bedrooms and handsome suites of rooms; but Dickens was a little misleading regarding its size and a little unkind in his reproaches. At any rate, if the seemingly unkind things he said of it were deserved in those days of which he writes, they are no longer.

“Never were such labyrinths of uncarpeted passages,” he says; “such clusters of mouldy, ill-lighted rooms, such huge numbers of small dens for eating or sleeping in, beneath any one roof, as are collected together between the four walls of the Great White Horse Inn.”

Here on a certain very eventful day appeared Mr. Pickwick, who was to have met his friends there, but as they had not arrived when he and Mr. Peter Magnus reached it by coach, he accepted the latter's invitation to dine with him.

Dickens's disparaging descriptions of the inn's accommodation lead one to believe that his experiences of the “over-grown tavern,” as he calls it, were not of the pleasantest. He refers to the waiter as a corpulent man with “a fortnight's napkin” under his arm, and “coeval stockings,” and tells how this worthy ushered Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Magnus into “a large badly furnished apartment, with a dirty grate, in which a small fire was making a wretched attempt to be cheerful, but was fast sinking beneath the dispiriting influence of the place.” Here they made their repast from a “bit of fish and a steak,” and “having ordered a bottle of the most horrible port wine, at the highest possible price, for the good of the house, drank brandy and water for their own.” After finishing their scanty meal they were conducted to their respective bedrooms, each with a japanned candlestick, through “a multitude of torturous windings.” Mr. Pickwick's “was a tolerably large double-bedded room, with a fire; upon the whole, a more comfortable looking apartment than Mr. Pickwick's short experience of the accommodation of the ‘Great White Horse’ had led him to expect.”

Whether all this was ever true does not seem to have mattered much to the various proprietors, for they were not only proud of the association of the inn with Pickwick, but made no attempt to hide what the novelist said of its shortcomings. On the contrary, one of them printed in a little booklet the whole of the particular chapter wherein these disrespectful remarks appear. Indeed, that is the chief means of advertisement to lure the traveller in, and when he gets there he finds Pickwick pictures everywhere on the walls to dispel any doubt he might have of the associations.

It is not necessary to re-tell the story of Mr. Pickwick's misadventure here. It will be recalled that having forgotten his watch he, in a weak moment, walked quietly downstairs, with the japanned candlestick in his hand, to secure it again. "The more stairs Mr. Pickwick went down, the more stairs there seemed to be to descend, and again and again, when Mr. Pickwick got into some narrow passage, and began to congratulate himself on having gained the ground floor, did another flight of stairs appear before his astonished eyes. . . . Passage after passage did he explore; room after room did he peep into"; until at length he discovered the room he wanted and also his watch.

The same difficulty confronted him on his journey backward; indeed, it was even more perplexing. "Rows of doors, garnished with boots of every shape, make, and size, branched off in every possible direction." He tried a dozen doors before he found what he thought was his room and proceeded to divest himself of his clothes preparatory to entering on his night's rest. But, alas! he had got into the wrong bedroom and the story of the dilemma he shortly found himself in with the lady in the yellow curl-papers, and how he extricated himself in so modest and gentlemanly a manner, is a story which "every schoolboy knows."

Having disentangled himself from the dilemma, he found the intricacies of the "White Horse's" landings and stairs again too much for him, until he was discovered, crouching in a recess in the wall, by his faithful servant Sam, who conducted him to his right room. Here Mr. Pickwick made a wise resolve that if he were to stop in the "Great White Horse" for six months, he would never trust himself about in it alone again.

We do not suppose that the visitor would encounter the same difficulty to-day in getting about the house as did Mr. Pickwick; but torturous passages are there all the same; and by virtue of Mr. Pickwick's experiences they are perhaps more noticeable than would otherwise appear had not his adventures been given to the world. And so the fact remains that Mr. Pickwick's spirit seems to haunt the building, and no attempt is made to disabuse the mind that his escapade was anything but an amusing if unfortunate reality.

The double-bedded room is a double-bedded room still, with its old four-posters, and is shown with great pride to visitors from all over the world as "Mr. Pickwick's room." The beds are still hung with old-fashioned curtains, and a rush-bottomed chair has its place there, as it did during Mr.

Pickwick's visit. Even the wall-paper is not of a modern pattern, and may have survived from that historic night. At least these things were the same when we last visited it.

Indeed, all the rooms have still the atmosphere of the Victorian era about them. The coffee-room, the bar-parlour, the dining-room, the courtyard and the assembly room reflect the Pickwickian period, which in other words speak of "home-life ease and comfort," and "are not subordinate to newfangled ideas." Whether the small room in the vicinity of the stable-yard, where Mr. Weller, senior, was engaged in preparing for his journey to London, taking sustenance, and incidentally discussing "Widders" with his son Sam, exists to-day we are unable to state with any certainty; but no doubt there is one which would fill the bill. Which, too, was the particular room where Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman were arrested, the former on the charge of intending to fight a duel, and the latter as aider and abettor, history does not relate, or modern research reveal.

The inn is some four hundred years old, and at one time was known as the White Horse Tavern. George II is said to have stayed there some three hundred years ago, and so, report has it, did Nelson and Lady Hamilton; but these are small matters compared to the larger ones connected with Mr. Pickwick, and merit but passing record. Whilst those details concerning the fictitious character can be adjusted by any enthusiast who stays at the "Great White Horse" on a Pickwickian pilgrimage, no tangible trace that the three other historical personages used the inn remains to substantiate the fact, although the tradition is acceptable.

CHAPTER XI

THE “GEORGE AND VULTURE”

Tucked away in the heart of the busiest part of the roaring city, overshadowed by tall, hard-looking, modern banking and insurance buildings and all but a thin strip of it hidden from view, is a veritable piece of old London.

This is the “George and Vulture,” known throughout the world as the tavern that Mr. Pickwick and his friends made their favourite city headquarters. The address in the directory of this inn is St. Michael’s Alley, Cornhill; The Pickwick Papers, however, describe it as being in George Yard, Lombard Street. Both are correct. If the latter address is followed, the inn is not easy to find, for the sign “Old Pickwickian Hostel” is so high up over the upper window in the far left-hand corner that it is almost the last thing one sees. One fares little better from the other approach, for the narrow alley with its tall buildings facing each other so closely as to be almost touched with outstretched arms, makes it necessary to search for the entrance doorway.

These, however, are not drawbacks to the lover of old London, for he rather prefers to probe about for things he likes, particularly when, as in this case, the discovery is worth the trouble; for once inside the “George and Vulture” the pilgrim will be thoroughly recompensed for the trouble he has taken in finding it. Here he will be struck by the atmosphere of old time which still prevails, even though there are signs that the modern has somewhat supplanted the old. Not long since the dining-room on the ground floor was well sawdusted, and partitioned off in the old coffee-room style, and some of these high-backed box-like compartments still remain in corners of the room. With the knowledge that this ancient hostelry was called “Thomas’s Chop House” — and it still bears that name ground on the glass doors — one expects to discover a grill loaded up with fizzing chops and steaks, and there it will be found, presided over by the white-garbed chef turning over the red-hot morsels.

Opposite the door is the old-fashioned bar, with a broad staircase winding up by its side to another dining-room above completely partitioned off into

compartments with still another grill and a spotlessly robed chef in evidence. Up another flight of stairs we come to yet one more dining-room recently decorated in the old style, with oak-beamed ceiling and surroundings to match; with lantern lights suspended from the oak beams, grandfather clock, warming pan, pewter plates and odd pieces of furniture in keeping with the period it all seeks to recall. It is called the "Pickwick Room," and this metamorphosis was carried out by a city business firm for the accommodation of its staff at lunch, and its good friendship toward them admirably reflects the Dickens spirit. Here the members of the general staff, both ladies and gentlemen, numbering about 170, daily gather for their mid-day meal; whilst a small cosy room adjoining is set apart for the managerial heads. On occasions, representatives of associated houses in the city and from abroad, calling on business, are cordially invited to join the luncheon party.

There is an interesting Visitors' Book in the Pickwick Room, wherein guests are asked to inscribe their names and designations; also a private or business motto. Custom has it that a man only signs the book once, however many times he may visit the Pickwick Room, unless his official position has altered through business promotion.

This being the floor tradition has decided was Mr. Pickwick's bedroom, it is suitably decorated with Pickwickian and Dickensian pictures and ornaments, all tending to remind the visitor of the homely period of the past. There are no bedrooms to-day in the inn, nor are there any comfortable so-called sitting- or coffee-rooms, for all the available space is required for satisfying the hungry city man.

The history of the "George and Vulture" goes back some centuries. Originally it was the London lodging of Earl Ferrers, and in 1175 a brother of his was slain there in the night. It was then called simply the "George," and described by Stow, the great historian of London, as "a common hostelry for travellers."

[illustration: The "George and Vulture." Drawn by L. Walker]

Ultimately the "Vulture," for reasons undiscovered by the present writer, was added to the sign, and the appellation the "George and Vulture" has come through the history of London unaltered, gathering with the flight of time many famous associations to keep its memory green in each succeeding period, until Mr. Pickwick put the coping-stone to its fame as one of London's imperishable heritages.

Poets and literary men of all degrees frequented it from the earliest times, and although there is no record available to substantiate a claim that the great Chaucer used the house, it seems possible that his father, who was himself a licensed victualler in the district, knew it well. But John Skelton, the satirical poet of the fifteenth century, undoubtedly enjoyed its hospitality, for he has left record in the following lines that he was acquainted with it: Intent on signs, the prying eye, The George & Vulture will descry. Let none the outward Vulture fear, No Vulture host inhabits here. If too well used you deem ye then Take your revenge and come agen.

Taverns in those days were the resort of most of the prominent men of the day, and were used in the same manner by them as the clubs of the present time, as a friendly meeting place for business men, authors, artists, lawyers, doctors, actors and the fashionable persons of leisured ease with no particular calling, all of whom treated "mine host" as an equal and not as a servant.

And so we find that men like Addison and Steele were much in evidence at these friendly gatherings of their day; that Jonathan Swift and his coterie foregathered in some cosy corner to discuss the pros and cons of that great fraud, the South Sea Bubble; that Daniel Defoe was a constant guest of the host of his time; that John Wilkes and his fellow-members of "The Hell Fire Club" used the house for their meetings, and many others the recital of whose names would resolve into a mere catalogue.

In 1666 the inn succumbed to the Great Fire; but after the rebuilding its fame was re-established and has never since waned. John Strype, the ecclesiastical historian, in his addenda to Stow's Survey of London, records that "Near Ball Alley was the George Inn, since the fire rebuilt, with very good houses and warehouses, being a large open yard, and called George Yard, at the farther end of which is the 'George and Vulture' Tavern, which is a large house and having great trade, and having a passage into St. Michael's Alley."

The yard referred to is now filled with large buildings, but when it existed as part of the inn was used, like other inn yards, by the travelling companies of players for the enactment of their mystery and morality plays. It was in the "George and Vulture," so it is recorded, that the first Beefsteak Club was formed by Richard Estcourt, the Drury Lane comedian, a fashion which spread in all directions. And so the history of the "George and Vulture" could be traced, and anecdotes relating to it set down to fill many pages.

But whilst admitting that these antiquarian notes have their interest for their own sake, we must leave them in order that we may glance at the Pickwickian traditions, through which the tavern is known to-day.

In our last chapter we left Mr. Pickwick at the “Great White Horse,” Ipswich. On his return to London he had, perforce, to abandon his lodgings in Goswell Street and so transferred his abode to very good old-fashioned and comfortable quarters, to wit, the George and Vulture Tavern and Hotel, George Yard, Lombard Street, and forthwith sent Sam to settle the little matters of rent and such-like trifles and to bring back his little odds and ends from Goswell Street. This done they shortly left the tavern for Dingley Dell, where they had a royal Christmas time. That the tavern appealed to Mr. Pickwick as ideal for the entertainment of friends is incidentally revealed in the record that after one of the merry evenings at Mr. Wardle’s he, on waking late next morning, had “a confused recollection of having severally and confidentially invited somewhere about five and forty people to dine with him at the ‘George and Vulture’ the very first time they came to London.”

Just before they left Dingley Dell, Bob Sawyer, “thrusting his forefinger between two of Mr. Pickwick’s ribs and thereby displaying his native drollery and his knowledge of the anatomy of the human frame at one and the same time, enquired — ‘I say, old boy, where do you hang out?’ Mr. Pickwick replied that he was at present suspended at the ‘George and Vulture’!”

Whether Mr. Pickwick had some idea of finding other quarters when he said he was “at present suspended” we do not know; at all events he made the tavern his London residence until, at the end of his adventures, he retired to Dulwich. Before, however, he settled down there, many incidents connected with his career took place within the walls of his favourite tavern. It was in his sitting-room here that the subpoenas re *Bardell v. Pickwick* were served on his three friends and Sam Weller on behalf of the plaintiff. The Pickwickians were seated round the fire after a comfortable dinner when Mr. Jackson, the plaintiff’s man, by his unexpected appearance, disturbed their happy gathering. It was from the “George and Vulture” they all drove to the Guildhall on the day of the trial, and it was in Mr. Pickwick’s room in the tavern that he vowed to Mr. Perker he would never pay even a halfpenny of the damages.

The next morning the Pickwickians again continued their travels, Bath being their choice of place. Returning after a week's absence, we are told that Mr. Pickwick with Sam "straightway returned to his old quarters at the 'George and Vulture.'" Before another week elapsed the fateful and inevitable day came when Mr. Pickwick was arrested and eventually conveyed to the Fleet Prison. He was in bed at the time, and so annoyed was Sam that he threatened to pitch the officer of the law out of the window into the yard below. Mr. Pickwick's deliverance from prison took him once again to the "George and Vulture," and to him came Arabella Allan and Winkle to announce to him that they were man and wife and made it their place of residence whilst Mr. Pickwick went off to Birmingham to make peace with Nathaniel's father. Mr. Winkle, senior, eventually visited the old hostel and formally approved of his daughter-in-law.

It was whilst in the inn also that Sam Weller received the news of the death of his "mother-in-law," conveyed in the extraordinary letter from his father, which he read to Mary in one of the window seats.

Here, also, came Tony Weller to make his offer of the L530 "reduced counsels" which he had inherited, to Mr. Pickwick, adding — "P'raps it'll go a little way towards the expenses o' that 'ere conviction. All I say is, just you keep it till I ask you for it again," and bolted out of the room.

The last specific reference to the "George and Vulture" is on the occasion when the party left it to join Mr. Wardle and other friends at dinner at Osborne's Adelphi Hotel. So, it will be seen, from the first mention of the tavern about midway through the book, until its closing pages, the "George and Vulture" may be said to have been Mr. Pickwick's headquarters in London.

Is it, therefore, to be wondered at, considering all the incidents and events these few references recall, that the whole atmosphere of the "George and Vulture" positively reeks with Pickwick?

Is it surprising that the various proprietors of the inn have from time to time cherished these associations, and none more so than the present genial proprietor and his efficient manager, Mr. Woods, and have reminded their customers each time they dine there of Mr. Pickwick's connection with it by placing before them plates with that immortal man's portrait in the act of addressing his club, printed thereon?

Is it to be wondered at that the City Pickwick Club should hold its meetings and dinners there, or that the Dickens Fellowship should choose it

as the most appropriate spot for the entertainment of their American and colonial visitors, and occasionally to have convivial gatherings of its members there?

And will it surprise anyone if a universal agitation is set on foot to preserve it from the axe and pick of the builder which threatens it in the near future?

There is one extraordinarily interesting piece of history relative to the “George and Vulture” and Pickwick with which fittingly to close this account of London’s famous inn.

In 1837, the year that *The Pickwick Papers* appeared in monthly-parts, a Circulating Book Society had its headquarters at the “George and Vulture.” On the occasion of the meeting held on March 30, 1837, it was proposed that *The Pickwick Papers*, “now in course of publication, be taken in for circulation.”

This motion was opposed by two members “who considered the work vulgar.” The motion, however, was carried with the amendment “that the work, when complete, be obtained and circulated as one volume.” In 1838 this famous copy of the immortal work was sold by auction amongst the members, in what was probably the very room Dickens had in mind when describing the meetings of Mr. Pickwick and his friends. It was bought by J. Buckham for 13s. 6d. This copy was annotated by the owner with notes, historical and explanatory, and is now a cherished possession of the nation in the safe custody of the Library of the British Museum, where it is known as the “George and Vulture” copy.

CHAPTER XII

THE “BLUE BOAR, “LEADENHALL MARKET,” GARRAWAY’S,” AND THE “WHITE HORSE CELLAR”

The “Blue Boar,” Leadenhall Market, was an inn of considerable Pickwickian importance. It was the elder Weller’s favourite house of call, and it will be remembered that Sam was sent for by his father on one occasion to meet him there at six o’clock. Having obtained Mr. Pickwick’s permission to absent himself from the “George and Vulture,” Sam sauntered down as far as the Mansion House, and then by easy stages wended his way towards Leadenhall Market, through a variety of by-streets and courts, purchasing a Valentine on his way.

Looking round him he beheld a signboard on which the painter’s art had delineated something remotely resembling a cerulean elephant with an aquiline nose in lieu of a trunk. Rightly conjecturing that this was the “Blue Boar” himself, he stepped into the house and enquired concerning his parent. Finding that his father would not be there for three-quarters of an hour or more, he ordered from the barmaid “nine penn’orth o’ brandy and water hike, and the ink-stand,” and having settled himself in the little parlour, composed himself to write that wonderful “valentine” to Mary. Just as Sam had finished his missive his father appeared on the scene, and he was invited by the dutiful son to listen to what he had written. Tony heard it through, punctuating it during the process with a running commentary and much advice on marriage in general and “widders” in particular.

It was here, too, that Tony, with the laudable intention of helping Mr. Pickwick, offered the invaluable, and now historic, advice concerning an “alleybi,” there being, as he asserted, “nothing like a’ alleybi, Sammy, nothing.”

It was in the same parlour on the same occasion that Mr. Weller, senior, informed his son that he had two tickets “as wos sent” to Mrs. Weller by the Shepherd “for the monthly meetin’ o’ the Brick Lane Branch o’ the United

Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association.” He communicated the secret “with great glee and winked so indefatigably after doing so,” “over a double glass o’ the invariable,” that he and Sam determined to make use of the tickets with the projected plan of exposing the “real propensities and qualities of the red-nosed man,” the success of which is so well remembered.

These facts in mind the “Blue Boar” ought not to be passed over lightly, even though it cannot be identified by name, or its existence traced in historic records. In those days the description of the locality given by Dickens was accurate enough; but although there were many inns and taverns in its district, topographers have never discovered a “Blue Boar,” or learned that one ever bore such a sign. There was a “Bull” in Leadenhall Street at one time, and possibly this may have been the inn the novelist made the scene of the above incidents, simply giving it a name of his own to afford scope for his whimsical vein in describing it.

However, the locality has changed completely from what it was when Tony Weller “used the parlour” of the “Blue Boar,” and such coaching inns that flourished then have all been swept away with the “shabby courts and alleys.”

We find, however, a picture purporting to be the “Blue Boar” with its galleries, horses and stable boys all complete drawn by Herbert Railton, in the Jubilee edition of *The Pickwick Papers*. Probably this is purely an imaginary picture.

On the other hand, there was nothing visionary about Garraway’s. “Garraway’s, twelve o’clock. ‘Dear Mrs. B., Chops and Tomato Sauce, Yours, Pickwick,’” not only implicated Mr. Pickwick, but conjured up an old and historic coffee house of city fame. It stood in Exchange Alley, and was a noted meeting-place for city men, and for its sales and auctions. It was demolished some fifty years ago after an existence of over two hundred years. It claimed to be the first to sell tea “according to the directions of the most knowing merchants and travellers into the eastern countries,” but ultimately became more famous for its sandwiches and sherry. No doubt it was the latter, or something even more substantial, that Mr. Pickwick had been indulging during the day he wrote that momentous message. Garraway’s was known to Defoe, Dean Swift, Steele and others, each of whom have references to it in their books, and during its affluent days it

was never excelled by other taverns in the city for good fare and comfort. It was there that the “South Sea Bubblers” frequently met.

[illustration: Garraway’s Coffee House. From a sketch taken shortly before demolition]

Garraway’s is mentioned in other books of Dickens. In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, for instance, Nadgett, who undertook the task of making secret enquiries for the Anglo-Bengalee business, used to sit in Garraway’s, and was occasionally seen drying a damp pocket handkerchief before the fire, looking over his shoulder for the man who never appeared.

It is also referred to in *Little Dorrit* as one of the coffee houses frequented by Mr. Flintwich.

In *The Uncommercial Traveller*, in writing about the “City of the Absent,” Dickens makes this further allusion to the tavern:

“There is an old monastery-cript under Garraway’s (I have been in it among the port wine), and perhaps Garraway’s, taking pity on the mouldy men who wait in its public room, all their lives, gives them cool house-room down there on Sundays.”

Again in *Christmas Stories* the narrator of the “Poor Relation’s Story” who lived in a lodging in the Clapham Road, tells how, amongst other things, he used to sit in Garraway’s Coffee House in the city to pass away the time until it was time to dine, afterwards returning to his lodgings in the evening.

But of all these references, Mr. Pickwick’s mention of Garraway’s in his note to Mrs. Bardell is the one which will prevent its name and fame from being forgotten more than any other incident connected with it that we know of.

The “White Horse Cellar” from which the Pickwickians set out on the coach journey to Bath stood, at the time, at the corner of Arlington Street, Piccadilly, on the site occupied by the “Ritz” to-day. It was as famous and notorious as any coaching office in London; perhaps being in close proximity to the park and being in the west end, more famous than any.

In those flourishing days of its existence it was the starting-point of all the mails for the west of England, and was a bustling centre of activity. It was, apparently, one of the “sights” of London, for on fine evenings those with leisure on their hands would gather to watch the departure of these coaches. The scene became more like a miniature fair, with itinerants

selling oranges, pencils, sponges and such-like commodities, to the passengers and the spectators.

Mr. Pickwick chose to take an early morning coach, perhaps to avoid the sightseers. In his anxiety he arrived much too soon and had to take shelter in the travellers' room — the last resort, as Dickens assures us, of human dejection.

“The travellers' room at the ‘White Horse Cellar’ is, of course, uncomfortable,” he writes; “it would be no travellers' room if it were not. It is the right-hand parlour, into which an aspiring kitchen fire-place appears to have walked, accompanied by a rebellious poker, tongs and shovel. It is divided into boxes for the solitary confinement of travellers, and is furnished with a clock, a looking-glass, and a live waiter, which latter article is kept in a small kennel for washing glasses in a corner of the apartment.”

Whilst taking his breakfast therein, Mr. Pickwick made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Dowler, also bound for Bath, who were to play such an unexpected part in his sojourn in the famous watering-place.

It was outside the “White Horse Cellar” that Sam Weller made that discovery about the use of Mr. Pickwick's name which so annoyed him. Whilst the party were mounting the coach he observed that the proprietor's name, written in bold letters on the coach, was no other than “Pickwick.” He drew his master's attention to it, but Mr. Pickwick merely thought it a very extraordinary thing. Sam, on the other hand, was of the opinion that the “properiator” was playing some “imperence” with them. “Not content,” he said, “vith writin' up Pickwick, they puts ‘Moses’ afore it, vich I call addin' insult to injury, as the parrot said ven they not only took him from his native land, but made him talk the English langvide arterwards.”

The “White Horse Cellar” ultimately was moved to the opposite side of Piccadilly, and in 1884, the new “White Horse” in turn was pulled down, upon whose site was erected the “Albemarle.”

The “White Horse Cellar” is also mentioned in Bleak House in the communication from Kenge and Carboys to Esther Summerson as her halting-place in London. Here she was met by their clerk, Mr. Guppy, who later, in his declaration of love to her, reminded her of his services on that occasion — “I think you must have seen that I was struck with those charms on the day when I waited at the whytorseller. I think you must have

remarked that I could not forbear a tribute to those charms when I put up the steps of the 'ackney coach."

CHAPTER XIII

FOUR BATH INNS AND THE “BUSH,” BRISTOL

On their arrival at Bath, Mr. Pickwick and his friends and Mr. Dowler and his wife “respectively retired to their private sitting-rooms at the White Hart Hotel, opposite the great Pump Room . . . where waiters, from their costume, might be mistaken for Westminster boys, only they destroyed the illusion by behaving themselves so much better.”

Mr. Pickwick had scarcely finished his breakfast next morning when Mr. Dowler brought in no less a person than his friend, Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, to introduce to him, and to administer his stock greeting, “Welcome to Ba-ath, sir. This is, indeed, an acquisition. Most welcome to Ba-ath, sir.”

For the story of the various adventures which overtook the Pickwickians in the famous city, what they saw, and what they did, the reader must be referred to the official chronicle, except where they are connected with some inn or tavern.

So far as the “White Hart” is concerned, there is little to be said in this direction. After the reception at the Assembly Rooms on the evening after their arrival, Mr. Pickwick accompanied his friends back to the “White Hart,” and “having soothed his feelings with something hot, went to bed, and to sleep, almost simultaneously.”

As Mr. Pickwick contemplated staying in Bath for at least two months, he deemed it advisable to take lodgings for himself and his friends for that period. This he did, and the “White Hart” has no further association with his person during his stay in the gay city.

The “White Hart,” nevertheless, has a very strong claim to Pickwickian fame, apart from the brief fact that the founder of the club stayed there a night or two. At the time, the “White Hart” belonged to the very Moses Pickwick whose name on the coach so worried poor Sam Weller at the start of their journey down from London.

[illustration: The “White Hart,” Bath. From an engraving]

This Moses Pickwick was a grandson of Eleazer Pickwick, who, it is recorded, was a foundling. The story told concerning him is that when an infant he was picked up by a lady in the village of Wick near Bath, carried to her home, adopted and educated. Hence, according to some, the name Pick-Wick. There is, however, a village near to hand actually called "Pickwick," which may also have inspired the name for the foundling.

For some reasons unknown, or, at any rate, unrevealed, this foundling developed a craze for the coaching business, and, ultimately, taking service in one of the coaching inns, devoted his time and interests whole-heartedly to the profession, or calling. Eventually he became the owner of the business.

His grandson, Moses, became even more famous during the coaching era than his foundling antecedent, and at the time Pickwick was written he was the actual proprietor of the White Hart Hotel, as well as of the coaches which ran to and from it. He became, also, the most popular owner in the trade, and retired to the village of Upper Swanswick a rich man. We believe the name is still perpetuated in the neighbourhood.

Now it is known as a fact that Dickens took the name Pickwick from the said Moses Pickwick the proprietor of the "White Hart," whose coaches he had seen and ridden in a year or two previously. So that apart from the brief references to the inn in The Pickwick Papers its history is very much associated with the book.

Unfortunately, Dickens does not give us any minute description of it, as he does of other inns. Although it was the most important coaching house in the city, it could not be spoken of as particularly attractive in appearance. It looked more like a barracks than an hotel, indeed, we believe it was used for such a purpose in its degenerate days before it was finally demolished in 1867.

During its prosperous era, it was the resort of all the distinguished visitors who flocked to Bath during those gay and festive times.

There is still a relic of it in existence. The gracefully carved effigy of a white hart, which decorated the front of the building, now serves a similar purpose on an inn with the same name in the suburb of Widcombe, near by. On the site of the old house now stands the Grand Pump Room Hotel.

The Royal Hotel to which Mr. Winkle resorted, after his adventure with the valorous Dowler, for the purpose of escape to Bristol by the branch coach, probably never existed — at any rate, by that name. Dickens may

have had the “York House” in his mind, for he stayed there himself on one occasion, and it was one of those ornate hotels, accustomed to receiving royal and distinguished visitors, suggesting such a title as Dickens gave it.

There is, however, a tavern in Bath which claimed — or was made to claim — a Pickwickian association, and that is the Beaufort Arms. The story in connection with it is that before it was a tavern it was originally “the small greengrocer’s shop” over which the Bath footmen held their social evenings, and was, therefore, the scene of the memorable “leg o’ mutton swarry,” given in honour of Sam Weller. This may be so; we prefer to think that it was more likely to have been the public-house from which, as we are told, drinks were fetched for that dignified function.

The “Saracen’s Head” in the same city has a Dickensian, if not a Pickwickian, interest, for Dickens stayed there when, in his journalistic days, he was following Lord John Russell through the country in 1835, reporting his speeches. We can be sure that it was during this brief visit that he gained an insight into the social doings and customs of the city, and also gathered the extensive knowledge of its topography his book exhibits. The “Saracen’s Head” is proud of its Dickens associations; the actual chair he sat in, the actual jug he drank from, and the actual room he slept in are each shown with much ado to visitors; whilst several anecdotes associated with the novelist’s visit on the occasion are re-told with perfect assurance of their truth.

Arriving at Bristol after his flight from Mr. Dowler at Bath, Mr. Winkle took up his quarters at the “Bush,” there only to encounter later in the day “the figure of the vindictive and sanguinary Dowler” himself. Explanations soon smoothed over their little differences, and they parted for the night “with many protestations of eternal friendship.”

[illustration: The “Bush,” Bristol. From an engraving]

In the meantime, Sam Weller had been sent posthaste on Mr. Winkle’s heels with instructions from Mr. Pickwick to lock him in his bedroom as soon as he found him. Sam was nothing loath, and when he had run Winkle to earth at the “Bush”, promptly carried out his master’s orders and awaited his further instructions as to what to do next. These were brought next morning by Mr. Pickwick, in person, when he walked into the coffee-loom. Satisfaction being arrived at, the three stayed on at the “Bush” for a day or two, experiencing some curious adventures in the neighbourhood during the time.

On another occasion Mr. Pickwick and Sam stayed at the “Bush,” and after dinner the former adjourned to the travellers’ room, where, Sam informed him, “there was only a gentleman with one eye, and the landlord, who were drinking a bowl of bishop together.”

“He’s a queer customer, the vun-eyed vun, sir,” observed Mr. Weller, as he led the way. “He’s a-gammonin’ that ‘ere landlord, he is, sir, till he don’t rightly know vether he’s standing on the soles of his boots or on the crown of his hat.”

This was no other than the man who told the story of Tom Smart at the “Peacock,” Eatanswill, and he was ready and willing to tell another; with little persuasion he settled down and related the story of the Bagman’s Uncle.

The “Bush” was, in its time, the chief coaching inn of the city, and one of the headquarters of Moses Pickwick’s coaching business. It stood until 1864, near the Guildhall, and its site is now occupied by Lloyd’s Bank. This was another inn that Dickens stayed at in 1835 whilst reporting for The Morning Chronicle. Writing from that address he says he expects to forward the conclusion of Russell’s dinner “by Cooper’s company coach, leaving the ‘Bush’ at half-past six next morning; and by the first Bell’s coach on Thursday he will forward the report of the Bath dinner, endorsing the parcel for immediate delivery with extra rewards for the porter.”

CHAPTER XIV

THE “FOX UNDER THE HILL,” OTHER LONDON TAVERNS, AND THE “SPANIARDS,” HAMPSTEAD

On his return from Bath, Mr. Pickwick was immediately arrested and conveyed to the Fleet Prison. In the course of the chapters following this event there are several inns or taverns either mentioned incidentally, or figure more or less prominently, such as the new public-house opposite the Fleet, the “Fox Under the Hill,” Sarjeants’ Inn Coffee House, the public-house, opposite the Insolvent Debtors’ Court, the Horn Coffee House in the Doctors’ Commons and the “Spaniards,” Hampstead Heath. Of these the “Fox Under the Hill,” casually referred to by Mr. Roker as the spot where Tom Martin “whopped the coach-heaver,” was situated on the Thames water-side in the Adelphi, at the bottom of Ivy Lane. The incident he related was no doubt a recollection of Dickens’s early days in the blacking factory at Hungerford Stairs, for the public-house was known to him, as the following sentence in his biography shows — “One of his favourite realities was a little public-house by the water-side called the ‘Fox Under the Hill,’ approached by an underground passage which we once missed on looking for it together”; and he had a vision which he has mentioned in *Copperfield* of sitting eating something on a bench outside, one fine evening, and looking at some coal-heavers dancing before the house.

The public-house, nevertheless, was there when Dickens and his biographer were seeking it, for it was not demolished until the Victoria Embankment was built many years later.

Robert Allbut states that the “Fox Under the Hill” was the tavern where Martin Chuzzlewit, junior, was accommodated when he arrived in London, and where he was visited by Mark Tapley.

[illustration: The “Fox Under the Hill”]

The public-house opposite the Insolvent Debtors’ Court, where Mr. Weller consulted Mr. Solomon Pell on an urgent family matter, was no doubt the “Horse and Groom” that once stood in Portugal Street, covered now by the solid buildings of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Sons, of railway

bookstall fame. It was here Sam obliged the company with his song on “Bold Turpin,” whilst his father and Solomon Pell went to swear the affidavit for Sam’s arrest. It was also at this identical public-house that Mr. Solomon Pell, later on in the book, was engaged to undertake the details of proving the Will of the late Mrs. Weller, and where, “to celebrate Mr. Weller coming into possession of his property,” a little lunch was given to his friends, comprising porter, cold beef and oysters, to which ample justice was done.

Reverting to the former incident, the elder Weller and Solomon Pell duly returned with the document all complete, and the party sallied forth to the Fleet Prison. On their way they stopped at Sarjeants’ Inn Coffee House off Fleet Street to refresh themselves once more. When Sarjeants’ Inn was rebuilt in 1838 the coffee house referred to ended its existence.

The Horn Coffee House in Doctors’ Commons, to which a messenger was despatched from the Fleet Prison for “a bottle or two of very good wine” to celebrate Mr. Winkle’s visit to his old friend, was a well-known and frequented place of call at the time. It was situated actually in Carter Lane, and although the present house is more in keeping with modern methods, there still remains a portion of the old building.

The “Spaniards,” Hampstead Heath, figures more prominently in the book than any of the foregoing, and has a story of its own to tell. In recalling the scene in its history which associates it with *The Pickwick Papers*, we remember that Mrs. Bardell and her friends, Mrs. Sanders, Mrs. Cluppins, Mr. and Mrs. Raddle, Mrs. Rogers and Master Tommy Bardell, bent on having a day out, had taken the Hampstead Stage to the “Spaniards” Tea Gardens, “where the luckless Mr. Raddle’s very first act nearly occasioned his good lady a relapse, it being neither more or less than to order tea for seven; whereas (as the ladies one and all remarked) what could have been easier than for Tommy to have drank out of any lady’s cup, or everybody’s, if that was all, when the waiter wasn’t looking, which would have saved one head of tea, and the tea just as good!”

But the brilliant suggestion was made too late, for “the tea-tray came with seven cups and saucers, and bread and butter on the same scale. Mrs. Bardell was unanimously voted into the chair, and Mrs. Rogers being stationed on her right hand and Mrs. Raddle on her left, the meal proceeded with great merriment and success,” until Mr. Raddle again put his foot into

it by making an unfortunate remark which upset Mrs. Bardell and caused him to be summarily sent to a table by himself to finish his tea alone.

Mrs. Bardell had just recovered from her fainting fit when the ladies observed a hackney coach stop at the garden gate. Out of it stepped Mr. Jackson of Dodson and Fogg, who, coming up to the party, informed Mrs. Bardell that his “people” required her presence in the city directly on very important and pressing business. “How very strange,” said Mrs. Bardell, with an air of being someone of distinction, as she allowed herself to be taken along, accompanied by Mrs. Sanders, Mrs. Cluppins and Tommy. Entering the coach in waiting, to be driven, as they thought, to Dodson and Fogg’s, they were alas! sadly deceived, for shortly afterwards Mrs. Bardell was safely deposited in the Fleet Prison for not having paid those rascals their costs, and promptly fainted in “real downright earnest.”

What happened to the rest of the party at the “Spaniards” history does not relate. But the event which had promised to be such a happy one at the famous old inn was spoiled by those rascallions of lawyers, and we can only hope that Mr. Raddle made himself amiable with the two ladies left in his charge, and helped them to enjoy the remainder of the day in the pleasant rural and rustic spot.

The “Spaniards” is still a favourite resort of the pleasure-seeking pedestrian, and a halting-place for refreshment for pilgrims across the Heath. The arbours and rustic corners of its pleasant tea gardens still attract holiday-makers, as they attracted Mrs. Bardell and her friends on that day long since gone by.

[illustration: The “Spaniards,” Hampstead Heath. Drawn by L. Walker]

The inn itself is spacious and offers the comforts expected of an ancient hostelry. Dating back to about 1630 it occupies what was once the lodge entrance to the Bishop of London’s great rural park, whose old toll gate is still remaining. It is said by some to have derived its name through having been once inhabited by a family connected with the Spanish Embassy; and by others from its having been taken by a Spaniard who converted it into a house of refreshment and entertainment. Ultimately its gardens were improved and beautifully ornamented by one William Staples, similar to the gardens which flourished during this period in other parts of the metropolis. It has carried on its business of catering for all and sundry to the present day, but the ornate decorations and statuary have long disappeared.

The “Spaniards” is a Dick Turpin house, for, according to tradition, in its precincts the famous highwayman often hid from his pursuers. We are assured that in the out-house he found his favourite resting-place, which many a time on the late return of the marauder had served as his bedroom. The under-ground passages that led to the inn itself have been filled up, years ago. There were two doors attacked by unpleasant visitors, and a secret trap-door through which Turpin dived into the underground apartment, there to await the departure of the raging officers, or to betake himself to the inn, if that were clear of attack.

To such a fine Londoner as Dickens, who must have known it and his history thoroughly, it is a little surprising that it does not figure more prominently in his writings than it does. There is, indeed, one occasion when, it seems to us, he missed the opportunity of making it a picturesque and typical setting for a scene which his pen was more peculiarly suited than any other we know.

In Barnaby Rudge he gives us vivid pen pictures of the Gordon Rioters setting fire to houses in London, prominent amongst them being that of Lord Mansfield, and goes on to describe how they proceeded to the country seat of the great Chief Justice at Caen Wood, Hampstead, to treat it in a similar fashion. On arriving there the rioters were met by the military, stopped in their nefarious deed, turned tail and returned to London — all in accordance with the historical facts which it is well known the novelist gathered from an authoritative document. But he does not tell us how the rioters were thwarted in their contemplated act, due, so runs the story, to the foresight of the landlord of the “Spaniards.”

On their way to Lord Mansfield’s house the rioters had to pass the Spaniards Inn, and the landlord, having been made aware of their approach and mission, stood at his door to meet them and enticed them in to drink whilst he sent a messenger to the barracks for a detachment of Horse Guards. In the interim his cellars were thrown open to the excited rebels, hot with irresponsibility from the devastation they had already made in London. Here he left them to themselves surrounded by all they might require to slake their thirsty appetites. By the time they had appeased this thirst and were ready to continue their journey to Lord Mansfield’s house a few yards off, they discovered to their chagrin that their way was blocked by the arrival of a contingent of soldiers. And so in their wisdom they retraced their steps, as Dickens tells us, faster than they went.

Now the reason for this quick decision on the part of the rebels is passed over by Dickens, and the “Spaniards” is, in consequence, robbed of additional reflected glory, whilst the landlord is deprived of his place of immortality in the pages of Dickens’s book: the one book on the “No Popery” riots that counts to-day. He does not even mention the Spaniards Inn in Barnaby Rudge, although the rioters are, in its pages, brought to the inn door, from which point they are turned back, and the famous seat of Lord Mansfield remains, if tradition be reliable, thanks to the landlord of the inn.

CHAPTER XV

THE “BELL,” BERKELEY HEATH, THE “HOP POLE,” TEWKESBURY, AND THE “OLD ROYAL,” BIRMINGHAM

The chapter describing the Pickwickians' journey from the “Bush” Bristol to Birmingham, supplies incidents at four inns mentioned by name, and one that is not. The party comprising Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Benjamin Allen, Bob Sawyer and Sam Weller, sallied forth in a post-chaise. The two former seated themselves comfortably inside, whilst Bob Sawyer occupied a seat on the trunk on the top, and Sam settled himself in the dickey.

The two last-named were bent on making a merry day of it, and as soon as they were beyond the boundaries of Bristol they began their tricks by changing hats, taking liquid and substantial refreshments to the amusement of the passers-by, and the astonishment of Mr. Pickwick. But the journey need not be described here. Suffice it to say that the hilarious pair outside, come what may, meant to make a day of it. Their first stop, ostensibly to change horses, was at the “Bell,” Berkeley Heath, on the high road between Bristol and Gloucester.

“I say, we're going to dine here, aren't we?” said Bob, looking in at the window.

“Dine!” said Mr. Pickwick. “Why, we have only come nineteen miles, and have got eighty-seven and a half to go.”

“Just the reason why we should take something to enable us to bear up against the fatigue,” remonstrated Mr. Bob Sawyer.

“Oh, it's quite impossible to dine at half-past eleven o'clock in the day,” replied Mr. Pickwick, looking at his watch.

“So it is,” rejoined Bob, “lunch is the very thing. Hallo, you sir! Lunch for three, directly, and keep the horses back for a quarter of an hour. Tell them to put everything they have cold, on the table, and some bottled ale, and let us taste your very best Madeira.” Issuing these orders with monstrous importance and bustle, Mr. Bob Sawyer at once hurried into the

house to superintend the arrangements; in less than five minutes he returned and declared them to be excellent.

[illustration: The Bell Inn, Berkeley Heath. Drawn by C. G. Harper]

The quality of the lunch fully justified the eulogium which Bob had pronounced, and very great justice was done to it, not only by that gentleman, but by Mr. Ben Allen and Mr. Pickwick also. In the hands of the thirsty three, the bottled ale and the Madeira were promptly disposed of; and when (the horses being once more put to) they resumed their seats, with the case-bottle full of the best substitute for milk-punch that could be procured on so short a notice, the key-bugle sounded, and the red flag waved, without the slightest opposition on Mr. Pickwick's part.

The unpretentious roadside inn still exists to-day, unaltered since the above-mentioned memorable occasion. It cherishes its Dickensian association by curiously and oddly announcing on its signboard that: "Charles Dickens and Party lunched here 1827. B. C. Hooper."

It is within a mile of Berkeley Road Station on the Bristol Road, and about the same distance from the town of Berkeley. It lies back from the main road, and is a rambling old house and of good age. Although it has no more mention in the book than that given above, it is well known far and wide, nevertheless. As the Pickwickians did not stay there the inn is deprived of the privilege of showing a room in which the illustrious men slept, as is done in the case of other inns; but it has been recorded by one proprietor that travellers have called there for no other purpose than that of drinking Dickens's health in the snug parlour.

Continuing their journey the animated party reached in course of time the "Hop Pole" at Tewkesbury, where they stopped to dine; upon which occasion, we are assured, there was more bottled ale, with some more Madeira, and some port besides; and here the case-bottle was replenished for the fourth time. Under the influence of these combined stimulants, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Ben Allen fell fast asleep for thirty miles, while Bob Sawyer and Sam Weller sang duets in the dickey.

The "Hop Pole" is still a flourishing country inn with the old-world flavour and atmosphere still clinging to it, where one is treated with the courtesy and welcome reminiscent of the old-time coaching days. Some modern "improvements" have been made in it, but its general appearance has not been tampered with, and it remains a veritable Dickens landmark of the town which the Tewkesbury Dickensians are proud of possessing. It is

practically as it was in Pickwickian days, and the fact that Mr. Pickwick dined there is boldly announced at the side of the entrance, the porch of which did not however exist in those days.

From the “Hop Pole,” Tewkesbury, the lively quartette continued their journey to Birmingham in a high-spirited mood and reached that city after dark.

“The postboy was driving briskly through the open streets and past the handsome and well-lighted shops which intervene between the outskirts of the town and the Royal Hotel, before Mr. Pickwick had begun to consider the very difficult and delicate nature of the commission which had carried him thither.”

The difficulty and delicacy mentioned referred to the presence of Bob Sawyer and Ben Allen, whom Mr. Pickwick for certain reasons wished miles away, but he hoped to surmount them by making his interview with Mr. Winkle, senior, as brief as possible.

[illustration: The “Hop Pole,” Tewkesbury, as it was in Pickwickian days. Drawn by Arch. Webb]

As he comforted himself with these reflections the chaise stopped at the door of the “Old Royal,” and the visitors were shown to comfortable apartments. Mr. Pickwick immediately made enquiries of the waiter concerning the whereabouts of Mr. Winkle’s residence, who was one not easily to be got the better of, as the following dialogue will show:

“‘Close by, sir,’ said the waiter, ‘not above five hundred yards, sir. Mr. Winkle is a wharfinger, sir, at the canal, sir. Private residence is not — oh dear no, sir, not five hundred yards, sir.’ Here the waiter blew a candle out and made a feint of lighting it again, in order to afford Mr. Pickwick an opportunity of asking any further questions, if he felt so disposed.

“‘Take anything now, sir?’ said the waiter, lighting the candle in desperation at Mr. Pickwick’s silence. ‘Tea or coffee, sir? Dinner, sir?’

“‘Nothing now.’

“‘Very good, sir. Like to order supper, sir?’

“‘Not just now.’

“‘Very good, sir.’ Here he walked softly to the door, and then stopping short, turned round and said with great suavity:

“‘Shall I send the chambermaid, gentlemen?’

“‘You may if you please,’ replied Mr. Pickwick.

“‘If you please, sir.’

“‘Bring some soda water,’ said Bob Sawyer.

“‘Soda water, sir? Yes, sir.’ And with his mind apparently relieved from an overwhelming weight by having at last got an order for something, the waiter imperceptibly melted away. Waiters never walk or run. They have a peculiar and mysterious power of skimming out of rooms, which other mortals possess not.”

Eventually Mr. Pickwick and his friends arrived safely at the house of Mr. Winkle, and, having concluded the interview, all three returned to the hotel and went “silent and supperless to bed.”

The next day was a dreary and wet one, and, in contemplating the aspect from his bedroom window, Mr. Pickwick was attracted by a game cock in the stable yard, who, “deprived of every spark of his accustomed animation, balanced himself dismally on one leg in a corner.” Then Mr. Pickwick discovered “a donkey, moping with drooping head under the narrow roof of an outhouse, who appeared from his meditative and miserable countenance to be contemplating suicide.” In the breakfast-room there was very little conversation; even Mr. Bob Sawyer “felt the influence of the weather and the previous day’s excitement, and in his own expressive language, he was ‘floored.’ So was Mr. Ben Allen. So was Mr. Pickwick.”

[illustration: The Old Royal Hotel, Birmingham. Drawn by L. Walker]

The Pickwickians’ visit, therefore, to the Royal Hotel was not a very bright and lively one, but they endeavoured to make the best of it.

“In protracted expectation of the weather clearing up, the last evening paper from London was read and re-read with an intensity of interest only known in cases of extreme destitution; every inch of the carpet was walked over with similar perseverance, the windows were looked out of often enough to justify the imposition of an additional duty upon them, all kinds of topics of conversation were started, and failed; and at length Mr. Pickwick, when noon had arrived without a change for the better, rang the bell resolutely and ordered out the chaise.”

And so they started on their journey back in spite of the miserable ‘outlook, feeling it was “infinitely superior to being pent in a dull room, looking at dull rain dripping into a dull street.”

But Mr. Pickwick’s lack of enthusiasm over the hotel was not due to the hotel itself, but more on account of the weather. As a fact, it was a very important hotel in those days. Attached to it were large assembly and concert rooms, erected in 1772 by Tontine. It was known as THE Hotel, the

distinctive appellation of “Royal” being prefixed in consequence of a visit of a member of the royal family who took up his residence there for a time.

This is the only occasion the hotel has mention in the works of Dickens, and although Mr. Pickwick and his friends had no reason for being pleased with their visit to Birmingham’s old inn, the reverse can be said of Dickens himself, for on more than one occasion he had pleasant associations of his stay there. The hotel has been rebuilt, but the picture shows it as it was in Mr. Pickwick’s day.

Dickens visited Birmingham some dozen times from 1840 to 1870, and on most of the early occasions it is believed he stayed at the Old Royal Hotel. On January 6, 1853, Dickens was presented with a silver “Iliad” salver and a diamond ring by the people of Birmingham in grateful acknowledgment of his “varied and well-applied talents.” After the presentation the company adjourned to the Old Royal Hotel (then Dee’s Hotel), where a banquet took place with the Mayor, Henry Hawkes, in the chair, and Peter Hollins, the sculptor, in the vice-chair.

The company numbered 218, and the event is notable as the occasion on which Dickens made a promise to give, in aid of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, his first public reading from his books.

“It would take about two hours,” he said, “with a pause of ten minutes about half-way through. There would be some novelty in the thing, as I have never done it in public, though I have in private, and (if I may say so) with great effect on the hearers.”

That was a notable event in Dickens’s life, for it is well known what followed from that initial public recital; and the place where the step was taken naturally becomes a landmark in his life; and so the Old Royal Hotel, Birmingham, if for no other reason, claims to be remembered as a notable and important one in Dickens annals.

CHAPTER XVI

COVENTRY, DUNCHUBCH, AND DAVENTRY INNS, AND THE “SARACEN’S HEAD,” TOWCESTER

Continuing their journey, the Pickwickians duly reached Coventry. The inn, however, where the post-chaise stopped to change horses is not mentioned by name, but may have been the Castle Hotel there; at any rate, the “Castle” has a Dickensian interest, for it was here that a public dinner was given to Dickens in December, 1858, when he was presented with a gold repeater watch of special construction as a mark of gratitude for his reading of the Christmas Carol, given a year previously in aid of the funds of the Coventry Institute. The hotel was, at the time the Pickwickians arrived there, a posting inn of repute. From Coventry Sam Weller beguiled the time with anecdotes until they reached Dunchurch, “where a dry postboy and fresh horses were procured”; the next stage was Daventry, and in neither case is the name of an inn mentioned or hinted at.

At the end of each stage it rained harder than ever, with the result that when they pulled up at the “Saracen’s Head,” Towcester, they were in a disconsolate state. Bob Sawyer’s apparel, we are told, “shone so with the wet that it might have been mistaken for a full suit of prepared oilskin.” In these circumstances, and on the recommendation of the wise Sam, the party decided to stop the night.

“There’s beds here, sir,” Sam assured his master as a further inducement; “everything clean and comfortable. Very good little dinner, sir, they can get ready in half an hour—pair of fowls, sir, and a weal cutlet; French beans, ‘taters, tart and tidiness. You’d better stop vere you are, sir, if I might recommend.” At this very moment the host appeared, and, having confirmed Sam’s statement, Mr. Pickwick decided to take the “advice” of his trusted servant, which caused the landlord to smile with delight.

[illustration: The Pomfret Anns (formerly the “Saracen’s Head”), Towcester. Drawn by C.G. Harp]

The pilgrim to Towcester to-day, searching for the sign of the “Saracen’s Head,” would find himself on a fruitless errand, for it was changed scores of years back to the Pomfret Arms. Indeed, it was so called at the time The Pickwick Papers were first published, having been altered in 1881 at the bidding of the new lord of the manor when he succeeded to the titles and estates.

But doubtless Dickens knew it in his newspaper reporting days, and described it from memory. In any case, he is historically correct in retaining the old name, for the period of his book is 1827-28. Beyond the change of name the hotel to-day is practically the same as it was in those early days, the only material alteration being the conversion of the kitchen into a bar-parlour and smoking-room, where the open chimney and corner seats have given place to more modern and ornate substitutes.

Situated in the main street this old posting house is a prominent feature. The exterior is typical of the period. It is a low, long-looking building with many windows, two stories high (unless the dormer windows in the old red-tiled roof be counted another), and is built of a light brownish sandstone brick, peculiar to the neighbourhood. There is a picturesque bow window on the ground floor to the left of the solid oak gateway leading into the coach yard, and over this hangs the swinging sign-board flanked on each side by two curious carved figures set in alcoves let into the wall; the whole general setting is a pleasant survival of the old-time days of the coaching era.

There always is an agreeable and comforting relief to the traveller when he at last arrives at the inn at his journey’s end, and that feeling will not be dispelled to-day when the old “Saracen’s Head” is reached. But to the Pickwickians, on the occasion of their visit, wet to the skin, tired, and sorely out at elbow with the raging element they had just driven through, the “Saracen’s Head” must have been a haven of delight indeed; and those few words of instructions from the landlord to make the room ready for them must have been cheerful to their ears, and the result, as described in the following paragraph, a joy to their hearts:

“The candles were brought, the fire was stirred up, and a fresh log of wood thrown on. In ten minutes’ time a waiter was laying the cloth for dinner, the curtains were drawn, the fire was blazing brightly, and everything looked (as everything always does in all decent English inns) as

if the travellers had been expected and their comforts prepared for days beforehand.”

So in this cosy room they gathered, after they had sufficiently dried themselves, and eagerly waited for dinner to be served. To them suddenly reappeared Sam Weller, accompanied by no less a person than the notorious Mr. Pott of the Eatanswill Gazette — who, that worthy had discovered, was also staying in the hotel. He was on his way to the great Buff Ball, to be held at Birmingham the next evening. Needless to say, he was heartily welcomed and an agreement was made to club their dinners. Mr. Pott soon began to entertain the company with gossip about his mission and firebrand intentions, taking the opportunity of letting off some of his best abusive expletives at the expense of his rival paper, the Eatanswill Independent, and its editor.

Incidentally he extolled the genius of one of his staff, and revealed the great secret of how he “crammed” for an article on “Chinese Metaphysics” by turning up the two words in the encyclopaedia and combining his information. He was in the midst of enlivening the proceedings with extracts from his own lucubrations, when his great rival, whom he was abusing, drove up, unknown to him, and booked a bed for himself at the same hotel. Mr. Slurk was also making for the great Buff Ball at Birmingham, and, having ordered some refreshment, retired to the kitchen (a custom in those days) to smoke and read in peace.

“Now some demon of discord,” writes Dickens, “flying over the ‘Saracen’s Head’ at the moment,” prompted Bob Sawyer to suggest to his friends that “it wouldn’t be a bad notion to have a cigar by the kitchen fire.” They all agreed that it was a good idea, and forth they went — only to find, to their surprise, Mr. Slurk there before them deep in the study of some newspaper. The rival editors both started at each other, and gradually showed symptoms of their ancient rivalry bubbling up, which, by slow but certain process, developed until it eventually precipitated them into a free fight with carpet bag and fire shovel as respective weapons.

The details of this fracas are too well known to need repetition here. Suffice to say that, when the fray was at its height, Mr. Pickwick felt it his duty to intervene, and called upon Sam Weller to part the combatants. This he dexterously did by pulling a meal sack over the head and shoulders of Mr. Pott and thus effectually stopping the conflict. The scene, it will be remembered, was depicted with much spirit by Phiz, the artist who

illustrated the book. The rivals parted, peace once more reigned, and the company repaired to their respective beds. In the morning both Mr. Pott and Mr. Slurk were careful to continue their journey in separate coaches before the Pickwickians were stirring, whilst the spectators of the exciting scene went forward to London in their post-chaise a little later.

This incident is one of those that are best remembered in the book, and has made the “Saracen’s Head,” Towcester, a notable Pickwickian landmark. The old posting inn remains to-day as it was when the book was written, and if the kitchen — as such — is not on view any longer, the same room turned to other uses is there for the faithful disciple to meditate in and visualize the scene for himself; and no doubt he will find that the inn is as famous now for its “French beans, ‘taters, tarts and tidiness” as it used to be.

We would, however, suggest to the present owner that the words “formerly the ‘Saracen’s Head’ “should be added to those of the Pomfret Arms Hotel on the sign now hanging so gracefully over the pavement as a guide to the Dickens pilgrim seeking the Pickwickian landmark of the town.

CHAPTER XVII

“OSBORNE’S,” ADELPHI, AND TONY WELLER’S PUBLIC-HOUSE ON SHOOTER’S HILL

There is a singular and conspicuous interest attaching to Osborne’s Hotel in the Adelphi, for the almost pathetic reason that it was in one of its rooms that Mr. Pickwick first made the momentous announcement of his intention of abandoning his nomadic life of travel and adventure and settling down in “some quiet, pretty neighbourhood in the vicinity of London, “where he had taken a house which exactly suited his fancy. And so it may be said that within its four walls the Pickwick Club brought its activities to an end, for on Mr. Pickwick’s decision to retire from its ramifications, coupled with the fact that during his absence in the Fleet Prison it had suffered much from internal dissensions, its dissolution was imperative, and to use his own words with which he announced the fact to his friends on the occasion in question, “The Pickwick Club no longer exists.”

That was an historic pronouncement, and the room in which it was made naturally becomes a veritable landmark for Pickwickians; and a fitting mark of this distinction might well be made, by the fixing of a tablet on the walls of the historic building, which still stands practically as it was in those adventurous days. The event which first brought Mr. Pickwick and his friends to the hotel was a domestic one; but the occasion did not pass without an awkward adventure such as always dogged the footsteps of the Pickwickians.

Mr. Pickwick had just been released from the Fleet Prison and was at Mr. Perker’s office settling little details in connexion with Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, when his old friend Wardle turned up quite unexpectedly to seek the advice of the little lawyer on the situation which had arisen by his daughter Emily’s infatuation for Mr. Snodgrass. He had brought his daughter up from Dingley Dell and informed Mr. Pickwick that “she was at Osborne’s Hotel in the Adelphi at this moment, unless your enterprising friend has run away with her since I came out this morning.”

Mr. Perker made advice unnecessary, for he proved to both of them that they were quite delighted at the prospect. Mr. Wardle forthwith invited them to dine with him, and he sent the fat boy to "Osborne's" with the information that he and Mr. Pickwick would return together at five o'clock. Arriving at the hotel the fat boy went upstairs to execute his commission.

"He walked into the sitting-room without previously knocking at the door, and so beheld a gentleman with his arm clasping his young mistress's waist, sitting very lovingly by her side on a sofa, while Arabella and her pretty handmaid feigned to be absorbed in looking out of a window at the other end of the room. At sight of which phenomenon the fat boy uttered an interjection, the ladies a scream, and the gentleman an oath, almost simultaneously.

"Wretched creature, what do you want here?" said the gentleman, who it is needless to say was Mr. Snodgrass.

To this the fat boy, considerably terrified, briefly responded, "Missis."

"What do you want me for?" enquired Emily, turning her head aside, "you stupid creature."

"Master and Mr. Pickwick is a-going to dine here at five," replied the fat boy.

After being bribed by Snodgrass, Emily and Arabella, he was invited by Mary to dine with her downstairs, where he regaled himself on meat pie, steak, a dish of potatoes and a pot of porter. Here he attempted to make love to Mary, and, having failed, "ate a pound or so of steak with a sentimental countenance and fell fast asleep."

"There was so much to say upstairs, and there were so many plans to concert for elopement and matrimony in the event of old Wardle continuing to be cruel, that it wanted only half an hour to dinner when Mr. Snodgrass took his final adieu. The ladies ran to Emily's bedroom to dress, and the lover, taking up his hat, walked out of the room. He had scarcely got outside the door when he heard Wardle's voice talking loudly; and, looking over the banisters, beheld him, followed by some other gentlemen, coming straight upstairs. Knowing nothing of the house, Mr. Snodgrass in his confusion stepped hastily back into the room he had just quitted, and, passing from thence into an inner apartment (Mr. Wardle's bedchamber), closed the door softly, just as the persons he had caught sight of entered the sitting-room. These were Mr. Wardle and Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Nathaniel Winkle and Mr. Benjamin Allen, whom he had no difficulty in recognising by their voices."

In this dilemma Mr. Snodgrass remained, for the door was locked and the key gone, and in desperation he sat himself down upon a portmanteau and trembled violently. In the meantime Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Wardle and the rest of the company settled down to dinner, at which the fat boy made himself conspicuous “by smirking, grinning and winking with redoubled assiduity.” His state of mind grew worse, when, having at Mr. Wardle’s instructions, gone into the next room to fetch his snuff-box from the dressing-table, he returned with the palest face “that ever a fat boy wore.” In his effort to acquaint Mr. Pickwick with what he encountered in the room, his manner became worse and worse, and on the instant that Mr. Wardle was about to ring for the waiters to remove him to a place of safety, Mr. Snodgrass, “the captive lover, his face burning with confusion, suddenly walked in from the bedroom, and made a comprehensive bow to the company.”

“Mr. Snodgrass, who had only waited for a hearing, at once recounted how he had been placed in his then distressing predicament; how the fear of giving rise to domestic dissensions had alone prompted him to avoid Mr. Wardle on his entrance; and how he merely meant to depart by another door, but, finding it locked, had been compelled to stay against his will. It was a painful situation to be placed in; but he now regretted it the less, inasmuch as it afforded him an opportunity of acknowledging before their mutual friends that he loved Mr. Wardle’s daughter deeply and sincerely, that he was proud to avow that the feeling was mutual, and that if thousands of miles were placed between them, or oceans rolled their waters, he could never for an instant forget those happy days when first — et cetera, et cetera.

“Having delivered himself to this effect Mr. Snodgrass bowed again, looked into the crown of his hat, and stepped towards the door.”

But he was stopped on the threshold, and Arabella, having taken up the defence, called on Mr. Wardle to “shake hands with him and order him some dinner.” A reconciliation took place and Mr. Snodgrass had dinner at a side-table, and when he had finished drew his chair next to Emily, without the smallest opposition on the old gentleman’s part. The remainder of the evening passed off very happily “and all was smiles and shirt collars.”

During the next few days much perturbation was evinced by the Pickwickians at their leader’s continual absence from the society of his admiring friends, and it being unanimously resolved that he should be called upon to explain himself, Mr. Wardle invited the “full circle” to dinner

again at Osborne's Hotel to give him the opportunity. After the decanters "had been twice sent round" Mr. Wardle called upon Mr. Pickwick for his explanation. This was forthcoming in a pathetic speech, very affecting to all present, announcing his unalterable decision of retiring for the rest of his life into the quiet village of Dulwich. "If I have done but little good," he said, by way of peroration, "I trust I have done less harm, and that none of my adventures will be other than a source of amusing and pleasant recollection to me in the decline of life. God bless you all."

With these words Mr. Pickwick filled and drained a bumper with a trembling hand; and his eyes moistened as his friends rose with one accord and pledged him from their hearts. So runs the chronicle, and so ended the immortal Pickwick Club, in the precincts of Osborne's Hotel in the Adelphi, which also became the headquarters of the relatives of Mr. Wardle during their stay in London for the wedding of his daughter. From here the wedding party set out for Mr. Pickwick's new abode at Dulwich, from which house the ceremony took place, and where the wedding was celebrated by a happy breakfast party afterwards.

[illustration: Osborne's Adelphi Hotel. From a photograph by T.W. Tyrrell]

To have the distinction of being the venue for such notable events is something that any self-respecting hotel should be proud of, and we are sure that Osborne's Hotel will be remembered so long as it stands for those reasons alone. But it has other reasons for fame, even if they are more likely to be forgotten, or lightly passed over by those who keep the records of London's notable landmarks. It stands to-day in a neighbourhood distinguished for its history, and has claims to a share in the making of that history.

It is situated, as it has always been, at the corner of John and Adam Streets, and was first opened in 1777 as the Adelphi New Tavern and Coffee House. Dickens no doubt knew it well, for the Adelphi and its neighbourhood attracted him greatly, and its curious old buildings, side streets and rambling arches often figure in his books. When a mere boy at work in the blacking factory, down by the river there, he continually wandered about its quaint byways. "Osborne's" was a notable house in those days, and if its full records were available, no doubt many an entertaining story concerning its activities could be told. As it is, it is known that "being completely fitted up in the most elegant and convenient manner

for the entertainment of noblemen and gentlemen,” as it boasted in its early days, many notable figures in past history made it their headquarters.

On the 8th August, 1787, Gibbon stayed there on his arrival from Lausanne with the completion of his “History,” and wrote to Lord Sheffield to apprise him of the fact. In 1802 Isaac D’Israeli, the author of *Curiosities of Literature* and father of the famous Earl of Beaconsfield, stayed in the hotel after his honeymoon. It is also on record that George Crabbe, the poet, with his wife resided for a time there, and that Rowlandson, the caricaturist, died in one of its rooms in 1827.

Perhaps the most notorious of visitors to it were the King and Queen of the Sandwich Islands in 1824. Unfortunately, both were victims to the smallpox epidemic which raged at the time, and died in the hotel, the latter on the 8th July of that year and the former on the 14th September. The visit of the “illustrious” king, we are told, gave rise to the popular song, “The King of the Cannibal Islands.”

During the war it was acquired as a house of utility for the military. Before it was acquired for that purpose it was the favoured resort of business men of the neighbourhood and of certain literary and artistic coteries, and was the headquarters of the famous O.P. Club. However, it has returned now to its old-time ways and methods, and we hope it will long remain a landmark for the Dickens lover and particularly the Pickwickian devotee.

The last tavern mentioned in *The Pickwick Papers* is the “excellent public-house near Shooter’s Hill, “to which Mr. Weller, senior, retired. Unfortunately it was never named, nor has it been identified. Continuing to drive a coach for twelve months after the Pickwick Club had ceased to exist, he became afflicted with gout and was compelled to give up his lifelong calling. The contents of his pocket-book had been so well invested by Mr. Pickwick, we are told, that he had a handsome independence for the purpose of his last days. At Shooter’s Hill he was quite revered as an oracle, boasting very much of his intimacy with Mr. Pickwick, and retaining a most unconquerable aversion to widows.

CHAPTER XVIII

PICKWICK AND THE “GEORGE” INN

Certain traditional legends naturally grow round our old London landmarks and, when once started, no matter how conjectural, they are hard to overtake or suppress.

The George Inn, Southwark, is an instance of this, and the legend that is prone to cling to it is that it was the original of the White Hart Inn of Pickwick fame; the contention being that Dickens, when writing so faithfully of the “White Hart” in Chapter X of *The Pickwick Papers*, where Sam Weller was first discovered, described the “George” and called it after its near neighbour, the “White Hart.” This contention, we submit, has no justification whatever. The only reason, therefore, for referring to it here, is with a view to dispelling the illusion.

It is surprising that so good a Dickensian as the late J. Ashby Sterry should have been one of those who favoured the idea. Whether he was the first to do so we are not aware. But in his very interesting and informative article entitled “Dickens in Southwark,” in *The English Illustrated Magazine* for November, 1888, he states it as his opinion that the “George” was the original of the “White Hart,” and reverted to the same idea in *The Bystander* (1901). The following extract from the former article contains the argument he used to substantiate his claim:

“Moreover it (the ‘George’) is especially notable as being the spot where Mr. Pickwick first encountered the immortal Sam Weller. The ‘White Hart’ is the name, I am aware, given in the book, but it is said that Dickens changed the sign in order that the place should not be too closely identified. This was by no means an unusual custom with the novelist. I think he did the same thing in *Edwin Drood*, where the ‘Bull’ at Rochester is described under the sign of the ‘Blue Boar.’ A similar change was made in *Great Expectations*, where the same inn is disguised in like fashion, in the account of the dinner given after Pip was bound apprentice to Joe Gargery. The ‘White Hart’ is close by, on the same side of the way, a little nearer London

Bridge, but little, if anything, is remaining of the old inn, and the whole of the place and its surroundings have been modernised.

[illustration: The George Inn, Southwark, in 1858. From an engraving by Fairholt]

“I, however, had the opportunity of comparing both inns some years ago, and have no hesitation in saying that the ‘George’ is the inn where the irrepressible Alfred Jingle and the elderly Miss Rachel were discovered by the warm-hearted, hot-tempered Wardle. If you like to go upstairs you can see the very room where Mr. Jingle consented to forfeit all claims to the lady’s hand for the consideration of a hundred and twenty pounds. Cannot you fancy, too, the landlord shouting instructions from those picturesque flower-decked galleries to Sam in the yard below?”

These deductions and views are not in any way convincing to us; indeed, we find ourselves in complete disagreement with them, and few Dickensians, we feel sure, will endorse them.

Mr. Ashby Sterry’s argument regarding the “Bull” and the “Blue Boar” at Rochester proves nothing. Dickens described the “Bull” there in *The Pickwick Papers* and called it the “Bull” at Rochester, as he did the “Leather Bottle” at Cobham, the “Angel” at Bury St. Edmunds, the “Great White Horse” at Ipswich — to name a few parallel cases. When he described the “Bull” and called it the “Blue Boar,” it was in another book, *Great Expectations*, not in *Edwin Drood*, as stated by Mr. Ashby Sterry, and its location was a fictitious city, i.e. The Market Town.

The only case in which Dickens deliberately used the name of one inn for another was that of the “Maypole” and “King’s Head” at Chigwell in *Barnaby Rudge*. But in this instance he admitted that he had done so, although it was scarcely necessary, for the inns were very dissimilar and the novelist’s description of the latter could not be taken for the former.

The case of the “George” and the “White Hart” is different. They both stood quite near to each other at the time Dickens was writing *The Pickwick Papers*, and were both so named and both famous. There could be no reason, therefore, for him to describe one and call it by the other’s name.

Although they may not have been identical in all particulars as to structure, the “George” and the “White Hart” were sufficiently alike to make it possible for a person of imagination to go over the “George” and be satisfied that such and such a room might do for the one in which “Mr. Jingle forfeited all claims to the lady’s hand,” and imagine, too, that the

galleries could be accepted easily as those over which “the landlord shouted instructions to Sam in the Yard.” But these flights of fancy could be indulged in even in the New Inn, Gloucester, or any similar old coaching inn, if one so desired.

Mr. Percy FitzGerald, the greatest authority on *The Pickwick Papers*, is of the same opinion as ourselves on the point, and asks: “Why should notoriety be attached to the ‘White Hart,’ from which the ‘George’ was to be shielded?”

No, the “George” is a wonderfully alluring old inn, and for this reason Dickensians have a warm place in their hearts for it. But we have no hesitation in saying that it is not the original of the “White Hart” of *Pickwick* and Sam Weller fame.

Another distinguished writer, the American novelist and artist, F. Hopkinson Smith, in his book, *Dickens’s London*, fell into a similar blunder. Indeed, his book contains some glaring mistakes, owing, no doubt, to the fact, which he admits, that he gathered his information from any Tom, Dick or Harry he came in contact with during his wanderings. In describing his visit to the “George,” he found incidents from *Pickwick* to fit every nook and cranny in the building and quoted them with much conviction. But he quoted no facts, nor did he give any data to substantiate his statements. Someone told him it was the original of the “White Hart,” as they told him that the house named Dickens House in Lant Street was where Dickens once lived, irrespective of the fact that the actual house was demolished years before. Yet that satisfied him, he took no trouble to make further enquiries and then imagined the rest. In regard to the “George” he let his imagination run riot, dilated on this being Miss Wardle’s room, this being the room where the couple were discovered, and further states that Dickens made the inn a favourite one of his when a boy in Lant Street, and speaks of the seat he used to sit in. All of which is sheer nonsense.

Dickens may have known the George Inn in those early days, but being only a mere boy is not likely to have frequented it. Although in later years — those of *Little Dorrit* and the *Uncommercial Traveller* — it is quite likely he may have visited it. Indeed, Miss Murray, the present hostess, tells us he did. Her authority was Abraham Dawson, a well-known carman and carrier in days gone by, who was a nephew of W. S. Scholefield who owned the inn at the time. Dawson assured her that he frequently chatted with Dickens in the coffee-room.

Yet the only occasion, so far as we are aware, that the novelist actually mentions the inn is in *Little Dorrit*, Book I, Chapter XXII, where Maggy, speaking of Tip, says: “If he goes into the ‘George’ and writes a letter. . . .”

No, the George Inn is just a fine survival of old days — the old days of which Dickens wrote — and is similar, in many respects, to what the ‘White Hart’ used to be. As such Dickensians have a great affection for it, and there is no need to invent stories about it to justify their reverence.

Mr. A. St. John Adcock is another writer who steers clear of the confusion. In *The Booklover’s London*, after referring to the “White Hart,” he goes on to say: “If you step aside up George Yard, which is next to the ‘White Hart’ yard, you may see the old George Inn which, with its low ceilings, ancient rafters and old wooden galleries outside, closely resembles what the ‘White Hart’ used to be, and gives us an idea of the inn yards in which the strolling players of Shakespeare’s time used to set up their stages.”

Let us leave it at that and retain our regard for the old inn for what it is, rather than for what it is not.

THE END

The Shorter Prose



A LITERARY HIGHWAY



By Walter Dexter

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Of all the great highways in the United Kingdom, the road which runs from London into Dover, and is commonly called the Dover Road, is perhaps the most historic. But other great highways have their place in history also, and so the Dover Road is but an historic road among a number, be its historic importance ever so great. It is the literary interest centred in its seventy odd miles that singles it out from all the other great roads of the country and causes it to stand alone as the great literary highway.

Let us view the Dover Road, our literary highway, as in a mirror, and see what it reflects. It reflects Chaucer and his "nyne and twenty in a compaignye" trudging its dust en route for Canterbury and a Becket's shrine; it reflects those wonderful tales, told one to another, to beguile the tedium of a lengthy journey, which Chaucer, the father of English poetry, has bequeathed to us.

It reflects the father of English drama, Christopher Marlowe, a young man of but thirty years of age, trudging from his birthplace, Canterbury, to the metropolis. It reflects "Dr. Faustus," his truly great work; it reflects a tavern brawl at Deptford, in which his young and brilliant career was suddenly brought to an end. At Deptford, too, "dismal Deptford" of to-day, it reflects the days of good Queen Bess: the luxuries of Sayes Court, and a vision of Walter Scott's "Kenilworth." It reflects Byron and "Don Juan" on Shooter's Hill. It reflects Shakespeare and "King Lear" on the cliffs at Dover. It reflects Shakespeare and Gad's Hill, by Rochester, with the valiant Sir John Falstaff plotting to rob the coach. The scene changes: it is Gad's Hill still, and our mirror reflects a pale sickly lad, gazing with admiration at a great house standing back from the highway; it reflects that same lad, now

a man, in the full time of his glory, writing a literature that will never die: a literature that has fascinated, and will still fascinate, millions of readers wherever books are read; it reflects an empty chair in the study — and our vision of Charles Dickens vanishes, and with it the literature of the literary highway.

So let us now in all reality take a literary pilgrimage along the Dover Road. Let us picture ourselves en route for Rochester in the company of Mr. Pickwick, and his three friends, and the loquacious Alfred Jingle. Over London Bridge we rumble and down into the Borough. Where are the literary landmarks of this almost classic spot? Gone! Every one of them gone! Where is the Tabard of old, that hostelry of Chaucer's day?

In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay,
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury, with ful devout corage,
At night was come into that hostelrie
Wei nyne and twenty in a compainye,

That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.

Where is the "White Hart" of Dickens's days, the immortal spot where Sam Weller made his bow to a vast appreciative public? Where is the house in Lant Street where Bob Sawyer gave his memorable party? Where is the Marshalsea, with its tender recollections of Little Dorrit? Gone! all gone, in the great endeavor to make London a more healthy and more habitable spot! St. George's Church is left, and with it we have a few lingering recollections of the night of Little Dorrit's party, when she went to sleep in the vestry with one of the parish registers for a pillow, and of a happy day, years afterwards, when she descended the altar steps, the wife of Arthur Clennam.

London is not left behind until we have gained the country beyond Blackheath. We might search in vain for Salem House, or the haystack beneath which David Copperfield slept on the first night of his memorable tramp to his aunt's cottage on the cliffs at Dover; but these are not the only literary landmarks of the district.

Shooter's Hill has a lingering memory of Dickens, of the night when the Dover mail lumbered up it, bearing in it no less a person than Mr. Jarvis

Lorry. This was in the days of the highwayman, when, so we are informed in chapter two of “A Tale of Two Cities,” “the Dover mail was in its usual genial position that the guard suspected the passengers, the passengers suspected one another and the guard, they all suspected everybody else, and the coachman was sure of nothing but his horses; as to which cattle he could, with a clear conscience, have taken his oath on the two Testaments that they were not fit for the journey.”

A fine picture of this literary highway in the days of the coach has Dickens drawn for us in that chapter, for none save him knew how to put life and vigor into its dust and stones.

And so, like the Dover mail, we “lumber up” the hill, listening the while to the loquacious stranger whose lively anecdotes soon find a place in Mr. Pickwick’s notebook.

From Shooter’s Hill Don Juan obtained his first glimpse of London:

A mighty mass of brick and smoke, and
shipping,
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail
just skipping
In sight, then lost amid the forestry
Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peep-
ing
On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy:
A huge, dim cupola, like a foolscap crown
On a fool’s head — and there is London
Town!

“This hill is dangerous.” So runs the cyclist’s notice at the top. Don Juan found it dangerous too — though in a different sense.

The poet Bloomfield, in his “Rural Tales,” devotes one poem to this very hill, and mentions the curious Severndroog Castle, which is situated in the woods to the right, as

This far-seen monumental tower
Records the achievements of the brave
And Angria’s subjugated power,

Who plundered on the Eastern wave.

From this spot, until we reach Rochester, the road is chiefly associated with Dickens. Passing through Gravesend we soon reach the little village of Chalk, at the farther end of which we find a couple of pretty cottages standing at a corner where the road branches off to Shorne. Here Charles Dickens spent his honeymoon. When he lived at Gad's Hill in later years he would often pass this spot during his daily walk — for he was a prodigious walker and the Dover Road knew him well. Mr. E. L. Blanchard, himself of no mean literary fame, and at that time living at Rosherville, often walked in this direction, and in so doing often met with Dickens at the same spot. "This was," he informs us, "on the outskirts of the village of Chalk, where a picturesque lane branches off towards Shorne and Cobham. Here the brisk walk of Charles Dickens was always slackened, and he never failed to gaze meditatively for a few moments at the windows of a corner house on the southern side of the road, advantageously situated for commanding views of the river and the farstretching landscape beyond. It was in that house he had lived immediately after his marriage."

Chalk Church is a few yards farther on, and stands out romantically against the distant river. This would often be included in his walk, says Dickens's biographer, John Forster. "He would . . . return by Chalk Church, and stop always to have greeting with a comical old monk who, for some incomprehensible reason, sits carved in stone, cross-legged, with a jovial pot, over the porch of that sacred edifice."

It is a most curious carving, and supposed to be symbolical of an ancient merrymaking known as "Church Ales."

This portion of the Dover Road between Gravesend and Rochester is a rare place for tramps, and Dickens thus describes it, in this respect, in one of his "Uncommercial Traveller" papers:

"I have my eye upon a piece of Kentish road, bordered on either side by a wood, and having on one hand, between the road dust and the trees, a skirting patch of grass. Wild flowers grow in abundance on this spot, and it lies high and airy, with a distant river stealing steadily away to the ocean like a man's life. To gain the milestone here, which the moss, primroses, violets, bluebells, and wild roses would soon render illegible but for peering travellers pushing them aside with their sticks, you must come up a steep hill, come which way you may. So all the tramps, with carts or caravans —

the Gipsy-tramp, the Show-tramp, the Cheap Jack — find it impossible to resist the temptations of the place, and all turn the horse loose when they come to it, and bell the pot. Bless the place, I love the ashes of the vagabond fires that have scorched the grass!”

Bless the place! Of course he did, for the steep hill which leads to “the magic ground” is none other than Gad’s Hill, and on top is Gad’s Hill Place.

Dickens came to live at Gad’s Hill Place in 1856, at the age of forty-four, but from his very earliest days he had conceived a wonderful attraction for the house. This receives authentication at the hands of Dickens himself, who, in a paper entitled “Travelling Abroad,” in passing down the Dover Road en route for Calais overtakes a vision of his former self. The story is a pretty one, and worth repeating here:

“So smooth was the old high-road, and so fresh were the horses, and so fast went I, that it was midway between Gravesend and Rochester, and the widening river was bearing the ships, white-sailed or blacksmoked, out to sea, when I noticed by the wayside a very queer small boy.

“‘Halloa!’ said I to the very queer small boy, ‘where do you live?’

“‘At Chatham,’ says he.

“‘What do you do there?’ says I.

“‘I go to school,’ says he.

“I took him up in a moment, and we went on. Presently the very queer small boy says, ‘This is Gadshill we are coming to, where Falstaff went out to rob those travellers and ran away.’

“‘You know something about Falstaff, eh?’ said I.

“‘All about him,’ said the very queer small boy. ‘I am old — I am nine — and I read all sorts of books. But do let us stop at the top of the hill, and look at the house there, if you please!’

“‘You admire that house?’ said I.

“‘Bless you, sir,’ said the very queer small boy, ‘when I was not more than half as old as nine it used to be a treat for me to be brought to look at it; and now I am nine I come by myself to look at it. And ever since I can recollect, my father, seeing me so fond of it, has often said to me, if you were to be very persevering and were to work hard, you might some day come to live in it. Though that’s impossible!’ said the very queer small boy, drawing a low breath, and now staring at the house out of the window with all his might.

“I was rather amazed to be told this by the very queer small boy, for that house happens to be my house, and I have reason to believe that what he said was true.”

Was ever man so attracted by a house as Dickens was by Gad’s Hill Place? Dickens loved his Kent, his Dover Road, and Rochester in particular. In almost all his novels this city of Rochester figures in one way or another; even before he came to Gad’s Hill Place he had written the immortal “Pickwick” and described the city more or less minutely in sundry other works. His thoughts always turned to the towns on the literary highway, and after he had taken up his abode at Gad’s Hill Place he gave us that charming picture of the district in “Great Expectations,” and in his last work the fascination of Rochester held him still.

Our first impressions of Rochester are thus admirably expressed by our friends on the coach:

“‘Magnificent ruin!’ said Mr. Augustus Snodgrass, with all the poetic fervor that distinguished him, when they came in sight of the fine old castle.

“‘Ah! fine place,’ said the stranger, ‘glorious pile, frowning walls, tottering arches, dark nooks, crumbling staircases; old cathedral too, earthy smell, pilgrims’ feet worn away the old steps, little Saxon doors; . . . fine place, old legends too, strange stories.’“

The “Bull Inn” is in the main thoroughfare, on the right-hand side. It is much the same as when the Pickwickians stayed there, and when Dickens himself slept there on various occasions. There is the ballroom still, with the little minstrels’ gallery, and a recollection about it of Alfred Jingle masquerading in Mr. Winkle’s dress-suit.

“Wright’s, next house,” which, according to Mr. Jingle, was “dear — very dear — half-a-crown in the bill if you look at the waiter — charge you more if you dine at a friend’s than they would if you had dined in the coffee-room,” is the “Crown,” at the foot of the bridge, which, in Dickens’s days was kept by one named Wright, and in its old form was the “Inn at Rochester,” forming the scene with the flea-bitten travellers in Shakespeare’s “Henry IV.”

Our connection with Rochester does not take us from the High Street which forms a part of the Dover Road. Page upon page could be written of the literary interest of Rochester, but I must refrain from making more than brief mention of a few of the most important items.

Rochester Bridge, upon which Mr. Pickwick ruminated one morning until he was interrupted by the dismal man, is not the same bridge as that which now spans the Medway. The old bridge was swept away by a storm some nine or ten years after Mr. Pickwick's visit. Dickens gave many names to Rochester. In "Edwin Drood" it is "Cloisterham"; in "Great Expectations" we find it simply as "the market town." In one short story it is "Great Winglebury," in another sketch "Dullborough." The projecting clock at the Corn Exchange is a notable feature of the High Street, and is several times mentioned in the above-mentioned works.

"The silent High Street of Rochester," he writes in "The Seven Poor Travellers,"

"is full of gables, with old beams and timbers carved into strange faces. It is oddly garnished with a queer old clock that projects over the pavement out of a grave red-brick building, as if Time carried on business there and hung out his sign."

Opposite the clock is the "Bull Inn," already referred to, and a little farther up the street towards Chatham is a white house of three gables, known as Watt's Charity, or, in Dickens's parlance, "The house of the seven poor travellers," as this charity, which provides accommodation for "six poor travellers not being rogues or proctors," formed the basis of one of Dickens's well-known Christmas stories. On the same side of the road is Eastgate House, lately restored, which as the Nuns' House figured as the school of Miss Twinkleton in "Edwin Drood." Opposite is a large gabled house — Mr. Sapsea's house; whilst near at hand is the Gate House, opening into the Cathedral Close. At this house Jasper lodged with the verger Tope, as all readers of "Edwin Drood" know full well.

Of no town, save London, did Dickens write so much; no town did he love more. Before we leave Dickens and Rochester behind us let us quote the last description he penned of the cathedral city; it was almost the last paragraph he ever wrote:

"A brilliant morning shines on the old city. Its antiquities and ruins are surpassingly beautiful, with the lusty ivy gleaming in the sun and the rich trees waving in the balmy air. Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods, and fields — or rather from the one great garden of the whole cultivated island in its yielding time — penetrate into the cathedral, subdue its earthy odor, and preach the Resurrection and the Life."

We have left Mr. Pickwick and his friends at the “Bull “; the coach has gone on without us, and we needs must follow on foot in the wake of David Copperfield.

We pass through Chatham. It would indeed be hard to locate the spot where David pawned his “little weskit” to the man who, with his frightful “Goroo! Goroo!” bid him “go for fourpence,” and so we walk straight through the town, up the long hill, to Sittingbourne and Canterbury.

There is not much left along the roadside to remind us of the days when countless pilgrims, weary and footsore, must have tramped this highway. For a greater part of the way the road is uninteresting, until we reach Ospringe and Faversham, and begin the ascent of Boughton Hill.

The village of Boughton-under-Blee must be familiar to readers of Chaucer’s “Canterbury Tales,” for it was here that the Canon and the Yeoman overtook the pilgrims in such mad haste:

When that tolde was the lif of seinte Cecile
Er we had ridden fully five mile
At Boughton under Blee us gan atake
A man, that clothed was in clothes blake,
And undernethe he wered a white surplis.

Boughton Hill is a long hill, and by the time we reach the top we, like many of the pilgrims of old, must take a rest, and enjoy the delightful views spread out on either hand. As yet Canterbury, though not many miles distant, is not visible; but as we descend to Harbledown — Bob-up-and-down Chaucer called it, and a very “little town” it is!

Wist ye not where standeth a little town
Which that ycleped is Bob-up-and-down
Under the Blee in Caunterbury way?

— we obtain a fine view of the pinnacles of the Cathedral away in the distance. It was here that the pilgrims first caught sight of the “Angel Steeple” (replaced in 1495 by the present central tower) and fell on their knees, their pilgrimage being all but at an end.

We enter the city of Canterbury, not so tired as young David, we hope, into its “sunny street . . . dozing as it were in the hot light; and with the

sight of its old houses and gateways, and the stately gray cathedral, with the rooks sailing round the towers.”

Mr. Wickfield lived somewhere in the High Street at “ a very old house bulging out over the road — a house with long low lattice windows bulging out still farther, and beams with carved heads on the ends, bulging out too,” but it would be idle to assign any special house as being the one occupied by Agnes’s father.

The Chequers of Hope, where Chaucer’s pilgrims stopped, was situated at the corner of Mercery Lane. Not much of the original building is left; indeed, the stone vaults beneath the present building are supposed to be all that remains of the “Chequers” of Chaucer’s days.

The literary history of the Dover Road at Canterbury does not end with Chaucer and Dickens. The Rev. Richard Harris Barham, the author of the immortal “ Ingoldsby Legends,” was born here in 1788, and his ancestral home was the village of Barham, from which the family took their name, only a few miles south of Canterbury, and near to “ Toppington Everard,” which figures so often in the legends.

Canterbury is to Barham what Rochester is to Dickens. Thus does Barham speak of his birthplace in “The Ghost”:

There stands a City — neither large nor small, —

Its air and situation sweet and pretty;

It matters very little — if at all — Whether its denizens are dull or witty;

Whether the ladies there are short or tall.

Brunettes or blondes, only, there stands

a city!

Perhaps ‘tis also requisite to minute

That there’s a Castle and a Cobbler in it.

A Fair Cathedral, too, the story goes,

And kings and heroes lie entombed

within her:

There pious Saints in marble pomp repose,

Whose shrines are worn by knees of

many a sinner;

There, too, full many an Aldermanic nose
Roll'd its loud diapason after dinner;
And there stood high the holy sconce of
Becket,
Till four assassins came from France
to crack it.

The “dark entry” of the Cathedral has been made famous in the humorous legend of “Nell Cook,” who “bought some nasty doctor’s stuff and put it in a pie,” and so poisoned the canon and his niece, of whom she was jealous.

Leaving Canterbury for Dover, sixteen miles distant, the literary interest lies off the Dover Road proper. In fact it lies on either side, and we may well call this portion of the road the Ingoldsby road. To the right is the village of Barham, and the farmhouse known as Tappington, a picturesque little old house nestling in the valley, a house which hardly comes up to the expectations we had of it after reading the preface of the Legends and looking at the engravings of the house accompanying it.

To the left we have the road running to Margate — a road that savors of Smuggler Bill and Exciseman Gill (“The Smuggler’s Leap “), of “The Brothers of Birehington,” “Misadventures at Margate,” and other well-known pieces.

But we have no time to search out Tappington Everard, to visit the Reculvers, to look down into the Chalk Pit, or to visit “merry Margate”; our road is David Copperfield’s road, and with him we cross “the bare wide downs” and come at last to Dover.

Where Miss Betsy Trotwood lived is not to be stated with exactitude, but from Dickens’s description given of the little cottage on the heights it is said to be one of the houses now known as “Athol Terrace,” overlooking the bay.

Dickens gave a reading of his works at Dover, and afterwards said that “the audience with the greatest sense of humor is Dover,” and Dickens was not the least humorous of the writers of this great literary highway which ends at Dover.

EXTRACT FROM “*A Book of Remembrance*”



by Elizabeth Duane Gillespie, J.B. Lippincott, 1901, p.123-124

In 1865, through the changes which come to us all in this mortal life, I was left alone with my daughter, my niece, and nephew, but they were all children. Our pleasures were few, but my time was absorbed in the education of my girls. Our summers were spent in New England wherever my brother, Rev. Richard B. Duane, selected a spot. In the winter of 1867-1868 we had the great pleasure to listen to Charles Dickens's readings from his own works. This was a delight, for from the opening chapters of the “Pickwick Papers” his books had for me great interest and peculiar charm. His wit was so keen, his insight into human nature so clear, his charity for all so evident, and his pathos so easily understood by any one who had had sorrow, that I have found in his writings a sympathetic answer to my feelings, whatever might be the mood.

I had taken my seat for his readings long before he came to Philadelphia, and had listened to him with intense delight, but on the evening when he read the “Christmas Carol” I was completely absorbed. I think I never turned my eyes from his face while he read. The day after Mr. George W. Childs sent for me; but this that good and noble man often did, sometimes to offer me a helping hand in my work, sometimes to ask me to help him in his constant care of others. When I reached his office he told me that Mr. Dickens had asked him, after describing where I sat, who I was, and had added, “I never had a more attentive listener.” He then told Mr. Childs he would be very glad to see me in his dressing-room after the next reading. I said “Yes” gladly to this invitation, and thus emboldened I sent Mr. Dickens a boutonniere on the morning of his next reading, and had the following acknowledgment:

“Dear Madam: —

“Accept my cordial thanks for your kind note, and with them the assurance that I shall have great pleasure in wearing your flowers this evening.

“Faithfully yours always,

“Charles Dickens.

“Mrs. Gillespie.

“Philadelphia, Thursday, Thirtieth Jan’y, 1868.”

Together Mr. Childs and I went into the dressing-room and found Mr. Dickens very tired and very warm. His welcome was most hearty; he thanked me for being an attentive listener and asked me which reading I had liked best. I told him “The Christmas Carol,” and added, “I read that aloud to my mother when it was first published, and then told her I hoped I should later take a walk in heaven between Sydney Smith and Charles Dickens.” Mr. Dickens laughed heartily, and after a most interesting conversation we rose to leave him. He held my hand in his, and said, “Good-night; I shall not forget that walk in heaven, but remember, you will see the back buttons of my coat through my heavenly body.” I never heard him speak again, but hope he still remembers the walk which is to come.

A CHILD'S JOURNEY WITH DICKENS



by Kate Douglas Smith

A CHILD'S JOURNEY WITH DICKENS

WHEN I was a little girl (I always think that these words, in precisely this juxtaposition, are six of the most charming in the language) — when I was a little girl, I lived, between the ages of six and sixteen, in a small village in Maine. My sister and I had few playmates, but I cannot remember that we were ever dull, for dullness in a child, as in a grown person, means lack of dreams and visions, and those we had a-plenty. We were fortunate, too, in that our house was on the brink of one of the loveliest rivers in the world. When we clambered down the steep bank to the little cove that was just beneath our bedroom windows, we found ourselves facing a sheet of crystal water as quiet as a lake, a lake from the shores of which we could set any sort of adventure afloat; yet scarcely three hundred feet away was a roaring waterfall, — a baby Niagara, — which, after dashing over the dam in a magnificent tawny torrent, spent itself in a wild stream that made a path between rocky cliffs until it reached the sea, eight miles away. No child could be lonely who lived on the brink of such a river; and then we had, beside our studies and our country sports, our books, which were the dearest of all our friends. It is a long time ago, but I can see very clearly a certain set of black walnut book-shelves, hanging on the wall of the family sitting-room. There were other cases here and there through the house, but I read and re-read the particular volumes in this one from year to year, and a strange, motley collection they were, to be sure! On the top shelf were George Sand's "Teverino," "Typee," ** "Undine," Longfellow's and Byron's "Poems," "The Arabian Nights," Bailey's "Festus," "The Lamplighter," "Scottish Chiefs," Thackeray's "Book of Snobs," "Ivanhoe," and the "Life of P. T. Barnum." This last volume, I may say, did not represent the literary inclinations of my parents, but had been given me on my birthday by a grateful neighbor for saving the life of a valuable Jersey calf tethered on the

too steep slopes of our river bank. The "Life of Barnum" was the last book on the heterogeneous top shelf, and on the one next below were most of the novels of Charles Dickens, more eagerly devoured than all the rest, although no book in the case had escaped a second reading save Bailey's "Festus," a little of which went a very long way with us.

It seems to me that no child nowadays has time to love an author as the children and young people of that generation loved Dickens; nor do I think that any living author of to-day provokes love in exactly the same fashion. From our yellow dog, Pip, to the cat, the canary, the lamb, the cow, down to all the hens and cocks, almost every living thing was named, sooner or later, after one of Dickens's characters; while my favorite sled, painted in brown, with the title in brilliant red letters, was "The Artful Dodger." Why did we do it? We little creatures couldn't have suspected that "the democratic movement in literature had come to town," as Richard Whiteing says, nevertheless we responded to it vigorously, ardently, and swelled the hero's public.

For periodical literature we had in our household "Harper's Magazine" and "Littell's Living Age," but we never read newspapers, so that there was a moment of thrilling excitement when my mother, looking up from the "Portland Press," told us that Mr. Dickens was coming to America, and that he was even then sailing from England. I remember distinctly that I prayed for him fervently several times during the next week, that the voyage might be a safe one, and that even the pangs of seasickness might be spared so precious a personage. In due time we heard that he had arrived in New York, and had begun the series of readings from his books; then he came to Boston, which was still nearer, and then – day of unspeakable excitement! – we learned that he had been prevailed upon to give one reading in Portland, which was only sixteen miles away from our village.

It chanced that my mother was taking me to Charlestown, Massachusetts, to pay a visit to an uncle on the very day after the one appointed for the great event in Portland. She, therefore, planned to take me into town the night before, and to invite the cousin, at whose house we were to sleep, to attend the reading with her. I cannot throw a more brilliant light on the discipline of that period than to say that the subject of my attending the reading was never once mentioned. The price of tickets was supposed to be almost prohibitory. I cannot remember the exact sum; I only know that it was mentioned with bated breath in the village of Hollis, and that there was

a general feeling in the community that any one who paid it would have to live down a reputation for riotous extravagance forever afterward. I neither wailed nor wept, nor made any attempt to set aside the parental decrees (which were anything but severe in our family), but if any martyr in Fox's "Book" ever suffered more poignant anguish than I, I am heartily sorry for him; yet my common sense assured me that a child could hardly hope to be taken on a week's junketing to Charlestown, and expect any other entertainment to be added to it for years to come. The definition of a "pleasure" in the State of Maine, county of York, village of Hollis, year of our Lord 1868, was something that could not reasonably occur too often without being cheapened.

The days, charged with suppressed excitement, flew by. I bade good-bye to my little sister, who was not to share my metropolitan experiences, and my mother and I embarked for Portland on the daily train that dashed hither and thither at the rate of about twelve miles an hour. When the august night and moment arrived, my mother and her cousin set out for the Place, and the moment they were out of sight I slipped out of the door and followed them, traversing quickly the three or four blocks that separated me from the old City Hall and the Preble House, where Dickens was stopping. I gazed at all the windows and all the entrances of both buildings without beholding any trace of my hero. I watched the throng of happy, excited, lucky people crowding their way into the hall, and went home in a chastened mood to bed, — a bed which, as soon as I got into it, was crowded with Little Nell and the Marchioness, Florence Dombey, Bella Wilfer, Susan Nipper, and Little Em'ly.

There were other dreams, too. Not only had my idol provided me with human friends, to love and laugh and weep over, but he had wrought his genius into things; so that, waking or sleeping, every bunch of holly or mistletoe, every plum pudding was alive; every crutch breathed of Tiny Tim; every cricket and every singing, steaming kettle had a soul.

The next morning we started on our railroad journey, which I remember as one being full of excitement from the beginning, for both men and women were discussing the newspapers with extraordinary interest, the day before having been the one on which the President of the United States had been formally impeached. When the train stopped for two or three minutes at North Berwick, the people on the side of the car next the station suddenly arose and looked eagerly out at some object of apparent interest. I

was not, at any age, a person to sit still in her seat when others were looking out of windows, and my small nose was quickly flattened against one of the panes. There on the platform stood the Adored One! His hands were plunged deep in his pockets (a favorite gesture), but presently one was removed to wave away laughingly a piece of the famous Berwick sponge cake, offered him by Mr. Osgood, of Boston, his travelling companion and friend.

I knew him at once! — the smiling, genial, mobile face, rather highly colored, the brilliant eyes, the watch chain, the red carnation in the button-hole, and the expressive hands, much given to gesture. It was only a momentary view, for the train started, and Dickens vanished, to resume his place in the car next to ours, where he had been, had I known it, ever since we left Portland.

When my mother was again occupied with her book, I slipped away and entered the next car. I took a humble, unoccupied seat near the end, close by the much patronized tank of (unsterilized) drinking-water, and the train-boy's basket of popcorn balls and molasses candy, and gazed steadily at the famous man, who was chatting busily with Mr. Osgood. I remembered gratefully that my mother had taken the old ribbons off my gray velvet hat and tied me down with blue under the chin, and I thought, if Dickens should happen to rest his eye upon me, that he could hardly fail to be pleased with the effect of the blue ribbon that went under my collar and held a very small squirrel muff in place. Unfortunately, however, his eye never did meet mine, but some family friends espied me, and sent me to ask my mother to come in and sit with them. I brought her back, and fortunately there was not room enough for me with the party, so I gladly resumed my modest seat by the popcorn boy, where I could watch Dickens, quite unnoticed. There is an Indian myth which relates that when the gaze of the Siva rested for the first time on Tellatonea, the most beautiful of women, his desire to see her was so great that his body became all eyes. Such a transformation, I fear, was perilously near to being my fate! Half an hour passed, perhaps, and one gentleman after another came from here or there to exchange a word of greeting with the famous novelist, so that he was never for a moment alone, thereby inciting in my breast my first, and about my last, experience of the passion of jealousy. Suddenly, however, Mr. Osgood arose, and with an apology went into the smoking-car. I never knew how it happened; I had no plan, no preparation, no intention, no

provocation; but invisible ropes pulled me out of my seat, and, speeding up the aisle, I planted myself timorously down, an unbidden guest, in the seat of honor. I had a moment to recover my equanimity, for Dickens was looking out of the window, but he turned in a moment, and said with justifiable surprise: —

“God bless my soul, where did you come from?”

“I came from Hollis, Maine,” I stammered, “and I ‘m going to Charlestown to visit my uncle. My mother and her cousin went to your reading last night, but, of course, three couldn’t go from the same family, so I stayed at home. Nora, that’s my little sister, stayed at home too. She’s too small to go on a journey, but she wanted to go to the reading dreadfully. There was a lady there who had never heard of Betsey Trotwood, and had only read two of your books!”

“Well, upon my word!” he said; “you do not mean to say that you have read them!”

“Of course I have,” I replied; “every one of them but the two that we are going to buy in Boston, and some of them six times.”

“Bless my soul!” he ejaculated again. “Those long thick books, and you such a slip of a thing.”

“Of course,” I explained conscientiously, “I do skip some of the very dull parts once in a while; not the short dull parts, but the long ones.”

He laughed heartily. “Now, that is something that I hear very little about,” he said. “I distinctly want to learn more about those very dull parts.” And whether to amuse himself, or to amuse me, I do not know, he took out a notebook and pencil from his pocket and proceeded to give me an exhausting and exhaustive examination on this subject; the books in which the dull parts predominated; and the characters and subjects which principally produced them. He chuckled so constantly during this operation that I could hardly help believing myself extraordinarily agreeable, so I continued dealing these infant blows, under the delusion that I was flinging him bouquets.

It was not long before one of my hands was in his, and his arm around my waist, while we talked of many things. They say, I believe, that his hands were “undistinguished” in shape, and that he wore too many rings. Well, those criticisms must come from persons who never felt the warmth of his handclasp! For my part, I am glad that Pullman chair cars had not

come into fashion, else I should never have experienced the delicious joy of snuggling up to Genius, and of being distinctly encouraged in the attitude.

I wish I could recall still more of his conversation, but I was too happy, too exhilarated, and too inexperienced to take conscious notes of the interview. I remember feeling that I had never known anybody so well and so intimately, and that I talked with him as one talks under cover of darkness or before the flickering light of a fire. It seems to me, as I look back now, and remember how the little soul of me came out and sat in the sunshine of his presence, that I must have had some premonition that the child, who would come to be one of the least of writers, was then talking with one of the greatest; — talking, too, of the author's profession and high calling. All the little details of the meeting stand out as clearly as though it had happened yesterday. I can see every article of his clothing and of my own; the other passengers in the car; the landscape through the window, and above all the face of Dickens, deeply lined, with sparkling eyes and an amused, waggish smile that curled the corners of his mouth under his grizzled moustache. A part of our conversation was given to a Boston newspaper next day, by the author himself, or by Mr. Osgood, and a little more was added a few years after by an old lady who sat in the next seat to us. (The pronoun "us" seems ridiculously intimate, but I have no doubt I used it, quite unabashed, at that date.)

"What book of mine do you like best?" Dickens asked, I remember; and I answered,

"Oh, I like David Copperfield much the best. That is the one I have read six times."

"Six times, — good, good!" he replied; "I am glad that you like Davy, so do I; — I like it best, too!" clapping his hands; and that was the only remark he made which attracted the attention of the other passengers, who looked in our direction now and then, I have been told, smiling at the interview, but preserving its privacy with the utmost friendliness.

"Of course," I added, "I almost said 'Great Expectations,' because that comes next. We named our little yellow dog Mr. Pip. They told father he was part rat terrier, and we were all so pleased. Then one day father showed him a trap with a mouse in it. The mouse wiggled its tail just a little, and Pip was so frightened that he ran under the barn and stayed the rest of the day. Then all the neighbors made fun of him, and you can think how Nora

and I love him when he's had such a hard time, just like Pip in 'Great Expectations'!"

Here again my new friend's mirth was delightful to behold, so much so that my embarrassed mother, who had been watching me for half an hour, almost made up her mind to drag me away before the very eyes of our fellow passengers. I had never been thought an amusing child in the family circle; what then, could I be saying to the most distinguished and popular author in the universe?

"We have another dog," I went on, "and his name is Mr. Pocket. We were playing with Pip, who is a smooth dog, one day, when a shaggy dog came along that didn't belong to anybody, and hadn't any home. He liked Pip and Pip liked him, so we kept him, and named him Pocket after Pip's friend. The real Mr. Pip and Mr. Pocket met first in Miss Havisham's garden, and they had such a funny fight it always makes father laugh till he can't read! Then they became great friends. Perhaps you remember Mr. Pip and Mr. Pocket?" And Dickens thought he did, which, perhaps, is not strange, considering that he was the author of their respective beings. Mr. Harry Furniss declares that "Great Expectations" was Dickens's favorite novel, but I can only say that to me he avowed his special fondness for "David Copperfield."

"Did you want to go to my reading very much?" was another question. Here was a subject that had never once been touched upon in all the past days, — a topic that stirred the very depths of my disappointment and sorrow, fairly choking me, and making my lip tremble by its unexpectedness, as I faltered, "*Yes; more than tongue can tell*"

I looked up a second later, when I was sure that the tears in my eyes were not going to fall, and to my astonishment saw that Dickens's eyes were in precisely the same state of moisture. That was a never-to-be-forgotten moment, although I was too young to appreciate the full significance of it.

"Do you cry when you read out loud?" I asked curiously. "We all do in our family. And we never read about Tiny Tim, or about Steerforth when his body is washed up on the beach, on Saturday nights, or our eyes are too swollen to go to Sunday School."

"Yes, I cry when I read about Steerforth," he answered quietly, and I felt no astonishment.

"We cry the worst when it says, 'All the men who carried him had known him and gone sailing with him, and seen him merry and bold,'" I said,

growing very tearful in reminiscence.

We were now fast approaching our destination, — the station in Boston, — and the passengers began to collect their wraps and bundles. Mr. Osgood had two or three times made his appearance, but had been waved away with a smile by Dickens, — a smile that seemed to say, — “You will excuse me, I know, but this child has the right of way.”

“You are not travelling alone?” he asked, as he arose to put on his overcoat.

“Oh, no,” I answered, coming down to earth for the first time since I had taken my seat beside him, — “oh, no, I had a mother, but I forgot all about her.” Whereupon he said, — ” You are a passed-mistress of the art of flattery!” But this remark was told me years afterwards by the old lady who was sitting in the next seat, and who overheard as much of the conversation as she possibly could, so she informed me.

Dickens took me back to the forgotten mother, and introduced himself, and I, still clinging to his hand, left the car and walked with him down the platform until he disappeared in the carriage with Mr. Osgood, leaving me with the feeling that I must continue my existence somehow in a dull and dreary world.

That was my last glimpse of him, but pictures made in childhood are painted in bright hues, and this one has never faded. The child of to-day would hardly be able to establish so instantaneous a friendship. She would have heard of celebrity hunters and autograph collectors and be self-conscious, while I followed the dictates of my countrified little heart, and scraped acquaintance confidently with the magician who had glorified my childhood by his art.

He had his literary weaknesses, Charles Dickens, but they were all dear, big, attractive ones, virtues grown a bit wild and rank. Somehow when you put him — with his elemental humor, his inexhaustible vitality, his humanity, sympathy, and pity — beside the Impeccables, he always looms large! Just for a moment, when the heart overpowers the reason, he even makes the flawless ones look a little faded and colorless!

CHARLES DICKENS AND ROCHESTER

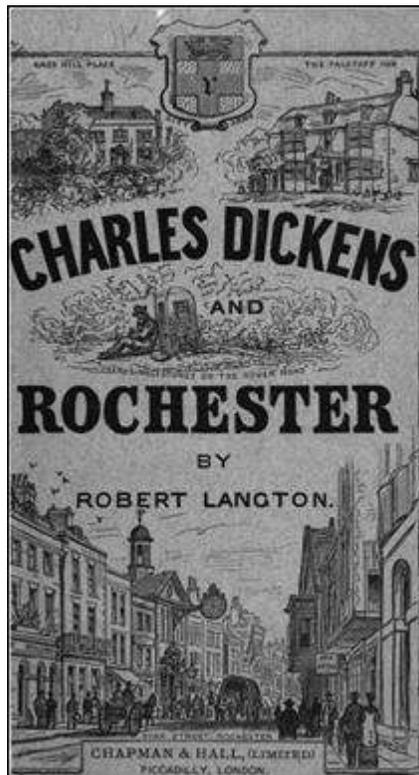


BY ROBERT LANGTON.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

From Original Drawings by the late William Hull and the Author.

Second Thousand.





ROCHESTER CASTLE.

Showing Graveyard in the remains of Castle Moat. Here Charles Dickens wished to be buried.

[the following essay was, most of it, written in August and September, 1879, and was read before the Manchester Literary Club, on the evening of the 16th February, 1880. The drawings were made in August, 1879.]

CHARLES DICKENS AND ROCHESTER.

Writing to the Hon. Mrs. Watson in 1856, Charles Dickens says: —

“I have always observed within my experience that the men who have left home young have, many long years afterwards, had the tenderest love for it. That’s a pleasant thing to think of, as one of the wise adjustments of this life of ours.”

It has no doubt been observed by all careful readers of the works of Charles Dickens how very frequently in his earliest and his latest books he introduces the city of Rochester as the scene of portions of his stories.

I now propose to bring together such references to this locality as are to be found in the entire works of Dickens, and where possible, to let the great master himself do the descriptive part in his own language.

In adding some explanatory notes of my own, I may say that, having passed perhaps the most impressionable part of my childhood at a school in Rochester, and having been familiar with the neighbourhood all through my life, I am able to testify to the wonderful accuracy and realism of the many sketches of life and scene in that part of Kent, which are to be found in some of the works of Charles Dickens.

■
Though not a man of Kent by birth, Charles Dickens was at the tender age of four years removed with his father's family to Chatham, where they lived near the parish church of St. Mary. Forster truly says that "the associations that were around him when he died were those which, at the outset of his life, had affected him most strongly."

He was, we are told, a very small boy for his age, and very delicate, insomuch that he could not engage in the ordinary sports of boys, but sat apart and watched them at their play, or read such works of Defoe, Smollett, Fielding, and Goldsmith as he had / access to.

All this and a great deal more we have from his own sketch of his early days in *David Copperfield*. When a very little fellow he had made several attempts at dramatic writing, or, as he says in his preface to a later edition of the *Sketches by Boz*, "They (the sketches) comprise my first attempts at authorship — with the exception of certain tragedies achieved at the mature age of eight or ten, and represented with great applause to overflowing nurseries." He had already become famous in his own childish circle as a good teller of a story, and an especially good singer of comic songs. Writing to Wilkie Collins in 1856, in answer to some enquiries as to his early years, he says: "I had been a writer when I was a mere baby, and always an actor from the same age."

That his childhood at this time was a happy, innocent enjoyment of life, is certain. We can gather this from some of his autobiographical characters, for we may now be quite sure that besides David Copperfield, Pip in *Great Expectations*, little Paul Dombey, and to some extent little Oliver Twist, there are other children, boys and girls too, here and there in his writings, who more or less reflect his own quaintly beautiful child-life. During the

last two years of his residence at Chatham he was sent to school to a Mr. William Giles, in Clover Lane, or Clover Street as it is now. Here, too, he distinguished himself by his happy way of reciting pieces, and once obtained a double encore for a piece out of the *Humourist's Miscellany* called "Dr. Bolus." Mr. Giles appears to have had a very early and pronounced opinion of the sterling abilities of his little scholar, and it will, perhaps, be remembered that when about half the parts of *Pickwick* had been published, he, Mr. Giles, sent Dickens a silver snuff box with this inscription: "To the inimitable Boz;" and accordingly, he was known among his more intimate friends as "the inimitable" for the rest of his life.

The school of Mr. Giles is still remembered by many middle-aged people in these towns, as is also a schoolboy's doggerel rhyme which embraces the four principal schools of Rochester and Chatham of fifty years ago. It ran thus: —

Baker's Bull Dogs,

Giles's Cats,

New-road Scrubbers,

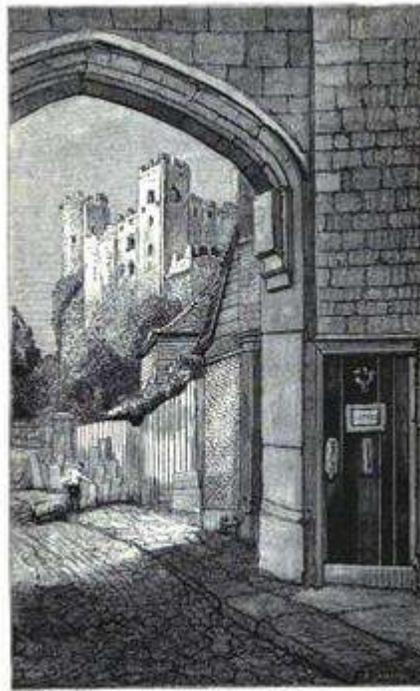
Troy-Town Rats.*

It was in the year 1821, at the age of nine years, that these I happy days of childhood were to terminate. "I have often heard him say," says Forster, "that in leaving the neighbourhood of Rochester he was leaving everything that had given his ailing little life its picturesqueness or sunshine. He was to be taken to London inside the stage coach, and Kentish woods and fields, Cobham Park and Hall, Rochester Cathedral and Castle, and all the wonderful romance together, including the red-cheeked baby he had been wildly in love with, were to vanish like a dream." Arrived in London we find the bright, genial, tender-hearted boy falling into utter poverty and neglect; his father was in difficulties, and soon afterwards was removed to the Marshalsea Prison, and the boy Dickens was sent to do the veriest drudgery at a blacking manufactory at Hungerford Stairs. What such a boy must have suffered in his neglect it would be difficult to estimate. He was not only getting no book-learning whatever, but he was fast losing what little he had learned at Chatham. He was not even properly fed, and had to associate with very different people to those he had been used to in Kent.

The subject of his neglect at this time was so painful to him that for twenty-five years afterwards he could not bring himself to mention it, even to his dearest friends. I find, however, that he mentions the blacking

manufactory incidentally in two of his works. In the *Pickwick Papers*, chap, xxxiii., Mr. Weller, senior,

* The Troy-Town School at the top of Star-Hill was kept for many years by Mr. Geo. E. Shirley. The origin of the term “Scrubbers” is rather obscure.



“JASPER’S GATEHOUSE.”
From “Edgar’s Dream.”

says: “Poetry’s unnat’ral; no man ever talked poetry ‘cept a beadle on boxin’ day, or Warren’s blackin’, or Rowland’s oil, or some o’ them low fellows.” In *Great expectations*, chap, xxvii., in answer to a question as to whether he had seen London yet, Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, replies: “Why, yes, sir, me and Wopsle went off straight to look at the blackin’ ware’us — but we didn’t find that it come up to its likeness in the red bills at the shop doors; which I meantersay,” added Joe, in an explanatory manner, “as it is there drawed too architectooralooral.”

For a full account of the almost incredible hardships and neglect that Dickens experienced at this time, see *David Copperfield*. The only difference in the actual sordid drudgery he was put to is that in the novel he makes a wine and spirit warehouse pass for the blacking manufactory. I will merely quote here the last paragraph of the dismal story. “I know that I lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed — I know

that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.”

After another brief period of schooling, Charles Dickens went, at the age of fifteen, to a solicitor’s office, as junior clerk or officeboy, for that was what he really was; and after being there some eighteen months he, by the force of his own strong will, set himself to master the difficulties of stenography, and to qualify himself to take a situation as a reporter. Having succeeded in this in no ordinary degree, and having been in the gallery of the House of Commons for some years as a parliamentary reporter, Dickens suddenly startled the reading world of 1834 and 1835 by his *Sketches by Boz* which first appeared in the *Monthly Magazine*, and afterwards in the *Evening Chronicle*.

From this time there was for him really no looking back, either in popularity or fortune, and his first book, the *Pickwick Papers*, went up in circulation from four hundred copies of part i. to forty thousand of part xv., and this, says Forster, “without newspaper notice or puffing, until people at this time talked of nothing else, tradesmen recommended their goods by using its name, and its sale, outstripping at a bound all the most famous books of the century, had reached to an almost fabulous number.”

Writing at this time on the wonderful popularity, of *Pickwick*, Thomas Carlyle says —

An archdeacon with his own venerable lips repeated to me, the other night, a strange profane story of a solemn clergyman who had been administering ghostly consolation to a sick person; having finished, satisfactorily as he thought, and got out of the room, he heard the sick man ejaculate: “Well, thank God, *Pickwick* will be out in ten days any way.”

Having thus very briefly sketched an outline of the childhood and youth of Charles Dickens, I will now enter upon the more immediate subject in hand, and it will perhaps be better to take the works containing references to Rochester (which of course includes Chatham) in the order in which they appeared; and here I may say that the very beautiful drawings of my friend, the late William Hull, show Rochester not only as it now is, but as it was when Dickens was a child. Changes have taken place in the old city during the last half century, and notably the old bridge has been replaced by a new one; but the views of Rochester here shown by Mr. Hull, and which he truly said he took up at my invitation as a labour of love, are most of them substantially the same as they must have appeared to William Hogarth and

his four jovial friends, when they visited Rochester during their memorable “Five days peregrination” in May, 1732! It is very probable that had Charles Dickens lived to complete *Edwin Drood*, some of the illustrations would have included views of places now before you. From the volumes of *Dickens’s Letters* we learn that at the end of the very week in which Dickens died, Mr. Fildes was to have been introduced to Rochester and neighbourhood, with a view to future illustrations. In the woodcut opposite page 88 of the unfinished story, we have a view taken opposite the west door of the cathedral, and which shows part of the cathedral graveyard, part of St. Nicholas’ Parish Church, and the Gatehouse. This was evidently taken after Dickens’s death, and though the Gatehouse is shewn as a stone building to the top, instead of timber, it is still a wonderfully fine illustration, and serves to show what we have lost.

In “The Great Winglebury Duel,” one of the *Sketches*, occurs the first recognizable hint of Rochester, though it is of course not mentioned by name. It was nevertheless evidently in the mind of the writer when he penned the description of the High Street and the hotel.

At the opening of *Pickwick* we find the friends on their way to the Bull Hotel, Rochester, and a capital description is given of the old house, the ball-room and grand staircase of which remain to this day just as it appeared to Mr. Pickwick and his friends more than fifty years since, for the tale is laid in the year 1827. Standing on Rochester bridge early on a fine summer morning, Mr. Pickwick, beheld the landscape here described, and part of which I have attempted to show in a sketch at the head of this paper.

On the left of the spectator lay the ruined wall, broken in many places, and in some overhanging the narrow beach below in rude and heavy masses.

* * * Behind it rose the ancient castle, its towers roofless, and its massive walls crumbling away, but telling us proudly of its old might and strength

* * * On either side the banks of the Medway, covered with cornfields and pastures, with here and there a windmill or a distant church, stretched away as far as the eye could see, presenting a rich and varied landscape, rendered more beautiful by the changing shadows which passed swiftly across it, as the thin and half-formed clouds skimmed away in the light of the morning sun.

We next get a glimpse of the friends just issued from their hotel, on their way to Dingley Dell, Mr. Winkle’s horse “drifting up the High Street in the

most mysterious manner — side first, with his head to one side of the way, and his tail towards the other.” Then there is an account of a review on Chatham Lines, wonderfully told, but too long to give here. An extract from Mr. Pickwick’s never-failing notebook runs thus: “The principal productions of these towns appear to be soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers, and dock-yard men. The commodities chiefly exposed for sale in the public streets are marine stores, hard bake, apples, fiat fish, and oysters.”

Mr. Jingle, in describing the various grades of exclusiveness in these parts, says, for the enlightenment of Mr. Tupman, “The dock-yard people of upper rank don’t know dock-yard people of lower rank; – dock-yard people of lower rank don’t know small gentry – small gentry don’t know tradespeople; – commissioner don’t know anybody.”

It is worthy of notice, more particularly as it is not mentioned by Forster, that the scene of the duel which was to have been fought between Mr. Winkle, and the irascible Dr Slammer, is laid in the field at the back of Fort Pitt; the very spot where the four schools before-mentioned, used to meet to settle their difficulties with their fists!! Here too they occasionally met in the more friendly rivalry of Cricket. We do not find Rochester mentioned again till 1849, when David Copperfield passes through these towns on his way to Dover.

I see myself, as evening closes in, coming over the bridge at Rochester, footsore and tired, and eating bread that I had bought for supper. One or two little houses with the notice “Lodgings for travellers” hanging out had tempted me; but I was afraid of spending the few pence I had, and was even more afraid of the vicious looks of the trampers I had met or overtaken. I sought no shelter, therefore, but the sky, and toiling into Chatham — which in that night’s aspect is a mere dream of chalk and drawbridges, and mastless ships in a muddy river, roofed like Noah’s arks — crept at last upon a sort of grass-grown battery overhanging a lane, where a sentry was walking to and fro. There I lay down near a cannon, and, happy in the society of the sentry’s footsteps, slept soundly till morning.

He then tells how he had to sell his little jacket in order to buy food, and “Old Charley,” the dealer in second-hand clothes — a real character of forty years ago — is portrayed for all time. The description is too long for quotation, but here is the close of it: —

There never was such another drunken madman in that line of business, I hope. That he was well known in the neighbourhood, and enjoyed the reputation of having sold himself to the Devil, I soon understood from the visits he received from the boys who continually came skirmishing about the shop, shouting that legend and calling to him to bring out his gold.

There is another reference to this district in *David Copperfield*, where Mrs. Micawber explains her presence thus: —

Mr. Micawber was induced to think, on enquiry, that there might be an opening for a man of his talent in the Medway coal trade. Then, as Mr. Micawber very properly said, the first step to be taken was to come and see the Medway — which we came and saw. We came, repeated Mrs. Micawber, and saw I think the greater part of the Medway, and my opinion of the coal trade on that river is that it may require talent, but that it certainly requires capital. Talent, Mr. Micawber has; Capital, Mr. Micawber has not.

In 1854 we have as a Christmas tale *The Seven Poor Travellers*, the scene of which is laid in High Street, Rochester, at Watts's Charity. The well known Inscription over the door of Watts's Charity has puzzled many generations of men. It runs thus: —

Richard Watts, Esq.,
by his Will, dated 22 Aug., 1579,
founded this Charity
for Six poor Travellers,
who not being Rogues or Proctors,
may receive gratis for one night,
Lodging, Entertainment,
and Fourpence each.



WATTS'S CHARITY.



MINDR CANON ROW, ROCHESTER.

*See *The Sixty Poor Travellers*, and *Edwin Drood*.*



ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL AND CASTLE.

This may have been well understood three hundred years ago, but, Time had drawn a veil over the true reading of the inscription, till quite lately, when Mr. W. Gibson Ward of Ross, pointed out, that the Proctors who are

not to participate in the charity, were a set of mendicants, who swarmed everywhere in the South of England, under the pretence of collecting alms for the support of Leper-houses, at a time, too, when these Hospitals had fortunately become unnecessary.

In the time of Watts, these Proctors had become a greater nuisance than the Leprosy itself. Hence the prohibition.

Dickens under guise of a *seventh* poor Traveller, then gives a description of the Charity as administered in 1854.

I had been wandering about the neighbouring cathedral and had seen the tomb of Richard Watts, with the effigy of worthy Master Richard starting out of it like a ship's figure-head, and the way being very short and very plain, I had come prosperously to the inscription and the quaint old door.

I found it to be a clean white house, of a staid and venerable air, with choice little low lattice windows, and a roof of three gables. The silent High Street of Rochester is full of gables, with old beams and timbers carved into strange faces. It is oddly garnished with a queer old clock that projects over the pavement out of a grave red-brick building, as if time carried on business there and hung out his sign. Sooth to say, he did an active stroke of work in Rochester, in the days of the Romans, and the Saxons, and the Normans; and down to the times of King John, when the rugged castle — I will not undertake to say how many hundreds of years old then — was abandoned to the centuries of weather which had so defaced the dark apertures in its walls that the ruin looks as if the rooks and daws had picked its eyes out.

As I passed along the High Street I heard the waits at a distance, and struck off to find them. They were playing near one of the old gates of the city, at the corner of a wonderfully quaint row of red-brick tenements, which the clarionet obligingly informed me were inhabited by the minor canons. They had odd little porches over the doors, like sounding-boards over old pulpits; and I thought I should like to see one of the minor canons come out upon his top step and favour us with a little Christmas discourse about the poor scholars of Rochester, taking for his text the words of his Master relative to the devouring of widows' houses.

This refers to a great scandal, caused by the discovery of a serious misappropriation of the Rochester Cathedral funds by the clergy, and for the exposure of which the Rev. Robert Whiston, M. A., then Head Master of

the Grammar School, had just before this date (November, 1854) been presented with a service of plate.

Mr. Whiston recovered for the school a large sum of money, amounting to many thousands of pounds, for which service he was promptly turned out of his Head Mastership by the Dean and Chapter. They were however compelled to re-instate him at once, and the foregoing allusion by Dickens was thought at the time to be well deserved, and not at all too strong.

In the *Uncommercial Traveller*, 1860, we have many glimpses of Rochester and its vicinity. The first is in a chapter on Tramps, which abound on the great Dover Road, and especially so in the neighbourhood of Gads Hill.*

As a tramping clock-maker the un-commercial traveller gives a good description of Cobham Hall and Woods. * * * Having in following his vocation given voice to the long silent bell of the stable-clock, the un-commercial is introduced to the hospitality of the servants' hall * * * "and there regaled with beef and bread, and powerful ale."

Then, paid freely, we should be at liberty to go, and should be told by a pointing helper to keep round over yinder by the blasted ash, * * * and so straight through the woods, till we should see the town-lights, right afore us. * * * Then should we make a burst to get clear of the trees, and should soon find ourselves in the open, with the town-lights bright ahead of us.

So should we lie that night at the ancient sign of the Crispin and Crispanus,+ and rise early next morning to be betimes on tramp again.

Farther on in this chapter on tramps, we have the surroundings of the third milestone from Rochester, on the road to Gravesend, lying a little to the West of Gads-hill Place, brought before our notice thus. * * * (The distant river is the Thames.)

I have my eye on a piece of Kentish road, bordered on either side by a wood, and having on one hand, between the road-dust and the trees, a skirting patch of grass. Wild flowers grow in abundance on this spot, and it lies high and airy, with a distant river stealing steadily away to the ocean, like a man's life. To gain the milestone here, which the moss, primroses, violets, blue bells, and wild roses would soon render illegible but for peering travellers pushing them aside with their sticks, you must come up a steep hill, come which way you may. So all the tramps with carts or caravans — the gipsy tramp, the show tramp, the Cheap Jack — find it impossible to resist the

* The initial letter I at the head of this paper represents the monument erected to the memory of Charles Larkin, of Rochester, at Gads Hill.

+ At Strood.

temptations of the place, and all turn the horse loose when they come to it, and boil the pot. Bless the place, I love the ashes of the vagabond fires that have scorched its grass! On this hallowed ground has it been my happy privilege (let me whisper it) to behold the white-haired lady with the pink eyes eating meat pie with the giant. It was on an evening in August that I chanced upon this ravishing spectacle, and I noticed that, whereas the giant reclined half concealed beneath the overhanging boughs and seemed indifferent to nature, the white hair of the gracious lady streamed free in the breath of evening, and her pink eyes found pleasure in the landscape. I heard only a single sentence of her uttering, yet it bespoke a talent for modest repartee. The ill-mannered giant — accursed be his evil race! — had interrupted the lady in some remark, and, as I passed that enchanted corner of the wood, she gently reprov'd him with the words, “Now, Cobby;” — Cobby! so short a name! — ” ain’t one fool enough to talk at a time?”

This describes the neighbourhood of Gads Hill as probably only Dickens could have described it. Of the house, Gads Hill Place, little need be said here, as it has been so thoroughly done by Forster. It is a comfortable, old-fashioned house, built about a century since, in the reign of George III., and is on the very spot mentioned in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV.* as the scene of the robbery of the travellers.

Gads Hill had been the scene of many robberies on the highway, long before Shakespeare conferred upon it what may now be called its *first* world-wide renown. An extract or two from the parish registers of Gravesend will serve to show that Travellers in these parts did not always tamely submit to be spoiled of their goods.

Thus we find the following entry: — ” 1586, September 29th daye, was a thiefe yt was slayne, buried.” And again, “1590, Marche the 17th daie, was a theefe yt was at Gadshill wounded to deathe, called Robert Writs, buried.”

Also in John Clavell's "Recantation of an ill-led life" published in 1634, we find the following allusion to the well known character of this part of the Dover Road.

"For though I oft have seen Gads-hill and those Red tops of mountains,
where good people lose Their ill-kept purses. I did never climbe
Parnassus' Hill or could aduenture time To tread the muse's
mazes, * * *

*" The circumstances connected with the purchase of this estate by Dickens are so remarkable that it will be as well to give an extract from a letter from Dickens to his friend M. de Cerjat, written in 1857, fully detailing them : —

I happened to be walking past [the house] a year and a half or so ago, with my sub-editor of *Household Words* (Mr. W. H. Wills,) when I said to him, "You see that house? It has always a curious interest for me, because when I was a small boy down in these parts I thought it the most beautiful house (I suppose because of its famous old cedar trees) ever seen. And my poor father used to bring me to look at it, and used to say that if ever I grew up to be a clever man perhaps I might own that house, or such another house. In remembrance of which I have always in passing looked to see if it was to be sold or let, and it has never been to me like any other house, and it has never changed at all." We came back to town, and my friend went out to dinner. Next morning he came to me in great excitement and said, "It is written that you are to have that house at Gads Hill. The lady I had allotted to me to take down to dinner yesterday began to speak of that neighbourhood. 'You know it?' I said; 'I have been there to-day.' 'O yes,' she said, 'I know it very well. I was a child there in the house they call Gads Hill Place. My father was the rector, and lived there many years. He has just died, has left it to me, and I want to sell it.' So," says the sub-editor, "you must buy it. Now or never!" I did, and hope to pass next summer there.

Nearly opposite Gads Hill Place, is the Falstaff Inn, dating probably from Queen Anne's time. It formerly had an old-fashioned swinging sign, on one side of which was painted Falstaff fighting with the men in buckram suits, and on the other, Falstaff being pitched into the Thames from a buck-basket, the merry wives of Windsor looking on approvingly. In its long, sanded room there was a copy of Shakespeare's monument in Westminster Abbey, with the inscription, "The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,"

and so forth. It is worth noting, that forty years ago, something like ninety coaches passed this old hostelry every day!

The Railways have altered that, and although it is still true, as Mr. F 's Aunt says, that, "there's milestones on the Dover road,"* it is also true that, in some places there is very little else; for in parts of the road grass struggles successfully with the diminished traffic of these latter days.

"Dullborough Town" is the title of another chapter of the *Uncommercial Traveller*; and is another name for Rochester.

The following extracts show more clearly perhaps than any other portion of the writings of Charles Dickens, how he clung to

* Little Dorrit. — Chap. XXIII.



GATEHOUSE OF CATHEDRAL CLOSE, ROCHESTER.

the memories of his childhood, and how he still loved Rochester when in the full-tide of his popularity, and in the prime of his life.

As the uncommercial saunters along a street, he at last recognises a man he had known many years before, when a child. * * * "It was he himself; he might formerly have been an old-looking young man, or he might now be a young-looking old man, but there he was." * * * Addressing the man (a greengrocer) he wishes to explain that he formerly as a boy had the honour

of his acquaintance, but he quite failed to excite the interest of his former acquaintance. * * *

Nettled by his plegmatic conduct, I informed him that I had left the town when I was a child. He slowly returned, quite unsoftened, and not without a sarcastic kind of complacency, *Had I?* Ah! And did I find it had got on tolerably well without me? Such is the difference (I thought, when I had left him a few hundred yards behind, and was by so much in a better temper) between going away from a place and remaining in it. I had no right, I reflected, to be angry with the greengrocer for his want of interest; I was nothing to him: whereas he was the town, the cathedral, the bridge, the river, my childhood, and a large slice of my life, to me.

There is probably more of fact than fiction, in the following extract from the same chapter.

As I left Dullborough in the days when there were no railroads in the land, I left it in a stage coach. Through all the years that have since passed have I ever lost the smell of the damp straw in which I was packed — like game — and forwarded, carriage paid, to the Cross Keys, Wood Street, Cheapside, London? There was no other inside passenger, and it rained hard all the way, and I thought life sloppier than I had expected to find it.

The coach that had carried me away was melodiously called Timpson's Blue-eyed Maid, and belonged to Timpson, at the coach office up street; the locomotive engine that had brought me back was called severely No. 97 and belonged to S.E.R., and was spitting ashes and hot water over the blighted ground.

When I had been let out at the platform door the first discovery I made was that the station had swallowed up the playing field. I looked in again over the low wall at the scene of departed glories. Here, in the haymaking time, had I been delivered from the dungeons of Seringapatam, an immense pile (of haycock,) by my countrymen, the victorious British (boy next door and his two cousins,) and had been recognized with ecstasy by my affianced one (Miss Green,) who had come all the way from England (second house in the terrace) to ransom me and marry me. Here had I first heard of the existence of a terrible banditti, called "The Radicals," whose principles were that the Prince Regent wore stays, and that nobody had a right to any salary, and

that the army and navy ought to be put down — horrors at which I trembled in my bed, after supplicating that the Radicals might be speedily

taken and hanged.

The theatre was in existence, I found, and I resolved to comfort my mind by going to look at it. Many wondrous secrets of nature had I come to the knowledge of in that sanctuary, of which not the least terrific were, that the witches of Macbeth bore an awful resemblance to the thanes and other proper inhabitants of Scotland; and that the good King Duncan couldn't rest in his grave, but was constantly coming out of it and calling himself somebody else. To the theatre, therefore, I repaired for consolation. But I found very little, for it was in a bad and declining way. No, there was no comfort in the theatre. It was mysteriously gone, like my own youth — unlike my own youth, it might be coming back some day; but there was little promise of it.

Of course the town had shrunk fearfully since I was a child there. I found the High Street little better than a lane. There was a public clock in it which I had supposed to be the finest clock in the world: whereas it now turned out to be as inexpressive, moon-faced, and weak a clock as ever I saw.

I had not gone fifty paces along the street when I was suddenly brought up by the sight of a man who got out of a little phaeton at the doctor's door, and went into the doctor's house. Immediately the air was filled with the scent of trodden grass, and the perspective of years opened, and at the end of it was a little likeness of this man keeping a wicket, and I said "God bless my soul! Joe Specks!" Scorning to ask the boy left in the phaeton whether it was really Joe, and scorning even to read the brass plate on the door — so sure was I — I rang the bell and informed the servant maid that a stranger sought audience of Mr. Specks. Into a room half surgery, half study, I was shown to await his coming.

When my old schoolfellow came in and I informed him with a smile that I was not a patient, he seemed rather at a loss to perceive any reason for smiling in connection with that fact, and enquired to what was he to attribute the honour? I asked him with another smile could he remember me at all? He had not (he said) that pleasure. I was beginning to have but a poor opinion of Mr. Specks, when he said reflectively, "And yet there's a something, too." Upon that I saw a boyish light in his eyes that looked well, and I asked him if he could inform me, as a stranger who desired to know and had not the means of reference at hand, what the name of the young lady was who married Mr. Random? Upon that he said "Narcissa," and, after staring for a moment called me by my name, shook- me by the hand,

and melted into a roar of laughter. “Why, of course,” you’ll remember Lucy Green,” he said, after we had talked a little. “Of course,” said I. “Whom do you think she married?” said he. “You?” I hazarded. “Me,” said Specks, “and you shall see her.” So I saw her, and she was fat, and if all the hay in the world had been heaped upon her it could scarcely have altered her face more than time had altered it from my remembrance of the face that had once looked down upon me into the fragrant dungeons of Seringapatam. *

We talked immensely, Specks, and Mrs. Specks, and I, and we spoke of our old selves as though our old selves were dead and gone, and indeed, indeed they were — dead and gone as the playing field that had become a wilderness of rusty iron, and the property of S .E. R.

When I went to catch my train at night I Was in a more charitable mood with Dullborough than I had been all day; and yet in my heart I had loved it all day too. Ah! who was I that I should quarrel with the town for being changed to me, when I myself had come back so changed to it! All my early readings and early imaginations dated from this place, and I took them away so full of innocent construction and guileless belief, and I brought them back so worn and torn, so much the wiser and so much the worse!

In another paper of the *Uncommercial Traveller* there is a graphic description of Chatham Dockyard and the machinery there, also of the appearance of the Medway and the marshes beyond. In Paper 26 there is a reminiscence of a funeral Dickens attended when a child at Chatham, and the impressions it made on his mind. “Other funerals,” he says, “have I seen with grown-up eyes since that day, of which the burden has been the same childish burden. Making game. Real affliction, real grief and solemnity, have been outraged, and the funeral has been *performed*.” These impressions enlarged on in nearly all his other works have gone far to abolish the absurdities and extravagance of modern funeral customs.

In 1861 *Great Expectations* appeared. The opening scene is Cooling Churchyard, near Rochester, beyond which lies a large tract of marsh country extending from the Medway to the estuary of the Thames. While at Rochester in August, 1879, with Mr. Hull, we drove out to look at the spot, and the sketch is one I made of the church and churchyard. (See Tail-piece.)

The curious rows of little coffin-shaped stones are still to be seen exactly as described by Pip, but with this difference, the tale says there are five of them, Forster says there are “a dozen,” the real number is thirteen, — and

they are all the children of one family! Even the names of the children are accurately given so far as they go.

This tale has many allusions to Rochester, but mostly under

*” Death doesn’t change us more than life my dear.” — *Old Curiosity Shop*. Chap. XVII.

the name of “Our market town.” According to Forster, “Restoration House,” as it is called, stands for the “Satis House” in the tale. That may be so, but it certainly is not *the* “Satis House” where Richard Watts entertained Queen Elizabeth. That stood on Boley Hill, close up to the curtain wall of the castle, and overlooking the river. A portion of this fine old house is incorporated with the new one built about a century since.

There is a fine description of the desolate tract of wild marshes beyond the village of Cooling, and of the “fearful wild fowl” in the shape of escaped convicts sometimes caught there. Pip, the hero of the story, says: —

To five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine — who gave up trying to get a living exceedingly early in that universal struggle — I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs, with their hands in their trouser pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence. Ours was the marsh country, down, by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out, for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all, and beginning to cry, was Pip. “Hold your noise!” cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. “Keep still, you little devil, or I’ll cut your throat!”

A fearful man all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who

limped and shivered, and glared and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.

The convict makes the frightened boy promise to bring him in the morning a file and some “wittles,” and then takes himself off, “hugging his shuddering body in both his arms, and picking his way among the nettles, and among the brambles that bound the green mounds, as if he were eluding the hands of the dead people, stretching up cautiously out of their graves to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in.” Pip gets the file and the “wittles,”



EASTGATE, ROCHESTER.

and in the morning finds the convict at an old battery on the marshes: —

Hugging himself and limping to and fro as if he had never all night left off hugging and limping. He was awfully cold, to be sure. I half expected to see him drop down before my face, and die of deadly cold. His eyes looked so awfully hungry, too, that when I handed him the file, and he laid it down on the grass, it occurred to me he would have tried to eat it if he had not seen my bundle. “What’s in the bottle, boy?” said he. “Brandy,” said I. He was already handing mince-meat down his throat in the most curious manner — more like a man who was putting it away somewhere in a violent hurry than a man who was eating it — -but he left off to take some of the liquor. He shivered all the while so violently that it was quite as much

as he could do to keep the neck of the bottle between his teeth without biting it off. "I think you have got the ague," said I. "I'm much of your opinion, boy," said he. "It's bad about here," I told him. "You've been lying out on the meshes, and they're dreadful aguish. Rheumatic too." "I'll eat my breakfast afore they're the death of me," said he. "I'll beat the shivers so far, I'll bet you." He was gobbling mince-meat, meat-bone, bread, cheese, and pork pie all at once; staring distrustfully while he did so at the mist all around us, and often stopping — even stopping his jaws — to listen. Some real or fancied sound, some clink upon the river or breathing of beast upon the marsh, now gave him a start, and he said suddenly: "You're not a deceiving imp? You brought no one with you?" "No, sir! no!" "Nor giv' no one the office to follow you?" "No!" "Well," said he, "I believe you. You'd be but a fierce young hound indeed if, at your time of life, you could help to hunt a wretched warmint, hunted as near death and dunghill as this poor wretched warmint is!" Something clicked in his throat as if he had works in him like a clock, and was going to strike. And he smeared his ragged, rough sleeve over his eyes.

Dickens must have had many opportunities of observing the appearance and condition of the Chatham convicts, and there are many vivid glimpses of convict life in this tale. The captured convicts in this chapter, were spirited away to the hulk lying out in the Medway, and looking by night like "a wicked Noah's Ark." He also describes in another chapter the manner of conveying convicts to Chatham by coach, and how ordinary outside passengers first became aware of their presence by their "bringing with them that curious flavour of bread poultice, baize, rope yarn, and hearthstone, which attends the convict presence."

Farther on in the tale, Pip is taken to the Town Hall to be bound apprentice to Joe Gargery, the blacksmith. The "Hall," is of course the Guildhall, Rochester.

The Hall was a queer place I thought, with higher pews in it than a church, * * * and with mighty justices leaning back in chairs, with folded arms, or taking snuff, or going to sleep, or writing, or reading the newspapers, * * * and with some shining black portraits on the walls, which my unartistic eye regarded as a composition of hardbake and sticking-plaster. There in a corner my indentures were duly signed and attested, and I was "bound;" Mr. Pumblechook holding me all the while as if we had

looked in on our way to the scaffold, to have those little preliminaries disposed of.

At the dinner and merry-making at the Blue Boar, which followed, Pip complains that being sleepy, his friends kept waking him up, and telling him to enjoy himself, — and farther on in the evening

Mr. Wopsle gave us Collins's Ode, and threw his blood-stained sword in thunder down, with such an effect, that a waiter came in and said "The commercials underneath sent up their compliments, and it wasn't the Tumblers Arms."

The Blue Boar so often mentioned in this tale is undoubtedly intended for the Bull Hotel in the High Street

The following extract may have been and very likely was, a personal experience of Dickens on revisiting Rochester. In the story it is the experience of Pip, after he had for a time realized his great expectations: —

It was interesting to be in the quiet old town once more, and it was not disagreeable to be here and there suddenly recognized and stared after. One or two of the tradespeople even darted out of their shops, and went a little way down the street before me, that they might turn, as if they had forgotten something, and pass me face to face — on which occasions I don't know whether they or I made the most pretence; they of not doing it, or I of not seeing it.

The story of *Great Expectations* lies either in Rochester and neighbourhood or London, and, like *Edwin Drood*, is so full of Rochester and London that either book might equally with his terrible story of the French Revolution have been called *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Many characters in the earlier and later books of Charles Dickens are, it is well known, taken from actual life, and have been thought by some still living in these towns to be much too easily recognizable to be pleasant.

Names of places, too, are occasionally used in works that do not otherwise touch on Rochester district at all; for instance, in *Bleak House*, a rookery in London is called "Tom-all-alone's," which to thousands not in the secret may seem an unmeaning name. It is really the name of an outlying district of Chatham, at the back of the Lines, and is now being nearly all absorbed in the dockyard extension. There is or was lately here a tavern also called "Tom-all-alone's." Of the names of characters throughout the works of Dickens, many are drawn from these towns. Hubble, Jasper, Cobb, Dowler, Larkins, and many others are well-known local names;

Caleb Pordage and Fanny Dorritt lie side by side in the cathedral graveyard; and there is a Weller, a greengrocer, in High Street, Chatham.

In the last work of Dickens, Rochester figures again as Cloisterham, and there are several fine passages in the fragment relating to his favourite spot. In a letter to Forster, written some six years before his death, he says: — "I have grown hard to satisfy, and write very slowly." There is, however, no doubt that this work shows no falling off either in invention or descriptive power; and although his statement to his friend, "that he had grown hard to satisfy," is fully borne out by a careful examination of the manuscript, where erasures and interlineations are numerous, perhaps few will doubt that this, his last work, is one of his best, if not the best of all.

It may be noted, too, that towards the close of his life Charles Dickens seems to have been more frequently in the immediate precincts of the cathedral than ever before; this may very probably have been in order to make a closer study of its surroundings, for use as the story developed itself. The apparitor of the cathedral (the Mr. Tope of the tale) says: — "he often saw Mr. Dickens about the cathedral during the last few months of his life; and for some time he took no particular notice of him, not knowing who he was." And to the remark, "Ah, but he was taking notice of you!" he replied "Very true, sir, very true," and seemed pleased with the recognition of his portrait. The curious character, Durdles, who has only recently disappeared from the neighbourhood, was from the life, as was also, to some extent, Mr. Sapsea. There is plenty of good comedy in *Edwin Drood*, * but it is rather noticeable for a quieter and more thoughtfully subdued tone throughout. The first extract describes Eastgate House, or the Nun's House of the tale, the High Street, and Mr. Sapsea's premises. Mr. Hull's drawings of the High Street and Eastgate give capital views of this part of Rochester.

* It is believed on good grounds, that (with the alteration of one letter,) *Edwin Drood* is named after a former Landlord of the Falstaff, his name being Edwin Trood.

A drowsy city, Cloisterham, whose inhabitants seem to suppose, with an inconsistency more strange than rare, that all its changes lie behind it, and that there are no more to come. A queer moral to derive from antiquity, yet older than any traceable antiquity.

So silent are the streets of Cloisterham (though prone to echo on the smallest provocation,) that of a summer day the sunblinds of its shops scarce dare to flap in the south wind; while the sun-browned tramps who pass along and stare, quicken their limp a little, that they may the sooner get beyond the confines of its oppressive respectability.

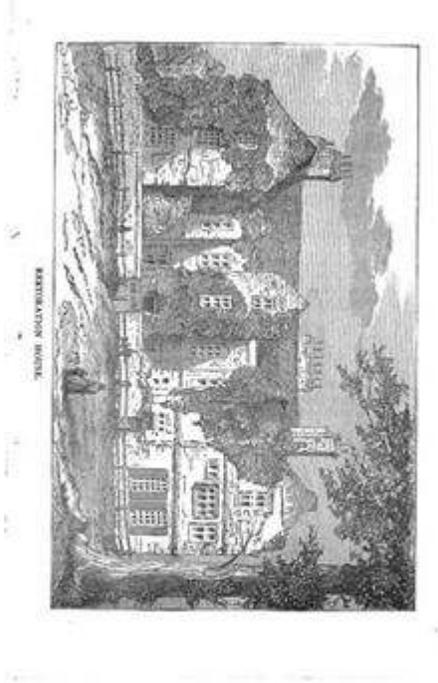
In a word, a city of another and a bygone time is Cloisterham, with its hoarse cathedral bell, its hoarse rooks hovering about the cathedral tower, its hoarser and less distinct rooks in the stalls far beneath.

In the midst of Cloisterham stands the Nun's House; a venerable brick edifice, whose present appellation is doubtless derived from the legend of its conventual uses. On the trim gate enclosing its old courtyard is a resplendent brass plate flashing forth the legend "Seminary for Young Ladies. Miss Twinkleton." The house front is so old and worn, and the brass plate is so shining and staring, that the general result has reminded imaginative strangers of a battered old beau with a large modern eyeglass stuck in his blind eye. * * # # # # #

Mr. Sapsea's premises are in the High Street, over against the Nun's House. They are of about the period of the Nun's House, irregularly modernized here and there, as steadily deteriorating generations found, more and more, that they preferred air and light to fever and the plague. Over the doorway is a wooden effigy, about half life size, representing Mr. Sapsea's father, in a curly wig and toga, in the act of selling. The chastity of the idea, and the natural appearance of the little finger, hammer, and pulpit, have been much admired.

The figure of the auctioneer just mentioned, disappeared some twenty-five years since, but the description of it, and it is said of the auctioneer also, was true to life; certain it is that, when Charles Dickens died, the successors of this very auctioneer, Messrs. Thomas and Homan, were employed by the executors to sell the furniture and effects at Gads Hill Place. Here follows a description of Minor Canon Row, or, as it is called in the tale, "Minor Canon Corner," the residence of the minor canons. Mr. Hull's beautiful drawing was sketched under difficulties, and we were more than once invited into the nearest house in the row, the corner one, out of the pitiless rain. What we were shown there convinced us that Dickens had been there before us, as his account of the interior of Canon Crisparkle's house is photographic in its accuracy.

Minor Canon Corner was a quiet place in the shadow of the cathedral, which the cawing of the rooks, the echoing footsteps of rare passers, the sound



EASTGATE HOUSE, ROCHESTER.
The Nun's House of Edwin Drool.



"THE VINES," ROCHESTER; WITH RESTORATION HOUSE.
The "Satis House" of Great Expectations.



ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL (WEST DOOR).
Norman work, 1094-1134.



BRASS IN WALL OF SOUTH TRANSEPT, ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

of the cathedral bell, or the roll of the cathedral organ, seemed to render more quiet than absolute silence. Swaggering righting men had had their centuries of ramping and raving about Minor Canon Corner, and beaten serfs had had their centuries of drudging and dying there, and powerful monks had had their centuries of being sometimes useful and sometimes harmful there; and behold, they were all gone out of Minor Canon Corner, and so much the better. Perhaps one of the highest uses of their ever having been there was that there might be left behind that blessed air of tranquillity which pervaded Minor Canon Corner, and that serenely romantic state of the mind, productive for the most part of pity and forbearance, which is engendered by a sorrowful story that is all told, or a pathetic play that is played out.

Red-brick walls harmoniously toned down in color by time, strong-rooted ivy, latticed windows, panelled rooms, big oaken beams in little places, and stone-walled gardens where annual fruit yet ripened upon monkish trees, were the principal surroundings of pretty old Mrs. Crisparkle and the Reverend Septimus as they sat at breakfast.

Here is what Mr. Grewgious saw and heard as he stood at the great west door of the cathedral on the afternoon of a fine autumn day: —

“Dear me,” said Mr. Grewgious, peeping in, “it’s like looking down the throat of Old Time.”

Old Time heaved a mouldy sigh from tomb and arch and vault; and gloomy shadows began to deepen in corners; and dampness began to rise from green patches of stone; and jewels, cast upon the pavement of the nave from stained glass by the declining sun, began to perish. Within the grill-gate of the chancel, up the steps surmounted looming by the fast darkening organ, white robes could be dimly seen, and one feeble voice, rising and falling in a cracked monotonous mutter, could at intervals be faintly heard. In the free outer air, the river, the green pastures, and the brown arable lands, the teeming hills and dales, were reddened by the sunset; while the distant little windows in windmills and farm homesteads shone patches of bright beaten gold. In the cathedral all became grey, murky, and sepulchral, and the cracked monotonous mutter went on like a dying voice, until the organ and the choir burst forth, and drowned it in a sea of music. Then the sea fell, and the dying voice made another feeble effort, and then the sea rose high, and beat its life out, and lashed the roof, and surged among the arches, and pierced the heights of the great tower; and then the sea was dry, and all was still.

The old building before mentioned, called “Restoration House,” has always in the memory of man been said to be haunted. The story is that a lady, with a child in her arms and a rope dangling from her neck, has been seen, not only in the house, but in the Vines opposite (the monk’s vineyard of the story,) and in parts of the precincts. Dickens says : —

A certain awful hush pervades the ancient pile, the cloisters, and the churchyard, after dark, which not many people care to encounter. The cause of this is not to be found in any local superstition that attaches to the precincts, but it is to be sought in the innate shrinking of dust with the breath of life in it from dust out of which the breath of life has passed; also in the widely diffused, and almost as widely unacknowledged, reflection: “If the dead do, under any circumstances, become visible to the living, these are such likely surroundings for the purpose that I, the living, will get out of them as soon as I can.”

This reminds one of that fine passage in *Rasselas*, where Imlac says: — ” That the dead are seen no more I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations. That it

is doubted by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence; and many who deny it with their tongues confess it by their fears.”

Christmas Eve in Cloisterham : —

A few strange faces in the streets; a few other faces, half strange and half familiar, once the faces of Cloisterham children, now the faces of men and women who come back from the outer world at long intervals. To these, the striking of the cathedral clock, and the cawing of the rooks, are like voices of their nursery time.

To such as these, it has happened in their dying hours afar off, that they have imagined their chamber floor to be strewed with the autumnal leaves fallen from the elm trees in the close: so have the rustling sounds and fresh scents of their earliest impressions revived, when the circle of their lives was very nearly traced, and the beginning and the end were drawing close together.

The next and last extract was written at Gads Hill, on the morning of the 8th of June, 1870, in the Swiss chalet which stood in the grounds on the opposite side of the road; and in the evening Charles Dickens was stricken with apoplexy, and died the next day. The weather was unusually fine and warm,* and in the morning of his last day of consciousness we find him thus beautifully describing the effects of such a morning in his favourite spot: —

A brilliant morning shines on the old city. Its antiquities and ruins are surpassingly beautiful, with the lusty ivy gleaming in the sun, and the rich trees waving in the balmy air. Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods, and fields — or rather, from the one great garden of the whole cultivated island in its yielding time — penetrate into the cathedral, subdue its earthly odour, and preach the Resurrection and the Life. The cold stone tombs of centuries ago grow warm; and flecks of brightness dart into the sternest marble corners of the building, fluttering there like wings.

* ‘The June weather was delicious. The sky was blue, the larks were soaring high over the green corn, I thought all that country-side more beautiful and peaceful by far than I had ever known it to be yet.’ — *Great Expectations*. Chap. LVIII.

Having thus glanced at all the works of Dickens containing references to this neighbourhood, it remains only to note that, although none of the books between *Pickwick* and *David Copperfield* touch upon Rochester, we can by the aid of Forster's Life of Dickens, and the two volumes of Letters published by Miss Dickens, and her Aunt, get many glimpses of his old love for these towns. Charles Dickens never wearied of taking his friends Forster, Maclise, Stanfield, Leech, Longfellow, Fields, Wilkie Collins, and many others to see the places he had known from childhood; and which places may certainly be said to have left their influences, — very beneficent influences too — upon the whole of his after life.

Charles Dickens has now been in his grave ten years, and although it would not be becoming in me to express any opinion as to the relative value of his works, or the hold they are destined to take on posterity, I may say that I have taken some little pains to get an expression of opinion from the booksellers as to the present and probable future sale of his books. To quote a term used in the trade, "Dickens is still alive." The sales are good, and to all appearances likely to continue so permanently, and there is an entirely new edition recently published, the Pocket Edition, which is selling well. Of Dickens himself it may be said that probably there has not been another man so entirely beloved by all classes of people during the present century.*

Some persons it is true have written and thought disparagingly of our great novelist, but it has perhaps been more from ignorance of the facts than from any other cause. The publishing lately of his private letters, written to all sorts and conditions of men, has let in a flood of light as to the real character of this gifted, generous man.

It is not too much to say that very few men could have passed through that greatest of all trials, unbounded success and popularity, and yet have remained, as he did, unspoiled to the last! Prosperity, in his case, only served to bring out the sterling good qualities of the man, not to dwarf or narrow them. Most men

* It may be recorded here on the best authority, that of Dean Stanley, that occasionally to this day, flowers, and now and then a wreath, are laid on the grave of Dickens in Westminster Abbey. This is independent of a fine wreath of choice flowers placed there annually by loving hands on the ninth of June.

starting in life as poor as he, would, when they had attained to riches and honour, have turned Conservative in the worst sense of the word, while he, as we all know, remained a consistent Radical to his life's end.

Charles Dickens was "born with Heavenly compassion in his heart,"* and was ever ready to help with money and with hard work the families of deceased literary men, and others less fortunate than himself. He no more believed "that people with nought are naughty" than did Thomas Hood, the genial author of that punning line.

To learn how world-wide is the knowledge of the works of Charles Dickens we have but to look to the newspaper press of the present day, whether metropolitan, provincial, or colonial. Take up a newspaper where you will in the English-speaking portions of our globe, and oftener than not you will find one or more quotations from his books in its leaders. And what is quite as remarkable, quotations, phrases, and sayings from Dickens are noticeably more and more getting into our language.

So that, finally, it may be said of him, without exaggeration, that "his sound is gone out into all lands, and his words to the ends of the world!"

* *Bleak House*. Chap. XLVII.



COOLING CHURCH NEAR ROCHESTER.

William Alcock, Printer, Lord's Chambers, Corporation Street, Manchester.



GATEHOUSE AND CATHEDRAL PRECINCTS, ROCHESTER.

This Drawing was left unfinished at the death of the Artist, Mr. WILLIAM HILL.

From: *Literature: an International Gazette of Criticism* V.3 No.51
October 8, 1898 p.325-326

A WALK WITH AN IMMORTAL



BY ALFRED T. STORY

One afternoon late in the sixties a youth was walking along a country road above the town of Blackburn, enjoying at one and the same time the fresh air, the pleasant autumn landscape, and a book. Though it was the beginning of October, the shortening days were still pleasant. There was enough edge to the breeze to make walking agreeable, enough warmth in the sunshine to render an extra coat unnecessary. The trees were still covered with foliage, the swallows had not yet gone.

Sauntering along, book in hand, the youth now read a page, now permitted his eye to wander away to what of life or beauty the declining year afforded. Here it was a flower of the purple scabious, there a cluster of the scarlet berries of the cornel. But anon a rarer sight presented itself — a dwarf bush of alder, thickly covered with snails. Every tiniest leaf had its snail; the larger ones two or three. To see so many of the slimy molluscs in one tree, and every mollusc with his house on his back, was not a thing to be met with every day; and the youth bent over the bush with curious eyes.

So interested was he in the spectacle that he did not notice the approach of a stranger who had been walking a little way behind, and who, seeing him so intent upon something in the hedge-bottom, stopped and inquired,

“What is it you are gazing at so intently there?”

The youth, without removing his eyes, pointed to the alder and its inhabitants. “Look!” said he. “What is the meaning of that?”

“It looks like a snail parliament, doesn’t it?” said the stranger, after gazing at the bush for a brief moment.

There was something so novel in the suggestion that the youth looked up at the querist, a man in the prime of life, grizzled, with pointed beard, and a hard felt hat. He wore a blue pilot-coat, tightly buttoned. But the thing of all others to remember was his superb eyes, largo, brown, and full of light.

They smiled upon the youth as he added to his first remark, again looking at the mollusc assemblage, “There is evidently a national crisis of some

sort, and the snail people have sent up their delegates.”

The youth laughed. “A queer parliament-house though, isn’t it?”

“It is rather; but Parliament does sometimes get up a tree, you know. What do you think brings them there- -you seem something of a student?”

“O, I can only suppose they have climbed up there for an airing.”

“Ay, likely enough — and to get a sight of the sun. We all — every living thing of us — like to see the sun, to bask in the light. That is what has brought you and me out of the smoke of the town this cheery afternoon — is it not?”

The youth acquiesced. “There was nothing so delightful,” said he.

“Unless it be a book,” observed the light-lover with a smile, glancing at a small volume protruding from the youth’s pocket.

“Oh, yes, a pleasant book enhances the enjoyment; but this is hardly a book in that sense,” replied the younger wayfarer, drawing forth a dry handbook on some subject. “It is no more a real book than”

“Than a bat is a bird, eh?” suggested the stranger.

This remark led to a chat about books in general as the two walked along, after having seen all there was to be seen about the snails. The younger companion stated his preferences — history, biography, poetry, natural history.

“Ah, that is the study to inform and enlarge the mind — natural history, the study of nature!” exclaimed the gentleman.

“I could be content with that; only my natural history should not exclude man. He, equally with every living thing, is a part of nature.”

“Would you leave out poetry?” queried the younger.

“By no means,” was the reply. “Natural history is poetry. Listen to that robin; is not that living poetry? All the year’s choir is silent except that bird. And what a contented note it is. If we could all preach cheerfulness like that! I should perhaps say ‘teach’ not ‘preach,’ for he gives us example rather than precept, and that is the best for instruction.” A few steps further on brought the wayfarers to a field over which a number of swallows were darting and circling about with little cries of delight.

“Look,” said the gentleman, “there are some more light-lovers.”

He stood for a moment or two watching them; then, as a path led through the field, winding up a slight elevation, he said, “It looks pleasanter up there

than along the road — if you are for a further stroll. But perhaps you want to be alone to read your book?”

“By no means,” replied the youth.

He was already too fascinated with his chance companion to care any more that day for his book. So the two wandered on together over the fields, through a wooded vale, and back by the fields and the road; the elder man talking, asking questions, stopping now to look at the prospect, now to examine some object of interest, the younger full of curiosity, answering oddly to questions asked, causing his companion every now and again to smile quietly, possibly at his naïveté, possibly at his enthusiasms.

“So you want to be a writer, eh?” came the question at length.

“It is a dream.”

“A dream is not a bad thing — if you put a heft to it.”

The youth considered; then, thinking he had grasped his companion’s meaning, he said, “Of course, one can do nothing by mere dreaming; I would not care how much hard work it cost or how long it took, if”

“Good! But in the meantime what about your living? It is up-hill work, this writing business — they say so at least — and hard to make a living at. There are a good many in Loudon, who, according to all accounts, do not find it a mint.”

“But some do fairly well?”

“Fairly — I know one or two who do. But what kind of writing do you wish to be at? Have you tried your hand at anything?”

The youth replied that he had essayed something in the story line, and caused his companion to laugh very heartily by telling him that he could not get his characters to do anything of themselves: they were so wooden that everything had to be done for them.

“You want your puppets then to be so full of life that when you have created them they will begin to think and act for themselves, eh? If you can do that you will be as great a magician as Moses. But give me an instance.”

This brought out the outline of a village legend which the would-be yarn-spinner was trying to make something of. A young fellow has won the heart of the village belle, and the day of the wedding has arrived. Rising early, he sets off for a lake in the woods for a bath; but after finishing his swim he finds his clothes gone, stolen by envious rivals. It is a lonely, out-of-the-way spot; nobody comes near; and there he lingers, helpless, until the bells begin to ring — the wedding bells. The legend says he improvised some

sort of covering and ran pell-mell into the village, to find the wedding-party returning to their homes. But there the bridegroom is — in the woods — Adam-like — too wooden to devise any means of escape out of his dilemma.

“Rather a bad hole for the poor fellow,” commented the light-lover. “But you would have thought, being a countryman, that he would have contrived somehow to bark a tree and make himself a sort of wooden shirt — a shield back and front, so to speak. But, as you say, the great art is to be able to make your characters think and act for themselves. The secret will no doubt come in time — if it is in you.” “A big if,” cried the youth.

“Yes, rather a formidable one,” returned his companion; “but there are other fields for the pen besides that of fiction — and I am not sure but there are higher ones. Anyway, I do not know that that matters if you only got the right key.”

“And what is that?”

“To be sure your heart is in the right place, and write from that. I know a man who has written a good deal, whose works are rather well thought of, and who attributes all his popularity to the fact that he never set down a word that he would have been ashamed to read to the one he loved and honoured the most. That is what I call the right key. It is the key that will unlock the heart of the people in the end — if anything will.”

The last words were accompanied by a smile. He added: “Don’t be discouraged by a little failure. The higher your aim, you know, the bigger your climb. They used to give a youth seven years to learn to make a pair of boots; if a man learns in three times that to write a book he may consider himself lucky.”

“A pretty long apprenticeship!”

“It is rather. But then the apprentice lives in the meantime.” The youth pondered.

“I knew one man,” said the elder, “ who did fairly well by writing love poems for lovers who had not the wit to do so for themselves, composing rhymed advertisements, and the like. But it proved rather bad for him, because it caused his sweetheart to throw him over; she said he wrote better verses for other men’s lovers than for his own.”

“Suppose you were in my place now?” said the would-be writer.

“Ah! I could not suppose that! But” — with a broad smile — “if I had my life to go over again I think I would risk the three times seven.” Then more

seriously, "In any case it is better to aim high and fail than to aim low and hit."

By this time the chance companions had reached the outskirts of the town, or rather of the local park, which overlooks the town on the east. Blackburn is, or was, a smoky and malodorous place, with hideous stacks of reeking chimneys ; but for once, under the glamour of an almost unparalleled sunset, it looked absolutely beautiful, the grimmest objects of the scene having the appearance of colossal pillars supporting the roof of some gorgeous hall. It was a sight to enthral, and the light-lover stood and gazed upon it for several minutes in silence, removing his hat as though in reverence. Then for the first time the youth noticed the lines of thought and care upon his brow. He ventured to observe that it was "very beautiful."

"Beautiful, indeed! Wonderful !" murmured the elder. Then after a pause, "Ah, if we could all go down like that after the day's work!"

There was something like a suggestion of dew in his eyes as he spoke, and he looked away as though to hide it. When he turned to his companion again it was to bid him farewell. "When you write," he said, "put something of the spirit that is there into your writings. Try to make people feel that we are living in an eternity that net or ends, and that it is worth while endeavouring to be great — like that sunset."

* * * *

In the evening the youth went to hear a reading at the Town-hall by Charles Dickens; the subject being "Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings." The place was full to overflowing, and when Mr. Dickens entered the whole audience rose in mass. He was in evening dress, and fresh as though from a band-box ; but there was no mistaking those eyes of his ; and his companion of the afternoon, seated right in front of him, felt that he was speaking and acting specially to him the evening through.

Whilst the audience were leaving the hall, Mr. Dickens stood on the steps leading up to the platform shaking hands and conversing with several ladies and gentlemen. As the youth passed him, wondering whether he had been recognized or not, the famous novelist caught sight of him, descended a step lower, held out his hand, and pressing warmly the one extended to him in return, gave him a hearty " Good luck — and God bless you!"

From *Cosmopolitan*: V.52 No.2 January 1912 p.149-159



NEW CHAPTERS FROM 'The Life of Dickens'

Editor's Note. — In February next the English-speaking world will celebrate the centenary of the birth of Charles Dickens. The *Cosmopolitan* proposes to do honor to the memory of the great novelist by presenting his countless admirers with a series of articles which it has been fortunate enough to secure from those who were themselves his intimate associates. We think we may safely promise our readers the most remarkable Dickens feature which has ever been offered by a magazine. The first article — written by Mr. Alfred Tennyson Dickens, the eldest surviving son of the novelist, who has recently returned from Australia and here writes of his father for the first time — is given this month.

My Father and His Friends

By Alfred Tennyson Dickens

SINCE my father's death in 1870 many very interesting books concerning his works and his life have been given to the world by able writers, not only here in England, but all over Europe and in America and the Colonies, where his novels are more intimately known than are those of almost any other author of his time. But each day adds to the difficulty writers experience in finding anything worth telling about him, for everything has been told, and whatever is now written must inevitably read like a repetition of what has been already said. There are many of my father's admirers, however, who, looking upon his memory as they do with the warm affection of a personal friendship, never tire of reading his stories or of seeking for further details relating to his life, and to the desire of satisfying the affectionate curiosity of these admirers may be attributed sometimes a slight amount of exaggeration that creeps into the descriptions we come across of his habits, manner, and appearance; indeed, I remember having read somewhere of various gorgeous articles of apparel, supposed to have been worn habitually by my father, that were certainly never seen upon his person, either at home or elsewhere, and that must have existed solely in the fertile imagination of the writer.

In the short article I am about to write I shall confine myself to describing a few facts and impressions connected with our home life and that came under my notice during my holidays from school, and the impressions I give of my father will be those of the boy I was before leaving England for Australia.

I was born at No. 1 Devonshire Place, Devonshire Terrace, almost immediately opposite St. Marylebone Church, on October 28, 1845; but as my father left there in 1851, having purchased Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, in that year, I have but little recollection of the events which occurred in the house in which I was born. An early reminiscence of the last-named house, showing the kindly thoughtfulness of my father, brings me at once into touch with that great continent of Australia from which I have recently returned. Shortly after my father had taken up his residence at Tavistock House there appeared upon the scene a crossing-sweeper in the shape of a small boy. He was about fourteen years of age, and was, I firmly believe, the original of poor Joe in "Bleak House," which was written, as many of my readers may recollect, in 1852. In order to make myself clear, I must explain that this house, with two others — one of which was occupied by Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A. (father of the present talented artist, Mr. Marcus Stone, R.A.), and the other by a London merchant — stood within iron gates of its own. In front of these houses there was a considerable block of land, with a large carriage drive, and a flower-bed in the center. The boy-sweep made these houses his headquarters, keeping the pavements and the drive scrupulously clean. During the winter months, when the snow was upon the ground, he managed in some manner to collect little pieces of holly, mistletoe, etc., with which he decorated the barren flower-beds. After a time an intimacy sprang up between my father and the neglected lad, and Dickens, finding the boy honest, industrious, and intelligent, saw to it that the little chap got his meals in the kitchen of Tavistock House, and sent him to school at night. The boy got on wonderfully well "with his education, and when he came to be some seventeen years of age his benefactor procured for him a substantial outfit and sent him to the colony of New South Wales. It is satisfactory to know that the young man prospered well in his adopted country. After he had been in Australia some three years he wrote to his friend in England, thanking him for his kindness and telling him of his prosperity.

This is but one of many hundreds of similar actions which this warm-hearted man performed during his lifetime, and of which the world knew nothing. It may be truly said of him that he never let his left hand know what his right was doing.

THE BURIAL OF THE “IRON DUKE”

I can recollect without effort nearly everything that occurred in our family life at Tavistock House. One of my first and most vivid recollections takes me back to the burial of the Duke of Wellington, and I remember well the then butler at the house, John Thompson, wakening my brothers Frank and Sydney and myself at about three o'clock in the morning, and escorting us to the Household Words office, nearly opposite the Lyceum Theater in Wellington Street, where later on in the day most of the members of the family assembled, as well as a number of the authors and authoresses who were contributors to my father's periodical. The duke's burial was a most impressive ceremony, and I recollect as though it were yesterday our father calling the attention of us children to the duke's famous charger, Copenhagen, as he was led by in the procession.

THE ORIGINAL OF DOCTOR MARIGOLD

Departing for a moment from the chronological order of events, I may here mention that when the procession of the then Prince of Wales (afterward King Edward VII) and Prince Alexandra of Denmark passed along the Strand in March, 1863, my father, my aunt, Miss Georgina Hogarth, and myself were the sole occupants of the balcony on the first floor of the office of All the Year Round at the corner of Wellington and York streets. The vehicular traffic was as a matter of course all blocked in Wellington Street, and in front of us there was one huge mass of omnibuses, cabs, carriages, and large numbers of costermongers' carts.

On the top of one of the buses stood the conductor, or a London “cad,” as many of them were then familiarly termed. He was a man brimful of natural wit and humor, and was doing the “cheapjack man” absolutely to perfection. He beguiled the time and kept the crowd, including my father, in roars of laughter.

At Christmas, 1865, in All the Year Round “Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions” appeared, and I think all readers of my father will agree with me that he never conceived a prettier little story than that of the deaf and

dumb girl and the cheapjack, and he certainly never created or depicted a finer character or one more admirably drawn than that of Doctor Marigold. So great was the success of this number that in the first four days of issue, from December 20 to December 23, 1865, over two hundred and fifty thousand copies were sold — and this was at a time when readers were very few in number compared with those of the present day. Although my father was always very reticent as to the channels from which he drew his characters, and never, so far as I personally know, spoke to anyone definitely about them, yet I firmly believe his idea of Doctor Marigold germinated from that conductor on the memorable afternoon in March, 1863, when the prince and princess passed along the Strand.

That same evening my father had to go to a dinner-party in Westbourne Terrace, so toward nightfall he sent me to get a cab or hansom. I searched the Strand, Haymarket, Regent Street, and Leicester Square, but not a single vehicle of any description was procurable. I was returning in despair to the office when, outside the Lyceum Theatre, I sighted a solitary, well-appointed brougham. Upon getting into conversation with the coachman and explaining the predicament in which my father was placed, the coachman said, “Well, I do not expect my master will be back for about three-quarters of an hour, and as I would chance a good deal for Charles Dickens, I will drive him over.” When I told my father of what I had done, he expressed the opinion that I had a considerable amount of assurance, but he availed himself of the uses of the brougham nevertheless.

On the night of March 13, 1863, when the illuminations in honor of the prince and the princess took place, my father chartered a furniture-van, which he had fitted up with seats. At about nine o’clock at night we started with a joyous party from the office. In addition to the members of the family there were present, among others, Mr. and Mrs. John Forster, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Wills, Wilkie and Charley Collins, Mr. H.F. Chorley, (the then music critic of the Athenaeum), Mr. (afterward Mr. Justice) Chitty, celebrated in his college days as a great athlete, and very

toward nightfall he sent me to get him a cab or hansom. I watched the Strand, Haymarket, Regent Street, and Leicester Square, but not a single vehicle of any description was procurable. I was returning in despair to the office when, stooping the Lyceum Theatre, I sighted a solitary unappointed brougham. Upon getting into conversation with the coachman and explaining the predicament in which my father was

availed himself of the use of the brougham nevertheless.

On the night of March 23, 1851, when the illuminations in honor of the prince and princess took place, my father chartered a furniture-van, which he had fitted up with seats. At about nine o'clock at night we started with a joyous party from the office. In addition to the members of the family there were present, among others, Mr. and



... of a note written to Henry Kelly, the husband of Maria's sister Anna, and for many years a trusted friend of Dickens.



placed, the coachman said, "Well, I do not expect my master will be back for about three-quarters of an hour, and as I would chance a good deal for Charles Dickens, I will drive him over." When I told my father of what I had

Dickens about the time he was making ardent and hopeless love to "Dora."

Mrs. John Forster, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Wills, Willie and Charley Collins, Mr. H. F. Clowley (the then musical critic of the *Observer*), Mr. (afterward Mr. Justice) Chitty, celebrated in his college days as a great athlete, and very

well known to the general public as having been for many years judge of the Oxford and Cambridge boat-races. We succeeded in getting passed across the Strand by the police, and all went well till we got safely under a railway arch close to London Bridge at about ten o'clock. The crush of vehicles of every possible description from that side of the river got hopelessly jumbled up, and I am not exaggerating when I say that the wheels of that wretched furniture-van never moved again till four o'clock in the morning. A few of the male members walked as far as London Bridge, which was beautifully illuminated, but when the party got back to the Strand at five or so, most of them had not seen anything at all, and were utterly miserable, hungry, and worn out.

A VANISHED HOUSE OF CHEER

The following evening my father, my eldest brother, Charley, myself, and two or three young men from the office (which I had just entered) started on foot from London Bridge, did the whole of the city and West End, and saw all that there was to be seen perfectly. When we had finished our walk, my father took the party to supper at Evans's famous supper-rooms in Covent Garden. The owner of these rooms at that time was a perfect character in himself, who was commonly known as Paddy Preen. He wore a wig which

was painfully transparent to the naked eye, carried a most elaborate gold snuff-box, had manners which were really courtly and gracious, and dressed in exquisitely good taste. He knew well every celebrity in London, and whenever any one of them patronized his house, he invariably himself escorted the honored guest to an armchair in a sort of a library near the entrance doors. This was a most delightful spot in which to spend a couple of hours, for there every evening were rendered glees such as "The Chough and Crow" and "The Men of Harlech," by choir-boys from Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's. Then again, Herr Van Joel, another most original character, was, with his farmyard imitations and quaint German songs, always a leading attraction of the program. Would that the dear old place were still in existence, for since I returned to London last October I have not seen anything in the whole of this wonderful city to approach it for comfort and civility, or for orderliness and good nature on the part of its patrons.

During the years 1854 and 1855, and always commemorating Charley's birthday, our most successful children's theatricals took place. The pieces selected were Fielding's burlesque "Tom Thumb," and "Fortunio," and in each of these my brother Harry (Henry Fielding Dickens, now the well-known K.C. and Recorder for Maidstone) most admirably sustained the name parts. Among the rest of the company were Mark Lemon, then editor of Punch, and his talented family.

Mark Lemon was one of the most delightful of men, and was always called by myself and my brothers and sisters "Uncle Mark." He was just about the middle height, decidedly corpulent, with a grandly shaped head and a face brimful of vitality, good humor, and kindness — in short, just such a face as the editor of the most successful comic paper of the universe should have. He was a most excellent actor, and as the Giant in "Tom Thumb" and the Baron in "Fortunio" he was simply irresistible. Mrs. Lemon was a charming lady and a devoted mother, and as they lived in Gordon Place, only a stone's throw from our house, the intimacy between the two families was very close and true.

DICKENS AS AN ACTOR

Included in the casts of both the above named pieces was Mr. Ainger, then on the verge of manhood, who became the well known preacher and canon of St. Paul's Cathedral. He died, I am told, some five or six years

ago. So admirably comic was his rendering of Villekins, and his Dinah in "Fortunio," that Thackeray, who was one of the audience, was so much convulsed with laughter that he rolled off his chair. Following on these children's revels came, in 1855, the celebrated grownup amateur theatricals. In that year "The Lighthouse," written by Wilkie Collins, was produced. The principal parts in this drama were sustained by my father, Mark Lemon, Augustus Egg, R.A., my aunt, Miss Georgina Hogarth, and my eldest sister, Mamie. In the farce, "Mr. Nightingale's Diary," which concluded the entertainment, in addition to the actors and actresses already named, my youngest sister, Kitty (Mrs. Carlo Perugini), also took part.

I may here mention that the scenery was painted by Mr. Clarkson Stanfield, R. A. (always familiarly known, to my father and his intimates, as Stanny). At the sale of the furniture and the effects at Gad Hill in the autumn of 1870, the drop-scene of the Eddystone Lighthouse realized one thousand guineas.

Thomas Carlyle, writing of my father's make-up as the lighthouse keeper in "The Lighthouse," likens it to the famous figure in Nicholas Poussin's Bacchanalian Dance in the National Gallery. At one of the suppers that followed on each night of the play,

Lord Campbell told the company that he would much rather have written "Pickwick" than be Chief Justice of England and a peer of the realm.

At the end of 1856 my father turned his daughters' schoolroom at the back of Tavistock House into a charming little theater which he described as being the smallest theater in the world, and in January, 1857, "The Frozen Deep," written by Wilkie Collins, with elaborate scenery, was played by a very large cast. This proved the most successful of all the theatrical representations given. Of all the talented men and women who took part in these famed theatricals I think there are now only five living — viz., Mr. Marcus Stone, R.A., Mark Lemon, Jr., my aunt, Miss Georgina Hogarth, my youngest sister, now Mrs. Perugini, and Mr. Francesco Berger, who conducted the orchestra and composed the music incidental to the two pieces.

During 1857 my father heard with great grief of the death of his dear friend Douglas Jerrold. He died in indigent circumstances (through, I believe, the failure of some bank), and it was therefore decided at a meeting of his friends at the Punch office that my father should give two public readings of the "Christmas Carol" at St. Martin's Hall, W. M. Thackeray a

lecture, and W. H. Russell, the celebrated war correspondent of the Times during the Crimean War, a lecture. Further representations of "The Frozen Deep" were also given by my father and Mark Lemon at the Gallery of Illustration and in the provinces, the only alterations in the cast being that in the country towns professional actors were substituted. A large amount of money was realized from these combined efforts, and invested for the benefit of Mrs. Jerrold and the family.

Her Majesty Queen Victoria, having heard so many favorable words about these theatricals, sent a request that a performance might be given for herself, the prince consort, and the court. This took place at the Gallery of Illustration in August, 1857, the only persons present besides the court being my mother and Hans Christian Andersen, who at that time was paying a long visit to Tavistock House and Gad's Hill. Gad's Hill had then just been purchased by my father.

Hans Christian Andersen was one of the most singular men I have ever met in my life. In appearance he was like an elongated Tom Pinch, with a lank, ungainly figure, and with all the simplicity of Tom. He was so unversed in the ways of the world that one could almost believe he had spent his life with the fairies of whom he wrote so charmingly. Once, when a cricket match was being played in the meadow at Gad's Hill, and a ball hit vigorously to square leg landed close to him, he fairly bolted and never stopped until he had accomplished a good three hundred or four hundred yards. He used to delight in making wreaths of very bright flowers, and one evening in the height of the hop-picking season, when the whole of the house-party were going for a stroll after dinner, he crowned Wilkie Collins with one of his wreaths, just as we were passing the Falstaff Inn, almost immediately opposite- Gad's Hill, where a large number of hop-pickers were sitting at the table in the porch. Poor Wilkie, to his intense disgust, had to run the gantlet of the pickers, who gibed and jeered at him to their hearts' content. My father, bringing up the rear, was, I remember very well, literally choking with laughter.

During the time we were in residence at Tavistock House my brother Frank (Francis Jeffery), next older in the family to myself, suffered from a very severe affection of stammering. Although my father at the time was working night and day at a very high pressure, he used to have Frank in his study every morning. He would read him a passage from Shakespeare, and then would make my brother Frank do the same thing over and over again,

very slowly and very distinctly. Finally my father made a complete cure of him, and in later life in Canada, where Frank



Dickens reading to his daughters. Mamie and Katie, in the gardens of Gad's Hill. From boyhood the novelist had admired the place, but he did not own it until just a few years before his death

held a high position in the Canadian Mounted Police force, he was described in the public press of that dependency as being a good and effective speaker. Frank, like my youngest sister, Katie (Mrs. Perugini), bore a striking resemblance in face, gesture, and manner to our father.

As I am writing just on the eve of the centenary of the birth of William Makepeace Thackeray, it is appropriate that I should make some reference to him in connection with my father. Many arguments have taken place in the past, and will in all probability be continued in the future, as to which of the two novelists was the greater writer. It has always appeared to me that it would be just as easy to compare Smollett or Fielding with Richardson, or Wordsworth and the Lake school of poetry with Lord Tennyson, as to compare these two writers whose modes of composition were so dissimilar, and whose characters were drawn from such different strata of society. Be

that as it may, the fact remains that each writer had the most sincere and hearty admiration for the works of the other,



Charles Dickens in 1863, about the time he published “Great Expectations” which Swinburne considered his best work

and the personal friendship, commenced in 1835, when Thackeray waited upon my father, offering himself as the illustrator of the “Pickwick Papers,” lasted, with a very short intermission — for which neither of them was in any way personally to blame — till the death of Thackeray on Christmas Eve, 1863

At Thackeray’s funeral at Kensal Green my father stood as chief mourner by the grave. I drove my father down in the basket carriage from Gad’s Hill to Hinham railway station on the morning when he was going to London to the funeral, and I know how much distressed he was at the death of his old friend. Incompliance with requests received from all sides, my father wrote an “In Memoriam” of Thackeray for the Cornhill Magazine, which periodical Thackeray both started and edited. This short paper is, to my mind, so very beautiful, so true, and so sympathetic, without the slightest degree fulsome, that I will venture to give a few short extracts from it here,

more especially as I think they may be new to many of the readers of this magazine. The article was published in the Cornhill Magazine in February, 1864. Charles Dickens writes: "We had our differences of opinion. I thought that he too much feigned a want of earnestness and that he made a pretense of underrating his art, which was not good for the art that he held in trust. But when we fell upon these topics, it was never very gravely, and I have a lively image of him in my mind twisting both his hands in his hair and stamping about, laughing, to make an end of the discussion." Then further on he says: "He had a particular delight in boys, and an excellent way with them. I remember his once asking me with fantastic gravity, when he had been to Eton, where my eldest son then was, whether I felt as he did in regard of never seeing a boy without instantly wanting to give him a sovereign, and I thought of this when I looked down in his grave, after he had been laid there, for I looked down into it over the shoulder of a boy to whom he had been very kind."

My father's article went on: "He was only in his fifty-third year, so young a man that the mother who blessed him in his first sleep blessed him in his last. Twenty years before he had written, after being in a white squall:

And when, its force expended,
The harmless storm was ended,
And as the sunrise splendid
Came blushing o'er the sea,
I thought, as day was breaking,
My little girls were waking
And smiling and making
A prayer at home for me.

These little girls had grown to be women when the mournful day broke which saw their father lying dead. In those twenty years of companionship with them, they had learned much from him, and one of them has a literary career before her, worthy of her famous name. On the bright wintry day⁴ the last but one of the old year, he was laid in his grave at Kensal Green, there to mingle the dust to which the mortal part of him had returned with that of a third child, lost in her infancy years before. The heads of a great concourse of his fellow workers were bowed in grief around."

My father in his article refers to Thackeray's eldest daughter, Anne, now Lady Ritchie, the authoress of "The Story of Elizabeth," "The Village on the Cliff," "Old Kensington," and several other delightful novels. Since early girlhood a firm and lasting friendship has existed between Lady Ritchie and my youngest sister, Katie. There is a charming little poem of Thackeray's, the last he wrote, I believe, that was presented by him shortly before his death to my sister, who had been from childhood a great ally of both his own daughters. The gift of a pretty, quaint old lantern accompanied the verses, and engraved upon the pane were her initials, K and E — Katherine Elizabeth.

A LARK WITH THACKERAY IN BOULOGNE

When my brothers, Frank and Sydney, and myself were at school at Boulogne, Thackeray upon one occasion, which I shall never forget, called and took us for an outing. He made us row him up the Liane to the Pont de Briques, where we had tea. Then on our return he fed us with pastry at the fashionable pastry-cook's in the town (I went over specially a month ago to Boulogne to look at that and other well-loved spots), and finally, when we got back to the school, solemnly presented each of us with a napoleon, thus practising his doctrine as to how schoolboys should be treated. He was indeed most charming to us boys, and that was a red-letter day in our lives, never, never to be forgotten.

MY FATHER AS I RECALL HIM BEST

I cannot, I think, conclude these detached reminiscences better than by giving a short sketch of the personal characteristics of Charles Dickens in the year 1860. In this year he decided to live permanently at Gad's Hill. He was then fifty years of age, about the middle height, with his hair just grizzled with gray. His face was full of life and intellect. His bright, piercing eyes were very thoughtful and dreamy looking at times, but seemed always to be able to look you through and through. His eyes were a true index to his character. Leigh Hunt said of him: "What a face is his to meet in a drawing-room! It has the life in it of fifty human beings"; and Carlyle, referring to the fineness of his features, said, "It seems to me as though his face were cutout of steel." His features were far too sensitive, however, to be likened to so hard and unsympathetic a substance. He was the kindest, most thoughtful, and most considerate of fathers, and he was

one of the most charming hosts it is possible to conceive. While he had a fund of anecdote and humor, he was never in the least pedantic or bookish in his talk, and if anyone referred to himself or his books, he invariably in a very pleasant way turned the conversation into another channel.

As in his public and professional life he laid down for himself the golden rule that "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well," so in his private life he was the most methodical and orderly of men. He could not bear to see anything out of its place. If a book was removed from the library, he looked for the borrower to return it immediately it was done with. I recollect once when I was going to drive with him in the basket carriage to Gravesend to meet either Mr. Spiers or Mr. Pond {I forget which of these two gentlemen it was), who was coming over to see him about the contemplated Australian reading, I was busily

A LETTER RECEIVED BY A. TENNYSON DICKENS TWO DAYS AFTER

HIS FATHERS DEATH — JUNE 9, 1870

My Dear Alfred,

I have just time to tell you under my own hand that I invited Mr. Bear to a dinner of such guests as he would naturally like to see; and that we took to him very much, and got on with him capitally.

I am doubtful whether Plorn is taking to Australia. Can you find out his real mind? I notice that he always writes as if his present life were the be-all and the end-all of his emigration; and as if he had no idea of you two becoming proprietors, and aspiring to the first positions in the Colony, without casting off the old connection.

From Mr. Bear I had the best accounts of you. I told him that they did not surprise me, for I had unbounded faith in you. For which take my love and blessing. They will have told you all the news here, and that I am hard at work. This is not so much a letter as an assurance that I never think of you without hope and comfort.

Ever, my dear Alfred,

Your affectionate Father,

Athenaeum Club,

Friday Night, 20 May, 1870.



A recent portrait of Alfred Tennyson Dickens, one of the two surviving sons of the novelist, who went to Australia in 1865. where he received the above letter from his father two days after the latter's death at Gad's Hill, June 9, 1870. Mr. Dickens has left Australia for England, and was recently in this country lecturing on his distinguished father

engaged brushing my coat in the dining-room, instead of outside. He happened to come in just at the moment, and I never by any chance committed that particular offense afterward.

In everything pertaining to food and drink he was the most careful and abstemious of men. Mr. Fields, of Ticknor & Fields, the Boston publishers, described him exactly when he said: "He was accustomed to talk and write a good deal about eating and drinking, but I have rarely seen a man drink or eat less. He liked to dilate in imagination over the brewing of a bowl of punch, but when the punch was brewed, he drank less of it than anyone who might be present." It was the sentiment of the thing and not the thing itself that engaged his attention. He was wonderfully good and even tempered,

although, as may be easily imagined, of a nervous and excitable temperament. If he did allow his temper to get the better of him for a few moments, which, however, he very rarely ever did, then, like the sun after a passing summer shower, all the most lovable traits of his most lovable character shone out to greater advantage afterward.

That is the Charles Dickens of my loving recollection. In 1865 I went to Australia, and I never saw him again. Five years later, when I was managing a large station property in the north of New South Wales, news came to me by cablegram of my father's death at Gad's Hill. Two days afterward there reached me a letter — one of the last letters from his hand.

NEW FACTS ABOUT THE REAL CHARLES DICKENS



From *Cosmopolitan*: V.52 No.3 February 1912 p.394-400



Charles Dickens in 1867
"Bill Sikes" "Squeers"

Editor's Note. — This intimate article from the pen of Mary Angela Dickens, granddaughter of the great novelist and herself a novelist and essayist of wide note, narrating her memories and impressions of her famous grandfather, constitutes one of the most interesting contributions to Dickens literature that has yet been given to the world. This is the second

article on Charles Dickens giving new points of view on the life of the great Victorian by relatives and close personal friends.

My Grandfather as I Knew Him

By Mary Angela Dickens

THE great place which my grandfather holds in my memory — and few people could realize how great it is — is filled by an immense personality, a personality so dominating that it affected everything and everybody with whom it came in contact; that the world in which he moved, so to speak, existed only in order that he might so move at his good pleasure.

All my personal recollections of my grandfather — all but one, that is to say — belong to his last and best loved home, Gad's Hill — my own home for years after his death. Most people know the story of his childish love and admiration for the house, how, as "a very queer small boy," he used to walk from his home in Chatham to stand and look at it, and how he resolved that in some far-off and utterly inexplicable future he would himself live in it.

It was on March 14th, four years before his death, that he wrote: "This day I have paid the purchase-money for Gad's Hill Place. After drawing the check I turned round to give it to Wills, and said: 'Now, isn't it an extraordinary thing — look at the day — Friday! I have been nearly drawing it half a dozen times, when the lawyers have not been ready, and here it comes round upon a Friday, as a matter of course!'" "Friday, in his opinion, was his lucky day, and certainly it was a lucky day indeed which put him in possession of the home that became so dear to him.

His great delight — very significant of his restless and inventive mind — was to make improvements in his property. One of the first was the sinking of a well and the installing of a horse-pump, and in connection with this work he writes in September the following delightfully resigned appreciation of the methods of the British workman, "Five men have been looking attentively at the pump for a week, and (I should hope) may begin to fit it in the course of October." In addition to the pump, came a new drawing-room, two bedrooms, and a rearrangement of the ground floor. Whenever an improvement was completed his younger daughter, who lived in London, and who was often at Gad's Hill, used to come down and inspect, and on each and every occasion my grandfather would say to her, very seriously and in the utmost good faith, "No, Katie, you behold your parent's latest and last achievement." One of the achievements was the

lining of the walls and doors of the drawing-room with mirrors, and on this occasion my younger aunt, laughing at him, said, "I believe, papa, that when you become an angel your wings will be made of looking-glass and your crown of scarlet geraniums."

Scarlet geraniums were my grandfather's favorite flowers, and the garden of Gad's Hill blazed with them when the master lay there dead.

It was indeed a "last improvement" that gave him one of the final pleasures of his life. This was a conservatory which opened into both dining-room and drawing-room; "Glass and iron," as he described it, "brilliant but expensive, with foundations as of an ancient work of horrible solidity." On the last Sunday before his death he saw it first in a completed state, and he said to his daughter, who had come from town on purpose to see it, "Well, Katie, now you see positively the last improvement at Gad's Hill!" It was the repetition of the old joke,



A unique portrait of Charles Dickens made in 1867 and everybody laughed, not knowing that it was in sober truth the very last.

To write of Gad's Hill is not easy to me, because I grew up there, and I loved it. But even in those later days, at an age when youth is least impressionable, the memory of my grandfather which it held was always

one of its charms for me — though at the time a somewhat terrible charm. I had heard my father speak of his arrival at the house on the morning of that 9th of June, of how he sat, I think with Katie, on the steps of the conservatory later in the day, waiting for the inevitable end. The scent of syringa was heavy in the air, and my father would never have the flower near him afterward. Consequently there were certain places which were always haunted for me, and as year after year the 9th of June came round and dinner was served anywhere — in the large square hall, in the garden, in the library — but in the dining-room, the impression remained always fresh.

MY GRANDFATHER'S WORK-ROOM

My recollections of Gad's Hill during my grandfather's lifetime are all, except one, of winter weather. I remember going with my great-aunt to the chalet, probably to renew the flowers which always stood upon his table, and the leaves were green about the little place, and the sun shone in, and the birds were singing. This is the only recollection I have of going into the chalet, which I regarded with awe as a place where mysterious doings took place, but I can see the room in which my grandfather wrote as clearly at this moment as though I had just stepped out of it. This chalet was sent to him by Fechter, the actor, in ninety-four pieces, which had to be put together like a puzzle. My grandfather wrote of it:

“I have put five mirrors in the chalet where I write, and they reflect and refract, in all kinds of ways, the leaves that are shivering at the windows, the great fields of waving corn, and the sail-dotted river. My room is up among the branches of the trees, and the birds and the butterflies fly in and out, and the green branches shoot in at the open window, and the lights and shadows of the clouds come and go with the rest of the company. The scent of the flowers, and indeed of everything that is growing for miles and miles, is most delicious.”

His remarkable tidiness — apparent in all his doings, and insisted upon throughout his household — was nowhere more apparent than in the arrangement of his writing-table. There were certain little objects which he always took with him when he changed his quarters for any length of time, and these were invariably set out in the same order and with the most absolute precision. In one of his letters he alludes with much satisfaction to

having performed this ceremony immediately on his arrival at one of his temporary homes.

I have been told that my grandfather took pleasure in having my little brother and myself trotting beside him as he walked about the place, and that as a very minute child with a very large muff which involved great solemnity of demeanor, I appealed to his sense of humor. Remembering some of his letters to children, that seems quite possible. I can distinctly recollect the thrill of speechless delight with which I received a message in a letter from America, thanking me for some violets which he had received as coming from me. I hope I sent them, and I always wish I could remember doing so. But honesty obliges me to say that I do not. It is one of my regrets that he never wrote to me.

Four distinct pictures of my grandfather hold their places in my memory, and, oddly enough, each one of the four reflects more or less definitely a different phase of his many-sided character.

A CHRISTMAS DINNER AT GAD'S HILL

In the first I see the dining-room at Gad's Hill, and a large dinner-party in progress. It is very gay and very glittering, many flowers, much glass, much silver, and everyone is in great good humor. I think it must be Christmas Day, as I can imagine no other reason for the presence on the scene of my little brother and myself. My little brother — a mere mite, a great favorite and innocent of the "seen and not heard" adage — said or did something which caught my grandfather's attention. I can see the figure at the head of the table standing with his glass in his hand, alert, laughing, full of the zest of the moment, and pausing for an instant to say something to the little boy — something which I probably did not understand, and certainly do not remember — which was received with peals of laughter, in which the child joined gleefully



without the faintest idea what it was all about! Here then is the social Charles Dickens, the delightful companion whose friends invariably forgot that he had ever written anything, so great was the charm of his capacity for enjoyment, so great was his gift for causing those about him to enjoy. He talked well, because he was so full of spirit, and so keenly observant, and because his sense of humor was wholly irrepressible. But he never talked other than naturally and unaffectedly, and he was never bookish.

My second picture always makes me smile a little. It reminds me of a passage in one of his letters from America — containing a phrase, “a ‘cream of joy,” much quoted in the long ago by my aunt. “There is a child in this house,” he wrote, “a little girl, to whom I presented a black doll when I was last here. When you sent it up to me by the colored boy,’ she said after receiving it, ‘I gave such a ‘cream that ma came running in and ‘creamed too, ‘cos she fort I’d hurt myself. But I ‘creamed a ‘cream of joy.’ She had a friend to play with her that day, and brought the friend with her — to my infinite confusion. A friend all stockings and much too tall, who sat on the sofa with her stockings sticking stiffly out in front of her, and glared at me, and never spake a word. Dolly found us confronted in a sort of fascination like serpent and bird.”

Now I hope I need not apply to myself the description of the friend — I was certainly not too tall, and I wore socks. I also hope I did not glare. But in my second picture, my grandfather and I are certainly confronting one another with an awful fascination. My grandfather is standing in front of a red and roaring fire — again in the dining-room at Gad’s Hill. There is a very high and a very narrow mantelpiece, and he is framed, so to speak, against the background of cheery flame. On either side of the fireplace is a window, through which the garden, covered with snow, can be seen. My grandfather, handsome, alert, but for the moment a little at a loss, looks down at me. I, a very small girl in a pinafore, look up at him. And I am afraid I emulate the friend, inasmuch as I never speak a word! For it is an occasion, and I have been sent into the room, alone, with the impression strong upon me that something tremendous is going to happen to me — my grandfather is going to give me a Christmas present himself. The present was one of the few children’s annuals of those days — the “Child’s Prize,” and I do not doubt that my aunt had bought it, and had asked him to perform the ceremony of its bestowal. And my grandfather either was not in spirits that morning, or else my preternatural solemnity seemed to demand a return in kind. So there we stood, the

presentation being made, and I always wonder how the interview closed! It seems that

it might have gone on interminably.

My grandfather’s charm in a sick-room is well known, but I must emphasize it, because it forms the frame-work of my third picture. On one of my visits to Gad’s Hill, running about where I should not have been allowed to go, I fell over a sauce-pan of boiling water. Dinner was going on, and my nurse, frightened at the result of her shortcomings, dared not disturb my aunt, and accordingly put me to bed, and told me not to cry! My aunt, coming to see me after dinner, instantly discovered my unhappy plight, but to my astonishment it was my grandfather who appeared at my bedside and “made me better.” And through the unhappy days that followed — for I was badly scalded — the faith that he would always “make me better” never left me.

In the course of those days he had to go to London, and my childish misery was great. I “hurt dreadfully,” no one knew how much, and no one could possibly know, until “Venerables” — our childish name for him — came back. I can remember the joy of hearing the pony-carriage which

brought him from the station drive into the yard, and can see him, almost immediately afterward, coming into the room to me — a little invalid, waiting in perfect confidence to be “made better.”

Of my grandfather’s art as a reader I have, of course, nothing to say, though my last picture of him is at one of his readings. Everything possible has been said many times over by those well qualified to speak. But I like much to think of his most personal delight in his success and the manner in which he bore himself under it. Says Mr. Forster: “Of his hearty, undisguised, and unmistakable enjoyment of his astonishing and indeed quite bewildering popularity, there can be as little doubt as that there was not a particle of vanity in it, any more than of false modesty. . . . Few men in the world, one fancies, could have gone through such grand displays of fireworks, not merely with so marvelous an absence of what the French call pose, but unsoiled by the smoke of a cracker. No man’s strong individuality was ever so free from conceit.” These words were written in connection with what Mr. Forster calls “the universal blazing up of America.” But my grandfather loved his less sensational English popularity quite as dearly. It was the personal note, the personal affection, always, that appealed to him. It was my father, I think, who was determined that I should be taken to one of the last series of readings; and he very naturally chose for me the “Christmas Carol.” Curiously enough, I was not in the least elated at such an unusual form of “treat” — I think the necessity for being very good must have been unduly impressed upon me! But I never went into the St. James’s Hall in after years without looking at the place where I sat on that occasion, and feeling again the half-frightened expectation of I knew not what, which I felt then. I see my grandfather now, as I saw him then, standing at the little table, not “Venerables” at all, but a terrible and unknown personage, a long way off, quite unaware of my existence and speaking in unknown voices. And I count among the most dreadful moments of my childish existence the moment when “Venerables” cried.

There is an element of distress in my last picture, but there is a smile in it, too. And I am always glad I have it — that I have that one impression of my grandfather in connection with the public that loved him, and loves him still. I think there is no man for whom has been so fully answered the prayer which he himself wrote in ““The Haunted Man,” “Lord, keep my memory green!”



From left to right: Mr. H. F. Chorley, Miss Kate Dickens, Miss Mamie Dickens, Charles Dickens (in a white bowler), C. A. Collins (reading), and Miss Georgina Hogarth. The group is at the entrance to Gad's Hill



A rare portrait of Charles Dickens, made in his study at Gad's Hill in 1865

MEN AND MEMORIES: PERSONAL REMINISCENCES



by John Russell Young

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DICKENS

It was during Tribune days, in 1867, that Charles Dickens made his second visit to the United States. Of that event, and his subsequent friendship with Dickens, Mr. Young wrote a few years since, the following article:

CHARLES DICKENS AS I KNEW HIM



I have been reading in a recent number of the New York Times a narrative of Richard B. Kimball, author of "St. Leger," to whom our literature is indebted for so much that is useful, of the two visits of Dickens to the United States, — that is to say, in 1842 and in 1867-8. In regard to the second visit, Mr. Kimball writes without that fulness of information requisite to the entire value of his narrative. I saw much of Mr. Dickens when in the United States, — was his friend and became somewhat in correspondence with him. He rests with me as a memorable figure. What Mr. Kimball has so gracefully written may justify me in recalling some memories of the man as I saw and knew him.

It was one snowy Saturday afternoon in December, 1867, as I place the date, when I found myself in the dingy editorial rooms of the Tribune, under engagement to dine with Horace Greeley. He had letters to write and I was to await his leisure. There were no Sunday newspapers in those days, and the editorial rooms were deserted. Greeley in a small ante-room writing, nothing better to do than to pace up and down in front of the worn desks of Ripley, Bayard Taylor, Winter and Clarence Cook, look out upon the snow and watch the falling in of the night. A desolate, sobbing day; all nature under drifts of the ghastly deadening snow; the park as bleak as a bit of Nova Zembla. Mr. Greeley's own invaluable Dennis, drowsing in the corner in attendance, awaiting to take the mail, brought me word that a person below named Dickinson desired to see me. I had a profuse knowledge of Dickinson; recall him as an enthusiast in patents; had several machines with a vital money-evolving principle, which had only to go, to make the world go with it, when he would build colleges, and in other ways elevate and bless mankind. There was, however, a conspiracy to rob him, and the only way to defeat it was by elaborate expositions in the press. Dickinson was a weary, dreary, cheerful, sanguine soul, whom I had avoided with assiduity. So when his name was given, my impulse was to ask Dennis to rid me of him, with as little burden to his conscience as possible. The afternoon, however, was shuddering in its dreariness — skies

dark as despair — and perhaps poor, sanguine, cheerful Dickinson had a new idea, and anyhow it would be a kindness to see him. Moreover, Greeley was scratching away, and no knowing how long that process would run, and time had to go, and better the Dickinson enthusiasm than being alone with the sombre night. In a few moments up the stairs and out of the shadows came a furred figure, sprinkled with snowflakes; ruddy, teeming cheeks glistening with snow, which whitened a full and already frosty beard. A very Kris Kringle stepped out of his sleigh, who shook hands in the clasped, hearty American fashion, as his companion, Osgood of Boston, famous bookseller then as now, introduced him as, —

CHARLES DICKENS!

I was living at the time in bachelor quarters on Irving Place, Mr. Greeley likewise with chambers in there, and Dickens at the Westminster a few doors above. The next morning, while shoveling together some newspaper work and arranging for the day, Dickens came in with hardly the formality of a card — came in, as it seemed, almost tumbling over the maid servant who announced him. He had only heard — how jolly — had only heard from Palmer, friend of both (his hotel keeper), that Mr. Greeley lived so near. We could be neighborly, and all that! He was so sorry to hear that Greeley had gone to his country place, as he wanted to say to him — he was not sure he had said with due emphasis the night before, but it was something that he must say — how grateful he was for the very great kindness the Tribune had done him, — how much he appreciated it and how much it had to do with his coming. And this Greeley should know, and I should know, and he could not be at peace until it was well understood. I have tried to recall the special incident which had impressed Dickens, and to which I owed a valued and memorable friendship. I believe some foolish story, disparaging his motives in coming to this country, that they were vulgar and mercenary, had floated over. Picked up in some London coffee room, some foolish truculent imagination had magnified it to the chagrin of Dickens, and the Tribune had set it right. I remember Fields, of Boston coming one afternoon in a mood of dismay, with a cable or a letter from Dickens, then in London — cable, I think — to the effect that the story was despicable, and must be stamped out. It was a pleasure and a duty so to do; would have been done for one less estimable than Dickens. However, he

must come and say how deeply the incident had impressed him, and how handsomely Greeley had behaved.

It was a long call! Dickens, with many apologies for breaking in, would run away if I gave a hint, for he knew the value of Time. If I gave a hint! This royal visitor from the land of romance, the master and king, his presence making the atmosphere sovereign. If I gave a hint! The eager, joyous man, with those fine, gleaming eyes, and how he tossed at once into journalism, had had deplorable days at it, could not endure the day in and day out never ending grind, asked me a hundred questions about journalism in New York. They were direct, leading, thorough, — questions about pay, the division of labor, the powers of the editor, our relations with public men and affairs, and all that pertained to the inside economics and ethics of the press. If I knew aught of journalism which was not bestowed upon Dickens the fault did not rest with him. The effect of the war upon journalism interested him, the white paper problem and the imminence of the cable. He saw with his discerning eyes what the cable meant. “Farewell to the adjectives,” I said. “Yes,” he replied, “to the adjectives and adverbs and all the horticulture of newspaper genius.” The relations of the editor to the business departments were strange, and especially when I said that I could not see how such a relation as that of Delane to the Times would be permitted in the New York press. “Ah!” he said, “your newspapers are properties. Ours are institutions. The editor, as we understand him, with his royal attributes and powers, will come to you with time, as many other things will come. There can be no real editor without it, and no true journalism where the editorial prerogatives are impaired.”

I must tell him, too, about our report of his first reading in Boston. How could it have possibly been done. Straggling, ragged, rubbishy, hysterical, jerked narratives in other papers, and here a perfect essay, written with the grace and finish of Addison. And yet it was late before he had finished his reading, and this must have been telegraphed to New York, hundreds of miles away.

The report to which Dickens referred, and at the time a memorable newspaper event, would be quite an obvious incident now, and hardly worth the telling except to note the advance in journalism. When Dickens came to Boston it seemed that the one only thing that could be done was to report his first night in a manner worthy of his genius and his fame. I took counsel with Clarence Cook, then as now one of the most accomplished and

graceful writers in American journalism, and laid my purpose before him. That he must hear the reading, that he must absorb the color and incident, and going to the telegraph write it with all the care and style possible, even marking where the paragraphs belonged, and aim in the whole narrative for striking, finished rhetorical effect. This was the time when telegraph tolls were dear and condensation was the rule. Cook accepted the mission, and that done there should be absolute secrecy. Once it was known that a writer of his eminence were to do the work, and other writers would be sent from our rivals, and there would be a competition of rhetoric. My hope was that the first Dickens night in Boston would be treated by our rivals as an ordinary news reporter incident, a street affray or an elopement. I am afraid that to encourage that hope one of the most indifferent of our police news reporters was sent to Boston with some show of ostentation, at least there was no instruction that his mission should not be the theme of the nearest beer saloon. Cook went to Boston. No one knew of his errand but myself. His despatch was, of course, the only one used. I remember it as a masterpiece of brilliant composition, so far beyond any other report that comparison was useless. In this idle, little story, Dickens was profoundly interested, said that the journalism of England could not have surpassed the story of Mr. Cook, and it was not alone because of the compliment to himself, but as a step forward in journalism that he valued it. "If we only knew how narrow the distance between the good and bad in our craft," he said, "and that the one is almost as easy as the other — if we only knew it."

This was the first of what were to be many meetings with Dickens, and how clearly it stands before me. The hearty, easy, direct, spontaneous, cheery man, with those sovereign, searching eyes. Yet, somehow it was a disappointment. There was something about Dickens that I did not like; that deterred me, as it were. His genius I had held in sovereign reverence. How much he had been to my life, as he had been to so many millions in those innocent believing days. No spirit from the infinite reaches of our love and hopes and dreams, not even Byron, or Shakespeare, or Burns, could have been more welcome. And here, even here, in my chamber — to look into the eyes that had seen Agnes and Micawber and Little Nell — to hear the very tones of his voice that had given the world so many precious lessons of joy and hope. Why the very gods were dowering me with Olympian splendor. In soul I long had worshipped Dickens, and if I could have made worship then and there, it would have come from my soul. But somehow I

did not like Dickens. Here he was, but where were the illusions? Can the fancy never be satisfied? Are our idols ever to have the feet of clay, and men never to be what they seem? What was it? Something awkward, unnatural. Could it be that certain condescension of the foreigner toward Americans about which Mr. Lowell has written an essay? There was no want of heartiness nor tact, nor came there between us any point of controversy. He seemed restless, artificial, like one on his guard; began his sentences as though he had been waiting a cue; was acting rather than talking. There was an impression of showiness, and the thought came over me, how much more agreeable the man would be if one could only see the man. There was now and then what seemed to be an effort to adapt himself to circumstances, to be entirely agreeable, to seek themes that would interest or please me, so that instead of being spoken to, as man to man, I began to feel as if I were being caressed, soothed, being put quite at my ease.

I dwell upon this strange impression, because it is a part of my memory of Dickens, and because it was so soon to pass away. I spoke to Greeley of it when we met in the evening, and I gave him the various messages of Dickens, spoke perhaps with disappointment, as I recall Greeley's remark, that such a manner was almost inseparable from such a fame. "This having to live ever in full dress," he said, "plays the devil with one's deeper and better personality." It was soon to pass away, and I came to know Dickens as the most natural of men, simple, direct, straightforward, with the very gaiety of genius. Among the messages which Dickens left was that Greeley and I should come and dine with him at his rooms, the next evening. When we arrived we saw there had been some mistake. Dickens had named one hour for the dinner and ordered it for an earlier hour, and we found in his manner the dismay which comes with the consciousness of cooling soup. There was the hour noted in a pencil scrawl by Dickens himself. How well I recall his laughing self-condemnation, his walking across the room and striking the table to make his remark more emphatic. "It is always a mistake to give a friend a verbal invitation and not confirm it with a written note confirming time, day, place, hour and minute. Then there can be no mistake. I always do it in London; always insist upon friends doing it, and then "you are sure to be right." Boythorn himself could not have been more amusingly boisterous as he arraigned himself for this neglected duty and laughingly pointed us to our seats.

I could write of many meetings, but one evening, when we had been at Delmonico's with Greeley and two or three friends, and together walked home. There was just a film of snow and in the air a keen invitation for a walk, a challenge I was never loath to accept. Dickens lingered a minute at the door of his hotel. It was so fine a night, even with the melting streets and the snowy clouds, that it was a sin not to do it honor. So out and around Gramercy Park and toward Third Avenue — "Your Tottenham Court road," as he called it. I do not know how far we walked, recall ourselves near the far end of the park, and looking sharply to see that we were on our way. He spoke of his books with simplicity; like "Copperfield," could hardly understand my enthusiasm over "Bleak House," wished I had seen more in the "Tale of Two Cities," to which he had given his best work. However, I had not then been in France, and I would comprehend what he was striving to say when I saw France. I was to see France, indeed, and to know the truth of the master's own criticism.

Dickens craved all I knew of Lincoln, said Carpenter's book on Lincoln had taken a night from him, and that there was something weird about Lincoln — a fascination. He had met Stanton and admired his strength, and told me that the Secretary could repeat pages from his works. I recalled what Stanton had once told me, that during the war, when he was harried and worn with his superhuman struggles, his invariable source of comfort was Arthur Helps' "Friend in Council." "What Helps?" exclaimed Dickens. And this I had to repeat to him, until it was fixed in his mind so that Helps might hear of it — "there being," he said, "no truer man in England." I was coy about Thackeray, and cannot recall any opinion from Dickens as to his rival. He seemed to dwell upon Irving and Poe among American authors; was disappointed when I referred to Irving as the genius of his own generation, rather dimming under new conditions. Dickens could not see how we should rise above the high-water mark of the genius of Irving. The compliments paid by Dickens to American authors seemed as if given rather in a general spirit of compliment, with no attempt at analysis or criticism. He doubted if there were any more growth in Poe, fearing that years with conservatism would have dwarfed rather than developed his genius. People, however, he thought, could not very well write books and plant trees, and no critic, however severe, should be impatient with America.

I am afraid it was in a sense disappointing that Dickens did not share in some of my own foolish literary enthusiasms. He was quick with sketching outlines of whoever came into our talk — Tennyson, Moore, Browning, Shelley, Wordsworth and the rest. Each one limned as alone the master could do it. When I came to inspect my company of heroes, as retouched by Dickens, they did not seem improved. There was scarcely a remembrance or an estimate that did not have what I may call a sting. “Yes, yes, quite so — but,” and with the “but” would come anecdote, phrase, epithet or comment — brilliant, grotesque, irresistibly amusing. So my poor heroes had little good, in my eyes, from the Dickens touch. Illusions vanished. Harmonies became discords. The gods wore wooden shoes after all. We could hear the patter of their feet and their garments were not sound. The judgments were those of a just and true man. I have never questioned them. Over against my modest Pantheon the Dickens decrees must rest, never to be disturbed by any appellate tribunal.

A notable exception was Carlyle, and especially Mrs. Carlyle. “Carlyle, yes — but Mrs. Carlyle!” he would say. “Old Carlyle,” he said; “what a man. I was reading the *Trial* shortly before I left London, and while doing the Buzfuz speech became conscious of peal after peal of laughter, that seemed to come from some cavern below the stage. It was so noticeable that people in the audience began to laugh likewise. I could not make out the source, but in the course of the declamation managed to edge toward the end of the platform. There, sure enough, on the first bench was old Carlyle, head bent and wagging, laughing peal upon peal, and muttering, ‘Buzfuz, Buzfuz, oh, Buzfuz.’ It was by the severest restraint that I could keep from laughing, too, and breaking down in my work.” Of Carlyle, Dickens never spoke but with tenderness, enthusiasm and affection, and of Mrs. Carlyle as among the most gifted women he had ever known.

I have heard famous talkers, — Greeley when in vehement mood; Grant when among his friends, say at one in the morning; Conkling, with a grievance, Bismarck, Beaconsfield, — have been under the spell of perhaps the most exquisite of all, even the silvery spell of Wendell Phillips; have talked with Tribune Smalley and Gen. Sherman, Robert Ingersoll and Henry George, but the talk of Dickens was unique, an art in itself. The supreme dramatic power, dramatic expression in repose, as in Wendell Phillips; his way of settling himself in the chair as his narrative proceeded, head rather bent forward, the eye archly turned upon you, partly sidewise, glancing

with its ascending look, as if studying the effect. This is as I recall him. A Dickens story was ever finished and minute. Occasionally an effort at mimicry, as when I heard him once describe Carlyle's unconscious self-communing, description in the broadest Scotch, of some other one at the table, as "a puir, feckless creature," but not as a general thing mimetic. No contrasts or surprises, or odd fancies so often summoned for conversational effect. Yet at times the humor of the man would stream, and picture after picture 'would be thrown at you, as though he were some wandering silhouette artist at a county fair. One occasion, for instance, when he had returned from Philadelphia and we met at dinner, a handful of Philadelphians, whom I knew, and about whom I made friendly inquiry, were each one sketched in an airy, bantering way. Mr. Childs, among others, a graceful etching, reminding Dickens, as he stood at his carriage, of one of his characters in his books — name escaped me; a quizzical sketch of DuChaillu, somehow his heart going out to the gorillas as he approached the famous explorer; the boys that would trail after Tennyson, as if ever boys were born that could help trailing after such a cloak and hat — an invitation to boys quite irresistible in its way; a solemn quizzing of Sumner, whom he admired, yet as if he were afraid he would surprise himself when he was with the Senator and forget to be solemn; little bits of portraiture, vivid, acute, as though drawn upon the thumb-nail, would flutter out of his talk, and keep alive your wonder at the incessant genius.

"Shakespeare with some threads of the negro minstrel running through him," as Shelton Mackenzie said to me of Dickens in an impatient mood, endeavoring to forget, I fancy, some frailty in the way of recognition on the part of Dickens in London. A tendency to showiness, personal decoration, scarfs and pins, and other bits of innocent adornment. This, I presume, is what Mackenzie meant; and although I could see no reason for the criticism in New York — as I have read of no reason why it should have applied in London — yet Dickens, as I knew him, might be called a somewhat overdressed man. In this, however, he had preserved what we read of the manners of Bulwer, Disraeli and the brilliant young bucks who came after Alvanley, Brummel and Byron. If there was an exuberant tone in Dickens it belonged to his nature. If we are never older than we feel, as I have read in the pages of some consoling French philosopher, Dickens was a young man, even at fifty-six, when I knew him. I should say among the youngest of my friends. His face seemed free from care. Sorrow had kneaded no lines

around those radiant eyes. A very living human man, amenable to comforts, putting aside, at least not without inquiry, whatever the world might bring him in the way of sensation and experience; a hearty, wholesome man, who as he came swinging into your room seemed redolent with life; to have exacted tribute from nature whatever her mood; and if he could not bring the scents of the clover field, to reek with the fallen rain or the stern blustering winds.

I had a good deal to do with the famous dinner to Dickens, now recorded in his works; found myself in a sea of trouble before I was well out of it. Some of us, the working press people, met one day at the Park Hotel to talk it over. The thing to do was to dine Dickens. Assuredly, but would he come? Among my fellows in a small way an authority upon Dickens, knowing him at all events, when appealed to was compelled to say that I did not believe he would come. His one refrain when we had met, that he was in America for reading work, and all else must give way. An occasional dinner, under the rose, as it were, to Greeley or some definite favored one, — well, that would not count. As working newspaper men, in presence of a working newspaper man whom we would honor, there would be no harm in asking him to dine. The invitation went from Croly in due form. Dickens was not only willing, but eager. It was the one invitation that he could and would accept — only let the dinner be on the eve of his going away! And thus it fell, that on the Saturday night preceding his departure, he dined with his newspaper friends at Delmonico's, on Fourteenth street, no banquet in my remembrance more notable and brilliant.

I was chairman of the committee that arranged the dinner. Charles E. Wilbour was a member. Wilbour, then a Tribune shareholder, and spasmodic writer — a thorough, scholarly man, who had won fame as the translator of "Les Miserables," and was to go off into the fascinations of Egyptology, and to become a professor of hieroglyphics on the Nile — where I vainly tried to find him some months ago. D. G. Croly, manager of the World, a quaint man of genius, striving ever in a whirlpool of ideas; kind, appreciative, angular, with strange formulas of governing mankind upon some Ollendorff plan of learning the philosophies in six easy lessons. Sheppard, of the Times, a steady headed Canadian, then right hand to Raymond, and for a small space to succeed him, long vanished from journalism in New York into railroads and measurable affluence in London. Amos J. Cummings, I think, then journalist, now shining with political

splendor as a kind of Tammany magnate and Congressman, completed the committee. About Cummings I am not sure.

We resolved that it should be a dinner worthy of Dickens, and representative of whatever was clever and good in our calling. Upon that there was instant agreement, and we went about it in a severe, unrelenting way. I shall, I presume, never know, until I have access in the eternities to the books of Time, the enemies I made as Chairman of that Committee in repressing young ambition and suppressing rising talent that would shine and astonish Dickens. No Robespierre — Carnot, Revolutionary Committee of Safety was more implacable in the resolution to suppress the self-glorification that the occasion would awaken. Who should preside? Who but William Cullen Bryant? Of the host of those who had known and welcomed Dickens when he came in 1842, Bryant alone remained. When Bryant was sought with the purpose of extending the invitation, he was in a state of offended dignity. Dickens either had not called upon him, or, as is more probable, Bryant had called on Dickens and the courtesy had not been returned. I fancy there must have been a mistake, as Dickens seemed exemplary in such social pieties. At all events, he had taken no pains to see Bryant. The poet, therefore, would not preside, nor would he even attend the dinner.

Bryant out of the way, there was no special sorrow in my mind in that regard, as I was anxious for Greeley. The professional renown of Greeley justified the honor, and more than that, he was friendly to Dickens and much esteemed by him. There was a battle over this — some of my colleagues afraid of the consequences. Greeley was not popular. His hand had fallen heavily upon many, whose society would be grateful. Some, Thurlow Weed among the number, would not come because of Greeley. He might object to wine; people unacquainted with him did not know what he would do. Once in the chair, might declaim upon bran bread or a vegetable diet, or insult the Democratic guests. One thing was sure — Mr. Bennett would never let such a dinner pass without an arrow flight of sarcasm. And more and more of this, the end being that no chairman ever presided with more grace and dignity than Mr. Greeley, and no incident of the banquet was more striking than his persuasive eloquence and humor.

Among other things out of this famous dinner came the celebrated association of ladies which now flourishes in New York as Sorosis. Dickens was to be honored by the brethren of his craft, the working men of the

press. But where were the working women? Why should not the gifted women of America be permitted to do honor to the master if Fanny Fern was moving in her eloquence in that regard; the proud, sanguine, high souled Fanny, with a spirit like Tudor Elizabeth, coming to me so often in these later years. Dear Alice Cary, her genius as exquisite as when it commanded the proud admiration of Poe, with the shadows of her soon to be good night softening her gracious presence; dear Alice Cary could not endure that Dickens should leave with no recognition from those like herself who loved him. I was with the women. It seems the strangest thing possible that there should have been a question. When it came before the committee the unanswerable argument was that there was no room. The men had helped themselves — where was the place for the ladies? I was dissatisfied with the argument and voted for the ladies, but with the minority. As a result, the ladies, under the leadership of Alice Cary, Mrs. Croly, Miss Kate Field and others, resolved to form a club of their own; to exclude the men from their festivities, as they had been excluded from this dinner; and when Dickens or some other of relative fame came to the United States, they would honor him in their own sweet and gracious way. They named their club Sorosis, and even as determined upon by the justly angry ladies who were denied admission to the Dickens festival, it has flourished and flourishes even to the present day. Among other contributions to the happiness of mankind it was appointed that Dickens should indirectly give us Sorosis.

To return for a moment to the narrative of Mr. Kimball. I read that when the guests assembled there was some apprehension that Dickens would not come, that there was a panic, that “the committee felt specially compromised,” and “finally sent word to Mr. Dickens through his most intimate friend that come he must, if he had to be brought in an ambulance.” The impression that there was any hesitation on the part of Dickens in accepting the splendid tribute that had been arranged with so much care, does his memory grave injustice.

Dickens, as a matter of fact, took a deep interest in the dinner, and when I saw him, as I did on occasion in a neighborly way, was curious as to the details — wanted to see the list of guests and to be told who was who. And when he heard that from all over the Union men of the highest station were coming to do him honor, he was deeply impressed. Brilliant as I felt our dinner would be, I knew he would rise to it. I did not know, as we all do now, that he meant to make as far as was in his power his farewell a grand

recantation of the severe and absurd things he had said and written about the United States.

The afternoon of the dinner, when I called to arrange some minor detail, time of coming and so on, I found Dickens in great pain, lying on the lounge, his right foot bare, Dr. Fordyce Barker bending over it. The foot had troubled him off and on, he said, but he put it down to our “dreadful weather.” “That morning while writing to Lord Lytton,” pointing to an unfinished letter on the desk, “the pain smote into helplessness.” Dr. Barker pronounced it neuralgia of the foot, and was afraid the exposure of the dinner would be too much. Dickens, in his earnest way, said that he would go if he had to be carried by “Dolby and the rest of them,” as the Pope was carried into St. Peter’s on a throne, with a grotesque description of the effect it would produce, the bearing him aloft to bless the assembled journalists. It had been proposed, and for this reason the guests were bidden at an earlier hour than usual, that Dickens should have a little reception before dinner, with the chance of taking each guest by the hand to give and receive some friendly word. This was at once vetoed. Mr. Dickens must not stand, and as soon as he came dinner would be served. Mr. Greeley would meet him at the hotel, and the guests were prepared for what was in a way a disappointment, the impossibility of the reception.

In time he came, looking ill, and as he walked into the room leaning on the arm of Mr. Greeley the company formed a lane, and with difficulty he kept his way to his seat. I had occasion to speak to him, and he said that Barker had swathed him in black silk, but he was in horrible pain. He was cheerful, merry even, and said that Mr. Greeley must protect him from violence if he should leave before the feast was over. We were all in concern about him, and those who knew the facts felt that his presence was in truth a heroic thing, what alone a brave man could do.

It was a noble gathering, ever to be remembered. Two hundred guests and from all parts of the Union — men of authority and renown. Horace Greeley, in the prime of health and genius, his almost sixty years resting lightly upon him, with a deep red rose in a wine glass whose perfume he would now and then inhale, to the scandal of many near-sighted guests who saw with their very eyes that he was sipping wine. There was Raymond, the chivalrous, gracious, eloquent, tender-hearted man, in the early days of a brilliant career, and ere many months were to pass to fall stricken in the night; Boker, in the noble beauty of his young ripening manhood, but upon

whose brow genius and fortune had rested the crown of achievement and renown; Bowles, of Springfield, then famous as the embodiment of virtuous journalism, with his pale Puritan face; "Harry Franco Briggs," who had been the friend and partner of Poe, the years resting upon him, one of the few who had known and welcomed Dickens a quarter of a century before; Hawley, of Connecticut, soldier, Governor, journalist, in time to be and remain Senator; Charles Eliot Norton, from Cambridge, one greatly esteemed by Dickens; Parton, with his calm, fine face; the brilliant Hassard; young Stedman, the poet, hovering between literature and finance, not quite sure whether he would be a Rothschild or an Addison, apparently still undetermined; George William Curtis, who was to make the speech of the evening; Charles Nordhoff, lieutenant of Bryant, sturdy, constant, earnest, true; Lester Wallack, the comedian; Frank B. Carpenter, the artist, likewise held in esteem by Dickens, studying our guest with the proud fond eyes that had rescued the features of Lincoln and so many great ones from the night we call life and given them to the day we call time. Philadelphia had sent McClure, heavy with the honors of having maintained the Republican ascendancy in Pennsylvania, unconscious of the greater honors that awaited him. Thomas Nast, then as now one of the most famous as he is now one of the most brilliant and worthy of our sons; Hurlbert, a corruscating quantity on the World, and Whitelaw Reid, who was about to close a noted career in the journalism of the West, and win another and more noted in the journalism of the East.

These among the living and the dead come as the shadows from the Dickens festival. The committee had been imperious as to speaking. There was to be no buncombe, no fustian, no zoological eloquence over eagles and lions and other birds and beasts of prey. Dickens should see us at our best. But it was no easy task. Bryant had flown off irreclaimably — no Thanatopsis eyes to speed Dickens over the seas. Weed would not come but sent a quaint, elaborate letter, which with the other letters, because of our guest's sufferings and the need of speeding things, was not read. Then at the last moment there was the fearful rumor that Raymond would be absent. It was impeachment times, the political air feverous, and Greeley and Raymond had taken to calling each other liars in the fond old endearing way, and what if the discussion would break out under these sulphurous conditions before the very eyes of our guest. What a sight for the master who had created Pogram and Jefferson Brick. But with Raymond and

Greeley, these tempters were the very foam at the beaker of wine, and underneath was the ever present chivalry, forbearance and kindly regard. A battle also as to whether Hurlbert should speak; certain grumblings from Boston in opposition. But upon this Croly came down in his firm Celtic way, and by all the gods that were ever overthrown by Saint Patrick, Hurlbert should speak or there would be no dinner. That settled it. Halstead was selected from the West, then not quite a field marshal, but welcomed by us all for his noble and princely qualities. There was Demers, of Albany, now no longer visible in my range of journalism; T. B. Thorpe, the lively, genial "Bee Hunter," who had been a colonel in the Mexican war, great on sporting themes, kind of painter, too, as well as soldier and journalist, to remain with us until 1878, and leave many gracious memories behind him.

The speaking was about the best I ever heard. Greeley was crisp, quaint, original, told how he tried in a Florentine inn to read Copperfield in Italian, and gave a noble toast which made every glass ring — "Health and happiness, honor and generous, because just recompense to our friend and guest, Charles Dickens."

Dickens spoke with an ease marvelous to those who knew his suffering. I should rank him high among orators, — certainly among dinner speakers. The presence, the grace, the perfect self-possession; the grave, kindly, rather husky tones of the voice, and the striking personality of the man were dominating. His speech was prepared, — you have all read it in his books, — for he decreed that it should be a part of them while his wishes had any power. He spoke from memory amid the closest attention, and at times enraptured enthusiasm. There was a figure at the end, — it were better for the two nations to go back to the ice age and be given over to the Arctic fox and bear, than fight, that brought us to our feet, — and as he sat down in a storm of cheers the band played "God Save the Queen."

Raymond spoke as he always did, with clear, courtly eloquence. We cheered him a great deal because the newspaper people liked Raymond and rather resented Greeley's having called him a liar in a recent Tribune. Hurlbert was classical; Hawley eloquent over his memories of the first Dickens visit. Boker was dragged out in some way as an afterthought by Mr. Greeley, and made a short, impressive address. Norton spoke for Boston, Halstead for the West; De Leon, who had been in the Confederacy, represented the South, while the gentle and accomplished Youmans answered for the journalism of science. There were some words from

Demers and the Bee Hunter. The one speech was that of George William Curtis. I never heard that distinguished orator to greater advantage, and I remember the enthusiasm of Dickens over the address as we went home in the carriage. The peroration, spoken as only Curtis could speak it, in the low, musical cadence of his marvelous voice, leaning toward Dickens as in the attitude of farewell, aroused tremendous cheers. "Old ocean bear him safely over. English hedges welcome him with the blossoms of May! English hearts, he is ours as he is yours. We stand upon the shore. We say farewell — and as he sails away we pray with love and gratitude — may God bless him." The farewell of Curtis to Dickens can never pass from the memory of those who heard it, and saw what was possible in the supreme beauty of eloquence.

The rapture of applause, the glow and go of fellowship, the laughter and the wine, the sense that we were having' a Dickens night; so many ruling, true original spirits from our various sections, almost every face a notability, served to enfold our dinner as with a rare atmosphere. It irradiated Dickens, as he sat there, the guest, the man, the master; one after another of us sidling up under the blazing lamps to do him homage. The unique splendor of the scene rested heavily upon me, knowing the condition of Dickens, and having been of the anxious conference that determined his coming, I went to his chair once or twice with suggestions of home. Greeley was sure that departure was humane and wise when the speech of Dickens was done. Raymond, sitting at the side of Dickens, pressed for departure, and said that the company with proper knowledge would demand it. But how could he tear away from so splendid a feast? "I fear," he said, "I am like the mummy that the Egyptians passed around at their dinners. If the mummy, however, were not on duty as an entree, it would have been an imperfect feast."

When Norton had spoken, Dickens, who was my vis-avis, beckoned to me. "The pain," he said, "is simply horrible. I think I will take the advice of Mr. Greeley if you are quite sure it will not be misunderstood." Before calling on Halstead, Mr. Greeley arose and said that he knew the expression of sympathy that would come from every one in that company when they were told of the suffering of the guest; when they remembered that in spite of pain he had spent so much of the evening with them, and that they would excuse him now, with every loving wish for his speedy recovery and favoring breezes home. The company arose as if by instinct, and stood

while Dickens shook hands with Greeley, Raymond, Curtis and those around, and as well as the pain would permit him slowly moved out of the room. A cheer of farewell started by some hearty admirer awakened a whirl of cheers, continuous and resonant, until Dickens was outside the Delmonico walls. He was grateful over the company and for what had been said; dwelt upon the intellectuality of Greeley, Raymond and others, and the inexpressible charm of the eloquence of Mr. Curtis. "No orator in England," he said, "who could have surpassed Curtis in grace and feeling." When we came to the hotel Dickens insisted that I should return to the banquet, as his immediate concern was with his bed and Dr. Barker. Standing in the doorway he would not say farewell, for he knew I would come to England. And when I came let it be "when the hedges are in bloom," and I was to "report at Gadshill."

I came, and the hedges were in bloom, but there was no master at Gadshill. Dickens was asleep in the silence of the Abbey beside Johnson, Macaulay and Sheridan. I was never to see Dickens again. To the Dickens whom I knew, and the impressions of him as here crudely shadowed, I was to add, during my extended residence in London, even another Dickens — the man as he had been to so many who had known his life. From all came the one tribute — the recognition of his fine truth and nobility as a man walking among men. I can give this sentiment no more eloquent expression than what came from Carlyle, when the news of the sudden death of Dickens came upon him, as it came upon mankind, with the sense somewhat that one more glorious star had set, and that the heavens would never shine with the same splendor. "It is almost thirty years," wrote Carlyle, "since my acquaintance with Dickens began, and on my side, I may say, every new meeting ripened into more and more clear discernment of his rare and great worth as a brother man — a most cordial, sincere, clear-sighted, quietly decisive, just and loving man — till at length he had grown to such a recognition with me as I have rarely had from any man of my time. The good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever-friendly, noble Dickens, every inch of him an Honest Man."

At the time of the above written article Mr. Young received this letter from Judge F. G. Gedney, of New York: —

My dear Mr. Young: — Apropos of your article on Dickens, if you could look over the old assignment book of the Tribune, you would find: Gedney:

— "Go down the bay with Dickens." I did. We were on a little tugboat. The late James T. Field, of Boston; Thurlow Weed, George W. Childs, William Winter, and I cannot now remember all. We went alongside the steamer, and I saw both Mr. Dickens and Mr. Dolby talking with an officer and separated from the party. I had just time to say to Dickens, "Can I bear any answer for you to the Tribune?" Shaking my hand in a hearty manner, Mr. Dickens said, "Tell Mr. Young that I shall never forget his kindness." So, perhaps, the last words spoken to an American in America by Mr. Dickens were the words I have written.

Yours truly, F. G. Gedney.

Gadshill Place, Higham By Rochester, Kent, Monday, Fifteenth June, 1868. My dear Mr. Young: — Many thanks for your kind letter of the fourteenth of last month, and for the copies of the New York Tribune. I am happy to report that three or four days at sea vanquished both the catarrh and the neuralgia, and that I came home in great force. I am now looking out expectantly for Longfellow.

With kindest regards to Mr. Greeley when you see him, believe me,
Always faithfully yours,
Charles Dickens.

On the death of Dickens, Mr. Young wrote this editorial In the New York Standard, June 11th, 1870: —

"Mr. Dickens concluded the last book which he gave to the world with this paragraph:

"On Friday, the ninth of June, in the present year, Mr. and Mrs. Boffin (in the manuscript dress of receiving Mr. and Mrs. Lamble at breakfast) were in the South Eastern Railway with me in a terribly destructive accident. When I had done what I could to help others, I climbed back into my carriage, nearly turned over a viaduct and caught aslant upon the turn, to extricate the worthy couple. They were much soiled, but otherwise unhurt. The same happy result attended Miss Bella Wilfer on her wedding-day, and Mr. Riderhood inspecting Bradley Headstone's red neckerchief as he lay asleep. I remember, with devout thankfulness, that I can never be much nearer parting company with my readers forever than I was then, until there

shall be written against my life the two words with which I have closed this book — (the end).”

As though these words were a presentiment of his-own fate, the time came to write “The End” to his illustrious and noble career on the 9th of June, 1870, On that day, just five years after this strange event and its singular anticipation, Mr. Dickens died at his country residence, near London, in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

With the exception of Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott, no modern English writer has filled so vast a place as Mr. Dickens, and none since Burns will be so widely mourned. We question if Byron or Scott enjoyed a renown so rare and universal. There will be many who would regard the loss of Thackeray and Wordsworth and Shelley and Tennyson as a greater misfortune; but, without denying the claims of these men to higher grade of art, it is certain that Mr. Dickens came into a closer relation with the nineteenth century than any writer who lived in it. His art was his humor and his sympathy. He amused as well as instructed. The children of his fancy have long been more than creations of fancy to nine-tenths of the general readers of the English language.

Our current literature has drawn upon him for illustration more largely than any writer since Shakespeare and Bunyan. Like Shakespeare and Bunyan, his genius was universal. The dramatist and politician — the man of the drawing-room and the exchange, and society have come to know his characters as friends and associates — to give them speech and action, and make them a part of everyday existence.

This is one of the highest attributes of genius. We know Hamlet and Othello and Iago and Macbeth, and the fair Ophelia, as though they were our friends. The journey of Christian and the terrors of Doubting Castle, and the visions of the Enchanted Land, belong to our earliest and brightest dreams, and in the same life and the same dreams we have Micawber and Weller, and Little Nell, and Nancy Sikes, the Fleet Prison, the Circumlocution Office, the Mansion of the Dedlocks, and the wild sea wares which never speak to us without something of the strange meaning they gave to Little Paul.

This is what we have called the universal power of genius. Upon such a dominion he entered at the outset of his career and reigned to the end. How much we owe this man, even the best of us! For in whatever place we walk, no matter how high in philosophy or sublime in poetry, we have all of us

come within his hearty and imposing influence, and known freshness and rest and incentive to loftier aims. The world is better because he lived in it. He has taught us patience, faith, the sweetness of domestic love, the peace of the fireside. Some one has said of him that he made the Christmas trees to blossom, and over all England and English lands the Christmas fires to burn merrily.

His gospel has been simple, but truthful, — to eat, drink and be happy, to live peacefully, marry early, and be content with our daily bread. He never went beyond society. He believed in lords and gentlemen, the sacraments, the gallows, power, the British Constitution, the old traditions, and was a thorough Conservative. His world was the world we live in, and although he took us into the byways, and far down into the haunts of sin and misery, and threw broad, purifying, strengthening light and freshness into many dark and noisome depths, he never ascended. He had not the courage and sweep of Hugo, and gave us nothing like “*Les Miserables*.” He was no worshipper of abstract ideas. The man who sinned should be punished; the women who fell should die; for the naked there should be clothing, for the hungry food, for the poor great content and an assured plum-pudding on Christmas day.

Beyond this he saw nothing but society and the statutes. He never ventured upon dangerous ground; nor did it ever seem to him that our whole modern society, church, law, system, Parliament, the monarchy, under what we call religion and justice, there was a great wrong to be redressed, and mighty crimes, no less criminal because the world approved them. In nothing is this more painfully seen than in his view of the French Revolution. We pass through marvelous scenes with a shiver, seeing nothing but the guillotine and the *Jacquerie*; the dripping heads; the wine that seemed to be blood; the men, black and swarthy and hideous; the fearful women knitting under the axe; the king with a big face; and France itself a land of terror and crime and death.

This was all that our great writer saw in those glorious and memorable years, and those who look for an apostle in every teacher, may feel that a work which was limited and superficial was only partly done. We make no such criticism. Mr. Dickens did a good and glorious work — such as no man could do in his stead.

Mr. Dickens had various gifts. He was a journalist, an actor, a dramatist, a poet, a biographer and a historian. He had amazing industry. He died in the

prime of life, and yet see how much he did! His written works would make a good library — his edited works, even daily and weekly publications for many years — in themselves the labor of a man's life. As an actor and reader, he must have given as much time as the most industrious comedian on the London stage. This intense, absorbing labor, no doubt, cost him his life. Those who met him in America saw, beneath his rugged, manly face, the marks of hard, anxious toil. The bright and blithesome, curly-headed youth who came here in 1841 was prematurely old and gray and worn. He lived a generous and easy life. This is the saddest thought about the death of Dickens. He was in the afternoon of an illustrious and glorious career. The time of rest had come — the time which came to Goethe, and Wordsworth, and Landor — a time for thought and contemplation, and some one work, perhaps, to crown and cap his edifice. But he had lived with too much intensity and he died too soon.

It is not the time — standing, as we do, over his grave and sharing in the deep sorrow which to-day fills the heart of the English-speaking world — the sorrow of millions who feel the loss of Mr. Dickens as that of a personal friend — to estimate his position in our permanent literature.

Writers of fancy and sentiment are apt to live with their generation and die with the fashions and customs in which they lived. There was no more popular novelist than Richardson, and yet his books are as dead as the men and women he described.

DeFoe has left one book which is a classic, and we may say as much of Goldsmith. Fielding gave us "Tom Jones" and Smollet "Humphrey Clinker." Beyond this, their "works" are almost forgotten. The early novelists of the nineteenth century have passed into silence. Scott remains, but with a limited and dying influence. We fear we must say as much for Disraeli and Bulwer.

Thackeray seems to gain with every year (there is no such book as "Vanity Fair!") and although Dickens has passed through two generations, his works were never more popular than to-day.

Much of what he has done will, no doubt, share the silence and neglect that have come upon most of the books of Fielding and Scott, but we are greatly at fault in our estimate of his labor, if the time will ever come when the English world will cease to regard with classic veneration the "Pickwick Papers" and "Nicholas Nickleby."

DICKENS IN AMERICA



From: *The Outlook* V.98 May 20, 1911 p.109-113

By Thomas Wentworth Higginson

This article, written in view of the approaching centenary of Charles Dickens's birth, was one of the last pieces of literary work from the pen of Colonel Higginson, who died at his home in Cambridge on May 9. Elsewhere in this number of *The Outlook* will be found some estimate of Colonel Higginson's place in American life and literature. — The Editors.

One of the most vivid remembrances of my Harvard College life, now some seventy years away, was that time when my elder brother came home one afternoon from his modest office in Boston and burst upon us in our Cambridge parlor with the words: "There is a new book from England, about which every one in Boston is talking, and it has such an odd name — 'The Pickwick Papers, by Boz.'" Upon this there was a cry of wonder at a name so strange. Then my aunt, Mrs. Francis Channing — grandmother of the present Sir Francis Channing, in the British House of Commons — a lady who had just arrived from England, cried out: "Is it possible! Has the name of 'Boz' reached America?" In fact, the word "Boz" had come earlier than that of "Pickwick;" and there was another personage, Sam Weller, whose name had already inspired more enthusiasm than either. Then we began to wonder whether this great wizard, Boz, would ever be wafted across the Atlantic, and make his characters move and breathe on American soil.

It was some time, however, before the fulfillment of this vision. The event was on a bleak winter night in the year 1842, when the young English author was piloted by James T. Fields to what was then the Tremont House, now supplanted by the Tremont Building. This was the great resort for newly arrived English travelers. I had relatives in what was then a private

house opposite, and from their windows we often looked with interest on foreign passengers hastily unloaded in rainy weather at the door of the hotel. James Fields, who was then but five-and-twenty or so, was always ready to receive guests, and has left this description of the visitor at that time: "Young, handsome, almost worshiped for his genius, belted round by such troops of friends as rarely ever man had." We can easily imagine "young Boz," as they still called him, joining Lord Mulgrave, his fellow-traveler on the voyage, and eagerly sallying forth, even on a winter evening, to take his first look at an American city. Boz, at least, muffled himself in a shaggy fur coat and went forth on the frozen snow, wisely keeping in the middle of the street. "We boys," says Fields, "followed cautiously behind, but near enough not to lose any of the fun." Of course the English visitors soon lost their way on emerging into Washington Street from Tremont. Dickens kept up a stream of uproarious laughter as he went swiftly forward, reading the signs on the shops, to him unutterably quaint and odd. When the two youths came out opposite the Old South Church, Dickens screamed with laughter, but Fields never, he says, succeeded in understanding just why.

My first real glimpse of Dickens, when a boy of nineteen, was at a party in Boston. I find this entry in my journal: "Rather tired for a ball, but then the idea of seeing Boz I" I went with one of the prominent Jackson family of Boston, and we were wedged in a great crowd, when we were suddenly told that Dickens was close by with Charles Sumner. Miss Jackson was pulled forward and introduced to Boz, who, after speaking to Sumner, leaned over to my companion and said, benignantly, "Not a very good corner for confidential conversation I" Then he and Sumner pushed off through the crowd.

"Miss J. became a lion at once," continues the record, and "Sarah Hale (Dr. Hale's beautiful sister) was excited because she had been introduced to Dickens and had talked to him some time." Boz was the principal subject of conversation all that winter, sometimes to my youthful chagrin,- as when I thus record walking home from a dance with a young damsel: "She insisted on talking 'Barnaby Rudge' all the way, instead of ourselves!"

To refer again to my diary, I find this entry: "February 5. Home, and found them in great excitement at having seen Boz and actually shaken hands with him in the College Library, after he had breakfasted with Mr.

Longfellow. What a glorious thing it is for a whole nation to rise up and do homage to the genius of one young man!"

The following lively account of the persecutions to which Dickens was subjected by his admirers on his first visit has never before been published, and is taken from a letter written to me by my old friend Charles Parsons, a nephew of Dr. Holmes, and dated February 3, 1842. Speaking of a walk in Cambridge, he says the soil clung "to me like the women to Boz. . . . What devilish fools — I must speak my opinion — folks are making of themselves about Boz. . . . The poor man has from 150 to 200 applications for autographs per diem, has to keep a private • secretary to do all but the signatures; shouldn't wonder if that — on an emergency. . . . Alexander [a well-known Boston artist of that day] got the privilege of taking Dickens's portrait. The ladies pressed in so to stare at him that he at last couldn't bear it, swore a big oath that he wouldn't sit there to be gazed at, and bolted for the door. He was soon obliged to bolt it, for his fair, bewitched, and bewitching tormentors rushed after the persecuted wretch to see him come out. Whether Alexander had any crackers and cheese I know not, but at any rate, he was not prepared to stand a blockade, and Boz had in time to leave his fortress and attempt to paddle. The fairy sprites were instantly at him, one seized his hand to claim the privilege, etc. 'You do me too much honor,' exclaimed the distracted author, and made a straight coat-tail for the Tremont House. . . . Really, it is too bad that he should get such an idea of the ill-breeding of our people."

Dickens made bitter complaints himself of these unfortunate attentions, but he was less annoyed on his later trip — perhaps because more carefully guarded.

I find in my diary for 1842 the following extract from a speech of Dickens's at a dinner given by the young men of Boston:

"I cannot help expressing the delight, the more than happiness, it was to me to find so strong an interest awakened, on this side of the water, in favor of that little heroine of mine, to whom your president has made allusion, who died in her youth. I had letters about that child, in England, from the dwellers in log houses among the morasses, and swamps, and densest forests, and deepest solitudes of the Far West. Many a sturdy hand, hard with the ax and spade, and browned by the summer's sun, has taken up the pen and written to me a little history of domestic joy or sorrow, always coupled, I am proud to say, with interest in that little tale, or some comfort

or happiness derived from it; and the writer has always addressed me, not as a writer of books for sale, resident some four or five thousand miles away, but a friend to whom he might freely impart the joys and sorrows of his own fireside. Many a mother — I could reckon them now by dozens, not by units — has done the like ; and has told me how she has lost such a child at such a time, and where she lay buried, and how good she was, and how, in this or that respect, she resembled Nell. I do assure you that no circumstance of my life has given me one hundredth part of the gratification I have derived from this source. I was wavering at the time whether or not to wind up my clock, and come and see this country, and this decided me. . . . And even now I have such an odd sensation in connection with these things, that you have no chance of spoiling me. . . . At every new act of kindness on your part, I say it to myself — that’s for Oliver — I should not wonder if that were meant for Smike — I have no doubt that is intended for Nell ; and so I become a much happier, certainly, but a more sober and retiring man, than ever I was before.”

The courage and independence of Dickens are shown by the attitude he took on slavery. In his “American Notes,” published after his return to England, he quotes pages of shocking paragraphs and bloodthirsty slave advertisements taken, during his first visit here, from Southern newspapers, and then exclaims: “What! shall we declaim against the ignorant peasantry of Ireland and mince the matter when these Americans taskmasters are in question? Shall we cry shame on the brutality of those who hamstring cattle and spare the lights of freedom to those who notch the ears of men and women!

“Shall we whimper over legends of the tortures practiced on each other by the pagan Indians, and smile upon the cruelties of Christian men! Shall we, so long as these things last, exult above the scattered remnants of that race, and triumph in the white enjoyment of their broad possessions? Rather, for me, restore the forest and the Indian village; in lieu of stars and stripes, let some poor feather flutter in the breeze; replace the streets and squares by wigwams; and, though the death-song of a hundred haughty warriors fill the air, it will be music to the shriek of one unhappy slave.”

Indeed. Dickens’s desire to be useful was unlimited, and Daniel Webster, while in England, declared that the novelist had done more to help the condition of the English poor than all the statesmen in Parliament.

The enthusiasm which met the announcement of another visit to America in November, 1867, was hardly less exuberant, our people having forgotten, in their joy at greeting the great writer, their soreness over his sharp criticisms of American peculiarities. But it is always to be remembered that Dickens said nothing about Americans more unpleasant than he had previously said about his own countrymen.

At the time of his second visit I heard Dickens read, and find my impression recorded in this letter dated at Newport, Rhode Island, December 29, 1867:

“My Dear Sisters — I have been away again lecturing, Thursday night at Salem, and Friday at Lexington, and now am settled for the winter, my lecturing pretty much ended. This is why I did not write to you sooner about Dickens, whom I heard with Una [Hawthorne] on Christmas Eve.

“I enjoyed it as much as I originally expected. Our seats were admirable — the Fields bench — and Sam Longfellow sat by me. I think this explains half the dissent about his readings — people far off must miss so much. It was a sort of comic Fanny Kemble, the transformation of face and voice equaling hers — falling short of her in all high pathos, but having the advantage of narrative or recitative parts, which she has not, and which he made as good as anything. The ‘Christmas Carol’ and ‘Pickwick Trial’ were read, and the narratives of the Cratchet dinner and the Fezziwigs’ ball were as good as any of the dialogue. The ghostly part of the ‘Carol,’ which I always thought poor, became effective and Hamlet-like in his hands. In this Scrooge and Bob Cratchet were perfectly individualized; in the Trial the lawyers all, and Mr. Winkle. Sam Weller seemed nothing to me, though Fields said better than ever before! Some of the best characters (as with Mrs. Kemble) are those which only appear once or twice, with their individuality fixed forever — as the foolish juryman in the Trial who asks for the date — such a face of eager fussy triviality; and again the two merchants who talk on ‘Change about Scrooge’s death. This seemed to me the crowning triumph. I should have supposed that only Shakespeare and Fanny Kemble could endow with equal life the slightest and most elaborate portraiture.

“His face, though thin, is clear, and his magnetism irresistible for comedy — a single epithet set all in convulsions. But whenever he tried pathos beyond a certain point — only once, though, in Tiny Tim’s death — he failed; as do all, I think, except Fanny Kemble, and, notably, Booth.

“Dickens is much smaller than I expected, slim and quick and birdlike — like my impression of Tom Moore; he looks insignificant, but that his head is fine and well placed. There is nothing flashy or vulgar about him, which I feared. The Fields both praise him highly in private. Fields says he is not coarse and vulgar in talk, like Thackeray, and told stories of his great kindness, and says he is amusing beyond compare, as he imitates everybody. Dickens has a report merely that Browning and Jean Ingelow are to marry, but Fields disbelieves it. I have not met Dickens.”

It must be remembered that this visit happened nearly fifty years ago, when comparatively few Americans had crossed the Atlantic or come into contact with English life and customs. It was said that the readings were more successful in New York than in Boston, because the applause of New York audiences was instantaneous. Possibly Boston audiences were less responsive then than now, although, when we remember how Boston people stood in line all through the coldest winter nights to obtain tickets to these readings, we can be sure that there was no real lack of enthusiasm.

Fields was doubtless right in applying to Dickens what was said of Garrick, that he was the cheerfulest man of his age, and his jollity was contagious. As Carlyle said, “he was a whole theater.” It is told of a little dinner given by Dickens in Boston, that his dramatic and comic representations so convulsed his guests with laughter that in sheer exhaustion they broke up the gathering to “save their lives.”

One of the best tributes to Dickens’s fame is the way in which he has been quoted by other authors, who have lavishly used his characters and incidents to illustrate their own text. He came upon the scene when the exaggerated, emotional tendency flourished in literature. All this seemed blown away in an instant by the first appearance of Sam Weller upon the scene. Dickens himself bore marked traces of the very epidemic he banished, and his Little Pauls were the last survival of the sentimental period. Nevertheless, it was he more than any one else who exorcised it; and whatever its merits, he rendered the world a service in that act of grace.

He produced a long and rapid series of fiction, each individual book standing by itself and each quite outside the world of fashion and society, material with which few before Dickens had dealt. It was all most un-English; for instance, his only conspicuous nobleman was called by the contemptuous name of Lord Verisopht; yet he made in all a series of books absolutely new, whether in style or social atmosphere, and he rarely called

on great historical events for material. He so refrained from using the prevailing English class of subjects that I myself remember hearing Lord Houghton criticising him for it at a dinner in London many years later. Countless novels are full of the enjoyment of wealth; but how many celebrate the joys of poverty? The pride of its little prudences, the joy of its wholesome abstinences, the magnificent delight of its occasional holidays — who but Dickens ever described them? Who but his little Jacob ever knew what oysters were, or really saw a play? His earnestness of work is illustrated by his preparation for

the “Tale of Two Cities,” when he persuaded Carlyle to send him all his reference books on the French Revolution, and he read them until he knew them by heart.

The time came when I was to be personally bound to Dickens, through a tie quite unknown perhaps to him, on his second busy visit to this country. This was through a neatly printed little book bearing his name alone, yet which I was employed by Ticknor & Fields, his exclusive publishers in this country, to prepare. This was called “Child Pictures from Dickens,” and was based on extracts from his books. I have the only copy ever seen by me. Its successive chapters bore the titles of “Little Nell,” “The Marchioness,” “Paul and Florence,” “The Fat Boy,” “Tiny Tim,” “Smike,” and “Oliver Twist,” and it was well illustrated by the younger Eytinge, then prominent as an illustrator, under the superintendence of A. V. S. Anthony. It contained a brief preface from Dickens himself, which was dated November, 1867, the month in which he reached America, although the book had been chiefly prepared before he sailed from Europe. I find in my note-book this reference to it: “Have worked on ‘Child Pictures’ at night also.” This haste was doubtless necessary in order to have the book ready for Christmas sale at the time of Dickens’s visit.

In writing to my sisters I find recorded:

“I have been very busy, especially with the ‘Child Pictures from Dickens,’ which are now ready. ... In doing this [work] I have been very much struck with the superiority of Tiny Tim over his other pathetic pictures of children. It is the only one in which there is no trace of effort or sentimentality.” And later I have written: “He liked my selections for ‘Child Pictures’ well enough, I believe, but made the suggestion that some descriptions of eminent children should be added from his ‘Child’s History of England,’ which Fields and I thought unwise.”

It is sometimes said that young people no longer read Dickens. If this be true, I can only say, "So much the worse for the young people." To us of an older generation, how many of his characters were real beings; and what an excitement it was when we first went to England and met their counterparts on the London streets! I still remember with what glee a newly arrived member of my family wrote from Chester: "Every evening Tilly Slowboy comes out and stands under our window with her small charge; and yesterday I saw Quilp!"

In a note lately written to me by Mrs. Fields, referring to the all-absorbing interest and excitement of Dickens's second visit to America, she reminds me that during those overcrowded months the ordinary habits and occupations of his friends were brushed aside, "until the human hurricane had swept past." And she well adds, "The sense of genius could not be more forcibly felt than in the hurrying flight of this great spirit."

EXTRACT FROM “*Pen Photographs of Charles Dickens’s Readings, Taken from Life*”



by Kate Field, Loring Publisher, Boston, 1868

PREFACE.

To connect this little book with the art of Photography, by even the slight link of a title, may be considered presumptuous; but when it is remembered that the best photographs fail to do justice to their originals, and that the most interesting subjects generally receive the worst treatment, I hope to be exonerated from so grave a charge. The following pages were inspired solely by one sentiment, — that of gratitude. Their publication is induced by the hope of clinching the recollection of Mr. Dickens’s Readings in the minds of many; and, more particularly, of giving to those who have not had the good fortune to hear them, some faint outline of a rare pleasure, the like of which will ne’er come to us again. If I fail to realize this hope — I fail.

THE AUTHOR.

**PEN PHOTOGRAPHS
OF
Charles Dickens’s Readings**

I.

THE DESK AND THE READER.

One glance at the platform is sufficient to convince the audience that Mr. Dickens thoroughly appreciates “stage effect.” A large screen of maroon cloth occupies the background; before it stands a light table of peculiar design, on the inner left-hand corner of which there peers forth a miniature

desk, large enough to accommodate the reader's book. On the right hand of the table, and somewhat below its level, is a shelf, where repose a carafe of water and a tumbler. 'Tis "a combination and a form indeed," covered with velvet somewhat lighter in color than the screen. No drapery conceals the table, whereby it is plain that Mr. Dickens believes in expression of figure as well as of face, and does not throw away everything but his head and arms, according to the ordinary habit of ordinary speakers. About twelve feet above the platform, and somewhat in advance of the table, is a horizontal row of gas-jets with a tin reflector; and midway in both perpendicular gas-pipes there is one powerful jet with glass chimney. By this admirable arrangement, Mr. Dickens stands against a dark background in a frame of gas-light which throws out his face and figure to the best advantage. With the book "Dickens" stranded on the little desk, the comedian, Dickens, can transform a table into a stage, and had the great novelist concluded at the last moment not to appear before us, this ingenious apparatus would have taught us a lesson in the art of reading.

He comes! A lithe, energetic man, of medium stature, crosses the platform at the brisk gait of five miles an hour, and takes his position behind the table. This is Charles Dickens, whose name has been a household word in England and America for thirty years; whose books have been the joy and solace of many a weary heart and head. A first glance disappointed me. I thought I should prefer to have him entirely unlike himself; but when I began to speculate on how Charles Dickens ought to look, I gave the matter up, and wisely concluded that nature knew her own intentions better than any one else. Mr. Dickens has a broad, full brow, a fine head, — which, for a man of such power and energy, is singularly small at the base of the brain, — and a cleanly cut profile.

There is a slight resemblance between Mr. Dickens and Louis Napoleon in the latter respect, owing mainly to the nose; but it is unnecessary to add that the faces of the two men are totally different. Mr. Dickens's eyes are light-blue, and his mouth and jaw, without having any claim to beauty, possess a strength that is not concealed by the veil of iron-gray mustache and generous' imperial. His head is but slightly graced with iron-gray hair, and his complexion is florid.

If any one thinks to obtain an accurate idea of Mr. Dickens from the photographs that flood the country, he is mistaken. He will see Mr. Dickens's clothes, Mr. Dickens's features, as they appear when "Nicholas

Nickleby” is in the act of knocking down “Mr. Wackford Squeers;” but he will not see what makes Mr. Dickens’s face attractive; the geniality and expression that his heart and brain put into it. In his photographs Mr. Dickens looks as if, previous to posing, he had been put under an exhausted receiver and had had his soul pumped out of him. This process is no beautifier. Therefore if any one has not been able to judge for himself, let him believe that Mr. Dickens’s face is capable of wonderfully varied expression. Hence it is the best sort of face. There is a twinkle in the eye, that, like a promissory note, pledges itself to any amount of fun — within sixty minutes. After seeing this twinkle I was satisfied with Mr. Dickens’s appearance, and became resigned to the fact of his not resembling the Apollo Belvedere. One thing is certain, — that if he did resemble this classical young gentleman, he never could have written one of his novels. Laying this flattering unction to my soul I listen.

II.

“THE CHRISTMAS CAROL.”

“Ladies And Gentlemen, — I have the honor to read to you A Christmas Carol in four staves. Stave one, Marley’s Ghost. Marley was dead. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge’s name was good upon ‘Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.”

At the close of this paragraph the critic beside me, whispers: “Mr. Dickens’s voice is limited in power, husky, and naturally monotonous. If he succeeds in overcoming these defects, it will be by dramatic genius.” I begin to take a gloomy view of the situation, and wonder why Mr. Dickens constantly employs the rising inflexion, and never comes to a full stop; but we are so pleasantly and naturally, introduced to “Scrooge,” that my spirits revive. “Foul weather didn’t know where to have him. The heaviest rain and snow and hail and sleet could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect, — they often’ came down’ handsomely, and Scrooge never did.” Here the magnetic current between reader and listener sets in, and when “Scrooge’s “ clerk “put on his white comforter and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of strong imagination, he failed,” the connection is tolerably well established. I see old “ Scrooge,”

very plainly, growling and snarling at his pleasant nephew, and when that nephew invites that uncle to eat a Christmas dinner with him, and Mr. Dickens says that “ Scrooge “ said “that he would see him — yes, I am very sorry to say he did, — he went the whole length of the expression, and said he would see him in that extremity, first,” — he makes one dive at our sense of humor and takes it captive. Mr. Dickens is “ Scrooge;” he is the two portly gentlemen on a mission of charity; he is twice “ Scrooge “ when, upon one of the portly gentlemen remarking that many poor people would rather die than go to the work-house, he replies, “If they decrease the surplus population;” and thrice “Scrooge” when, turning upon his clerk, he says, “You’ll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?” It is the incarnation of a hard-hearted, hard-fisted, hard-voiced miser.

“If quite convenient, sir.” A few words, but they denote “Bob Cratchit” in three feet of comforter exclusive of fringe, in well-darned, thread-bare clothes, with a mild, frightened voice, so thin that you can see through it!

Then there comes the change when “Scrooge” upon going home “saw in the Knock, Marley’s face!” Of course “Scrooge” saw it, because the expression of Mr. Dickens’s face makes me see it, “with a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar.” There is good acting in this scene, and there is fine acting when the dying flame leaps up as though it cried, “I know him! Marley’s ghost!” With what gusto Mr. Dickens reads that description of “Marley,” and how, “looking through this waistcoat, ‘Scrooge’ could see the two buttons on his coat behind;” and how “Scrooge” would persist in doubting his senses because “Marley” might be “an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There’s more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are.” It is excellent, and at the conclusion of Stave One, my friend, the critic, and I say, “Mr. Dickens is an actor.”

Nothing can be better than the rendering of the “Fezziwig” party in Stave Two. You behold “Scrooge” gradually melting into humanity; “Scrooge” as a joyous apprentice; that model of employers, “Fezziwig;” “ Mrs. Fezziwig” “ one vast substantial smile,” and all the “Fezziwigs.” Mr. Dickens’s expression, as he relates how “ in came the house-maid with her cousin the baker, and in came the cook with her brother’s particular friend the milkman,” is delightfully comic, while his complete rendering of that dance where “ all were top couples at last, and not a bottom one to help them,” is owing to the inimitable action of his hands. They actually perform

upon the table, as if it were the floor of “Fezziwig’s” room, and every finger were a leg belonging to one of the “Fezziwig” family. This feat is only surpassed by Mr. Dickens’s illustration of Sir Roger De Coverley, as interpreted by “Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig,” when “a positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig’s calves,” and he “cut so deftly that he appeared to wink with his legs!” It is a maze of humor. Before the close of the stave, “Scrooge’s” horror at sight of the young girl once loved by him and put aside for gold, shows that Mr. Dickens’s power is not purely comic.

Ah, but the best of all is Stave Three. I distinctly see that “Cratchit” family. There are the potatoes that “knocked loudly at the saucepan lid to be let out and peeled;” there is “Mrs. Cratchit,” fluttering and cackling like a motherly hen with a young brood of chickens; and there’ is everybody. The way those two young “Cratchits” hail “Martha” and exclaim, “There’s such a goose, Martha!” can never be forgotten. By some prestidigitation, Mr. Dickens takes off his own head and puts on a “Cratchit’s.” Later, “Bob Cratchit” and “Tiny Tim” come in. Assuredly it is “Bob’s” thin voice that pipes out, “Why, where’s our Martha?” and it is “Mrs. Cratchit” who shakes her head and replies, “Not coming!” But murder will out; and then, “Bob” relates “how Tiny Tim “ behaved;” as good as gold and better.” Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember, upon Christmas day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see. There is a volume of pathos in these words, which are the most delicate and artistic rendering of the whole reading.

Ah, that Christmas dinner! I feel as if I were eating every morsel of it. There are “the two young Cratchits,” who “crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn;” there is Tiny Tim, who “beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried, ‘Hooray,’“ in such a still, small voice. And there is that goose! I see it with my naked eye. And O, the pudding! “A smell like a washing day!

That was the cloth. A smell like- an eating-house and a pastry-cook’s next door to each other, with a laundress’s next door to that! That was the pudding!” Mr. Dicken’s sniffing and smelling of that pudding would make a starving family believe-that they had swallowed it, holly and all. It is infectious.

What Mr. Dickens does is very frequently infinitely better than anything he says, or the way he says it; yet the doing is as delicate and intangible as the odor of violets, and can be no better described. Nothing of its kind can be more touchingly beautiful than the manner in which “Bob Cratchit” — previous to proposing “ a merry Christmas to us all, my dears, God bless us “ — stoops down, with tears in his eyes, and places “Tiny Tim’s” withered little hand in his, “as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.” It is pantomime worthy of-the finest actor.

Admirable is “Mrs. Cratchit’s” ungracious drinking to “Scrooge’s” health, and “Martha’s” telling how she had seen a lord, and how he “was much about as tall as Peter!”

It is a charming cabinet picture, and so likewise is the glimpse of Christmas at “Scrooge’s” nephew’s. The plump sister is “satisfactory, O perfectly satisfactory,” and “Topper” is a magnificent fraud on the understanding; a side-splitting fraud. I see Fred get off the sofa and stamp at his own fun, and I hear the plump sister’s voice when she guesses the wonderful riddle, “It’s your uncle Scro-o-o-o-oge!” Altogether, Mr. Dickens is better than any comedy.

What a change in Stave Four! There sit the gray-haired rascal, “old Joe,” with his crooning voice; “Mrs. Dilber,” and those robbers of dead men’s shrouds; there lies the body of the plundered unknown man; there sit the “Cratchits” weeping over “Tiny Tim’s “ death, a scene that would be beyond all praise were “Bob’s” cry, “My little, little child!” a shade less dramatic. Here, and only here, Mr. Dickens forgets the nature of “Bob’s “ voice, and employs all the power of his own, carried away apparently by the situation. “Bob” would not thus give way to his feelings. Finally there is “Scrooge,” no longer a miser, but a human being, screaming at the “conversational” boy in Sunday clothes, to buy him the prize Turkey “that never could have stood upon his legs, that bird. Ha would have snapped ‘em off in a minute, like sticks of sealing-wax.” There is “Bob Cratchit” behind time, trying “to overtake nine o’clock “ that fled fifteen minutes before; there is “Scrooge” poking “Bob” in the ribs, and vowing he will raise his salary; and there is at last happiness for all, as “ Tiny Tim” exclaims, “God bless us every one!”

I do not see how “The Christmas Carol” can be read and acted better. The only improvement possible is in “The Ghosts,” who are perhaps too

monotonous; a way ghosts have when they return to earth. It is generally believed that ghosts, being “damp, moist, uncomfortable bodies,” lose their voices beyond redemption and are obliged to pipe through eternity on one key. I am at a loss to see the wisdom of this hypothesis. Solemnity and monotony are not synonymous terms, yet every theatrical ghost insists that they are, and Mr. Dickens is no exception to the rule. If monotony is excusable in any one, however, it is in him; for when one actor is obliged to represent twenty-three different characters, giving to every one an individual tone, he may be pardoned if his ghosts are not colloquial.

Talk of sermons and churches! There never was a more beautiful sermon than this of “The Christmas Carol.” Sacred names do not necessarily mean sacred things.

III.

“DAVID COPPERFIELD.”

Nothing is more unjust than severe criticism of an artist heard or seen but once. Mr. Dickens’s first rendering of “David Copperfield,” disappointed me sadly in the more serious portions, and had I been obliged to give an opinion then and there, I should have declared that his tragedy wanted force, and that his description of the shipwreck at Yarmouth lacked vividness and intensity. Second and third hearings proved to me that Mr. Dickens depends upon the sympathy of his audiences for inspiration, and does not do himself full justice, unless warmly supported by them. This dependence is especially apparent in “David Copperfield,” which is undoubtedly the most difficult, and most exhausting of Mr. Dickens’s five readings, — being the most dramatic. I write of the reader at his best.

Ordinarily, descriptions are “most tolerable and not to be endured.” In novels the eye blinks at them, and rushes off in pursuit of dialogue. In hearing them read, the ear stops itself with imaginary cotton until the plot thickens and somebody says something to somebody else. But with Boz all signs fail. You cannot possibly overlook his descriptions if you would. He runs his pen through the heart of a fact so dexterously, — after the manner of naturalists, — that it lies before you in all its length, breadth, and local coloring, and you can no more ignore it than you can ignore sunshine. Attractive then as Mr. Dickens’s descriptions are in reading, they become

doubly so when read by him. Without being an orator, possessing (as has been previously stated) a naturally monotonous voice, he, by the keen appreciation of his own meaning and by a most original emphasis, develops every possibility of his text, and what was previously latent stands out in bold relief. It did not take me long to discover that "Dickens," however familiar, becomes a revelation when interpreted by the author.

Thus when Mr. Dickens begins his reading of "David Copperfield" with the description of the interior of Mr. Peggotty's boat-house, I realize that I have never before had a good look at the walls whereon "were colored pictures of Abraham in red going to sacrifice Isaac in blue, and of Daniel in yellow, being cast into a den of green lions." I never clearly saw "Mrs. Gummidge" until I looked, into his face, and heard her declare that she was "a lone, lorn creetur, and everythink went contrairy with her." It is the look and querulous voice of the good old grumbling soul. Soon we are in the presence of generous, genial "Mr. Peggotty," who grows quite red in the face with delight at shaking hands with "Copperfield," and "Steerforth," and chucks "little Em'ly" under his arm just as if she were there to be chucked. In his broad, hearty, tarpaulin voice, he joyfully and simply tells of "Ham's" courtship, concluding with those mighty blows upon "Ham's" imaginary shoulders that make us wonder how Mr. Dickens can poke the air so naturally as to make us believe it to be "Ham." Yet surely this is "Ham," bashful, rubbing his hands with emotion, and, with a tear in his voice, saying, "I'd lay down my life for her, Mas'r Davy, — oh, most content and cheerful. There aint a gentleman in all the land, nor yet a sailing upon all the sea, that can love his lady more than I love her, though there's many a common man as could say better what he meant." Childlike, noble-hearted "Ham!" child-like saving in' the kiss Mr. Dickens wafts after "Em'ly," wherein there is more of the salon than of the boat-house.

"Mr. Peggotty," says "Steerforth," "you are a thoroughly good fellow and deserve to be as happy as you are to-night, my hand upon it. Ham, I give you joy, my boy. My hand upon that, too!" Mr. Dickens's change of intonation and expression in addressing the father and son, is striking, but I am inclined to think too striking, for had "Steerforth" exhibited the hatred of "Ham" that darkens Mr. Dickens's face it could not have passed unnoticed. It is a hatred that admirably suits "Steerforth" when later he calls "Ham" "a chuckle-headed fellow" and vehemently rails at himself "in that devil's bark of a boat," but not before. Ah, "Steerforth," other actors may

interpret you better, but I doubt whether any one can equal the solemn yet tender sorrow with which Mr. Dickens as “Copperfield” exclaims, “O God forgive you, Steerforth, to touch that passive hand in love and friendship, never, never more!” It is a sigh from a heavy, heavy heart.

First, in Chapter Second, is that second glimpse of fretful “Mrs. Gummidge,” who is as complete a character as if she were a whole play, and then Mr. Dickens again becomes old “Mr. Peggotty.” There never was more rough-shod naïveté than his when he calls himself a “babby in regard o’ Em’ly; not to look at, but to — to consider on, you know,” and thinks his beautiful love for his little niece must be “along of my havin’ played with Em’ly so much when she was a child, and havin’ made believe as we was lions, and whales, and sharks, and French, and Turks, and porpuses, and every variety of forriners.” We could listen to the simple prattle of this overflowing heart all the evening; but alas! the pleasant comedy must give way to drama. Quickly the scene changes. Here is “Ham,” with horrorstricken face, whispering that “Em’ly’s run away; “ here is “Copperfield” reading in a plaintive voice “Em’ly’s” touching letter to her old lover. Dazed and stunned, the loved and loving uncle asks in a gruff voice, “Who’s the man? I want to know his name.” Poor “Ham”! “It is your friend, Steerforth,” he says to “Copperfield” with concentrated emotion, “and he’s a damned villain!” Is this caged lion thirsting for vengeance upon “Em’ly’s” seducer the genial soul of a minute ago? I see “Mr. Peggotty” pull down his great-coat from its peg in the corner and struggle to put it on as he cries out, “Bear a hand with this! I’m struck of a heap, and can’t do it;” and as his mind wanders in the agonized refrain, “ I’m going fur to seek my niece. I’m going fur to seek my Em’ly. No one stop me! I’m going to seek her fur and wide!” — who could have believed that in fretful “Mrs. Gummidge” “Mr. Peggotty “ had cherished unawares an angel of peace that would bring comfort to his bruised soul in its hour of trial? Yet it is even so, and here she stands, her trembling hands affectionately stroking “ Dan’l,” her querulous voice softened, reproaching herself for ever having been a “ worrit,” and gradually soothing the old man to tears.’

How Mr. Dickens can pass from grave to gay without a moment’s pause is a problem difficult to solve. He does, however; and while eyes are still dimmed by the sad scene in the boat-house, we find ourselves laughing heartily at “David Copperfield” in his “top set of chambers in Buckingham Street Strand,” where he “ lived principally on Dora and coffee,” and at

which ecstatic era of his existence he “laid the foundation of all the corns he ever had.” “If the boots at that period,” declares “Copperfield,” in a tone that is Dickens’s own, and nobody’s else, “could only be produced and compared with the natural size of my feet, they would show in a most affecting manner what the state of my heart was.” More ridiculous still is “Mrs. Crupp,” the housekeeper, whose voice and facial expression are as good farce acting as humanity deserves. If her manner of asking for “a little tincture of cardamums, mixed with rhubarb, and flavored with seven drops of the essence of cloves; or, if he had not such a thing by him, with a little brandy,” could be impossibly caught, transfixed, and perpetuated forever, so that everybody might have it in the house and take it whenever a depressed state of the market or of individual finances required, it would harden many a softening brain and materially decrease the number of suicides. Mrs. Dickens Crupp, or Mrs. Crupp Dickens, whichever she may be, is a fascinating woman. “What makes you suppose there is any young lady in the case, Mrs. Crupp?” asks “Copperfield.”

It is worth a day’s imprisonment, with Tupper’s Proverbial Philosophy as an article of diet, to hear “Mrs. Crupp’s” reply:

“Mr. Copperfull, I’m a mother myself. Your boots and your waist is equally too small, and you don’t eat enough, sir, nor yet drink. Sir, I have laundressed other young gentlemen besides you. It was but the gentleman who died here before yourself that fell in love, — with a bar-maid, — and had his waistcoats took in directly, though much swelled by drinking. Keep a good heart, sir, and know your value. If you was to take to something, sir, — if you was to take to nine-pins now, which is a werry healthy game, — you might find it divert your mind and do you good.”

Well, “Mrs. Crupp” no sooner makes her exit than “Copperfield” greets his friends, the “Micawbers,” and “Traddles.” Traddles says but three words, “Not at all,” during the entire visit; nevertheless three words are quite enough for Mr. Dickens to make a man out of, and “Traddles” is no myth, but a confiding human being, with a propensity to eat his own fingers. “Traddles” is “not at all,” and “not at all” is “Traddles.”

In “Micawber,” Mr. Dickens undergoes quite as much of a transformation as if he enjoyed a patent-right to the necromancer’s “Presto, change.” I see him “swelling wisibly before my wery eyes,” as he tips backward and forward, first on his heels and then on his toes. Before he stops swelling, he becomes just about the size of our ideal “Micawber;” his face, quite

apoplectic in hue, is fenced in by a wall of shirt-collar; he twirls his eye-glass with peculiar grace, and when he exclaims, "My dear Copperfield, this is lux-u-rious; this is a way of life which reminds me of the period when I was myself in a state of celibacy," — nearly choking himself to death before he arrives at "a state of celibacy," — the picture is complete. It is "Micawber" in "one of those momentous stages in the life of man," when he has "fallen back for a spring," and, previous to "a vigorous leap," is quite ready to fortify himself and the dearest partner of his greatness with a bachelor dinner and punch. "Micawber's" "waiting for things to "turn up; "his eloquent tribute to "the influence of Woman in the lofty character of Wife; "his magnificent trifling with the word "Discount;" and the all pervading cough, as inseparable from his speech as oxygen from air, are delectable.

Mr. Dickens could no more be "Micawber" without that cough than "Micawber" could have ever been at all without Mr. Dickens. It is the salt that gives the character savor. None but a great man misunderstood ever had such a propensity to choke. And when "Mr. Micawber" does cough, the two lapels of hair brushed above Mr. Dickens's ears, appear to be drawn by capillary attraction towards the sentiments spoken, and, waxing rampant, nod approvingly, as if to say, "just so." Neither cough nor lapels are to be found in the text, but when did finite words ever express a man's soul?

"Mr. Micawber" is so great a man that it is hardly possible for "Mrs. Micawber" to be a greater. Nevertheless, she is. Those lapels subside, and "Mrs. Micawber" sits before you, sipping her punch, smoothing her hair, "comparatively lovely," as "Copperfield" remarks, and blandly discusses "Mr. Micawber's" prospects. To describe the indescribable is absurd; yet it must not go unrecorded that "Mrs. Micawber's" sublimest moment is reached when she heroically remarks: "That, at least, is my view, my dear Mr. Copperfield and Mr. Traddles, of the obligation which I took upon myself when I repeated the irrevocable words, 'I, Emma, take thee, Wilkins.* I read the service over with a bedroom candle, on the previous night, and the conclusion I derived from it was, that I never could or would desert Mr. Micawber.'" As she utters these words, "Mrs. Micawber" is not to be trifled with. There is a determination in her eye that is equal to any amount of opposition; yet, if possible, her courage takes still another flight, and her mien becomes still more majestic in her final answer to -her final argument: "And here is Mr. Micawber without any suitable position or employment. Where does that responsibility rest? Clearly on society. Then I

would make a fact so disgraceful known, and boldly challenge society to set it right. It appears to me, my dear Mr. Copperfield, that what Mr. Micawber has to do is to throw down the gauntlet to society, and say, in effect, ‘ Show me who will take that up. Let the party immediately step forward.’“ Why the party does not immediately step forward, the party alone can explain, for “Mrs. Micawber” has her eye on him, and looks as -if the secrets of his prison-house were no secrets at all to her, and that the perennial employment of “Mr. Micawber,” on remunerative terms, would be but slight compensation for her discreet silence.

Then the account of that dinner! Language is usually thrown away upon readers; it is snubbed unmercifully, as if every word wore the same hue instead of being possessed of a peculiar coloring, which is shaded however according to situation. Mr. Dickens is an artist, and, therefore, never takes language in vain. He embraces every opportunity; hence, when he tells us that “the pigeon pie was not bad, but it was a delusive pie, the crust being like a disappointed phrenological head, — full of lumps and bumps, with nothing particular underneath!” that adjective “delusive” prepares us for all the good things to come. It takes aim and fires at the pie, bringing down pigeons, crust, and all.

The pie no sooner disappears than merriment ceases and “Mr. Peggotty” in all his noble simplicity relates to Copperfield “how he went through France “fur to seek his niece.” “ And many a woman Mas’r Davy, as has had a daughter about Em’ly’s age, I’ve found awaiting for me, at our Saviour’s cross outside the village, fur to do me sim’lar kindnesses. Some has had daughters as was dead. And God only knows how good them mothers was to me!” Tears? yes, tears are in the old sailor’s eyes, and he is not the only one who brushes them away. “I never doubted her. No! Not a bit! On’y let her see my face, — on’y let her heer my voice, — on’y let my stanning afore her bring to her thoughts of the home she fled away from, and the child she had been, — and if she had growed to be a royal lady, she’d have fell down at my feet!” What a lesson of love and charity is taught in these few solemn words and that expressive gesture of the arm! “. All that troubles me is, to think that any harm might come to me afore this money was give back. If I was to die, and it was lost or stole, or elseways made away with, and it was never know’d by him but what I’d accepted of it, I believe the t’other world wouldn’t hold me! I believe I must come back!” Grand, old “Mr. Peggotty” (for it is he, not Mr. Dickens that speaks),

well may everything be hushed in reverence as you step out into the rigorous night, for there is harbored within your breast an angel of the Lord.

The snow has suddenly ceased to fall, and all is again sunshine. "Copperfield "is steeped in" Dora," and romantically calling on the night to shield his "Dora" "from mice, to which she had a great objection." There are not many more delightful comedies than this short scene at "Miss Mills's." On the stage, "Miss Mills" would be a silly supernumerary, in a doubtful white muslin dress, with no more idea of the importance of her one little remark than a dejected canary-bird has of the importance of specie payment. But the art with which Mr. Dickens rescues the most trifling character from obscurity is positively marvellous. When "Miss Mills" is "very sorry her papa is not at home," that young lady proves herself to be an admirable actress. The love-making between "Dora" and "Copperfield" is perfect; so is the little dog "Jip," although he does nothing but bark. When "Copperfield" asks "Dora" if she can love a beggar, and she begins to cry an-1 "take on" and wants to go to "Julia Mills," and "Copperfield" ravages a work-box for a smelling-bottle and applies an ivory needle-case instead, and drops all the needles over "Dora; " and when at last the pretty doll is soothed and her lover asks, "Is your heart mine still, dear Dora?"

"O, yes! O, yes! it's all yours. Only* don't be dreadful! Don't talk about beggars!"

"My dearest love, the crusts well-earned — "

"O, yes; but I don't want to hear any more about crusts. And after we are married, Jip must have a mutton chop every day at twelve, or he'll die!" — Mr. Dickens is so funny that any one who loves humor as tenaciously as most people love their lives, feels deeply indebted to him.

"O, because I am such a little goose, and she knows I am!" she being "Mary Anne," the servant who had " a cousin in the Life Guards, with such long legs that he looked like the afternoon shadow of somebody else!" Well, into that short sentence and in its accompanying expression, Mr. Dickens condenses the whole of "Copperfield's" "Child-wife," — yet not the whole, for the pretty little creature has a heart full of love for her husband, and signs her own death warrant as she says with plaintive sentiment, "When you miss what you would like mo to be, and what I think-1 never can be, say 'Still my foolish child-wife loves me.' For indeed I do."

But trippings of the tongue are soon forgotten in the storm raging at Yarmouth that terrible September night; in the appearance off the coast next morning of a shipwrecked schooner from Spain or Portugal; in the mad frenzy of the sea; in the daring of the solitary man who wears a singular red cap that he waves while clinging to the mast, and who was the once dear friend, — “Steerforth”; in the sublime courage of “Ham,” who “watched the sea until there was a great retiring wave, when he dashed in after it. . . . At length he neared the wreck. He was so near, that with one more of his vigorous strokes he would be clinging to it, when a high, green, vast hill-side of water moving on shoreward from beyond the ship, he seemed to leap up into it with a mighty bound, — and the ship was gone!”

With the going down of that ship, — with the solemn, significant nod of the fisherman who leads “Copperfield” to the shore where “Steerforth” lies “with his head upon his arm as he had often lain at school,” — all doubt as to Mr. Dickens’s tragic power is at an end. Thrilling as this fine description is in reading, it becomes still more so when recited by the author; yet it is no ill compliment to him to say that it is capable of still greater effect, the scene admits of wonderful scope for a mighty voice and mighty action.

Take it for all in all “David Copperfield” is an extraordinary performance. On the stage fine actors might render “Steerforth” and “Copperfield” better, and might do as much justice to “Mr. Peggotty” and “Ham.” A fine actress might throw more pathos into “Emily’s” letter; but “Mrs. Crupp,” “Mr. and Mrs. Micawber,” “Traddles,” “Dora” and “Julia Mills” are incomparable, and no one actor living can embody the twelve characters of this reading with the individuality given them by Mr. Dickens, unaided too as he is by theatrical illusion. Few realize what a triumph of art it is to overcome the chilling and depressing influence of the lecture-room.

IV.

“NICHOLAS NICKLEBY AT THE YORKSHIRE SCHOOL.”

It is strange, inasmuch as no English novelist, living or dead, has created so many dramatic pictures, that more of Mr. Dickens’s novels have not been put upon the stage. Born an actor, Mr. Dickens regards everything from a dramatic stand-point. Even in reading, you see his characters talk. So natural is his dialogue, that whole scenes may be taken from his books for

private theatricals, without any adaptation whatever. They will play themselves, provided the amateurs are endowed with ordinary intelligence, and it is whispered in Gath that private theatricals are the severest test to which any literary work can be put. This power is peculiarly Dickensesque, and certainly other novelists could not publicly interpret their own works with similar effect. They may read skilfully from the poets, or they may gracefully deliver lectures, as Thackeray once did, but their novels are constructed on entirely different principles, and though they be as blood-freezing as Wilkie Collins's "Woman in White," they cannot possibly be set before an audience after the manner of Dickens. It is in the nature of Dickens to hold the mirror up to nature on the stage.

That wonderfully knowing person, Monsieur On Dit, who is perpetually "cooling his eyes" and ears at other people's keyholes, most positively declares that Mr. Dickens seriously objects to have his novels dramatized; but as Mr. Dickens is held responsible for many opinions that never entered into his most fantastic dreams, it is quite safe to conclude that he makes no such wholesale objection. For an author to protest against very bad adaptations very badly acted, is natural; but a clever dramatization cleverly delineated, is far more likely to please than displease him.

Many critics are radically opposed to the dramatization of any novel whatsoever, principally on the ground that no play can give the original work entire, and that at best it must be a sketch with much left to the imagination. As a rule, this opposition is wise, because, as a rule, novels are unfit to be trusted outside their covers. Dickens is an exception; and any one who remembers Burton's "Captain Cuttle," the late J. M. Field's "Mantilini," Mrs. Field's "Smike," Charlotte Cushman's "Nancy Sykes," E. L. Davenport's "Bob Sykes," and James W. Wallack's "Fagin," will never cease to congratulate himself upon seeing Dickens embodied. To condemn a "sketch," is to be ignorant of the fact that an artist frequently puts more inspiration into it than into more lengthy and elaborate work, for the reason that the colors can be laid on in a moment of enthusiasm. The sketch of a master is a daring concentration of his genius. Putting Dickens on the stage finely is stamping every character indelibly upon the mind. It is quite possible to forget what we read, but it is impossible to forget a fine picture that talks as well as looks. The terrible lesson of "Oliver Twist" is not fully learned until taught by the actor. If we object to Sketches from Boz in the theatre, we must, to be logical, object to Sketches from Boz by Boz in the

lecture-room. What lover of Dickens is prepared to do this? And who would forego the delight of supping upon delicious tidbits because we cannot have put before us the entire joint off which these tidbits have been cut?

Of all Dickens's dramatizations, that of "Nicholas Nickleby" is, perhaps, most familiar to the public. In spite of this fact, Mr. Dickens more fully fills out the entire picture than we can ever expect to see it filled on the stage. Small parts, however important to the ensemble, are invariably delegated to incompetent actors, and theatrical "children" are the dreariest of all spectacles.

Mr. Dickens's "Squeers" is a complete embodiment. From beginning to end he is the brutal, cunning, diabolically funny beast the author's fancy paints him, and it is complimentary to Mr. Dickens's versatility of facial expression to say that with his one eye, with the blank side of his face much puckered up, and with the corners of his mouth drawn the wrong way, he looks the monster he depicts.

"This is twopenn' 'orth of milk, is it waiter?" The mug is not on that desk, but it seems to be, as "Mr. Squeers" looks into it and gives Ills order. "What a rare article milk is, to be sure, in London! Just fill that mug up with lukewarm water, William, will you?"

Then both eyes are wide open, the sinister appearance vanishes, and there stands the waiter, "William," asking If it must be filled, "To the very top, sir? Why, the milk will be drowned."

"Serve it right for being so dear;" and back comes "Squeers" in a jiffy. His stirring of that milk and water, exclaiming the while, "Here's richness," and his talking to those hungry little boys looking on with hungry eyes, about conquering their passions and not being eager after vittles, must rejoice the soul of the devil, if that distinguished individual has such an unnecessary appendage. There is an "atmosphere" about Mr. Dickens's "Squeers" which impresses us with the belief that he enjoys being a brute and is not an actor trying to be brutal. "Mrs. Squeers," too, — she who thanked God for not being a grammarian, — is quite as well individualized as her more important husband. The short dialogues between "Squeers" and herself are quite entertaining, — after their peculiar fashion, — the climax being attained when, with an eye to "Nickleby's" accommodation, "Squeers" asks, "Who sleeps in Brooks's bed, my dear?" "In Brooks's bed?" replies "Mrs. Squeers," in her most winning manner; "well, there's Jennings, — there's little Bolder, — there's Graymarsh, — and there's

What's-his-name." "Mrs. Squeers" makes each syllable an independent name, so that our mind's eye contemplates ten boys in Brooks's bed.

"So there is. Yes! Brooks's is full;" and "Squeers" out-Squeers himself when turning to poor "Nickleby," he says, "I don't know, by the by, what place on whose towel to put you on; but if you'll make shift with your pocket-handkerchief to-morrow morning, Mrs. Squeers will arrange that in the course of the day." Search through every edition of Dickens, and you won't find that place in the towel, nor that pocket-handkerchief, nor in fact many of the cleverest "points" made by Mr. Dickens, which interpolations flash upon us as unexpectedly as comets, and give some good people much concern because they are not down in the book! These comets dash about most wildly in the first schoolroom scene, when, in reviewing the first class, "Squeers" is in his element. "W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, preposition, a casement. . . . B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, tin, bottin, n-e-y, ney, bottinney, adjective, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby. It's exactly like the use of the globes. Third boy, what is a horse?"

"A beast, sir!" (Poor little boy, what a frightened little voice it is!)

"So it is, aint it, Nickleby?"

"I believe there is no doubt of that, sir."

"Of course there ain't. A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped's Latin, or Greek, or Hebrew, or some other language that's dead and deserves to be, for beast." Nobody who has not heard Mr. Dickens's "Squeers" make this profound explanation, knows how satirical and funny he makes it.

Squeers's reading of the boy's letters is so good that we wish those letters would never finish; but when he arrives at "Mobbs's mother-in-law," we become excessively amused. "Mobbs's mother-in-law took to bed on hearing that he wouldn't eat fat and has had a succession of cold and boiling water running down her back ever since. She wishes to know, by an early post, where he expects to go to, if he quarrels with his vittles; and with what feelings he could turn up his nose at the cow's-liver broth, after his good master had asked a blessing on it. This was told her in the London newspapers, — not by Mr. Squeers, for he is too kind and too good to set anybody against anybody. Mobbs's mother-in-law is sorry to find Mobbs is discontented, which is sinful and horrid, and hopes Mr. Squeers will flog him into a happier state of mind. With this view she has also stopped his half-penny a week pocket-money, and given a double-bladed knife with a

corkscrew in it, which she had brought on purpose for him, to the missionaries. A sulky state of feeling won't do. Cheerfulness and contentment must be kept up. Mobbs come to me!" What varnish is to an oil painting, Mr. Dickens's delivery is to this letter, wherein satire and humor share equal honors. The other scenes of "Mr. and Mrs. Squeers" are portrayed as well as they can be, and the little boy, who, upon hearing the missing "Smike" inquired for by his watchful master, makes his entrance and his exit in the shrill answer, "Please, sir, I think Smike's run away, sir," is quite as much of a little boy as ever lived and talked incessantly; and the school-room melee between "Nickleby" and "Squeers" is vividly and vigorously related.

There are invariably three degrees of excellence. In "Nicholas Nickleby" Mr. Dickens is not his best until the appearance of "Fanny Squeers," "Tilda Price," and "John Browdie." Very comical is the interview between "Fanny Squeers" and "Nickleby." By means of leger-de-figure Mr. Dickens portrays "Nickleby" on one side of his face, and the susceptible "Fanny" on the other, for that simper, lisp, and mien certainly belong to "Mr. Squeers's" offspring. Her "thank you" is perfect, and her reply to "Nickleby's" question, "Shall it be a hard or soft nib?" — referring to the pen which is her excuse for appearing before the young master of arts, — "As soft as possible, if you please," deserves to be perpetuated by a John Leach; although, now I think of it, could only one moment of this dialogue be made enduring, I should fasten my affections upon that wherein, walking away with the pen, 'she exclaims, in a Squeersian ecstasy, "/ never saw such legs in the whole course 'of my life !' — ("the general run of legs at Dotheboys Hall being crooked.")

But there are more plums in the memorable tea-party. "Fanny's" introduction of "Nickleby" to "Matilda Price" — "Mr. Nickleby, 'Tilda; 'Tilda, Mr. Nickleby" — is a fitting overture to one of the cleverest of petite comedies. "John Browdie" with his rich Yorkshire dialect and voluminous laughter is absolutely equal to an epidemic. He breaks out in every direction, and when the interest increases by the appearance of the green-eyed monster, which in "Fanny Squeers" assumes the spiteful, and in the Yorkshireman displays itself in flattening his nose with his clenched fist, it increases after the spectator's own heart. Then when "John Browdie" "dangs his boans and boddy," and "Miss Squeers" "makes a face at "Tilda" (no child, however cultivated in the art, can "make a face" superior to Mr.

Dickens), and the two bosom friends call each other names, winding up with that beautiful climax, “‘Tilda, artful and designing Tilda! — I wouldn’t have a child mimed ‘Tilda, — not to save it from its grave,” — the Tragic Muse herself would smile, and would be forced to laugh outright at John Browdie’s retort, “As to the matter o’ that, it’ll be time enef to think about neaming of it when it cooms.” Glorious “John Browdie!” there’s not a trace of Mr. Dickens in him. Yorkshire triumphs over the dress-coat even, and the scene closes while we, like “Oliver,” long for “more.” How Mr. Dickens ne’er o’ersteps the modesty of nature is particularly apparent in this speech of “Browdie’s.” Few are the actors who would not transcend the bounds of propriety, but Mr. Dickens is never more a gentleman than in dealing with passages that are capable of being vulgarly construed. His humor, though always in character, is never tinged with coarseness of manner.

At the conclusion of this admirable reading, impartial criticism declares that of the eight characters portrayed, “Fanny Squeers,” “‘Tilda Price,” and “John Browdie” are unapproachable; that “Mr. and Mrs. Squeers” could be equally well done by actors born for the purpose; that “Nicholas Nickleby” might be better done on the stage, but never is; and that “Smike” is the only character wherein Mr. Dickens falls. To demand of Mr. Dickens that he shall equal the finest “Smikes” of the stage, is asking too much. Mr. Dickens is human, not superhuman. Let it be remembered also that the word failure is used with reservation. Mr. Dickens has set a very difficult task for himself, and one to which nobody else is equal. Compared with his other characters, Mr. Dickens’s “Smike” is unsuccessful because it is vulnerable. “Smike” is not poorly done, but it can be better done. Mr. Dickens’s “Smike” is earnest, pathetic, and his sighing is as truly touching as it is artistically fine. But “Smike” is not pathetic enough, and his monotonous voice frequently degenerates into a whine. This voice undoubtedly arises from Mr. Dickens’s desire to give “Smike” a distinct individuality, and to prevent the intonation of one character from encroaching upon that of another. This individuality he most certainly preserves. There is not a trace of the “Squeers’s,” or of “Nickleby,” or of “Browdie” in it, but the monotonous intonation is unnatural, and therefore unworthy of Mr. Dickens, whose best manner is thorough naturalness. Mr. Dickens could give more variety of tone and still keep “Smike” intact, and had he but this one character to assume, it would undoubtedly be vastly better carried out. At the same time it must be confessed, that the finest

“Smikes” known on the stage thus far, could not embody the seven remaining dramatis personae, whose idiosyncrasies Mr. Dickens puts on as easily as he would put on old gloves. It is this versatility that almost silences criticism; and that I am not silent proves a loyalty to art above any other consideration.

Apart from this disappointment in “Smike,” one thing must ever be regretted by lovers of Dickens: i.e., that he has not thought fit to incorporate in this reading a scene between “Monsieur and Madame Mantilini.” Mr. Dickens has deprived us of what would have been a “thing of beauty and a joy forever.” The desire is unreasonable, inasmuch as the “Mantilini’s” did not attend “Mr. Squeers’s” school, but it is human nature to be unreasonable.

V.

“THE STORY OF LITTLE DOMBEY.”

“Charles Dickens is only a caricaturist.” And he wrote the story of “Richard Doubledick, the poor soldier,” which, for naturalness and pathos, is unrivaled in the English language. “Charles Dickens is only a humorist.” And one half of his creations is as tragic as the other half is comic. “Charles Dickens is only a farce actor.” And the tears are still fresh that fell in listening to “The Story of Little Dombey.” Ah, well! whoever escapes being misinterpreted, likewise escapes being head and shoulders above his fellows. Who wears a crown at all must wear a crown of thorns.

Mr. Dickens’s Reading of “Little Dombey” is peculiar; for while the tragic element enters largely into several other Readings, it is so relieved by comedy that laughter holds the balance of power. Every chapter of “Little Dombey,” on the contrary, is written in a minor key. Here and there scherzos are interspersed; but the voice of the “old, old-fashioned child” returns like a sad refrain, and the general effect is melancholy. It is the only one of Mr. Dickens’s Readings that contains a death-bed scene. The Angel of Death hovers over “David Copperfield,” but we do not see “Ham Peggotty” and “Steerforth” die. The ocean yields up its victims and lays their bodies upon the shore at our feet. There is solemnity without pathos. But the spirit of “Little Dombey” takes wing before our eyes, and in its flight touches heart-strings that respond with saddest music. Therefore “The

Story of Little Dombey” is the least popular of all Mr. Dickens’s Readings. He, the comedian, the farce-actor, succeeds in making people very miserable; and people dislike to be made miserable. They prefer to laugh. They object to any draft upon their sympathies. Put tragedy before them in such guise as to excite no emotion, and they enjoy it. Make them feel it, and it ceases to be an amusement. “I don’t like Ristori’s ‘Marie Antoinette,’” said an unknown voice behind me not long ago. “I don’t call that acting; it is real. If she didn’t make me cry, I’d enjoy it. I tell you, that’s not what I call art.” In the most popular of all dictionaries, art is defined thus: “Art n., The reverse of nature.”

We are first ushered into the presence of “Rich Mr. Dombey,” who “sat in the corner of his wife’s darkened bedchamber, in the great arm-chair by the bedside,” and of “Rich Mr. Dombey’s son,” who “lay tucked up warm in a little basket, carefully placed on a low settee in front of the fire and close to it, as if his constitution were analogous to that of a muffin, and it was essential to toast him brown while he was very new.” In the reading of one sentence Mr. Dickens places before us both father and son. “Mr. Dombey was rather bald, rather red, and rather stern and pompous. Mr. Dombey’s son was very bald, and very red, and rather crushed and spotty in his general effect, — as yet.” With Mr. Dickens, one or two adjectives answer the purpose of a whole paint-box.

““ He will be christened Paul, of course. His father’s name, Mrs. Dombey, and his grandfather’s. I wish his grandfather were alive this day.’ And again he said, ‘Dombey and Son.’“ After this. “Mr. Dombey, Sr.” takes positive form and substance. “Mr. Micawber” is pompous, “Dr. Blimber” is pompous; but the pomposity of this rich gentleman, in a blue coat and bright buttons, is as unlike other styles of pomposity as Anno Domini is unlike Anno Dombei. “Mr. Dombey” is so pleased with himself — and his firm — that he is absolutely genial — for him; so much so, that he positively acknowledges the presence of that other child, six years old, and says, “Florence, you may go and look at your pretty brother, if you like. Don’t touch him!” “How is it possible,” asks Scudo, “to transmit to posterity, through the medium of cold language, an inflexion of voice, a look, a gesture, a pause,, those thousand shades of art and beauty that characterize the style of a great virtuoso?” I thought of this, and nothing but this, when Mr. Dickens paused, and summed up “rich Mr. Dombey and Son” in a motion of the hands and that one short command, “Don’t touch

him!" If he had crushed "Florence" beneath his heel, her insignificance could not have been made more apparent.

She is not a "Dombey." "Mrs. Chick is," and when the sister of her brother flings her arms about that brother's neck, exclaiming, —

"My dear Paul! This last child is quite a Dombey! He's such a perfect Dombey!" — Mr. Dickens assumes the air of that lady whose immortal receipt will be incorporated in the world's proverbial philosophy as the grand moral panacea. How like a "Dombey" she is, in her exhortation there in the chamber of death; how she advises "Fanny" "to make an effort;" how she places her ear close to the mother's face in expectation of a reply; how she touches her and almost shakes her in order that "Mrs. Dombey" may be roused "to make an effort!" It is very real, this monologue of "Mrs. Chick's," but no more real than "Florence's" appealing cry, "Mamma! O dear mamma! O dear mamma!" — no more real than the silence of that departing spirit, — no better than the closing of this scene. "The doctor gently brushed the scattered ringlets of the child aside from the face and mouth of the mother. And thus, clinging fast to the frail spar within her arms, the mother drifted out upon the dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world." The reading is worthy of the writing.

In scene second the "odd child" is no longer "crushed and spotty in general effect," but sits in a little chair beside his father and talks, and it seems to me that Mr. Dickens is particularly happy — if such an adjective can be applied to so unhappy a subject — in the voice he assumes in "Little Dombey." It is almost the same voice employed by him in "Smike;" but what is objectionable in the latter, appears to be eminently characteristic of the former. "Smike" is a youth of nineteen, and may possess variety of intonation; whereas a treble monotone harmonizes with "Paul's" years. Mr. Dickens's management of this voice, too, so completely expresses physical exhaustion and premature decay, — is so removed from anything grown up or manly, — that having once heard his "Little Dombey," it is difficult to conceive how else the child can be successfully treated. The dialogue between "Dombey and Son" about money is a wonderful contrast of two natures, considering that the two natures are delineated by one man, and when "Paul" silences his father by saying, "As you are so rich, if money can do anything, and isn't cruel, I wonder it didn't save me my mamma. It can't make me strong and quite well either. I am so tired sometimes, and my

bones ache so, that I don't know what to do," — a feeling of utter weariness possesses the attentive listener.

Mr. Dickens is also very effective in his description of "Mrs. Pipchin" the great manager of children, "whose husband had broken his heart in pumping water out of 'some Peruvian mines.'" — "Well! a very respectable way of doing it," mused "Mr. Dombey" to whose voice Mr. Dickens accords a hard, metallic ring. "Miss Pankey" never is quite so much of "a mild, little blue-eyed morsel," as when Mr. Dickens relates how "she was led in from captivity by the ogress herself, and instructed that nobody who sniffed before visitors ever went to heaven," and "Master Bitherstone's "perennial agony at being borne away "to have something else done to him with salt-water, from which he always returned very blue and dejected," is not fully realized until the author's reading throws light upon it. But the comedy does not get fully under way until the interview between "Little Dombey" and the exemplary "Pipchin," where the old-fashioned child so "fixes" his teacher that she finally says, —

"Never you mind, sir. Remember the story of the little boy that was gored to death by a mad bull, for asking questions."

"If the bull was mad, how did he know that the boy had asked questions? Nobody can go and whisper secrets to a mad bull. I don't believe that story."

"You don't believe it, sir?"

"No."

"Not if it should happen to have been a tame bull, you little infidel?"

The weird, reasoning boy is seen one moment, the mottled-faced, hook-nosed, hard gray-eyed "Pipchin" next, and "Little Paul's" earnestness is inexpressibly droll.

Although Mr. Dickens never waits for his "points" to "tell," — insisting that they shall take effect as they fly, or pass unrecognized, — he never neglects a word that can be dressed up to make an appearance. "Little Paul "on the sea-shore dislikes the company of his nurse, and is well pleased when she strolls away to "pick up shells and acquaintances." It never occurred to me that there was a world of meaning in this final word, and yet, after Mr. Dickens pronounces it, its significance dawns upon me and I behold that nurse in all manner of situations with all manner of people.

Solemnly funny with "Mrs. Pipchin," "Paul" is solemnly grave with "Florence."

“If you were in India, Floy, I should — what is it that mamma did? I forget.”

“Love me?”

“No, no. Don’t I love you now, Floy? What is it? — Died. If you were in India, I should die, Floy.”

How the tired head grows more and more tired in the endeavor to remember what mamma did! But there is hope in the voice and eagerness in the look when “Paul” points to the horizon and asks what it is that the sea keeps on saying.

“Very often afterwards, in the midst of their talk, he would break off”, to try to understand what it was that the waves were always saying; and would rise up in his couch to look towards that invisible region. — far away.”

Mr. Dickens is not a reader as others are readers. He is something better. There is a death-knell in those concluding words, “far away.”

Dropping the minor and taking up a major key, Mr. Dickens introduces us to “Dr. Blimber’s” hot-house for the blowing of young gentlemen. He dives into the intellectual garden and brings forth all the plums with such gusto that we feast upon them as if they were a fruit just discovered and eaten for the first time. When Mr. Dickens produces the plum, “Mrs. Blimber,” it cannot be truthfully said that the lady “who was not learned herself but pretended to be, and that did quite as well,” is good enough to eat; but this particular plum is most certainly good enough to stuff and put under a glass case. She makes but one remark, i. e., “that if she could have known Cicero” (going from the bottom to the top of a vocal staircase on the name of this distinguished Roman gentleman), “she thought she could have died contented.” Given a bone, and the naturalist can draw the skeleton. Given “Mrs. Blimber” as she vocally goes upstairs with Cicero, and the mother of “Miss Blimber” lives as long as we live.

As for “Dr. Blimber,” he may at any moment burst with importance. ““ And how do you do, sir?” he said to Mr. Dombey, ‘and how is my little friend?’“ When the doctor left off, the great clock in the hall seemed (to Paul, at least) to take him up, and to go on saying, over and over again, “How, is, my, lit, tie, friend, — how, is, my, lit, tie, friend.” Mr. Dickens defies the great clock by ticking himself.

Ah, but “Toots,” “Young Toots,” otherwise “P. Toots, Esquire, Brighton, Sussex!” You may have loved him from childhood, you may have seen him without his boots and sympathized with him in his unrequited affection, but

until you have made Toots's acquaintance, through the medium of Mr. Dickens, you have no idea how he looks, or how he talks. When "Toots" puts his thumb in his mouth, looks sheepish, and roars forth, "How are you?" I feel (and I am sure you experience the same sensation) as the man in the play must feel when, for the first time, he recognizes his long-lost brother with the strawberry mark on his left arm. Mr. Dickens's "Toots" bears the unmistakable strawberry mark. His sheepishness is not that of a country-bumpkin, not by any means. "Toots" is a gentleman. It is such sheepishness as only can accompany a voice that appears to proceed from some cavern ingeniously concealed in "Toots's" boots.

Dramatic genius may soar higher than Mr. Dickens soars in "Toots," but when this heavily good-natured young gentleman says, —

"Sit down, Dombey," —

When, after inspecting "Dombey," he asks, —

"Who's your tailor?" —

When, turning the crank of his organ with one tune, he stares and puts the question, "I say, — It's not of the slightest consequence, you know, but I should wish to mention it, — how are you, you know?" — When he dashes into "Paul's" bedroom and blurts forth, "I say — Dombey — what do you think about?"

"Oh, I think about a great many things."

"Do you though? — I don't myself" —

When "Mr. Toots" finishes his academic career, puts on a ring, and calls his former head gardener, "Blimper!" — when at the "Blimper" party his brain and fingers become chaotic in buttoning and unbuttoning the bottom button of his waistcoat, and turning his wristbands up and down, — when, finally, upon being asked by "Mr. Baps," the dancing-master, what is to be done with "your raw materials," he replies, "Cook 'em," — I fear that I am tempted to throw off my allegiance to the Tragic Muse and acknowledge that comedy is, after all, the greatest blessing in life. The oftener "Toots" says "How are you?" the better you like this profound question. It improves upon acquaintance, and you would very gladly take it three times a day all the year round — before eating. I hope therefore I may be pardoned if I venture to declare that the tout ensemble is perfect.

Who can ever forget little "Briggs" that has seen Mr. Dickens mournfully rub his face, — I mean "Briggs's" face, — muttering that "his head ached ready to split, and that he should wish himself dead if it wasn't for his

mother and a blackbird he had at home?" That blackbird brings out the boy-nature as nothing else can. When "Miss Blimber," tells "Dombey" that she is "going out for a con-sti-tution-al," she is just as comical as such a "dry, crisp, sandy Ghoul" can be; and more so. As "Miss Blimber" pronounces "con-sti-tu-tion-al," it sounds like a vocal illustration of a Virginia fence. It is here, there, and everywhere. "Miss Blimber" peppers "Dombey" with it, and although nobody in the flesh ever took such liberties with a respectable word of five syllables, yet the effect of this "con-sti-tu-tion-al" is so exhilarating that the sturdiest pre-Raphaelite is disarmed. *Se non e vero, e ben trovato*. "Mr. Feeder B. A." also comes out beautifully in the recitation of that remarkable poetry, —

"Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
I ne'er could injure you!"

But the old refrain of the old, old fashioned child breaks in upon the merriment, and while laughter still rings through the air, we stand upon the verge of a young grave. The little, thoughtful face, the tired, treble voice come back and ask, —

"What do you think I mean to do when I grow up, Mrs. Pipchin? . . . I mean to put my money all together in one bank, — never try to get any more, — go away into the country with my darling Florence, — have a beautiful garden, fields, and woods, and live there with her all my life. . . . That's what I mean to do, when I — 'he stopped and pondered for a moment — ' if I grow up.'" "Dombey, Sr.," "Dombey, Sr.," if one of your type is within sound of that piteous voice, his heart will soften, and his godless pride fail him!

To describe a death-bed scene, which is its own best description, would be to attempt to paint the lily. Mr. Dickens breathes a vital spark into the text, and what was previously an outline, is filled out with the substance. There stands the stern father, who bends down to the pillowed head, listening as the child murmurs, "Don't be so sorry for me! Indeed, I am quite happy!" — There is the loving nurse who holds the wasted hand in hers and puts it to her lips and breast. — There are brother and sister locked in each other's arms. — There is the final moment when, folding his hands prayerfully behind his sister's neck, the dying boy exclaims, "Mamma is like you, Floy. I know her by the face! But tell them that the picture on the

stairs at school is not divine enough. The light about the head is shining as I go!”

“The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old fashion! The fashion that came in with our first garments, -and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion, — Death!”

“Oh, thank God, all who see it, for that older fashion yet, of Immortality! And look upon us, angels of young children, with regards not quite estranged, when the swift river bears us to the ocean!”

Why is it that through glistening tears we see the imaginary pillow illuminated? Why do we know that mothers who have lost young children listen with bowed heads and yet with overflowing gratitude? Because “out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Because the reader leads us through the dark valley of the shadow of Death into the bright gladness of Immortality.

Ten characters! and Mr. Dickens fills them all without fear and without reproach!

VI.

“DOCTOR MARIGOLD.”

Of all Mr. Dickens’s Readings, this of “Doctor Marigold” is from a literary point of view, the most complete. It is the most complete, because with the exception of a few paragraphs here and there, it embraces the entire story as originally written. “Doctor Marigold’s Prescription” is given and taken without any perceptible diminution of the original dose. What a happy, healthy world this would be if all prescriptions were equally beneficial in their results!

Who that has grown sick at heart at the hollowness and conventionality of “society” wonders that Mr. Dickens selects his heroes and heroines from humble life? No author has done so much to raise the level of human nature by simply laying bare the generous impulses of the lowly. The obscurer the profession the more tenderly Mr. Dickens treats its followers; carrying out the scriptural prophecy of the first being last, and the last first.

In rescuing the Cheap Jack from the inevitable oblivion entailed by the expanding network of railroads, Mr. Dickens has laid a beautiful offering

upon a neglected altar, and in himself assuming the character of “Doctor Marigold,” he has made at least one Cheap Jack known to thousands who otherwise would have passed him by on the other side, failing to recognize an innate nobility worthy of the highest station.

Less difficult of portrayal than any other Reading, — changes of character being less, — “ Doctor Marigold “ is nevertheless more entirely sympathetic, for, to use one of the “Doctor’s” own expressions, his simple, touching story takes hold of you and “rolls upon you “ at the beginning and continues to roll on to the end. The moment that Mr. Dickens stands before his desk, which on this occasion is transformed into the footboard of a Cheap Jack Cart, he makes you feel that “Doctor Marigold” is a man to be loved. How is it possible then, being en rapport with his second self, not to love him?

To all intents and purposes Mr. Dickens appears in a sleeved-waistcoat, “ the strings of which is always gone behind,” and those who may boast of their eyes as “ a pair o’ patent double million magnifyin’ gas microscopes of hextra power,” ,can very distinctly perceive an old white hat reposing peacefully upon Mr. Dickens’s head.

Perhaps Mr. Dickens does not give as much color and effect as might be given to the parallel drawn between Cheap Jacks and Dear Jacks, — as fine a satire on political hawkers as ever was written, — but the moment “Doctor Marigold” arrives at the Ipswich market-place and notices his wife that is to be, “appreciating him wery highly,” the admirable portraiture begins.

“Doctor Marigold’s” description of his wife is inimitable. “A man can’t write his eye, nor yet can a man write his voice, nor the rate of his talk, nor the quickness of his action, nor his general spicy way,” remarks the original “Doctor Marigold,” so it is useless to make the attempt; but those who have not and never expect to hear it, will go down to their graves in complete ignorance of what a “temper in a cart” means. “Thirteen years of temper in a palace would try the worst of you; but thirteen years of temper in a cart would try the best of you. You are kept so very close to it, — in a cart, — you see. There’s thousands of couples, among you, getting on like sweet-ile upon a whetstone, in houses five and six pairs of stairs high, that would go to the Divorce Court, — in a cart. Whether the jolting makes it worse, I don’t undertake to decide; but in a cart it does come home to you arid stick to you. Wiolence — in a cart — is so wiolent, and aggrawation — in a cart

— is so aggrawatin’.” No one but Dickens would have dreamed of this conceit. No one but Dickens can endow the doleful confession with such unconscious humor. There never was so much good humor in’ so much bad humor.

And what an important creature “Doctor Marigold’s” dog becomes just from one or two references to his extraordinary sagacity! “My dog knew as well when she was on the turn as I did. Before she broke out, he would give a howl — and bolt.” (The tone of the “howl” and action of the “bolt” are unutterably expressive.) “How he knew it, was a mystery to me; but the sure and certain knowledge of it would wake him out of his soundest sleep, and he would give a howl, — and bolt. At such times I wished I was him.” As the dog bolts I think I recognize the breed, but not being quite certain on this point, I shall not commit myself.

“The worst of it was,” continues “Doctor Marigold,” “we had a daughter born to us, and I love children with all my heart.” When the good “Doctor” clasps his hands and presses them to his breast, as if he were embracing that pretty daughter with the dark curling hair, you feel as if he really did love children. Moreover, you feel morally certain that Mr. Dickens loves children too. Does he not put a child into his books whenever art opportunity offers? And does he not make opportunities when they refuse to offer themselves? Think of “Little Nell,” “The Marchioness,” “Paul and Florence Dombey,” “Oliver Twist,” “Little Dick,” “Tiny Tim,” and the many outlines of little folks that are as good and better than most people’s real children. Then he has written “A Child’s History of England,” and I am quite sure that he did not undertake it because children’s books “pay.” Of course “Doctor Marigold” loves children. Most expressive of tenderness is the way in which he holds a book to his breast when he is supposed to be selling goods with the suffering “little Sophy” clinging around his neck. The curly head is surely there, and the transition from the Cheap Jack with which “Marigold” hurls at his gaping audience, to the caresses and questionings of the father, are as artistic as they are natural. When, however, “Little Sophy” dies without warning in “Marigold’s” arms, and he staggers back into the cart, exclaiming to his wife, “Quick! Shut the door! Don’t let those laughing people see! . . . O woman, woman, you’ll never catch my little Sophy by her hair again, for she’s dead and has flown away from you!” the father’s expression of grief is too loud for the situation. “Marigold’s” endeavor is to keep the crowd in ignorance of his sorrows;

therefore, however terrible his agony, he must surely muffle the cry of his heart. Did "Doctor Marigold" shout as Mr. Dickens does, he would alarm the entire neighborhood. Therefore, in spite of his earnestness at this particular moment, Mr. Dickens may be criticised on the score of exaggeration. The same words, delivered in an undertone, would be equally intense, and much more natural.

All liberally educated persons have seen at least one giant, and some of us have speculated with melancholy interest upon the private lives of giants in general; but none of us knew what any giant in particular went through until "Doctor Marigold" became acquainted with "Rinaldo di Velasco, otherwise Pickleson," who, when on view, figured at length "as a hancient Roman." "He had a little head, and less in it; he had weak eyes and weak knees; and, altogether you couldn't look at him without feeling that there was greatly too much of him, both for his jints and his mind." Add Dickens's manner to Dickens's matter, and what wonder that our feelings are too much for us, and find vent in laughter over the "hancient Roman's" extremities? This "giant, otherwise Pickleson," confides to "Doctor Marigold" "the sad story of "Mini's" deaf and dumb step-daughter, whereupon the "Doctor" remarks: "He was such a very languid young man, that I don't know how long it didn't take him to get this story out; but it passed through his defective circulation to his top extremity in course of lime." Well, I don't know how Mr. Dickens does it, and I almost believe he does not know himself, — the inspiration of the divine afflatus descends upon him, — but the complete vacuity of his face as he pronounces the word "very," and the languor which accompanies his delivery of this sentence, absolutely make you as limp in joints and mind as "Rinaldo di Velasco" himself. You begin to feel attenuated, and are only saved from the long-drawn agony by "Doctor Marigold's" "presentation to the giant of a sixpence, "and he laid it out in two threepenn'orths of gin-and-water, which so brisked him up that he sang the Favorite Comic of Shivery Shakey, aint it cold? — a popular effect which his master had tried every other means to get out of him, as a hancient Roman, wholly in vain." The ludicrousness of "a hancient Roman" "singing the "Favorite Comic of Shivery Shakey" "is brought out [so cleverly by Mr. Dickens that if you have never before been guilty of the indiscretion, you become enamored of the Queen's English, convinced that no other language, living or dead, can express such humor as this.

Then Mr. Dickens goes to work — no, he never seems to work, and that's the beauty of his Readings; everything comes without any apparent effort, — and makes a character out of two remarks. Nobody can forget "Mim," the "wery hoarse man," the giant's master, after his declaration, in a bronchitis-ial voice, — sounding as if it had been rasped with a blunted file all the way down, — that he will exchange his deaf and dumb step-daughter for a "pair of braces;" and nobody can forget the tender humor of "Doctor Marigold" in his narration of how he taught his second "Sophy" her alphabet, nor the "Doctor's" account of his loneliness when "Sophy" is sent to school. At last the two years pass by, and "Doctor Marigold" goes to fetch "Sophy." "The new cart was finished, — yellow outside, relieved with wermilion, and brass fittings." Now the words "relieved with wermilion," as words, are not funny, and yet when Mr. Dickens is "relieved with wermilion" his face looks such unutterable things that even the most stoical fancies, as did "Sophy" herself, once, that the "Doctor" is the c-a-r-t. But it is only a fancy. Mr. Dickens is the living, loving "Doctor Marigold" when he starts at sight of "Sophy," who has grown up to be a woman; when he dares not go to her, but rubs his hands together, and, looking down, says timidly, "I feel that I am but a rough chap in a sleeved-waistcoat;" when he at last takes courage to give her the old sign, and "Sophy" clasps him round the neck.

"I don't know what a fool I didn't make of myself," says the "Doctor," "until we all three settled down into talking without sound, as if there was a something soft and pleasant spread over the whole world for us."

That is it. Mr. Dickens has spread something soft and pleasant over the whole world for us.

Having acquired an affection for "Rinaldo di Velasco, otherwise Pickleson" ("whose mother let him out and spent the money"), it is with delight that we at last hear him speak. "'Doctor Marigold,' — I give his words without a hope of conveying their feebleness, — who is the strange young man that hangs about your carts?" "The strange young man?" I gives him back, thinking he meant Sophy, and his languid circulation had dropped a syllable. 'Doctor,' he returns, with a pathos calculated to draw a tear from even a manly eye, 'I am weak, but not so weak yet as that I don't know my words. I repeat them, Doctor. The strange — young — man!'"

"Bottom" once saw a voice. If everybody could be "Bottom" and see the giant's voice, everybody might go about with his own theatre in his own

pocket. Mr. Dickens outdoes himself. The contrast between the giant's purple face, swelling with effort, and the trickle of sound squeezed out at the risk of breaking every blood-vessel in "Pickleson's" head, is absolute perfection. A mountain never brought forth a smaller mouse, nor one that was so much worth the trouble. .

What can be said of the remainder of "Doctor Marigold's" story, saving that it is charmingly narrated? When the unselfish "Doctor" puts "Sophy's" hand in that of her young husband, saying, "Doctor Marigold's last prescription, to betaken for life," — it seems very life-like; when "Sophy" writes from China, "Dearest father, not a week ago I had a darling little daughter, but I am so well that they let me write these words to you. Dearest and best father, I hope my child may not be deaf and dumb, but I do not yet know," — "Sophy" herself could hardly read the letter with more feeling; when the "Doctor" "knocks up" his Christmas-eve dinner and declared that such a beefsteak pudding as he made "is enough to put a man in good-humor with everything except the two bottom buttons of his waistcoat," — even the occupant of a boardinghouse inclines to the belief that he too has had a sufficiently good dinner to be at variance with the two bottom buttons of his waistcoat; and when the "Doctor" is startled out of his after-dinner nap by the real tread of a real child, who peeps in at the door of the cart, exclaiming, "Grandfather!" and the grandfather cries out, "O my God! she can speak!" and when "Sophy," and her husband, and their child, and the "Doctor" are "shaking themselves together, and the happy yet pitying tears fall rolling down the Doctor's face," — those tears steal into our eyes as well; and when Mr. Dickens hurries away, there seems to be more love and unselfishness in the world than before we took Doctor Marigold's prescription.

"If that fellar hasn't a heart," muttered a broad-shouldered, fine-looking countryman -who sat behind me at a- reading of "Doctor Marigold," and who emphasized his words by thumping a soft felt hat, — "if that fellar hasn't a heart, may I be everlastingly skewered! He's made me make a fool of myself, and I swiney! I wish Sal was here!"

VII.

"BOOTS AT THE HOLLY TREE INN."

There are some things that, once possessed, become so inalienably portions of ourselves as to render it a marvel how any one ever lived without them. Rubber boots for women, horse-cars, and watches are among them. What rubber boots, horse-cars, and watches are to the outer man and woman, certain works of art are to the inner man and woman. The light of the world would grow dim to many were certain bits of music, of canvas, of sculpture, and of architecture annihilated. This feeling is especially excited by particular books. Some books we approach on state occasions with much dignity and ceremony, knowing it to be highly literary and respectable to claim their acquaintance. We bind them in calf and give them the place of honor on our library shelves, where we permit them to remain undisturbed the greater part of the year. There are other books that we love just as we love intimate friends. We care not how they look, whether they are well or ill-dressed, and in all probability we never ask them into the library. But we do ask them into our private room, and insist upon their remaining, that we may enjoy their companionship at all times and seasons. These are the human books. They are not too good to speak to us in a language that we all understand, and confess to a sympathy with the frailty of our common nature. Such are the books of Charles Dickens. Occasionally we do permit his two-volume novels to go downstairs, and be imposing; but when it comes to his shorter stories, particularly those inspired by the approach of Christmas, we oblige them to remain *en deshabille* upstairs, that we may be talked to whenever we are in the mood to listen.

Unique, among these Christmas Stories, is "The Holly Tree." That cold, heartless monster, the snow, never did a better deed than when it snowed up the bashful man, "Charley," at the Yorkshire wayside inn, in consequence of which the bashful man "began to associate the Christmas time of year with human interest, and with some inquiry, into, and some care for, the lives of those by whom he found himself surrounded." The snow, I repeat, never did a better deed, for otherwise, by the bashful man's own confession, we never should have been made the happier by his "Christmas Carols," and "Boots" never would have related the adventures of "Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmars, Junior." So for once the snow thawed when it was coldest.

"But 'Boots's' story is utterly impossible." Why, so much the better! Are not some of the most delightful stories in the world as removed from fact as fancy can make them? Was not fancy made for this purpose? Are we always to sit on a pre-Raphaelite stump and contemplate a pre-Raphaelite cabbage?

Do any of us believe in the possibility of “The Tempest,” or of “Midsummer Night’s Dream,” and yet could we live comfortably without them? If no one ever dreamed, where would be the consolation of waking hours? Fancy is the oil that keeps Reality’s wheels in motion. “Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmars, Junior,” never thought of a way to Gretna Green. Of course not; but the story is charmingly quaint and is as pure and fresh as morning dew. I would not lose the recollection of that little creature, in the sky-blue mantle tucked under the arm of her young lover, who walks off “much bolder than Brass” (with a capital B) — for a wilderness of disagreeable facts. Truth is not necessarily a virtue.

There are three branches on the original “Holly Tree.” Leaving untouched the first and third branches, which are better on the tree than off it, Mr. Dickens cuts down the second and brings it into the Reading-Room that we may enjoy its refreshing verdure. In Mr. Dickens’s rendering of “The Boots,” criticism does not know “where to have him.” Search as you may for a weak point, the search is in vain; and after a first hearing you abandon yourself to unalloyed pleasure. “Boots” stands before you telling his story in his own naive, natural way.

And “Boots” is a captivating fellow. I am not surprised that “Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmars, Junior” were excessively fond of him and decided to give him two thousand guineas a year as head-gardener, — when the time should come for them to have a house in a forest, keep bees and a cow, and live entirely on milk and honey. Such a man deserves such a salary, particularly if condemned to such a diet. You cannot avoid liking “Boots” when you read him; but when you see and hear him, the relationship is of a tenderer nature. For “Boots” is a diamond in the rough. He is distantly related to “Sam Weller.” He is a “Sam Weller,” whose natural keenness has received no polish from city life, and whose humor has been softened by sentiment and a contemplation of nature as seen in garden-bulbs. I am not quite sure, — it is very difficult to make up one’s mind on such an important point, — but I think that if I were in affliction, or even comfortably unhappy, I should prefer the services of “Boots” to those of “Sam Weller.” Prosperity and the prejudice “Tony Weller” entertained against poetry, robbed “Sam” of the one attribute needed to make him an angel. This attribute “Boots” possesses. He is a poet in disguise. This is proved by his delicate appreciation of the loves of “Mr. and Mrs. Harry Walmars, Junior.” “On the whole, sir, the contemplation o’ them two

babbies had a tendency to make me feel as if I was in love myself, — only I didn't exactly know who with. ... I don't know, sir, — perhaps you do, — why it made a man fit to make a fool of himself, to see them two pretty babbies a-lying there in the clear, still, sunny day, not dreaming half so hard when they was asleep as they done when they was awake. But Lord! when you come to think of yourself, you know, and what a game you have been up to ever since you was in your own cradle, and what a poor sort of a chap you are, arter all, that's where it is! Don't you see, sir?" "Here's wisdom for you; chunks of it!" "Boots's" sum total of life is as philosophical as his contemplation of youthful innocence is poetical.

"What was the curious-es-est thing Boots had seen? Well! He didn't know. He couldn't momentarily guess what was the curious-es-est thing he had seen, — unless it was a Unicorn, — and he see him once in spirits at a fair." However clever we may be in the specialty for which we were naturally designed, not one of us but desires to be considered as born for something else, and we are never so complacent as when attempting that unattainable something. Even "Boots" betrays this amiable weakness He approaches the word "curious-es-est," with a look of admiration, clings to every syllable with affection, and only lets go his hold because conversation would otherwise come to a dead lock. Therefore "Boots" goes on, and the richness, the flavor, the bouquet of his tone, is as appetizing as transfigured bitters. When "Master Harry" says, "Cobbs," how should you spell Norah if you was asked?" and when "Cobbs" gives him "his individual views, sir, respectin' the spelling o' that name," one understands what is meant by the rare word "unction." The dialogue between "Master Harry" and "Cobbs" respecting "Norah" is to the manner born, and childhood never was more deliciously illustrated than in the air and expression assumed by "Master Harry" when, stopping at "The Holly Tree Inn" en route for Gretna Green, he gives his orders to "Cobbs." "We should like some cakes after dinner, and two apples — and jam!" If you have ever been a child and loved jam to distraction, — you never were a child unless you did love jam to distraction, — and remember how you gazed at it in hermetically sealed glass jars, with eyes as big as saucers, — wishing your eyes were saucers full of jam, — you know how Mr. Dickens treats this cabalistic word. It is your youthful aspiration, your eyes, your hermetically sealed jars reduced to sound. While "Cobbs" describes "Master Harry" sitting "behind his

breakfast cup a tearing away at the jelly, as if he had been his own father," you understand just how he is tearing.

"The way in which the women of that house," says "Cobbs," "without exception, — everyone of them — married and single took to that boy when they heard the story, is saperizing." ("Cobbs" is almost as devoted in his attentions to this word as to his former verbal Dulcinea.) "It was as much as could be done to keep 'em from dashing into the room and kissing him. — They climbed up all sorts of places, at the risk of their lives, to look at him through a pane of glass, — and they was seven deep at the key-hole. "By means of this key-hole" Cobbs "unlocks the door to such sense of humor as has not been exhausted by the previous drain upon it.

Great as "Master Harry" is at the moment of his calling for "jam," I think he is equally so when, upon being asked whether "Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior" is fatigued, he Replies, "Yes, she is tired, Cobbs; bat she is not used to be away from home, and she has been in low spirits again. Cobbs, do you think you could bring a baked apple, please? Norah's rather partial to baked apples, and I think one would rouse her." A father of a large family — John Rogers for example — could not speak with more confidence, or with greater knowledge of human nature.

But the pretty story, perfect as it is, will come to an end, and when, — "Master Harry" stooping down to kiss "Norah" for the last time, — one of the many chambermaids peeping through the door, shrilly cries out, "It's a shame to part 'em!" that chambermaid springs from Mr. Dickens's head as Minerva sprang from the head of Jove, and stands armed and equipped for the fray.

Who, after listening to "Cobbs," does not wish with him "that there was an impossible place where two such babies could make an impossible marriage, and live impossibly happy ever after?" and who does not shudder at thought of the era when universal education will have made such inroads upon even "The Holly Tree Inn" as to abolish all use of bad grammar, and proclaim "Cobbs's " occupation gone! See Mr. Dickens in his "Boots" and you wish universal education at the bottom of that well where truth is said to lie.

VII.

"MR. BOB SAWYER'S PARTY."

“There’s a destiny in these things, gentlemen, we can’t help it,” said Dickens’s Bagman, upon recounting the prowess of his uncle in absorbing the contents of quart measures. The Bagman was undoubtedly correct in his deduction. There must be a destiny in these things and in all things, else Mr. Dickens would have gone down to his grave before being able to decide upon what selections from “The Pickwick Papers” to make for his Readings. To the mind unilluminated by destiny there seems no good reason why “Mr. Bob Sawyer’s Party” should have been preferred to a thousand and one equally good episodes. In reading the book, this particular party takes no more hold of our affections than many others. Hence it is safe to conclude that there is a destiny in these things, and that Mr. Dickens was as much born to read “Mr. Bob Sawyer’s Party” as he was to create it. After seeing him at this party, the hypothesis becomes as self-evident as any axiom in Euclid. What has struck you heretofore as a diamond no better than its fellows, is magically transformed into a Kohinoor.

And when I say “magically transformed,” I mean it in all soberness of criticism. Whoever thought, in reading “Pickwick,” of giving any special attention to “Mrs. Raddle’s” housemaid? Her appearance and disappearance are almost simultaneous. She is a dirty, slip-shod girl, in black cotton stockings. That is all. And what does she say? “Please, Mr. Sawyer, Missis Raddle wants to speak to you.”

Anything else? Yes.

“Does Mr. Sawyer live here?” mildly inquires “Mr. Pickwick” “at” Mrs. Raddle’s” front door.

“Sawyer!” slowly echoes the Black Stockings, whose mental circulation is almost as languid as “Rinaldo di Velasco’s” physical circulation. “O, yes, Sawyer; he lives here. Sawyer’s the first floor. It’s the door straight afore you, when you gets to the top of the stairs.”

And is this all? No; there is one more scene.

“You can’t have no warm water.”

“No warm water?” exclaims the horrified host, “Bob.”

“No,” continues “Betsy.” “Missis Raddle said you warn’t to have none.”

“Bring up the water instantly, — instantly!”

“No, I can’t. Missis Raddle raked out the kitchen fire afore she went to bed, and locked up the kittle.”

Here is the whole of “Betsy.” From this small side bone that any but a consummate artist would throw away as having very little meat upon it, Mr. Dickens creates an incomparably comic character. The moment “Betsy” opens her mouth she is an accomplished fact. A dirtier, more slipshod, more stolid, more irretrievably stupid girl never lived. Mr. Dickens’s list of her clothes includes nothing but a pair of black cotton stockings, but when he brings her on the stage she not only wears black stockings with slippers down at the heel that drop off on the stairs, but a short gown, the original color of which is cleverly concealed by dirt, and a check apron, one-half of which is conspicuous by its absence. Her sleeves are rolled up, displaying very red arms, and that portion of her scrubby hair which is not standing on end, is maliciously attempting to put out “Betsy’s” eyes. “Betsy’s” legs look like sticks of black sealing-wax, as if in mourning for the rest of her neglected person, and are finished off at the knees with white strings. An owl in the brightest noonday sun never was more dazed or more incapable of an idea. A voice never expressed more thorough individuality, for “Betsy” has a cold in the head. She could not possibly fulfil her mission on earth if she had not a cold in the head. It gives a muffled, sepulchral tone to her words absolutely necessary to make what she says produce the desired effect upon “Bob Sawyer” and his guests. “Betsy,” however, is not such a fool as to be unaware that something must be amiss between “Mr. Sawyer” and his landlady. Consequently, the air of mystery with which she idiotically glares at “Mr. Sawyer,” or darts her head forward, — like a turtle from beneath its shell, — or slowly shakes that head, is not without solemnity. The amiable landlady, “Mrs. Raddle,” is quite as well portrayed; but something is expected of “Mrs. Raddle,” — whereas “Betsy” takes you entirely by surprise. If a donkey lisped in numbers you could not be more astonished. The former merely realizes fond hopes. The scene between “Mrs. Raddle,” “Mr. Sawyer,” and “Mr. Ben Allen,” is a farce in itself, while “Mrs. Raddle’s” final expose of “Mr. Sawyer’s” delinquencies, as she scolds over the banisters, the rumbling of “Mr. Raddle’s” voice, proceeding from beneath distant bedclothes, and the lady’s parting compliments to inoffensive “Mr. Pickwick,” “Get along with you, yon old wretch! Old enough to be his grandfather, you villain! You’re worse than any of ‘em,” — are rich in humor.

“Mr. Bob Sawyer” is not every inch himself, for the reason that “Mr. Sawyer” labors under depressing influences throughout the entire evening.

He is as much himself as he can be, considering the condition of his mind and pocket, and is really sublime in his impudence, when, seeing his guests ordered out of the house by “Mrs. Raddle,” he turns to “Jack Hopkins” with an injured look, and informs “Jack” that it is all his fault, “because he will sing chorus, — that he was born chorus-y, lives chorus-y, and will die chorus-y.” This impudence is rather the more delightful for being an interpolation.

The only time we hear dear “Mr. Pickwick’s” voice is on this occasion. He says very little, merely putting a few leading questions that keep conversation afloat, yet we recognize our old benefactor at once in the countenance that “glows with an expression of universal philanthropy,” and in a blandness of speech that cannot belong to any one else. Several young gentlemen who attended the original party are not present at its repetition, “Mr. Gunter,” among others, being absent. His share in the quarrel with “Mr. Noddy” is necessarily transferred to “Jack Hopkins,” and the quarrel is really so enlivening that you long to have it become general; but at the most promising moment, “Mr. Noddy” “allows his feelings to overpower him,” and “Mr. Hopkins” prefers “Mr. Noddy” “to his own mother,” whereupon the combatants shake hands with so much effusion that your blood-thirsty aspirations are strangled.

“Jack Hopkins” is what “Bob Sawyer” would have been, had not “Mrs. Raddle’s” “malevolence” thrown cold water upon his ardent spirits. He is the ideal of all the medical students that ever had a talent for lying combined with a tendency to black velvet waistcoats, thunder-and-lightning buttons, blue striped shirts, and false white collars. The general inflation of “Jack Hopkins’s” “person; the professional cast of countenance; the voice which makes its escape as best it can between closed teeth, and from a mouth apparently full of mush; the hands that are thrust into pantaloon-pockets, as if to be carefully preserved for the next surgical operation, — an attitude that, when accompanied by an oscillation of the body, as in “Jack Hopkins’s” case, always indicates superior wisdom, — are *sui generis*. He represents a type in caricature. All “Jack’s” medical stories are good, but all are obscured by the boy that swallowed a necklace. Even “Betsy” is obliged to divide the honors with this infant phenomenon. It may be doing Mr. Dickens great injustice, but it really seems as if he were as funny as he can be in this absurdest of burlesques. The law of self-preservation should prevent him from being any funnier, for, if he has no regard for his own

feelings, he should consider those of others, and remember that people have been tickled to death. “Peggotty” would burst every button, hook-and-eye that ever approached her jovial person. Mr. Dickens makes the story; the story does not make him. The inflexions of his voice are in themselves mirth-provoking, the mere pronunciation of the word “necklace” inspiring as much laughter as is usually accorded to a low comedy man’s best “point.” In one short sentence he rushes up and down the gamut most originally. Words can give no idea of the effect produced; perhaps a wretched outline drawing may. For example: —

“Child
toys,
being fond of
lace,
cribbed
neck
hid
lace,
neck
lace,
neck
of
cut string
lace,
and
bead!”
a
swallowed

Those who have heard Mr. Dickens, will understand this illustration, and may perhaps thank me for it. Those who have not heard him, will not understand it, and will not thank me. When, after hearing a noise “like a small hail-storm,” the father exclaims, —

boy!”
“Don’t my
do that,
and the child replies, —
“I aint a doin’ nothing “ — whereupon the father rejoins, —
gain!”
a
“Well, do it

the “most unkindest cut of all.” Assuredly the reader should be the best judge of what is, and what is not suited to his purpose, and yet there seems to be no good reason for the wholesale employment of a pruning-knife in this particular instance. What Mr. Dickens suppresses would not materially add to the length of the Reading, while the amount of effect lost is very considerable. Mr. Dickens is guilty of unjustifiable homicide. How he can wilfully cut the throat of “Thomas Groffin,” the chemist, thereby preventing him from being sworn in as a juror and indulging in an edifying conversation with “Mr. Justice Stareleigh,” passeth all understanding. Robbing “Sergeant Buzfuz” of one of the greatest points in his address to the jury, is even more extraordinary. “Let me tell him “ (Pickwick), “gentlemen, that any gestures of dissent or disapprobation in which he may indulge in this court will not go down with you; that you will know how to value and how to appreciate them; and let me tell him further, as my lord will tell you, gentlemen, that a counsel, in the discharge of his duty to his client, is neither to be intimidated nor bullied, nor put down; and that any attempt to do either the one or the other, or the first or the last, will recoil on the head of the attempted, be he plaintiff or be he defendant, be his name Pickwick, or Noakes, or Stoakes, or Stiles, or Brown, or Thompson!” That Mr. Dickens should ignore this sentence, which may be called the heart of the address, and is full of just such effects as he best knows how to produce, appears almost incredible. Less strange is the suppression of “Mr. Winkle’s” cross-examination by “Mr. Phunkey” and “Sergeant Buzfuz,” although no one who has seen Mr. Dickens in his great character of “Winkle” will ever cease to sigh over its omission. The most unpardonable sin of all, however, is Mr. Dickens’s inhuman treatment of “Sam Weller.” He actually prevents “Sam” from making two of his best speeches. Said “Sam,” “I had a reg’lar fit out o’ clothes that mornin,’ gen’l’men of the jury, and that was a wery particler and uncommon circumstance with me in those days.” “The little judge, looking with an angry countenance over his desk, said, ‘You had better be careful, sir.’”

““ So Mr. Pickwick said at the time, my Lord,’ replied Sam, ‘and I was wery careful o’ that ‘ere suit o’ clothes; wery careful indeed, my lord.’” Astounding though it be, the little judge does not give “Sam” his cue, “You had better be careful;” consequently “Sam” cannot make the retort courteous. And what is worse, — so bad that if there were a degree beyond the superlative it should be expressed by it, — “Sam’s “ final interrogatory

remark to the Court, "Would any other gen'l'man like to ask me anythin'?" is treated with as much silent contempt as if it had never been made. The friends of "Sam Weller" should protest as one man against this indignity, and demand satisfaction of Mr. Dickens. Is this indignity to be taken "in a common sense?" or is it to be regarded from "a Pickwickian point of view?"

It may be ungrateful to look a gift-horse in the mouth; but when that horse has a beautiful mane and tail which are unnecessarily curtailed by too much "Englising," should we not demur, particularly when that horse is Mr. Dickens's cheval de bataille?

Inner consciousness will accomplish miracles. It once evolved a camel; and I thought, not long ago, that it had evolved this famous "Pickwick Trial," so completely as to contest the honors with reality. I was mistaken, and now confess that I never knew how great the Trial was until Mr. Dickens made a panorama of himself, turned a crank, and unwound the entire scene. The eight characters that figure in the court-room are matchlessly delineated, while the assumption of the court itself is truly wonderful. When Mr. Dickens appears as "the little judge," the theory of metempsychosis seems to be practically carried out. Mr. Dickens steps out of his own skin which, for the time being, is occupied by "Justice Stareleigh." His little round eyes, wide-open and blinking; his elevated eyebrows that are in a constant state of interrogation; his mouth, drawn down by the weight of the law; the expression of the ensemble which clearly denotes that everybody is a rascal whether found guilty or not; and the stern, ironclad voice, apparently measuring out justice in as small quantities as possible, and never going faster than a dead march, — make up an impersonation that is extraordinary, even for Mr. Dickens.

Court. "Who is with you, brother Buzfliz? . . . Anybody with you, brother Snubbin?"

"Mr. Phunky, my lord."

Court. "Go on." This "go on" seals "Justice Stareleigh's" fate. The door of the court seems to shut with a gruff click, and the satire is complete.

Though a less original creation, "Sergeant Buzfuz" is truly admirable. He whispers to "Dodson," confers briefly with "Fogg," settles his wig, and proceeds to address the jury. The rising inflexion — which, if not natural to Mr. Dickens, has been adopted by him to overcome the defects of an

imperfect voice — here produces most comical effects. “Never, from the very first moment of his applying himself to the study and practice

law,

the

of

had he approached a case with such a heavy re-spon-si-bi-li-ty imposed

him, —

upon

a re-spon-si-bi-li-ty he could never have

sup-

ed,

port

were he not buoyed up and sustained by a conviction, so strong that it amounted to positive

ty

cer

tain

that the cause of truth and justice, or, in other words, the cause of his much-injured and most oppressed client,

vail —

pre

must

must

vail!”

pre

The intonation and action accompanying the repetition of these final words, are delightfully burlesque. “Sergeant Buzfuz” draws back his head and then throws it forward to add impressiveness to speech, while a muscular contortion going on at the back of his neck and rippling down his shoulders, suggests memories of a heavy swell on the ocean. Truth and justice are evidently convulsed.

The “sergeant” thrills his auditors by suiting the action to the word, and bringing down his hand with a mighty bang on the “box” in which “the unimpeachable female,” “Mrs. Bardell,” is to be placed.

“Here is one poor word a hundred clinches make!”

He is no less affecting when, speaking of his client as a widow, “yes, gentlemen, a widow,” he produces a pocket-handkerchief for appropriate application, and refers to the late Mr. Bardell’s having “glided almost imperceptibly from the world, to seek elsewhere for that repose and peace which a custom-house

never ford!”
can
af
hoy,”
bo
“little

If the
on whom Mr. Bardell “stamped his likeness,” was ever as funny as “Sergeant Buzfuz’s” mention of him, he ought to have fully compensated “the unimpeachable female” for the loss of her custom-house officer. The same learned gentleman’s rendering of the inscription, -

“Apartments furnished for

sin gentleman
gle
In in!
Quire with

In such oratory as might move the most obdurate to tears. (I do not specify what kind of tears.)

A single gentleman is no sooner invited to inquire within, than a juror with an anxious countenance, expressive of a profound sense of responsibility, starts up, and inquires without, “There is no date to that, is there, sir?” If I were a court, I should always insist upon having that conscientious man impanelled.

“Mr. Pickwick “merely writhes in silence, but when “Sergeant Buzfuz” directs attention to him — “ if he be in court as I am informed is!” —

he

and aims the forefinger of his right hand at the defendant’s head, it becomes a query whether grotesque action is not as difficult to excel in as absolute grace. Mr. Dickens has learned its secret.

The great points of “Mr. Pickwick’s having once patted “ Master Bardell” “on the head,”

“on
the head,”
and of his having made use of the remarkable expression, —

“How should you like to have

oth ther

an er fa

are brought out most effectively, while “Chops! Gracious heavens! and Tomato sauce!” and that other very remarkable expression, “Don’t trouble yourself about the warming-pan,” together with the “Sergeant’s “ surprised inquiry, —

“Why, gentlemen, what lady

trouble herself about

does

pan?”

a warming

are received with all the approbation they so richly deserve. When “Sergeant Buzfuz” appeals for damages “to an enlightened, a high-minded, aright-feeling, a conscientious, a dispassionate, a sympathizing, a contemplative, and I may say a highly poetic jury of her civilized countrymen,” his peroration takes instant effect, and he retires behind a round of applause.

“Mrs. Cluppins” is no sooner called than she appears, and in voice and physiognomy does ample justice to “Mrs. Bardell’s bosom-friend, number one.” She assures my lord and jury that she will not deceive them, whereupon the little judge almost entirely covers himself with glory, by slowly shaking his profound head at her and saying, —

“You had better not, ma’am.” The little of the little judge left unadorned, by the before-mentioned enviable article of apparel, is quickly covered, upon “Mrs. Cluppins” remarking that she “see Mrs. Bardell’s street door on the jar.”

“On the what?” asks the judge in a state of owl-like astonishment.

“Partly open, my lord, partly open.”

“She said on the jar” and the little judge is at this moment a parody on all the legal stupidity that ever ornamented England’s bar.

“Nathaniel Winkle,” cries “Mr. Skimpin.” —

“He-ah, he-ah,” replies an embarrassed voice, and we meet our old friend of the green shooting-coat, plaid neckerchief and closely-fitted drabs, face to face. This easily discomposed gentleman is surely he who was so brave

at duelling; who attempted to mount his horse on the wrong side, and when he got off the animal's back could not possibly get up again; who fired at rooks and brought down the left arm of his friend, "Mr. Tupman." By the professional way in which "Mr. Skimpin" badgers our sporting friend and rolls the badgering as a sweet morsel under his tongue, — the expression of his countenance denoting positive delight in the work before him, — one might believe that Mr. Dickens had passed the greater part of his life in trying the law, or being tried by it. The scene wherein the little judge browbeats "Winkle" on the subject of the latter's name, ought to be handed down to posterity; but alas! it never can be and this is the worst of acting.

Court. "Have — you — any — Christian — name, sir?" "Nathaniel, sir?"

Court. "Dan-iel. Have — you — any — other — name?"

"Nathaniel, sir, — my lord, I mean."

Court. "Na-thaniel Dan-iel, — or Daniel Nathaniel?"

"No, my lord, only Nathaniel; not Daniel at all, my lord. Nathaniel."

Court. "What — did — you — tell — me
— it — was — Daniel, for, then, sir?"

"I didn't, my lord."

Court. "You — did — sir. How — could
— I — possibly — have — got — Daniel — on
— my — notes — unless — you — told me so, sir?"

The contrast between the flustered stammering of poor "Winkle," and the impenetrable infallibility of "Justice Stareleigh," delivered in a slow, authoritative tone, as if founded on the Rock of Ages, is remarkable. Then "Mr. Skimpin" resumes his pleasant pastime, — which may be likened to a mental bull-fight, "Mr. Skimpin" being the triumphant bull engaged in goring "Winkle," the inexperienced matador.

"O, you don't know the plaintiff, but you have seen her? Now will you please to tell the gentlemen of the jury what you mean by that, Mr. Winkle?"

After hearing Mr. Winkle's reply to this aggravating question, it is possible to believe that "even a worm will turn." Our sporting friend, as we all know, is not very combative, but wherever his combativeness may be situated, the goring has at last reached it. "Mr. Winkle" does not assault "Mr. Skimpin," — for under greater provocation it would be contrary to our friend's constitution to assault anybody, — but he does all that doth become a "Winkle." He squirms in the witness-box; he grows so red in the face as

to render his plaid neckerchief pale by comparison, and is only saved from strangulation by finding vent for his feelings in the words, "God bless my soul! I mean that I am not intimate with her, but that I have seen her when I went to call on Mr. Pickwick in Goswell street."

At this crisis "Mr. Winkle" is immensely satisfactory to his friends, yet he is almost as delightful when he endeavors to gulp down the confession that he did see "Mrs. Bardell" in "Mr. Pickwick's" arms, and did hear him ask "the good creature to compose herself." "Mr. Winkle's" attempt to swallow several of the most implicative words, which attempt is finally overwhelmed by a stern devotion to truth that draws out the facts with a species of mental corkscrew, leaves nothing more to be desired.

At the close of this incomparable examination, Susannah Saunders, "bosom friend number two," performs her small part with credit to herself and "Mr. Saunders," after which "Sergeant Buzfuz" rises to the occasion and cries out, "Call Samuel Weller!"

If conclusions may be drawn from the applause that greets this announcement, there never was so universal a favorite as "Samuel Weller." Everybody looks intensely pleased and everybody settles himself as if saying, "Now I shall enjoy myself more than I ever did in my life." Is it strange that many are disappointed? Almost everybody has a pet theory with regard to "Sam Weller," and no two of these innumerable theories agree. Surely then it is not astonishing that Mr. Dickens's interpretation of this character fails to satisfy unreasonable expectations. People look upon "Sam" as neither fish, flesh, nor fowl; as some *lusus naturae* to be impossibly portrayed. Mr. Dickens's "Sam Weller" is a human being, very like other human beings belonging to the same profession, and his resemblance in voice and expression to an English coachman of my acquaintance is so striking that the two might readily pass for brothers. "Sam" has comparatively little to do in court, yet he is expected to crowd his entire life into a few sentences, that, from the very nature of the case, must be delivered quietly and with sly rather than boisterous humor. "Sam" never is boisterous, however. If there ever was a cool, self-possessed individual with a supreme contempt for people who, like "Weller Senior," are given to explosions of mirth, it is "Sam." It does not necessarily follow because Mr. Dickens has created "Sam," that he is therefore most competent to delineate him. Shakespeare never soared higher than "The Ghost" in "Hamlet," and the impression left upon posterity is that he was a

better manager than actor. Lee read his dramatic works like an angel; but when he strode the stage, the angel became a walking-stick. Sheridan Knowles was a shocking bad actor. But Mr. Dickens is so saturated with dramatic ideas, and embodies these ideas so well, that it is safe to declare him a better judge of "Sam's" nature than any one else. If Americans were Englishmen they would see the truthfulness of this portraiture. But nothing in the world can save "Sam" from being entirely eclipsed by "Justice Stareleigh."

"Little to do and plenty to get, I suppose," exclaims "Sergeant Buzfuz," referring to "Sam's" situation with "Mr. Pickwick."

"Oh, quite enough to get, sir, as the soldier said ven they ordered him three hundred and fifty lashes."

Court. "You-must-not-tell-us-what-the-sol-dier-said. The-evi-dence-of-that-sol-dier-can-not-be - received - unless - that-soldier-is-in court,-and-is-ex-am-ined-in-the-usual-way."

The little judge covers himself with a second coat of glory, and the text furnishes "Sam" with no opportunity to establish his superiority over the most stupid and learned bigwig. As intimated once before, Sam's best chance of being as slyly funny as he can be, is in the expurgated question, "Would any other gen'l'man like to ask me anythin'?" By restoring it, and by illustrating how "Sam" retires from the witness-box, Mr. Dickens might add another green leaf to his laurels.

No one is disappointed in "Tony Weller," because "Tony Weller's" most remarkable characteristics are his "hoarse voice, like some strange effort of ventriloquism," "the extreme tip of a very rubicund nose," "an underdone roast-beef complexion," and an unbounded stomach. Consequently, "Tony Weller" has but to open his mouth to stand before us in his full proportions; that is, when Mr. Dickens assumes the role. His exclamation, "Quite right too, Samivel, quite right. Put it down a we, my Lord, put it down a we!" takes the audience by storm, the author's identification with the character being complete. He not only talks like "Tony," but, expanding under the influence of beer and countless wrappers, he suggests the immortal stage-driver's personnel; and when the trial is over, and "Tony Weller" moralizes over it, saying, "I know'd what 'ud come o' this here way o' doin' bisniss. . O Samivel, Samivel, vy warn't there a alley bi!" it seems hardly possible that the slight, energetic man, who, a moment later, walks briskly oft' the stage, can have produced so perfect an illusion.

Let us leave Mr. Dickens “in one of those moments of unmixed happiness, of which, if we seek them, there are ever some to cheer our transitory existence here. There are dark shadows on the earth, but its lights are stronger in the contrast. Some men, like bats or owls, have better eyes for the darkness than for the light; we, who have no such optical powers, are better pleased to take our last parting look at the visionary companions of many solitary hours, when the brief ‘gaslight of the Reading-Room’ is blazing full Upon them.”

Thus Mr. Dickens takes leave of” Mr. Pickwick,” and thus, with some verbal liberties, we take leave of Mr. Dickens.

EXEUNT OMNES

The Readings are over, the curtain falls, and Mr. Dickens passes from among us, — probably forever. What is the final verdict? That Mr. Dickens is one of the best of actors, and, as an interpreter of himself, stands unrivalled. The debt we owe Mr. Dickens the author is increased twofold by his visit to this country, for he has demonstrated by personal illustration the meaning of the long-neglected art of reading. He has shown us that it means a perfectly easy, unaffected manner, a thoroughly colloquial tone, and an entire absence of the stilted elocution that has heretofore passed current for good reading, the virus of which has well-nigh ruined our school of public speaking. Mr. Dickens has done more: he has proved that the very best reading is such as approaches the very best acting, and in adopting the actor’s profession he has paid the highest tribute to a noble art, — one to which he has always been an earnest and devoted friend. Charles Dickens is now twice Charles Dickens. He is author, and actor, as only Shakespeare has been before him; and the balance between the two may be considered almost even, for while Shakespeare is of course the greater author, it is safe to regard Charles Dickens as the finer actor! Herein the latter resembles the magician who pours out numberless wines and liqueurs from one small black bottle. He “costumes his mind,” as Carlyle once declared, and without change of scene presents a repertoire of eighty characters! This is but a small percentage of his Fancy’s children, — the dramatis persona) of his fourteen principal works numbering no less than seven hundred and ninety-two, — yet it is enough. Nevertheless, were I omnipotent, I would have Mr. Dickens luxuriously incarcerated until he had made a dramatic study of

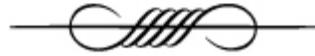
every one of his books, and was prepared to read them by instalments. Perhaps in another world, where time is of no consequence, Mr. Dickens may give his mind to a like occupation. With such audiences as he can there draw around him, it will indeed be “a feast of reason and a flow of soul.”

And Charles Dickens has accomplished other good-. Twelve years ago he wrote of the American nation: “I know full well, whatever little motes my beamy eyes may have descried in theirs, that they are a kind, large-hearted, generous, and great people.” In that faith he came to see us, in that faith he is now more fully confirmed than ever. His reception proves that our personal interest in him is akin to personal affection, and with Landor of old are we of to-day ready to exclaim, —

”Here comes the minister!
Yes, thou art he, although not sent
By cabinet or parliament:
Yes, thou art he.”

Charles Dickens is a minister of peace and light, and the prophecy that he would “lay down a third cable of intercommunication and alliance between the Old World and the New” is fast being fulfilled. In him, author and actor, the New World bids the Old World welcome, and thus “putting a girdle round the earth, “we say, as the new “minister” has often said, “God bless us every one.”

PORTRAITS AND MEMOIRS



From *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, February 1871, p.413-417

By *R.H. Horne*

The Duke of Devonshire. — Sir Joseph Paxton. — Charles Dickens. — Mark Lemon. — Augustus Egg, It. A. — Robert Bell. — Douglas Jerrold, etc

THERE are certain events and seasons when the overanxiety of the mind to write worthily concerning them almost puts what is understood by literary men as “good writing” out of the question. At such times men can not write as they think, or wish to think; they can only record, with more or less coherence, what they feel and remember. And this record, these memories, are often liable to be somewhat confused by the mist which is occasioned by inward tears, the mourning heart, the bewildered brain, the thoughts that “puzzle the will,” and cause us to be dubious of our course, as of the realities of life. We read of certain men’s deaths as so many “words” which do not represent any such actual facts; and when we seek to meet and measure and cope with the truth it makes us vaguely speculate upon the uncertainties of all the moving lives around us, as though they were so many representations of the “dance of death,” in which we ourselves would shortly have to join.

And the latter thought may well glance through the brain, and return to renew the look of destiny with a more fixed regard, when it breaks upon the mind of one of the very few survivors of such a group as that of the once brilliant “Guild of Literature and Art” in London.

This Guild, which commenced with the highest prospects of success, was founded (though the idea had been originated years before by the writer of this paper) by Charles Dickens and Lord Lytton. The latter, at that time Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, proposed to give land upon one of his estates, in a

locality suitable for the erection of a college, and to write a comedy, to be acted, with a view to raise a preliminary fund in aid of the object in question; and, in the first instances, the performers were to be celebrated authors and artists. All this was undertaken by Mr. Charles Dickens and the following — shall we say melancholy, list? It would be painful to put the record in a gloomy light. Neither would this be wise or necessary. Let us rather suppose the figures, to gleam forth upon the richly painted windows of some beautiful old cathedral, with the organ softly and deeply breathing noble strains, as if from distant clouds, while the spectator beholds the bright images of those who will never more appear upon this earthly scene.

The artists who were engaged on Lord Lytton's comedy of "Not so Bad as we Seem; or, Many Sides to a Character," were Daniel Maclise, R. A., Clarkson Stanfield, R. A., John Leech, Augustus Egg, R. A., Mr. Topham, Mr. Frank Stone, and Mr. Tenniel. The authors were Charles Dickens, Mark Lemon, Dudley Costello, Robert Bell, Douglas Jerrold (all gone!), and Mr. John Forster, Mr. Charles Knight, and the writer of the present brief chronicle. (Mr. Wilkie Collins and two or three others were engaged in subsequent performances; but the above list comprises, I think, all those who appeared in the first instance, when the play was represented at Devonshire House.) The stage architect and machinist was Sir Joseph Paxton; and to his name among the "past and gone" we have to add that of our most kind and munificent patron, the late Duke of Devonshire. It will hence appear that the only survivors of those who inaugurated the "Guild" are Lord Lytton and the three authors previously indicated.

The Duke gave us the use of his large picture-gallery, to be fitted up with seats for the audience, and his library, adjoining, for the erection of the theatre. The latter room being larger than required for the stage and its scenery, the back portion of it was screened off for a "green-room." Sir Joseph Paxton was most assiduous and careful in the erection of the theatre and seats. There was a special box for the Queen. None of the valuable paintings in the picture-gallery (arranged for the auditorium) were removed, but all of them were faced with planks, and covered with crimson velvet draperies. In the erection of the theatre not a nail was allowed to be hammered into the floor or the walls, the lateral supports being by the pressure from end to end of padded beams, and the uprights or stanchions were fitted with iron feet, firmly fixed to the floor by copper screws. The lamps and their oil were well considered, so that the smoke should not be

offensive or injurious — in fact, I think the oil was slightly scented — and there was a profusion of wax-candles. Sir Joseph Paxton also arranged all the ventilation in the most skillful manner; and, with some assistance from a theatrical machinist, he put up all the scenery, curtains, and flies. Mr. Dickens was unanimously dubbed general manager, and Mr. Mark Lemon stage-manager. We had a professional gentleman for prompter, as none of the amateurs could be intrusted with so technical, tactical, ticklish, and momentous a series of duties.

Never in the world of theatres was a better manager than Charles Dickens. Without, of course, questioning the superiority of Goethe (in the Weimar theatre) as a manager in all matters of high-class dramatic literature, one can not think he could have been so excellent in all general requirements, stage effects, and practical details of acting, and of theatrical business. Equally assiduous and unwearying as Dickens surely very few men ever were, or could possibly be. He appeared almost ubiquitous and sleepless. We had many (I really think thirteen) rehearsals, six or seven of them after every body knew his part letter-perfect.

Nothing could surpass the princely munificence of the Duke of Devonshire throughout this occasion, unless, indeed, it were his extreme kindness and delicate consideration for the feelings of all the authors and artists engaged in the matter. The gates of Devonshire House were thrown open to our dingy hackneys and cabriolets, with all the ceremony of porters and footmen, precisely as though our vehicles had been the usual classes of courtly equipage. A profuse and elegant cold collation, comprising every delicacy in and out of season, and the choicest wines, was always served for the “company,” behind whose carved chairs the Duke’s own footmen, in full livery (“uniform” would seem to be a more literal term, as they all wore double silver-bullion epaulets); and at most of these twelve or thirteen luxurious luncheons, or *dejeuners a la fourchettes*, his Grace sat down with us, apologizing for the state of his health, which limited him to a very spare indulgence. Some of these scenes would not have been out of place in “Lothair,” had the author witnessed them.

The principal scenes were painted by Clarkson Stanfield, but some of them, I think, were the work of Maclise; indeed it appeared that Mr. Egg, as well as Topham and Tenniel, gave frequent assistance, as they were all continually on the stage during the touching up and arrangement of the scenery. Mr. Planche was consulted about the costumes, and it was agreed

that the wigs and “make-up” of faces should be as good and characteristic as possible. One military “character,” not considering himself sufficiently tall for the part, had a pair of thigh-boots made with cork heels four inches high.

Several amusing incidents occurred in the course of the rehearsals. The first (one can only speak of what one knows) was during the preparation of the scenic arrangements, some alteration in which was required. Sir Joseph Paxton gave his directions, and went away for a time. The hour for rehearsal had not yet come, and we were conning our parts in the green-room. Meanwhile a tall, elderly gentleman, very plainly dressed in a suit of what looked like rather rusty black, had got upon the stage, and was lurking among the wings — now in one place, now in another — with an amiable smile upon his countenance, denoting the interest he took in the proceedings. The heavy roller of a scene was now being hoisted, and the tall gentleman in rusty black became confused as to his whereabouts. “Now, Sir,” exclaimed a voice, “do, for Heaven’s sake, keep out of the way! Do you want to get your back broke?” The elderly gentleman apologized with a deprecating bow, and immediately retired. “Who was that?” somebody inquired, but nobody on the stage at that moment knew. It was the Duke. This direful *contre-temps* was speedily put to rights by the ready tact and proper feeling of our manager, and was the source of much amusement to the amiable nobleman, who warmly and humorously expressed his thanks for the timely warning. It was “set about” that the blunder had been committed by one of the stage-carpenters, but there was good reason to be afraid that it was one of *nous autres*.

Another incident, which will be regarded as rather odd and unique, may serve as material for some curious speculation as to the force of imagination, and also of the sympathy between our visual and olfactory organs. “Colonel Flint,” of the Guards, a bully and duelist, described in the *dramatis personae* “a fire-eater,” was to stand with his back to the red glowing chimney-piece in Will’s Coffee-house. The period is that of George the First, when it was fashionable for the great bloods and bucks of the day to smoke long pipes, designated as “a yard of clay.” With such a pipe Colonel Flint had duly provided himself for rehearsal; and, to make his stage business more perfect, soft-rolling clouds of smoke began to issue from the bowl, and float over the once famous coffee-room. In no time came the manager, speaking quickly: “My dear Home, on no account

attempt to smoke! The Queen detests tobacco, and would leave the box immediately!”

“But there’s no tobacco, in the pipe,” replied the Colonel.

“Oh! come — nonsense!”

“Look here!” and the Colonel took out of his waistcoat pocket a handful of dried herbs. “I got these in Covent Garden Market this morning on the way to rehearsal.”

“Well, we smelled tobacco the moment we came within sight of the stage,” said Mr. Dickens. “The pipe must be foul.”

“It is a brand-new pipe!”

Mark Lemon now came up, and protesting that he also had smelled tobacco, and that the pipe must have been an old one reburned to look clean, the offending clay was flung aside.

Before the next rehearsal, however, another pipe, warranted new and pure, was obtained, independent of which it was placed in the fire, and kept there at red-heat long enough to purify it ten times over, even had it been one of the unclean. Again the cloud began to unfold its volume over Will’s Coffee-room; and this time Sir Joseph Paxton came running from the seat in the front, upon the stage, declaring that the Queen so detested the smell of tobacco that smoking must really not be attempted. Once again the Colonel protested the innocence of his pipe, in proof of which he produced a handful of dried thyme and rosemary from his waistcoat pocket. In vain. Sir Joseph insisted that he had smelled tobacco! They all smelled it! So this second yard of clay was sent to shivers.

But the Colonel had chanced to see a “Model of the Battle of Waterloo,” exhibited some years before, in Leicester Square, in which the various miniature platoons of infantry, as well as the brigades of artillery, were supposed to be firing volleys, the clouds and wreaths of smoke being fragile fixtures. These capital imitations of clouds and wreaths of smoke were discovered, on very close examination, to be composed of extremely fine and thinly drawn-out webs of cotton, supported on rings and long twirls of almost invisible wire, and attached at one end to the mouths and muzzles of the miniature cannon and musketry. This model for a triumph in the art of smoking a pipe in the presence of a Queen who abhorred tobacco was now adopted by Colonel Flint, but held in reserve for the morning of the rehearsal for the full-dress rehearsal of the same night, when there would be a preliminary audience. He ventured to flatter himself that all these delicate

considerations and assiduities would be much applauded and complimented both by the author and the management. Far from it. No sooner was the cloud of apparent smoke perceived to issue from the pipe than the manager, the stage-manager, and Sir Joseph Paxton hurried together to the too assiduous Guardsman, begging him on no account to persist in this smoking! — this smoke, or (on examining the smoke) this appearance of smoking. It would be most injudicious. Her Majesty would *think* she smelled tobacco, and that would be as bad as if her Majesty really smelled it. At the same time they added, collectively, that they themselves *had* smelled tobacco, no matter from what source or what cause. Of course there was an end of the matter, as we were all anxious to be harmonious; and the discomfited “fire-eater” of the comedy did the best he could to bully the company in Will’s Coffee-room with his empty-bowled and immaculate yard of clay. These minute details, however, will serve to show the pains that were taken even with the slightest parts of this performance — pains that were worthy of this come’die Francaise. But with regard to the supposed tobacco-smoke, “there’s more in that than meets the eye.” For, query — did they not really get a faint whiff of tobacco, though no such thing had been there? By the force of imagination, it will, of course, be said. Yes; but not only by that, but by some subtile power of memory and association reproducing such an effect upon the senses. It is easy to smile; but who knows? With which adventurous but very pregnant problem we will leave the subject.

At the full-dress rehearsal the audience was composed exclusively of the relatives, friends, and acquaintances of the Duke of Devonshire, and of the authors and artists engaged in the performance. All went well, and the “first night” was announced. The tickets were five guineas each, and her Majesty sent a hundred guineas for her box. This night also — our all-important night — went off most satisfactorily. Only one little accident occurred. Every gentleman of the period, of any rank, wore a sword; the manager, therefore, intimated that as our stage was small, and would be nearly filled up with side tables and tables in front in the conspiracy scene in Will’s Coffee-house, it would be prudent and important that the swords of the *dramatis personae* should be most carefully considered in passing down the centre and round one of the tables in front. At this table sat the “Duke of Middlesex” (Mr. Frank Stone) and the “Earl of Loftus” (Mr. Dudley Costello) in a private and high-treasonous conversation. On the table were

decanter, glasses, plates of fruit, etc. At the other table in front sat "Mr. David Fallen" (Mr. Augustus Egg), the half-starved Grub Street author and political pamphleteer, with some bread and cheese and a little mug of ale. The eventful moment came when "Mr. Shadowly Softhead" (Douglas Jerrold), Colonel Flint, and others, had to pass down the narrow space in the middle of the stage, to be presented to the "Duke of Middlesex;" and then, as there was not room enough to enable them to turn about and retire up the stage, they were to pass round the corner of that table, and make their exit at the right first entrance. This was done by all with safety and a reasonably good grace except one gentleman, who shall not be named; for as he rose from his courtly bowing advance, and passed round, the tip of his jutting-out sword went closely across the surface of the table and swept off the whole of the "properties" and realities. Decanter, glasses, plates, a pineapple, a painted pound cake, and several fine wooden peaches, rolled pell-mell upon the stage, and, as usual, made for the foot-lights. A considerable "sensation" passed over the courtly audience, amidst which the Queen (to judge by the shaking of the handkerchief in front of the royal face) by no means remained unmoved. But Mr. Dickens, who, as "Lord Wilmot," happened to be close in front, with admirable promptitude and tact, instantly called, with a jaunty air of command, "Here, drawer, come and clear away this wreck!" as though the disaster had been a part of the business of the scene, while the others on the stage so well managed their by-play that many of the audience were in some doubt about the accident. When inquiry was instituted as to the culprit on this occasion, who had failed to carry his sword with due circumspection, as every one of the "Guild" protested his innocence of the awkward fact in question, it was presently discovered that the guilty individual was a supernumerary lord for that scene enacted by a gentleman who was one of the Duke's suit.

Two other amusing incidents occurred. A number of bedrooms had been placed at our disposal for dressing-rooms. A certain gentleman of the "company," who was disposed to be rather portly, had been somewhat too long over the buttoning of a long-flapped and stiffly embroidered waistcoat, and the call-boy had been sent up stairs a second time from the prompter below to inform him that the stage would immediately be "waiting" for him. Away ran the boy, and vanished round a corner. In his haste the "character" in question took a wrong turn, and coming upon a steep flight of stairs, down he hurried, and thence down another long flight, and

presently found that he was close upon the kitchens. Up he rushed again, and scuttled along the gallery till he turned into a still longer gallery, well lighted, but vacant, and *hopeless*. Once more he made a turn, now wild with the thought of the stage being kept waiting, and seeing a tall, dark figure passing the further end, he rushed toward it — wigged, powdered, buckled, ruffled, perspiring, maddened, and gasping out, “Where, where’s the stage?” He was *barely* able to recognize that his preserver was the Duke, who, with a most delighted and delightful urbanity, at once put him upon his right course. Another miscalculation of time occurred in consequence of Sir Joseph Paxton remarking in the green-room, just after the conclusion of the performance, that he had arranged the Queen’s chair in the supper-room in a peculiar manner, with exotic and other rare flowers which had arrived that evening fresh from the Duke’s gardens at Chatsworth. Colonel Flint, hearing this, requested permission to see the floral throne before her Majesty’s entrance to the supper-room. “By all means,” said Sir Joseph, “but you must be very quick.” Away hurried the applicant, and was speedily in the supper-room, and made his way, his stage-costume notwithstanding, through a number of gentlemen-in-waiting, officers attired in a very different sort of uniform, footmen, etc., to their no small surprise and amusement.

At the top of the table, and furthest from the door, there was a richly-carved and cushioned chair, raised a few inches above all the other chairs. It had large padded arms of figured satin and velvet, and a high back that had a curved Gothic arch at the top. But very little of the chair could be clearly seen, and its outline was only indicated here and there. The whole of the back was devoted to a perfect cascade of roses, red and white, chiefly for their odor, mingled with magnolias, jasmine, honeysuckle, and tuberose; but the high arch and sides of the chair were overhung with festoons and long, dripping falls and tangles of the most lovely orchidaceous and other exotic plants, and by fine trickling tendrils and dangling lines, bearing little starry flowers, and very minute and curiously shaped leaves, leaflets, and tiny fairy buds, and some of the creepers displaying little flowers and leaves that resembled a sort of floral jewelry. At the top of the arched chair-back there was a large night-flowering cereus of most delicious and recondite perfume. (No wonder Sir Joseph was so much alarmed at tobacco!) The predominating colors were snow-white and apple-green, with a little soft azure, and a few scarlet buds, and here and there a dark Tuscany rose or

two, for *shadows* — the whole having been carefully selected and arranged by Sir Joseph as a suitable back-ground for the dress worn by her Majesty on this, we may fairly say, unprecedented occasion. An imitation of dew-drops was achieved to a degree of perfect illusion, by means of opals and glass, as it seemed — a piece of refined ingenuity which was about to undergo a closer inspection by Flint, when suddenly it was announced that the Queen was approaching the supper-room! Instantly the oblivious Colonel made a dash for the open door, but it was only to encounter the bowing backs and elegant coat-tails of gentlemen and lords in waiting, who were ushering in her Majesty. There was nothing for it but to spring aside, and range in line with the officers and gentlemen in attendance, and to “stand attention,” as if on grand parade. He trusted, in the confusion of the moment, that his Guardsman’s uniform of the time of George I., notwithstanding the polished thigh-boots and towering powdered wig, would not be observed by the Queen, with Prince Albert, the Duke, and suit attending her. Vain hope. However, with long, rapid strides, the instant her Majesty had passed, the anachronistic uniform made its exit at the rear of the line in which it had so unseasonably appeared *en militaire*.

Various other incidents, no doubt, transpired with respect to different individuals, but did not chance to come under the present writer’s observation.

After the performance, and before leaving the box, her Majesty had sent to the manager to express her gratification, coupled with the remark: “They act very well indeed.” This was duly announced to the company when assembled for supper, and received with great satisfaction, modest and otherwise; but Dickens went on, dryly adding: “But the Queen is very kind, and was sure to say *that*,” which very much straightened the complacent faces round the table, till they all laughed at each other. Nevertheless, a few more words may be said on the subject. They really *did* act well; some very well. When it is remembered the studious sort of men they all were, and the time, together with the great pains, bestowed in all respects, why not? The principal character, as matter of elocution, was that of “Hardman,” and the gentleman personating this rising young statesman was unquestionably one of the best private readers of the day. Then, as to acting, most of the company were practiced amateurs long before this event, more especially Douglas Jerrold and Mark Lemon, who, in parts that suited them, were first-rate actors, almost equal to Dickens. The latter two were matchless in the

after-piece, but the parts they played in the comedy were not in accordance with their peculiar talents. It has been said that Mr. Dickens, in private life, had very much the appearance of a sea-faring man. This is quite true; and his long daily walks about London and the environs, or at the sea-side, caused him to have a very sun-burnt, weather-beaten face. His full-length portrait might readily be mistaken for the captain of an East Indiaman, if truthfully painted. But the character and costume of "Lord Wilmot, a young man *at the head of the mode* more than a century ago," did not suit him, and was, in fact, against the grain of his nature. His bearing on the stage and the tone of his voice were too rigid, loud, and quarter-deck-like for such "rank and fashion;" and his make-up, with the three-cornered gold-laced cocked hat, black curled wig, huge sleeve-cuffs, long flapped waistcoat, knee-breeches, and great shoe-buckles, was not carried off with the proper air, so that he presented a figure that would have made a good portrait of a captain of a Dutch privateer after having taken a capital prize. When he shouted in praise of the wine of Burgundy, it far rather suggested fine kegs of Schiedam. It was in "Mr. Nightingale's Diary," which followed, that he was inimitable. The late Miss Mitford, being present at the performance of this some time afterward, pronounced certain parts of his acting in this piece as something wonderful. Neither can it be said that Mr. Mark Lemon was quite at home in his part in the comedy, viz., that of "Sir Geoffrey Thornsides, a gentleman of good family and estate." He looked far more like a burly, wealthy Yorkshire brewer, who had retired upon something handsome. In the afterpiece he could hardly have been surpassed. Yet both the last-named parts in the comedy were fairly acted. Jerrold, also (a capital actor in certain parts), was hardly in his right element. The head and face of Jerrold were a good illustration of the saying that most people are like one or another of "our dumb fellow-creatures," for he certainly had a remarkable resemblance, in several respects, to a lion, chiefly from his very large, clear, round, undaunted, straightforward-looking eyes, the structure of the forehead, and his rough, unkempt, uplifted flourish of tawny hair. It was difficult to make such a face look like the foolish, half-scared country gentleman, "Mr. Shadowly Softhead;" but he enacted the part very well, notwithstanding. As a contrast to these, Mr. Frank Stone, the painter, presented a very grave, tall, stately full-length of the proud "Duke of Middlesex," whose dignity was astonished at his wife daring to take "such a liberty" as to give him a kiss; while the "Earl of Loftus" of Mr. Dudley

Costello was even too elegant for a nobleman of the court of George I., and rather resembled a highly polished French marquis of the age of Louis Quatorze. The make-up of Mr. Egg as “David Fallen, Grub Street author,” etc., was such as only a fine painter could well have effected. Intellectual and refined amidst his seedy clothing; resentful of his hard lot, yet saddened by disappointment and semi-starvation; his thoughts appearing to oscillate between independence of character, his political hiring, and his hungry family in their miserable attic — such a countenance was presented as the stage has seldom seen, and is very unlikely to see again, except at rare and exceptional intervals. The Irish landlord of Mr. Fallen, “Paddy O’Sullivan,” was rendered to perfection by Mr. Robert Bell, whose gigantic stature of six feet four, “without his shoes,” long frieze coat, little round hat, ragged red wig, and highly painted, smiling, rubicund visage (reminding one of the Sompnour in the “Canterbury Tales”), presented a picture that even surpassed the effect of the rich brogue in which he blurted out the few words allotted to him. Tho minor parts of this play were cut down at nearly all the final rehearsals, in order to give “more words” to some of the principal characters, and have been reduced to mere shreds in the acting copies since published.

Some account of the after-piece, entitled “Mr. Nightingale’s Diary,” written jointly by Mr. Dickens and Mr. Mark Lemon (but never published), together with the ball and supper given by the Duke on the occasion, and the subsequent performances of the “Guild” at Manchester, Liverpool, Bath, Bristol, and other great provincial towns, must, for a time, be deferred.

HARD TIMES (refinished)



BY CHARLES DIGGINS.

From: *“Our Miscellany”* (which ought to have come out, but didn't), Edited by E.F. Yates and R.B. Brough, Routledge and Co. 1856 p.142-156

CHAPTER XXXV.

They coovered poor Stephen Blackpool's face!

The crowd from the Old Hell Shaft pressed around him. Mr. Gradgrind ran to look at the sufferer's face, but in doing so, he trod on a daisy. He wept: and a hundred and sixty more of his

* It would seem that the striking want of poetical justice in the usually-received termination of this otherwise excellent story, wherein none of the good people were made happy, and the wicked were most inadequately punished, had caused the author to tremble for his popularity among the female portion of the community — who, it is well known, will stand no liberties of that description. He has therefore (apparently) re-written it on more orthodox principles; or (not improbably) got somebody else to re-write it for him; or (as is “barely possible) somebody else has re-written it for him without asking his leave. We hare no means of ascertaining the exact state of the case. The reader is requested to form his own opinion, and let us know at his earliest convenience. Our business hours are from twelve to half-past, but our address is a profound secret. — EDS. O. M.

hairs turned gray. He would tread on no more daisies!

He was not, however, to be baulked in his humble, honest purpose of self-reform. As he passed over the common, a donkey kicked him. It

reminded him that facts were stubborn things: and he had done with facts and stubbornness. He wept again.

“Rachel, beloved lass, art thou by me?”

“Ay, Stephen; how dost thou feel V

“Hoomble and happy, lass. I be grateful and thankful. I be obliged to them as have brought charges o’ robbery agin me; an’ I hope as them as did it will be happy an’ enjoy the fruits. I do only look on my being pitched down that theer shaft, and having all my bones broke, as a mercy and a providence, and God bless ev’rybody!”

“Stephen, your head be a wandering.”

“Ay, lass; awlus a muddle.”

“Will you take anything, Stephen?”

“I do hoombly thank thee for a good and trew lass thou hast awlus been to me; and I dunnot care if I do take a little soomut warm — wi’ a little sugar.”

The sobered man had still credit at the neighbouring tavern. In two seconds he appeared with a steaming glass of rum-and-water, scarcely stopping to sip it by the way.

“Can thou drink rum, Stephen?” asked Rachel, taking the tumbler from the hands of the sobered man for fear of accidents.

“I do hoombly and kindly thank thee, lass,” said poor Stephen; “I can drink anything,”

Rachel placed the goblet to his parched and quivering lips.

There was a moment of breathless silence. Mr. Bounderby rattled three-and-sixpence in his breeches pocket, and finding his ostentation was unnoticed, kicked a little boy down the Old Hell Shaft, Mr. Gradgrind purchased a pennyworth of violets from a blue-eyed flower-girl, and true to his new and trusting creed, accepted two counterfeit farthings as change for a sovereign without looking at them. The Whelp glared fiercely at the rum-and-water, and barked.

Stephen drank it, every drop. Finished. Down to the dregs. No heel-taps.

“I do hoombly thank thee, Rachel, good and trew lass as thou hast been to me; but I do feel much better.”

“Oh, here!” Mr. Bounderby blustered forward: “I’m not going to stand this. If a man suspected of robbing Josiah Bounderby, of Coketown’s Bank, is to feel ‘ much better/ I should like to know what’s the use of Old Hell Shafts. There’s a touch of the gold-spoon game in that; and I’m up to the

gold-spoon game — rather! And it wont go down with Josiah Bounderby. Of Coketown. Not exactly. Here! Where's a constable?"

There was none. Of course not. There never is, when wanted.

Mrs. Sparsit and Bitzer pressed officiously forward, and volunteered to take Stephen into custody.

"Shame!" cried the populace.

"Oh, I dare say," said Mr. Bounderby; "I'm a self-made man, and, having made myself, am not likely to be ashamed of anything. There, take him along."

There was a movement, as if for a rescue. The sobered man had been sober quite long enough without a fight, and tucked up his sleeves.

Stephen prevented this explosion.

"Noa, lads," he said, in his meek broken voice; "dunnot try to resky me. I be fond o' constables. I like going to prison. As for hard labour, I ha' been used to that long enough. Wi' regard to law — it's awlus a muddle."

"Off with him!" said Mr. Bounderby. "When I used to commit robberies, I never had any rum-and-water given to me. No, nor didn't talk about muddles. And I'm worth sixty thousand pounds, and have got ladies of family — ladies of family;" — he raised his voice to call attention to Mrs. Sparsit, who was ambling gently along with the submissive Stephen on her august shoulders — "acting as beasts of burden for me. Come up, madam!" And he gave Mrs. Sparsit a gentle touch of his whip, causing that high-nosed lady to prance a little.

They moved on, towards Coketown. The lights were beginning to blink through the fog. Like winking. The seven o'clock bells were ringing. Like one o'clock. Suddenly the tramp of horses and the fierce barking of a dog were heard.

With a wild cry, Sissy recognised Sleary's company galloping towards them — all mounted; Mr. Sleary himself, grown much stouter, on his wonderful trained Arab steed, Bolivar; J. W. B. Childers, who had apparently not had time to change his dress, as the Indian warrior on the celebrated spotted Pegasus of the Caucasus j Kidderminster following, on the comic performing donkey, Jerusalem.

A dog, far in advance of the horse-riders, dashed amongst the astonished crowd, and singling out Mr. Bounderby, seized him by the scruff of the neck.

“Thath wight, Mewwylegth,” cried Mr. S., coming up panting (in addition to his former lisp, advancing age had afflicted him with a difficulty in pronouncing his r’s). “Thath the vevy identical cove: pin him! Good dog!”

“Help! murder!” cried the bully of humility, struggling with the animal. “Will you see a man worth sixty thousand pounds devoured by a dog?”

The prospect seemed to afford the bystanders considerable satisfaction.

“Ith no uthe, Thquire,” said Sleary, calmly; “the dog wont let go hith hold of you;” and he added, in a hissing voice, “*ith Jupeth dog!*” K a

“It’s a lie,” Bounderby faltered; “I didn’t murder him — he did it himself. I never saw the man. He hit me first. I never spoke to a clown in my life. Tear this hound off.”

“Quite enough, Thquire,” said Sleary. “I call on everybody in the Queenth name to athitht me in arethting thith man, Jothiah Bounderby, for the murder of my clown, Jupe, thickthteen yearthago.”

Sissy fainted into the Whelp’s arms. From that moment the latter quadruped resolved to lead a virtuous life.

Mrs. Sparsit and Bitzer, with the alacrity of timeservers, released Stephen, and seized on their former patron. Stephen slipped quietly away in the confusion of the moment, remarking, with a wink of satisfaction to Rachel, “Awlus a muddle!”

Merrylegs retained his hold on his victim’s throat. Like a vice.

“Murder!” cried Bounderby; “release me from this dog, or demon, and I will confess all.”

“Mewwylegth, come here, thir!”

Merrylegs released his victim.

“Well, then,” said the detected miscreant, desperately, — sixteen years ago I murdered the man, Jupe, to obtain possession of eighteen-pence,* with which I entered Coketown, and set up in business. And now, do your worst.”

The crowd recoiled in horror. The sobered man picked up Mr. Bounderby’s hat, that had dropped off in the scuffle, and immediately pawned it.

“Off with him!” cried Sleary, in a tone of theatrical authority, — ” to jail !”

To jail! to jail! to jail!

CHAPTEB XXXVI.

Towards town. The crowd gathering. Like a snowball. Much dirtier, though. Rather.

“Bitzer.”

The whisper was so hoarse that the light-porter scarcely recognised his master’s tones.

“Sir?”

There is a trifling anachronism here. Bounderby having been represented as already prosperous at the time of Jupe’s disappearance. These little accidents, however, will happen in the best regulated plots.

“I have twenty sovereigns in my pocket. Let me slip away, and they are yours.”

“Thank you, sir; but I have calculated that, by letting you be locked up all night, and going back and robbing the Bank, I shall make a much better thing of it. You must please to remember that I have my way to make.”

“Will the key of the safe tempt you?”

“Thank you, sir; — that might be a consideration.”

Bounderby slipped it into the light-porter’s hand. In an instant he was gone, into the darkness, up an entry. In a few seconds, by a howl resembling the cry of a pack of hounds baffled in their scent, he knew that his escape had been discovered.

“There is no time to be lost,” he muttered. He entered a chemist’s shop.

“A pint of strychnine!”

“I beg your pardon, sir; but what do you want it for?”

“For a dog,” said Bounderby, gnashing his teeth fiercely, as he thought of Merrylegs.

“Thank you; — you can keep the change.”

He seized the poison with avidity, and rushed into the street. The cries of his pursuers came nearer. It was a fearful night — just the sort of night for a man to poison himself in. He placed the potion to his lips.

What appeared an animated mass of rags darted up from a dark corner, and seized the bottle from his hand.

“Aha!” said a drunken female voice, “ a sly drain, eh, old boy? Half shares, though. I haven’t had a sup of anything good these two hours.

Here's your health."

Ere he could arrest her movement, the drunken wife of Stephen Blackpool had drained the bottle to the dregs, and lay a squalid, loathsome corpse at his feet.

"Baffled, by Heaven!" cried Bounderby, spurning the lifeless object with his left highlow.

The pursuers were approaching. Their angry murmurs grew more and more distinct. The barking of the dog was terrible.

What was to be done?

Give himself up. To justice? To be hanged — by the neck — till he was dead? No! He had raised himself from nothing, and he was not the man to trample on his own origin, if he could help it.

Lights at the end of the street.

"Bow! wow! wow! G-r-r-r-r-r!"

The dog again! How he wished the lights were in an edible form, and might choke the infuriated quadruped!

"G-r-r-o-o-o-o-w! Yap!"

"He is gaining on him. Good dog! at him, Merrylegs! S — s — tt! Murderers, boy, murderers!"

"Bow-ow-ow-o-o-o-o-w! Yap!"

There is scarcely an inch between the muzzle of the avenging Merrylegs and the seat of the inexpressibles that were considered, scarce an hour ago, worthy to press the highest judicial seat of Coketown. Another leap, and he has him by the trousers!

A yell of exultation bursts from the infuriated multitude.

Smash! crash! the head of Bounderby strikes against a door. The brave old oak resists the shock manfully. Ha! it is the door of his own mill — the Fairy Palace. There is yet hope; the latch-key quivers in the lock: — squeak! creak! — the door yields. Bump! thump! It is barricaded from within, and the baffled Merrylegs stands in the street alone, with the yet palpitating seat of Mr. Bounderby's trousers in his extended jaws.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

His melancholy-mad elephants were at work. They were always at work — day and night. I shouldn't like to be a melancholy-mad elephant, to be always at work — night and day. Should you? Not that I don't now and then

sit up all night myself. But on those occasions I am not melancholy. By no means. Nor in the elephantine line. Quite the contrary. Mr. Bounderby entered the engine-room. There was a window at the back, by which he might let himself down into the Warren's Blacking river that supplied the mill, and so swim as far as Liverpool. He was alone, — the night-watchman of course had gone out for the evening. He could hear the crowds battering at the door below. In a few minutes he would be in custody.

The melancholy-mad elephants occupied a good deal of room. As will be the case with illtempered asthmatic old gentlemen, the building that contained them seemed insufficient space for them to wheeze and squeeze, and groan and moan, and mutter and splutter in. It required the greatest precaution, on the part of Mr. Bounderby, to step over the foaming cylinders, exhausted receivers, cranks, levers, and what not, to reach the desired window in safety.

At length he opened it.

“Bow-ow-ow-ow! Gr-r-r-r!”

The dog again! Jupe's avenging angel! In at the window. Sixteen stories high! But of what is the dog not capable?

Bounderby fell back. Into what? Into the clutches of the melancholy-mad elephants. The fly-wheel caught him. Whirr! Burr! Whiz! Fiz! Round and round he went! He was a self-made man, but he had not made himself of sufficiently strong materials to resist the influence of the melancholy-mad elephants.

In the morning, a mother-of-pearl shirt button and a fragment of a broad blue cloth coat-skirt were all the remains of the once prosperous Josiah Bounderby, of Coketown!

* * * * *

Little remains to be told. Rachel and Stephen were married. The robbery of the bank was fixed upon Mrs. Sparsit and Bitzer. As the house of Bounderby, however, had never issued anything but forged notes, the culprits were soon detected in the attempt to pass some of them. Sissy married the reformed Whelp, and reared a large family of puppies. Mr. Gradgrind ended his days as a clown to Sleary's troop. He had had a lesson in the futility of facts, and during his engagement could never be prevailed

upon to accept wages. He lived by borrowing sixpences of the rest of the company — as a penance.

Mr. James Harthouse returned from Jerusalem, determined to go in for the domestic virtues. He proposed to Louisa, and was accepted. They were happy.

Sleary's company went to America, and got engaged by Barnum. Of course they returned with fortunes. Sleary himself, in consideration of his disinterested efforts to secure Bounderby, was made Master of the Horse.

J. W. B. Childers won £150,000 upon the last Derby. The horse had been trained to lose by Sleary.

Kidderminster grew ten inches after the age of twenty-seven, and was immediately appointed to a colonelcy in the Scots Greys. The sobered man, ashamed of his former conduct, never became so again. Macchoakumchild was carried off by a severe attack of his own name.

Mrs. Sparsit and Bitzer were transported. The former, through her high connexions, was enabled to obtain a ticket-of-leave before the customary time had elapsed. She set up a boarding-house, and lived by poisoning gold-diggers. As she had amassed a considerable fortune by the time Bitzer obtained Ms ticket, the latter assassinated her for her property, and was executed.

And now, reader, let us love one another. If you will, I will. I can't say fairer. And so, God bless us all.

UNDER THE SHADOW OF BLEAK HOUSE



By J. Ashby-Sterry

From: *The Shuttlecock Papers*, A book for an idle hour, J. Ashby-Sterry, Tinsley Brothers, 1873, p.101-114

It is a lovely day. The sunshine is brilliant. Ramsgate is getting too hot, too noisy, and too dirty. It is crammed with blatant excursionists, and the shout of the raucous cad resoundeth from early morn to dewy eve: the dirty street preacher is never silent, and the voice of the nigger minstrel never is mute. It is a relief to get over here, to revel in the quiet, to bask in the sunshine, and to watch the ever-changing colours of the ocean; to listen to its music almost lulling me to slumber as it gently washes the foot of the cliff below me, It is tolerably hot even in Broadstairs to-day, but I bethought me I should find a breeze on the Fort Hill, and I have certainly found it. The sun is just getting a little behind a large house at my back, and throwing a long slip of shadow across the sward on which I am rolling. I am just at the junction of the shadow and the sunshine, so when I feel cool, by one turn of my body, I can roast, and when I get too hot, by another turn, I can cool myself. I am leaning on my elbows, my head is thrust into a stray bunch of sweet-smelling clover that is growing at the very edge of the cliff. I look right away towards Deal. By tracing a white line which marks the spray breaking on the Goodwin, I can just distinguish the Gull Light ship, and a long way further on I fancy I can see a speck on the waters that may be the light ship of the South Sand Head. Ever changing is the aspect of sea and sky to-day. There is none of the monotony, none of the heartless burnished appearance of a cloudless steely sky. There is light and shade of every variety. Long lines of purple shadow come and go on the waters. Little white-sailed yachts are dancing over the waves and dallying with the breeze like flirts of the ocean. Vast ships on the horizon appear not to move at all, and a long line of smoke marks the track of a steamer much nearer to France than to us. Looking over my left shoulder I can see something white

flashing in the sunshine which happens to be the top of the North Foreland light-house, and an invigorating stray breeze from the North Sea cools my left cheek from time to time. There is a flagstaff close to me which rattles its cordage musically now and then, there is a coast guardsman with very white trousers and a very large collar, looking as if he were rehearsing the part of William, in *Black-Eyed Susan*, for an amateur performance at the Assembly Rooms. He carries a large telescope, which seems more like a piece of light artillery than an optical instrument, and with which he is continually taking shots at passing vessels. There is a young lady sitting on a bench reading a novel, there are two brown faced school-girls romping about the grass, there is a comical old gull pretending to be a tumbler pigeon, and there is bonny little Broadstairs with its tiny pier and its baby harbour sleeping in the sunshine before me. Behind me is Bleak House, where many years of his life lived Charles Dickens, and where many of his finest works were penned. What a romantic place this is to write in, is it not? What a glorious study to work in. Indeed, both from situation and association it would be impossible to find a better place for writing, were it not that one feels that so much superb work has been done on this very spot by so great an artist, that the mere craftsman is inclined to question whether it is worth while for him to write at all.

Directly I turned my back on the Granville this morning, and strolled along the cliff Broadstair-wards, I began to feel better. I seemed at once to get rid of the element which is so disagreeable during the height of the season at Ramsgate. I met not the Baron Bevis Marks on my way, neither did I encounter Lady Houndsditch, nor the Countess of Whitechapel. The young gentlemen who ape the manners and appearance of music-hall celebrities were conspicuous by their absence, and the class that makes us thankful that Ramsgate sands are well washed by the tide every day were in no wise represented. I walk round the wall of East Cliff Lodge, Sir Moses Montefiore's place, and think it would be just the place to suit me. The amount of pleasure I have had in fancying how comfortable I could be in houses that will never belong to me, how I would go somewhere in yachts I shall never possess, or how I would worship girls that I shall never marry, is something astonishing. The fields beyond East Cliff House were yellow with harvest, and the sheaves of corn looked glorious against the sparkling sea. I saw one or two very pretty pictures here, I should tell you. Two merry girls had made themselves a couch of corn sheaves and shawls, they had

hoisted an umbrella, they were nestling together, almost cheek to cheek, and both reading out of the same book. Ah! I should like to be the favourite author of these young ladies, I think to myself as I pass by and they look lazily up and give me a passing glance from beneath drooping lashes. I should dearly love to pass a morning talking lazily to them or getting them to read to me as I lounged in a comfortable attitude against the corn sheaves. I pass on sadly. I hear the whirr of a reaping-machine in the distance sounding like a Lilliputian apoplectic express train, and I shake my head. I hate all these improvements; these new fangled ways of doing everything by machinery are right down detestable. However, I wade ankle-deep across a field of sweet-scented clover which somewhat restores my equanimity. The sweet scent that you encounter in many parts of the Isle of Thanet in summer time is remarkable. There is the scent of the sea, of clover, of hay, of tamarisk, of thyme, borne upon the breeze one after the other, sometimes separate, sometimes in combination: a scale of perfume, a harmony of sweet scents. I descend towards Dumpton Gap, and in a little nook on the other side, looking down from the cliff, do I see a very charming sight. I see a young lady "paddling" in the coolest possible manner and apparently enjoying it very much indeed. She had taken off her stockings, reefed her skirts and furled her frills in the most artistic fashion; she had a pair of tiny boots in her hand; she was dimpling the soft sand with her white little feet, was letting the ripples kiss her well shapen ankles, and had evidently made up her mind to get to Broadstairs by water.

For the sirens of Ceres or the sirens of the shore I cannot stay, for I am anxious to get to the end of my journey. I cross another field or two and I come in sight of Broadstairs. My first feeling is one of rage, for I see some new houses have been erected at the end nearest Dumpton. I begin to gnash my teeth, to stamp, to shake my fist at an imaginary Buggins, the builder. However, I find the houses in question might be worse, but I would have the natives of Broadstairs beware. Mr. Buggins is very fond of getting the thin end of the wedge in, and when once he gets any footing at all it is not long before he begins erecting his filthy stucco villas, and would do his best to speedily convert this pleasant quaint sea-side village into a maritime Cadopolis. I address a word of warning to the Broadstairians, I say beware of Buggins and cheap trains! If I were an inhabitant of the place I would get up an agitation in favour of only allowing a couple of trains to stop there in the course of the day, and, if possible, I would head a subscription towards

disestablishing the railway station altogether. Having got over my indignation somewhat, I pass on. I come upon the old-fashioned what you may call “regular sea-side houses,” the houses with green balconies and green shutters, with curious little gardens, with hedges of tamarisk and queer “wooden railings. Rows of houses with quaint names. For instance, Nuckle’s Place. Who was Nuckle, and why should he have a place I should like to know? Was Nuckle ever harbour-master, commandant, mayor, magistrate, chief butler, topsawyer, or head bottle-washer at Broadstairs that he should have a row of houses named after him? What has Nuckle done that this lasting honour should be conferred upon him? I have a theory of my own about this. Hard by the row of houses of which I speak is the Assembly Rooms. I have a sort of notion that when balls and card parties took place here many years ago, Nuckle was the master of the ceremonies — he was the Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, of the place — and was usually known as Beau Nuckle, and though his figure has faded from Broadstairs, though balls are no longer held at the Assembly Rooms, his memory is preserved in a row of houses. I have no doubt Nuckle was quite as great a man at Broadstairs as Bantam was at Bath. But this by the way. The great characteristics of Broadstairs are its brightness and cleanliness: there is little of the frowsiness of seaside lodgings in any of the houses. Most of the windows are open, and all the doors, and many of the young ladies seem to pass the entire day in the balconies. The library is one of those delicious old “marine libraries” that I fancied had almost passed away. It has a reading-room, with a large brass telescope which makes you feel like a surveyor for Lloyd’s, and have a perpetual desire to see impossible things in the “offing.” It has a green baize-clothed table, which is almost suggestive of a cabinet council, and there is a solemnity about the room which induces you to carry on your conversation in subdued whispers. A capital place this room is to spend a wet day in, I can tell you, and run over the well-read collection of books, or, when it is too hot to go out, some very pleasant mooning can be done as you gaze upon the sea from the large bow window.

Beyond the library is the flagstaff, which stands in the middle of the green on the cliff side of the village. I do not know what this green is for. Whether it is for volunteers to exercise in, or for babies to roll in, I am unable to say. It would be a suitable place for some tiny agitator connected with that influential body, the Babies’ Rights Association to hold an

indignation meeting about perambulators not being allowed on the pier, and it would be about big enough for such a purpose. Beneath the flagstaff on this green may be seen four or five melancholy gulls. Now a gull on a grass-plot is as awkward as a swan on a turnpike road. I should very much like to know why these melancholy gulls are always here. Are they fed at the expense of the town of Broadstairs like the pigeons are at Venice, when the bell in the Torre dell Orologio strikes two. Is there as much mystery with regard to the origin of the gulls of Broadstairs as there is in respect of the pigeons of Venice? You know in former times there was a chapel here — a portion of it, I believe, still exists — dedicated to “Our Lady of Broadstairs,” which was held in such veneration that ships sailing by lowered their topsails. I wonder whether “Our Lady of Broadstairs” was the patron saint of seabirds, and if they have always hovered about her shrine.

Before descending to the pier I lean upon the railings and gaze upon the little harbour, the row of bathing machines, the sandy bay with the children digging and paddling. I note an excellent idea on the sands, that is, little portable tents for the children to sit under and so keep them out of the broiling sun. There is that same coal-brig that you always see in Broadstairs Harbour, which seems especially retained to give a picturesque finish to the scene. The bathing is all over. The machines are hauled up high and dry, and a number of bathing costumes are hung on the railings. I hear a great deal of chattering and girlish laughter, a popping of corks and a jingling of glasses proceeding from the bow window to my left. I fancy they must be having luncheon, and uncommonly merry over it they seem to be sure. I descend a flight of steps, pass under the quaint old York Gate, and feeling somewhat athirst I look in at the Tartar Frigate and have a glass of ale. Here I find half-a-dozen ancient mariners having what they are pleased to call “toothfuls” of rum. They are a good, kindly set of men, as different from the ordinary sea-side boatmen as well may be. As a general rule, it costs you a pint of beer and a screw of tobacco every time you open your mouth to a seaside boatman. It is very different with the sturdy honest inhabitant of Broadstairs. You may talk to him for half-an-hour, and at the end of that time he will wish you a courteous good morning without hinting at any reward or refreshment. They never bore you to go out in their boats, or make your life miserable by insisting, whenever you walk down the pier, that it is “A nice day for a sail.” “What a queer, picturesque, pitched, patched, be-riveted, be-clamped old structure this pier is to be sure! What a

deal of material Mr. J. C. Hook might find in it for one of his pictures. Look at the gigantic rough timbers, the strong ladders, the vast fusty rings, the coils of rope, the heaps of iron ballast, the anchors, the trawls, the blocks, the spars, the oars, the sailcloth, the nets that are distributed in picturesque confusion over this little pier. How everything seems to be made for strength and service, for rough and ready use and not for ornament; and yet how ornamental it all looks. Strolling down to the end of the pier we shall find very different to that of Ramsgate or the jetty at Margate. There is no boat to see in, nor are there any poor sea-sick passengers to jeer at. It almost seems like a private pier, and you look upon the little awning at the end as a subscription marquee, to which you would only be allowed to become subscriber after you had been proposed by one duchess and seconded by another. Being rather of a diffident disposition, I confess I do not feel as if I ought to intrude upon the large family party who are seated beneath the canvas. A gigantic black and white dog and his friend the Newfoundland come and look at me at first rather doubtfully, but I make friends with them and pat them. The black and white dog wags his tail and goes off to his master — a good-looking young fellow in a light grey suit — and looks at him, looks back at me and wags his tail violently as much as to say “ he’s a new comer, but not half a bad sort when you know him.” Encouraged by this I take a seat beneath the awning and look around me.

They are a very quiet lot of people, a good many ladies and children and a few men. They are mostly engaged in reading and working, and one or two are sketching. A few bonny children are racing up and down the slope to the sea, and a little imp of mischief named Jessie is severely reprovved by her grown-up sister for spoiling her boots and embroidery by standing up to her knees in salt water. A few men are smoking outside the awning, but they refrain from doing so within as long as the ladies are present. The only disadvantage of being beneath the awning is that the seats are all on the slope, and you are perpetually sliding seawards or into somebody else’s lap, which is very embarrassing till you are used to it. But outside you can get every variety of seat. There are big timbers, vast stanchions, and comfortable posts, so that you can achieve almost any position you please. If you require shade you can repose beneath the life-boat or any of the other boats that are hauled up high and dry on the slip. If you like sunshine you can sit on the broad wooden edge of the pier, dangle your legs over the harbour, and gaze upon the village. Whilst I was there a nigger in a gay

spotted muslin coat — who I suppose had come over on speculation from Ramsgate or Margate — walked jauntily down the pier and commenced thrumming his banjo and “yah-yahing” after the manner of nigger minstrels. He looked under the awning: he thrummed his banjo violently. One or two people looked at him languidly, nobody smiled; every one went on with their sketching, their working, or their reading. He saw it was a hopeless case: he had not the heart to sing a song, nor ask a conundrum, and he went slowly thrumming his banjo back again as if he were trying to play a funeral dirge, and I saw him no more. His merriment had departed and his voice was mute, and he evidently felt almost as much out of place as he would in a Belgravian drawing-room. I saw a gentleman walking about the pier in a coat with gilt buttons and a gold-embroidered collar: he looked like a port admiral at the very least, but I have a sort of idea that he may be the harbour-master. Another gentleman in plain clothes and a grey moustache looked very much like the commandant of the garrison in mufti — if Broadstairs has a garrison, a matter which I am prepared somewhat to doubt. Indeed, I very much doubt whether Broadstairs has a policeman. I know I have never seen one there. I believe that they keep a tame beadle, but he only comes out on Sundays. You will notice a building at the entrance to the pier decorated with figureheads of wrecked ships. This is the look-out and seamen’s reading-rooms. Do not forget to pay it a visit, and do not omit to give something towards its funds, and if you are a resident for a time make a point of becoming a regular subscriber. And whilst you have your hand in your pocket remember to drop as much as you can conveniently spare into the box of the Lifeboat Association which is close handy. I do not know any place for its size where you can get such a variety of views as Broadstairs. It is a village that grows upon you the more you see it. There is a simplicity about the whole place which is indescribably charming, especially when coming from the racket of Ramsgate and the boisterous hilarity of Margate. I do not think it is a place likely to be spoiled by the “jolly dog/” the music-hall snob, nor the blatant cad, simply because there would be no attraction for him in the place. There are no steamboats to see come in, there is no German band with an attenuated flageolet and a cracked trombone, there are no “harmonic meetings” at public-houses, no niggers, no Punch and Judy, no indecorous bathing, nor any of those light amusements in which the “jolly dog,” the music-hall snob, and the blatant cad find especial joy. But for health, for quiet, for mooning, and for

meditation, Broadstairs is superb. Anybody who is a potterer by profession and a mooner by education will enjoy himself vastly at this little village. You will soon know every one by sight, and those who have a sympathy with unknown people find a vast pleasure in imagining their histories, and in watching their doings will have an ample fund of amusement during the whole of his stay.

Having mooned about the pier for a considerable time, I mount up the Fort Hill, past a group of picturesque cottages, and arrive at Bleak House. I look across the luxuriant garden and the smoothly shaven lawn. I walk right round to the back and note the dense shrubs, the fig-tree peeping over the wall, and the wall itself perfectly matted with ivy and vegetation. I then come back, I roll down on the grass, and I-look up at the house and wonder and speculate. I wonder whether it was in that room with a large window looking towards the flagstaff that the wonderful description of the storm in “David Copperfield” was written. Or was it in the room looking across the garden on the other side? I should much like to know which was the study where Charles Dickens did his works; where the great master toiled and produced those characters, those scenes in which we believe so implicitly, and which have given such infinite pleasure to thousands and thousands wherever the English tongue is spoken. How one feels all this, lounging here in the sunshine, and looking up at the very windows where Dickens must have gazed from in the pauses of his work. I bury my face in the sweet-scented clover and gaze through it on the sea, and listen to the gentle splash of the waves, and feel the salt breeze on my cheek. And then comes a dream of pleasant fancies which the great novelist has painted for us, and in so doing has given many a gleam of sunshine to weary life. I think of Little Paul and Florence, of “what the waves were always saying.” Of grand old Captain Cuttle, of Major Bagstock, and of Dombey. Of Little Nell, Dick Swiveller and the incomparable Marchioness; of Peggotty, Ham, Em’ly, and delightful Baby Dora; of Nicholas Nickleby, the Cheeryble Brothers, Mark Tapley, the Crummles’s, the Phenomenon and Morleena Kenwigs; of Mr. Pickwick, the immortal Sam Weller, Stiggins, of poor Joe, of the detestable Chadband — I heard Chadband preach at Ramsgate this morning — and Jarndyce v. Jarndyce. Delicious dimpled Bella Wilfer — the “boofer lady” — Mr. Boffin, Wegg, the Veneerings, Inspector Bucket, Little Dorrit, Flintwinch, Clennam, the Tite Barnacles, Mr. Micawber, Guppy, Rosa Budd, Scrooge, Tiny Tim, Tilly Slowboy, Dot, Trotty Veck, Tom Pinch,

Westlock, Barnaby Rudge, the Willetts, Sim Tappertit, Dolly Varden — how different to the Dolly Vardens of Ramsgate ! — and Miss Miggs. Of Oliver Twist, of Sykes and Nancy — the last time I heard Charles Dickens read was when he gave the marvellously tragic impersonation of these two characters — of Mr. Pumblechook, Miss Havisham, Pip, Joe, Mr. Jaggers, the admirable “Wemmick, and Estella. I dream of all these people and hundreds more, of marvellous descriptions of scenery and graphic delineations of character, and I think sorrowfully of the unsolved “Mystery of Edwin Drood.” Whilst I have been pondering the shadow cast by Bleak House has widened and lengthened, it has spread over my little knoll across my bunch of clover, and has caused the cliff to cast a deep shade over the dancing waters. Somewhat slowly and sadly do I gather up my papers, and with a regretful glance at the mansion that has so many pleasant memories associated with it, I arise and pass from under the shadow of Bleak House into the summer sunshine.

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THE WOODEN MIDSHIPMAN



By J. Ashby-Sterry



Going down Leadenhall Street one day, I paused, as was my custom, at the door of the Wooden Midshipman, and thought of the changes he has seen since the days of Dombey and Son.

I found the Midshipman looking precisely the same as he had looked ever since I have known him, and as he looked, I imagine, many years before I had the pleasure of making his acquaintance: “With his quadrant at his round black knob of an eye, and its figure in the old attitude of indomitable alacrity, the midshipman displayed his elfin small clothes to the best advantage, and, absorbed in scientific pursuits, had no sympathy with worldly concerns.” Changes have taken place, and are taking place, under his very nose. Gigantic alterations, disregard of old customs and upheavals

of old neighbourhoods, waivings of ancient rights and discontinuance of time-honoured privileges, have come to pass in his immediate vicinity, and yet the Little Man is unmoved. He still stands high and dry at his post of observation, and lets the stream of progress and what the world calls enlightenment and improvement sweep beneath his feet unheeded.

With the London of Charles Dickens I have been familiar from my youth. When I first began "to take notice" and "to run alone," the greater part of it existed intact, and one of my chief pleasures was to wander about the localities he had described with such photographic exactness and such rich pictorial effect, and live his stories over again with their real scenery. The house of Mr. Dombey still exists on the shady side of that "dark, dreadfully genteel street." I often pass it now, and look up at the window of the room where Little Paul died. Do 'not say, my dear sir, or my dear madam, as the case may be, that this is all fancy. I tell you that constant study of such matters has made me infallibly accurate, and if you come with me, I will point you out the actual house, and show you the very window.

The ruthless scythe of "improvement" has, I am sorry to say, effectually mown out of existence many pleasant oases in our Great Sahara of bricks and mortar. At one time I could have taken you, down curious lanes, through odd passages and secluded squares, to Todgers's. It was difficult enough for the uninitiated to find, but when found, you would feel bound to admit that it was Todgers's, and no other. It would not surprise you the least to meet the Miss Pecksniffs under the escort of their cousin, Jonas Chuzzlewit, coming along the street. I have often encountered Mr. Jinkins in this locality, and one day I am quite certain I saw the shock-head of Bailey junior protruding from a first-floor window. At the period I speak of, I could have shown you the house of Mr. Sampson Brass in Bevis Marks, which Mr. Richard Swiveller described as commanding an uninterrupted view of over the way, and being pleasantly situated within a few minutes' walk of round the corner. Through the barred kitchen window half underground I have sometimes fancied I saw the Marchioness at one of her "make-believe" banquets.

Not a great distance from this spot might have been seen the quaint, quiet, out-of-the-way square where was situated the business of Messrs. Cheeryble Brothers, where Mr. Tim Linkinwater resided, and where Mr. Nicholas Nickleby had his first insight into commercial life. I remember paying a visit to the "Saracen's Head," Snow Hill, when it was in course of

demolition. I suppose I was the very last visitor to the coffee-room where Mr. Squeers, of Dotheboys Hall, used to receive his pupils, and when I left the room where Mr. John Browdie had that famous supper, the plaster was falling about my ears, and the walls looked by no means safe. And that reminds me I have seen the real Dotheboys Hall, near Bowes, in Yorkshire. A few years ago it was standing, and I daresay it is yet in existence. But hold! I must not think of venturing out of London with my Dickensian recollections, or this paper will have no end.

There was a time when I could have shown you Quilp's apartments on Tower Hill, even the very room where Mrs. Jiniwin twisted off the shrimp's head and wished it had been that of her son-in-law, and if you had no objection to prowl about a shy and unsavoury neighbourhood, I might have given you a private view of Quilp's place of business, and the yard where he broke up his ships into such very small pieces that people were inclined to question whether he broke any at all, and whether ship-breaking was not a blind for a business of a less reputable and more lucrative character. I know also the queer passages and the odd galleries at the "George Inn" in the Borough. Dickens is said to have shifted the name in order that it should not be too closely identified. I could point out the corner of the yard where Mr. Pickwick first encountered Sam Weller, and the room where the famous interview took place between Miss Wardell and Mr. Alfred Jingle on the one side, and Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Perker, and the Squire on the other.

I have gazed upon the house of Mrs. Bardell in Goswell Street, where Mr. Pickwick was unfortunate enough to have lodgings, and I have wondered that the benignant philosopher could have been content with such limited accommodation, chops and tomato sauce notwithstanding. Have I not spent many a pleasant evening in Traddles' room in Gray's Inn, and thought about Mrs. Traddles and her pretty sisters — Beauty, Sarah, Louisa, Margaret, and Lucy? Do I not know the rooms in Buckingham Street where David Copperfield gave his famous dinner-party? Could I not have knocked at the very door of the house in Lant Street where Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Ben Allen conducted themselves in such uproarious fashion?

I was acquainted with the establishment of Chivery and Co., hard by Horsemonger Lane Gaol, and I remember, too, one wet, gruesome, foggy day strolling down a muddy court in the Borough, and gazing on the remains of the old Marshalsea Prison; I recollect looking into that hideous structure of red brick and stone, the church of Saint George the Martyr, and

pausing for a time in the vestry where Little Dorrit and Maggie slumbered so soundly on the parish registers and pew-cushions early on that dismal rainy morning. I was familiar with Turveydrop's Dancing Academy, I knew the corner where Silas Wegg established his stall, the queer little no thoroughfare where Miss Tox resided, the bow-windowed riverside house, down Limehouse way, where Bill Barley growled and drank rum-and-water, and the situation of the offices of Dombey and Son.

And after all, there was no portion of the whole of London so prolific in Dickensian reminiscences as the City. You saw it at every turn, in the ancient churches, hemmed in on all sides by gigantic warehouses, in their melancholy deserted graveyards, with their ragged attenuated grass, their blackened trees and neglected gravestones. In the odd boarding-houses and unaccountable inns that had buried themselves up strange courts, and lurked, half hidden, in unaccountable alleys, and seemed to apologize for their presence in quiet behind-the-age squares. In the spacious halls of opulent companies, which showed but an old-fashioned porch in a narrow quiet lane, but which presented to those who were permitted to enter their portals a superb range of apartments teeming, mayhap, with old furniture and valuable pictures, and doubtless giving on a quiet garden, worth no one knows what a square foot for building purposes, but preserved from the ravages of Buggins the Builder, merely to gladden the eyes of the plump City sparrows, the master, the wardens, and the clerk of these most worshipful corporations.

You might find countless reminders of the works of the Great Novelist in the curious old banking-houses, in the mouldy old counting-houses where so much money was made; in the difficult to find but cosy chop-houses where you could get a chop or a steak — and such a chop or a steak — hissing hot from the gridiron; in the methodical old clerks, the octogenarian housekeepers, the corpulent beadles in their splendid gaberdine, and the “characters” who kept stalls at the street corners and sold anything you please from fruit in season to dolls' coal-scuttles. In the ticket-porters, the bankers'-clerks chained to their pocket-books, the porters, the dockmen, the carters, the carriers, the brokers, the brokers' men, and the brokers' boys, who touched their hats, who hurried along, who laboured, who smacked their whips, who loaded and unloaded, who sampled, who noted, and who scampered, who grew prematurely grey, who became quickly furrowed, and

who waxed old long before their time in the everlasting struggle for so much per cent, from year's-end to year's-end.

Down by the waterside, along Thames Street, through the narrow lanes and passages leading thereto, you continually saw some spot, some character or incident that recalled something in a novel by Charles Dickens. In the picturesque old wharves, with their gigantic cranes, their odd-shaped cabin-like counting-houses, their unaccountable sheds, their vast beams and supports, their gigantic scales and weighing-machines, their glimpses of the river, with its red-funnelled steamers, its picturesque billyboys, its forests of masts and elaborate tracery of rigging. As you listened to the whirr of the crane, the yeo-yeo of the sailors, the clink-clank of the windlass — over and over again, some well-remembered passage in one of your favourite volumes would recur to you.

There were also many ancient shops, which had existed in exactly the same place, with apparently the same goods in the window and the same shopman behind the counter ever since you could recollect, and for aught you knew ever since your grandfather could recollect. I can call to mind not a few of these. There was a glove-shop — the proprietor looked as if he might have been an under-secretary in Mr. William Pitt's Cabinet — there was a chemist's shop up a court; there was a tea-shop; there was a button-shop; there was a law-stationer's; there was a print-shop; there was a fishing-tackle shop and a silversmith's. These were of the oldest of old fashions; their proprietors were the most old-fashioned of old-fashioned people, and they all did business in a most old-fashioned way. All these shops had a distinct Dickensian flavour about them, but most of them have been now swept away in order to make room for the palatial buildings which are now crowding the City, and gradually altering its entire character.

Time after time in visiting the City have I grieved to find one after another of these shops removed, and other quaint corners and ancient landmarks swept away altogether. One, however, always remained, and that had perhaps the most distinct connection and association with Charles Dickens of any spot in the City — namely, the Wooden Midshipman in Leadenhall Street. Everyone knows the Wooden Midshipman, and everyone knows the important figure it makes in "Dombey and Son." To myself this shop is especially interesting. When I was a boy, the very first book of Dickens's that I read was "Dombey and Son." Going through Leadenhall Street shortly afterwards, I noted the Wooden Midshipman, and at once

“spotted” it as the original of Sol Gills’s residence. The description is so vivid and exact that it is unmistakable. It was many years after that I knew, for an actual fact, that this was really the shop that was so graphically sketched in the novel.

Passing down the street only the other day, I paused once more at the door of the Wooden Midshipman. I looked in at the window. Everything looked pretty much as usual. But stay! I see a white placard in a prominent position, and which startles me as if I had seen a ghost. The placard is to the effect that the business is being removed to One hundred and fifty-six Minories, on account of the premises being pulled down for improvement. “He was a callous, obdurate, conceited midshipman, intent on his own discoveries, and caring as little for what went on about him, terrestrially, as Archimedes at the taking of Syracuse.” He *is* “a callous, obdurate, conceited midshipman,” for despite this unlooked-for catastrophe, this terrible calamity, he stands at the door looking as blithe and gay and contented as he has looked any time I suppose during the past century. Men may come and men may go, but he observes for ever.

He has outlived most of his compeers, and he has seen many changes in Leadenhall Street. Long before the palatial mansion of John Company, over the way, was disestablished and pulled down, he was an institution in the street. I have no doubt that he often gazed upon Charles Lamb, who generally came to his office in the India House very late in the morning, but as he pointed out in reply to the expostulations of an indignant chief, he made up for it by leaving very early. I have no doubt that the gentle Elia often exchanged winks with the Midshipman when the former was “leaving early,” in order to enjoy a ramble at Islington, or a merry dinner at some rare old City tavern with congenial companions.

This quaint old-fashioned shop is almost the last of a number of quaint old-fashioned buildings which, but a few years ago, abounded in Leadenhall Street, especially on this side of the way. It has but little changed in appearance since it was first opened in 1773, only six years after the publication of the first nautical almanac. It was established by Mr. William Heather as a “sea chart, map, and mathematical instrument warehouse,” “where may be had,” we are informed, “Hadley’s Quadrants and Sextants of all Sizes, neatly mounted with two Parallel Glasses, accurately divided by the Patent Machines, and warranted good; Gunter’s Scales, Sliding Scales, Sectors, Cases of Instruments, and Compasses of all

sorts; Sea Telescopes from One to Three Feet long, with Four or Six Glasses, &c.” Mr. Heather was succeeded by Mr. J. W. Norie in 1814, who was joined by Mr. George Wilson in 1834. Hence the firm of Norie and Wilson, under which style the business is still carried on by Mr. Charles Wilson and his sons.

The Wooden Midshipman has probably seen more of City business and its various fluctuations and phases during the past century than most people. When he first commenced taking his observations there were plenty of people remaining who remembered acutely the losses they had sustained during the South Sea Bubble. Change Alley and Garraway’s Coffee-House wore very nearly as picturesque an aspect as they present in the late Edward Mathew Ward’s famous picture. In those days the City merchant was a man of considerable importance and not a little sense. He “lived over the shop,” he and his wife and family resided at the place of business; they patronized the City shops and the City markets, and on Sunday they might be found filling a gigantic black oaken pew in one of the fine old City churches.

Clubs were then unknown in the City; but there were grand old taverns and cosy coffee-houses, where the City merchant could smoke his “pipe of Virginia” and discuss the news of the day, and crack a bottle of wine of a vintage impossible to obtain in the present day. In the good old times there was one post a day and that not a remarkably heavy one; news travelled slowly and with uncertainty; prices remained steady from one week’s end to another; and ruin or prosperity depended more on honest labour and application than secret information, the flash of the electric current, or the juggling of the Stock Exchange. In those days commerce was not chicanery, neither was business a spasm.

When news came it was generally pretty correct, and people had time to talk it over and master every detail of the information before the next budget arrived. Nowadays you may receive terrible intelligence at breakfast-time and have it contradicted long before luncheon. There has been plenty of news discussed in this ancient shop in bygone times, you may be well assured; there have been many fierce arguments across that age-polished counter and much speculation over charts and newspapers in the little cabin-like back parlour. The place must have been a “going concern” when the news came of the Battle of Lexington, and I can imagine how the ancient captains and the young apprentices talked there by the hour together concerning the murder of Captain Cook. Indeed, I have a sort of

notion that Captain Cook called at “Heather’s” for some nautical instruments and charts just before starting on the disastrous expedition. During the Gordon Riots, I will be bound, Mr. William Heather trembled for his shop-windows. He probably, being a prudent man, kept them closely shuttered, closed his Nautical Academy, and gave his students a holiday, and doubtless the Wooden Midshipman) being a prudent midshipman, retired from his position at the door and sought shelter under the counter till the storm was over.

Within these walls there must have been considerable wrangling, too, when the independence of the United States of America was first acknowledged. How the Irish Rebellion of ‘98 must have been talked over and the Treaty of Arniens discussed! Cannot you imagine the sensation caused in this old-fashioned shop when “Boney” might be expected to land every day? and cannot you fancy the joy and the sorrow that pervaded this Naval Academy when news came of the Battle-of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson? The place is a good deal associated with Nelson. I daresay he had been there many times himself. In the little back parlour is an excellent portrait of the hero of Trafalgar, said to have been painted for Lady Hamilton. There is also a curious cup, with the initials “H. N.” upon it. Besides this, there is a very comfortable armchair, bearing this inscription on a brass plate: “This was Lord Nelson’s favourite chair when he was captain of the Boreas frigate. Presented by his master, James Jamieson, to Wm. Heather, being part of the property purchased by J. W. Norie and Wilson in Leadenhall Street, London.” I wonder whether the little officer wore a bit of crape round his arm on the occasion of Nelson’s funeral, or if he were hit by any of the bullets that were flying about in the neighbourhood when Sir Francis Burdett was committed to the Tower.

When the news came of the Battle of Waterloo the Midshipman must have been quite a veteran, and the establishment over which he presided as well known and as widely respected as any in the City of London. Still, I will be bound, notwithstanding the progress of the times, the gossips assembled, and though they presumably came in to buy one of Hadley’s quadrants, a case of instruments, or a sea-telescope, they remained to talk. I should fancy pupils in the Naval Academy neglected plane sailing, traverse sailing, and middle latitude sailing, during such times. The embryo admirals who were trying to reduce the time at ship to the time at Greenwich, to correct the observed altitude of the moon, to find the true amplitude, or the

true azimuth, who were endeavouring to observe the angular distance between the sun and moon, and who were puzzling their brains over parallax, refraction, or semi-diameter, who were nearly driving themselves silly over natural sines and proportional logarithms, would quickly shunt all such uninteresting “studies in favour of discussions concerning La Belle Alliance, La Haye Sainte, Hougoumont, the Duke of Wellington, Prince Blucher, and Sir Thomas Picton.

One can easily picture the wordy warfare in this curious old mansion during the trial of Queen Caroline, the surprise manifested when omnibuses first ran, and how people shook their heads over the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, and said the unfortunate death of Mr. Huskisson was a “judgment.” The Wooden Midshipman, notwithstanding all these changes, still stuck to his post, and still made his observations on the stirring events of the age. Among other things he observed were the passing of the first Reform Bill, the Abolition of Slavery, the introduction of lucifer matches, and the burning of the Houses of Parliament. He heard the cheers and joy-bells for the accession of Queen Victoria; he saw the glare of the conflagration at the Royal Exchange, and heard the ancient clock fall into the flames, playing, “There is no luck about the house.” He noted the introduction of the penny postage, the imposition of the Income Tax, and the repeal of the Corn Laws. He has been at his post from the time people clamoured for free trade till the period they have discovered it to be a mistake. He has been there through at least four notable French revolutions. He was a witness of the mourning crowd that thronged the city on the occasion of the funeral of the Duke of Wellington. He saw the people rushing down Cornhill when peace was proclaimed after the Russian War in 1855; and he heard the great bell of Saint Paul’s boom forth to all men at midnight the sad intelligence of the death of the Prince Consort. He has existed from the old days of lanterns and oil-lamps to the days of gas and electricity, from the time of the ancient and decrepit “Charlies” to the time of the well-organized police force. He has seen the navy become well-nigh perfect as a sailing fleet, and seamanship and navigation brought to the highest point of excellence. He has remained to see the sailing ships knocked out of time by steamers, and the line-of-battle ship almost superseded by the steam ram. He has seen the whole system of commerce utterly changed by the introduction of penny post, railways, steamships, and the electric telegraph.

A more popular little officer in his own domain than our friend it would be difficult to find. He is reverentially regarded and carefully looked after by all. Fifty years ago the street-boys did not treat him with respect; they jeered at him and gave him sly taps as they passed by. Old Sam, an eccentric shopman — there have been a good many extraordinary characters connected with this place notably an old-fashioned manager, whom it is said bore an extraordinary resemblance to Sol Gills — was always lying in wait for these rascals — like Betsy Trotwood did for the donkey-boys — and many a time has he chased them down Cornhill with a good stout cane, and soundly be-larrupped them over against Saint Michael's Alley. At one time the Little Man used to get his hands severely abraded by passing porters carrying loads, and was continually being sent into dock to have a fresh set of knuckles provided. But still, unless for these accidents and his going to get a new coat, he was always at his post all day long. If he was absent the inquiries would be frequent. Old pupils, who had become distinguished naval officers — and the academy has turned out not a few in its time — would pop in to inquire what had become of the genius of the place, and many have been the offers to buy him outright and remove him. Several Americans have recently offered his proprietors very large sums if they might be allowed to purchase him and take him to New York. It is furthermore on record that King William the Fourth, on riding through Leadenhall Street on his way to the Trinity House, raised his hat to him as he passed by.

All these details are of very great interest, but they pale before the romantic charm that has been thrown over the quaint little figure and its surroundings by Charles Dickens. It is with a sad heart that I accept the courteous invitation of Mr. Wilson to take a last look at the premises, and listen to much curious gossip about the old shop and its frequenters by Mr. J. W. Appleton, who for many years has been the principal hydrographer to the establishment. The interior of the shop, with its curious desks and its broad counter — under which it may be remembered Rob the Grinder used to make his bed — is fully as old-fashioned as its exterior. Here, it may be remembered, Mr. Brogley, the broker, waited during the consultation between Sol Gills, Walter, and Captain Cuttle. And here it was the aforesaid broker filled up the time by whistling softly among the stock, “rattling weather glasses, shaking compasses as if they were physic, catching up keys with loadstones, looking through telescopes, endeavouring to make

himself acquainted with the use of the globes, setting parallel rulers astride on to his nose, and amusing himself with other philosophical transactions.” Here the Chicken waited and amused himself by chewing straw, and giving Rob the Grinder the unspeakable satisfaction of staring for half an hour at the conqueror of the Nobby Shropshire One. Here it was also when Captain Cuttle had the management of the business a customer came and inquired for some especial nautical instrument. “Brother,” says the Captain, “will you take an observation round the shop?” “Well,” says the man, “I’ve done it.” “Do you see wot you want?” says the Captain. “No, I don’t,” says the man. “Do you know it wen you do see it?” says the Captain. “No, I don’t,” says the man. “Why, then, I tell you wot, my lad,” says the Captain, “you’d better go back and ask wot it’s like outside, for more don’t I!” The entire shop and its odd corners, its quaint cupboards, its glass cases, and its chart drawers, seem as familiar to me as if I had served a long apprenticeship to Sol Gills.

I pass from the shop up a panelled staircase with a massive hand-rail and spiral balusters to the upper rooms. I look in at Walter’s chamber, with its comprehensive view of the parapets and chimney-pots, and see the place in the roof where Rob the Grinder kept his pigeons. I spend some time in a cheerful panelled apartment, which at one time was the bedchamber of Sol Gills, but which was occupied by Florence when she fled from her father and took refuge with Captain Cuttle. Do not you recollect what trouble the good-hearted old captain had to make this room fit to receive its guest? Cannot you call to mind how he “converted the little dressing-table into a species of altar, on which he set forth two silver teaspoons, a flower-pot, a telescope, his celebrated watch, a pocket-comb, and a song-book, as a small collection of rarities that made a choice appearance?” Do not you remember with what loving care and tenderness he greeted and watched over her? How often he tramped up and down that ancient staircase to make inquiries, and how, on the night of Walter’s return, he shouted gleefully through the keyhole, “Drownded, a’nt he, pretty?” as some relief to his feelings. Two more faithful friends that Florence had in her loneliness than Captain Cuttle and her dog, Diogenes, it would be difficult for any woman to have.

Half expecting to meet the good old captain in the way, I creep slowly down the quaint old staircase. I gain the shop once more, and pass down a dark, narrow flight of steps. Do you know what I come here for? I come down to see the cellar where the two bottles of old Madeira were kept. One

of them was drunk when Walter first went to the house of Dombey and Son — to Dombey, Son, and Daughter; and the other, “a bottle that has been long excluded from the light of day, and is hoary with dust and cobwebs, has been brought into the sunshine, and the golden wine within sheds a lustre on the table,” many years after, to Walter and his wife. “Other buried wine grows older as the old Madeira did in its time, and dust and cobwebs thicken on the bottles.” I find I am mumbling this to myself, as I once more emerge in the daylight, and sit down to rest in the cabin-like back parlour in Lord Nelson’s favourite armchair.

It is well-nigh impossible for me to catalogue the scenes, the pictures, and the characters that flit across my brain as I gaze through the skylight overhead, or cast my eyes round the walls of this quaint little room. Here was Florence brought as a little child when she was found by Walter, and here she came with Susan Nipper to take leave of him before he went on his voyage. It was in this identical room that the famous conference concerning the loss of the Son and Heir at which Sol Gills, Captain Cuttle, Susan Nipper, Florence, and Jack Bunsby were present. It was on that occasion that the great commander of the Cautious Clara delivered his famous oracular opinion, “Whereby, why not? If so, what odds? Can any man say otherwise? No. Avast then!” This strikes one as being very much more original than Nelson’s “England expects every man will do his duty,” or Wellington’s “Up Guards and at ‘em.” Here it was, too, that Captain Cuttle, after the disappearance of Sol Gills, took possession; here that worthy had a service every Sunday night for the benefit of that snivelling young hypocrite, Rob. Here did the captain interview Mr. Toots on sundry and various occasions, here in presence of the mortal Bunsby did he read the last will and testament of Solomon Gills, and the letter to Ned Cuttle, and here was he discovered, after many weeks’ hiding, by Mrs. MacStinger and her demonstrative children, Alexander, Juliana, and Chowley.

It was to this odd-shaped, snug, queer little panelled parlour came poor Florence and her faithful Diogenes, when she fled from her brutal father and the grim cold house. Here did the captain cook that marvellous little dinner, which makes you quite hungry to read about. “Basting the fowl from time to time as it turned on a string before the fire, making hot gravy in a second little saucepan, boiling a handful of potatoes in a third, never forgetting the egg-sauce in the first, and making an impartial round of boiling and stirring with the most useful of spoons every minute. Besides

these cares, the captain had to keep an eye on a diminutive frying-pan, in which some sausages were hissing and bubbling in a most musical manner; and there never was such a radiant cook as the captain looked in the height and heat of these functions; it being impossible to say whether his face or his glazed hat shone the brighter.” Here, too, did Walter Gay return so unexpectedly. Here did a certain weatherbeaten pea-coat, and a no less weather-beaten cap and comforter come bundling in one night, and to the great delight of everybody turned out to be the old Instrument-maker, after all. And it was from this room that Florence and Walter departed to be married in the ancient city church, not far distant. It was here that —

But stay! It is impossible to chronicle one quarter of the fun, the pathos, the humour, the charity that haunt the four irregular walls of this ship-shape little chamber. I arise and pass out into the din of Leadenhall Street. I find The Wooden Midshipman still standing at the door “callous, obdurate, and conceited” as ever, observing the omnibuses and the hansom cabs as earnestly as he did the hackney coaches aforetime, and apparently quite oblivious that his century of observations in Leadenhall Street is drawing to a close.

Since writing the above the whole place has been demolished, and The Wooden Midshipman, in his old home, as Charles Dickens pictured him, only now exists in the magic pages of “Dombey and Son.”

From: Cucumber Chronicles, J. Ashby-Sterry, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1887, p.156-166

MISS BETSEY TROTWOOD'S



By J. Ashby-Sterry

This morning I was strolling through the marketplace at Dover, and I paused before a stall containing a miscellaneous collection of old iron, bent brass candlesticks, second-hand concertinas, dilapidated toys, and a few shabby old books. I looked through the books, hoping I might pick up a bargain — I never do pick up bargains — but they were none of them rare, and most of them were ragged. Among the raggedest of the lot was a copy of “David Copperfield.” It had evidently been read till it had fallen to pieces. I did not buy it, because I have one or two sound copies, and I know the work pretty well by heart. But it immediately recalled to my mind David’s connection with Dover, and I bethought me that I had never yet discovered the abode of Miss Trotwood.

It was all very fine to talk about discovering Miss Trotwood’s house, but how was it to be done? Probably the good lady is less known here now than when David Copperfield inquired after her, and there are most likely none of her friends now left in Dover. You may possibly recollect that the boatmen in David’s time were pleased to be unfeeling and facetious when he made inquiries. They opined that she lived in the South-Foreland Light; that she was made fast to the great buoy outside the harbour, and could only be visited at half-tide, that she was locked up in Maidstone Jail for child-stealing, and that she had been seen to mount a broom and make direct for Calais. The fly-drivers and the shopkeepers too, made merry over his misfortune and failed to give him any more satisfactory information. Now, if I were to address any of the brown-faced boatmen who may be seen smoking pipes, leaning against posts, or ruminating on the weather as they loll on capstans, they might possibly suggest that it was “werry dry work” giving information, but they would give it to the best of their ability. The Dover shopkeepers, too, are all so affable and polite that they would take the greatest pains possible to enable me to find the house of which I was in search.

If I were to hail that merry-looking fly-driver and say, "Drive me to Miss Trotwood's," I feel certain he would say, "Yes, sir," smartly, as if he knew all about it. Then he would hesitate and look round and say, "I know the name, sir, but can't recollect the address; somewhere on the Marine Parade, ain't it?" It sounds so as if she ought to live there. You can fancy her in one of the best houses — a rich old sister of General Trotwood, or of Admiral Trotwood, moving in the best society of Dover. Cannot you see her, with a lot of bonny nieces of all ages, from Troublesome Ten to Sweet-and-Twenty, who come down to visit her in the summer, and who always may be seen on the pier of an afternoon, or listening to the band in the Granville Gardens, or may be found devouring tarts at Winter's, in Snargate Street? I am sorry to find that I can obtain no assistance from boatmen or shopkeepers or fly-drivers. I have no guide or pilot of any description. I have simply to trust to mine own instinct, and to sail by the Dickens Chart — and if you sail by the Dickens Chart you cannot go very far wrong. If you read the text attentively you will almost invariably find he gives in the fewest possible words a complete indication of the locality he wishes to describe. It is so exactly and artfully done that if you are not careful as to a single word you may get on the wrong scent altogether.

You may remember the flyman — the only flyman who was civil and considerate to David — said, as he pointed towards the Heights, "If you go up there and keep right on till you come to some houses facing the sea, I think you'll hear of her." Now I followed these directions implicitly, but forgot David's starting-point was not the marketplace itself but "a street corner, near the marketplace." This made all the difference. However, I think I am on the right path, and I step out bravely. I am certainly going up hill, quite too much of a hill this lovely morning. It is evidently an ancient part of Dover; it is a narrow and a steep street, and the houses all look as if they were turning their backs on it. I am quite certain that I am on the right track, though I come to the conclusion the neighbourhood must have been considerably built upon since the days of Miss Trotwood. I note a quiet-looking, little, old-fashioned tavern, bearing the extraordinary sign, "The Cause is Altered." I have a good mind to go in there and make inquiries. I wonder whether Miss Trotwood used to have her ale from this tavern, and if Mr. Dick ever sought relief from the labour of his Memorial in a glass of whisky and water, and a long churchwarden pipe, at this quiet little

hostelry? No, I will not go in, because I think I see a house very much like the one I am in search of in the distance.

When I reach it I find it will not do at all. It breaks down at several points. It stands the wrong way; it is too pretentious; and the main characteristics of Miss Trotwood's dwelling-place are altogether wanting. I am very much afraid I have missed the mark altogether. I come upon a large cemetery on the slope of the hill. Though closed as a cemetery it is open as a garden, and I take a walk through it. I feel more than ever convinced that I have taken a wrong turn and am not in the right neighbourhood. For I am quite certain that Mr. Dick would have come here to meditate amid the tombs, and that Charles Dickens would have chronicled the fact. I take a turn round the well-kept graveyard, and think I espy in the distance a house that may possibly do. I walk along a pathway between comparatively modern cottages and the cemetery, where some ragged little girls, playing at hopscotch, regard me reproachfully. They evidently think I have no business to be walking about their playground. I pass by a market-garden. There is a little house on the edge of the slope, which looks as though it might slide off into Snargate Street at any moment, if the market-gardener happened to lean against it. It appears to be built of wood, with sham battlements. It is apparently of modern construction, and would certainly never have suited David Copperfield's aunt. I ascend the steps leading to the Heights. I pause halfway, for really the morning is so sunny that I feel quite exhausted.

The view hence is certainly superb. You have an excellent view of the Castle on your left, the town with its picturesque red roofs, and the film of blue smoke drifting across them. There is the valley of the Dour below, and immediately beneath me is Snargate Street, looking like a narrow alley. The colour, the beauty and variety of this scene will well repay me even if I fail to discover the object of my search. The whole scene is familiar to me, and I suddenly recollect that I have a very old print of Dover at home, that must have been taken from this very spot. This picture was taken long before Waterloo Crescent was built, and those houses certainly spoil the effect of the prospect from my present standpoint. I stay here gazing so long, and looking at the castle from different points of view, that I am afraid the sentry above regards me with suspicion, and half fancies I am making measurements or taking surreptitious sketches of the fortifications. Now it would be so very awkward if he were to ask me what I was doing there, and

I were to reply, “ I was only looking for Miss Trotwood’s.” Supposing he were to deem this answer unsatisfactory, and arrested me, and eventually I had to explain matters before General Newdigate, I am inclined to think, “ Looking for Miss Trotwood’s” would be considered a very suspicious excuse. Two privates in the Royal Irish Rifles pass me and salute; the sentry has disappeared, so I trust confidence is restored.

I hark back by the cemetery; I take a sharp turn to the left, down a narrow street. It is a street that recalls, in a degree, the Rows of Great Yarmouth. The houses are small and ancient, but the inhabitants are evidently well to do; you see this in the plants in the windows, the brightly polished brass door knockers, and the sleek, well fed tabby cats basking in the sunshine. There are odd little shops that lurk in unexpected corners, quaint little courtyards in unaccountable places, and bright little gardens where you would least expect to see them. There was a curious little butcher’s shop — so clean, neat, and orderly, like a toy butcher’s shop — and it contained one of the largest butchers I ever saw. It seemed to take quite a firmament of blue calico to clothe him. He was a jovial, hearty butcher, too; it must be quite a pleasure to deal with him. I could not help wondering where he would store his Christmas joints, or how he could ever find room to cut up anything. He looks so pleasant that I have a great mind to go in and ask him about Miss Trotwood. He might, though, think I was poking fun at him. That would never do, for if he became irate and felt tempted to smite me with his cleaver, or prod me with his steel, I should probably be sorry I spoke.

Evidently they are accustomed to receive very few visitors in this part of Dover, for children stare at me and gossips stop in the middle of a most interesting conversation and gaze after me. I walk boldly on, pretending I know every inch of the way and each turn of the lane, but not deceiving the inhabitants in the least, and feeling at the same time that my swagger is altogether unsuccessful. I think they mistrust my eye-glass. I cannot help that. If I did not wear it I could not see they mistrusted it. Query, if I dropped my eye-glass would the mistrust be removed, or should I only fail to have knowledge of the mistrust? This is an elaborate question, and there is so much to be said on both sides, that I at once dismiss it from my consideration. Like all questions that have much to be said on both sides, it is not worth discussion. Besides, it would not help me to discover Miss Trotwood’s.

Here, though, is something that will, unless I am very much mistaken. Here is a curious little general shop, with swollen, rather than bow, windows of ancient glass. Behind the pane are mysterious bottles containing mysterious bull's-eyes. There are jars of pickles, packets of starch, balls of string, bundles of wood, lucifer matches, a sugarloaf in blue paper, fire-revivers, and biscuits. Inside, the shop is very dark, but I imagine, from the odour of coffee that is wafted from the door, the bag of split peas, and the bundles of birch brooms that lean against either doorpost, you could get anything there you please necessary for house, keeping in the neighbourhood I happen to be exploring. It is just such a shop as the one where David Copperfield saw Janet, whence she eventually took him to his aunt's. There is a young woman making purchases there at the present moment. The man behind the counter is smiling pleasantly and weighing something in the scales. I feel certain it must be Janet, and feel almost inclined to go in, call her by name, and ask her to direct me to the abode of her mistress. I am getting quite disheartened at my want of success. I pass the shop, I turn down a narrow passage to my right, and I come upon a road leading up to the Down on my left.

In the distance I see what I fancy must be the house. The nearer I approach it the better satisfied I am; and directly I am in front of it, I have no doubt whatever on the subject. It is perhaps not quite so neat as it was in Miss Betsey Trotwood's time; but there is no doubt that it is *the* house. There are the bow-windows, there is the room above where Mr. Dick alarmed poor little David by nodding and winking at him on his first arrival. The window to the right must have been the neat room with the drugget-covered carpet, and the old-fashioned brightly polished furniture where might be found "the cat, the kettle-holder, the two canaries, the old china, the punch-bowl full of dried rose-leaves, the tall press guarding all sorts of bottles and pots, and wonderfully out of keeping with the rest." The garden is evidently not so gay or so well cared for as it used to be, and though there were no donkey-boys about for Miss Trotwood to assault and batter, there were plenty of riotous, screeching school-children on whom she might have expended her superfluous energy with considerable satisfaction to herself and great benefit to the neighbourhood. That irrepressible nuisance — Buggins the Builder — cannot be controlled even in the neighbourhood of Dover, and hugely does he enjoy to mar those spots that have been hallowed by antiquity, by seclusion, or the pen of the novelist. Hence the

abode of Betsy Trotwood is not so pleasant as it must have been formerly, for other houses have clustered about the back and the front.

The house, however, still stands high, the fresh breezes from over the sea and across the Down smite it. It still has a view of the sea, though perhaps not so uninterrupted as it was in the days of David Copperfield. I thought of that view as I looked up at the bow-window of the room, where the poor, tired, hungry, exhausted little fellow slept the first night of his arrival. Do you recollect him gazing on the moonlit sea after he was in bed? He says, "I remember the solemn feeling with which I at length turned my eyes away, yielded to the sensation of gratitude and rest which the sight of the white-curtained bed — and how much more the lying softly down upon it, nestling in the snow-white sheets — inspired. I remember how I thought of all the solitary places under the night sky where I had slept, and how I prayed that I never might be houseless any more, and never might forget the houseless. I remember how I seemed to float then, down the melancholy glory of that track upon the sea, away into the world of dreams."

With the melody of this prose poem ringing in my ears I take my way homewards, thinking how much we owe to the Master-hand who invested our every-day life with such an indescribable charm, and by his magic touch rendered commonplace neighbourhoods and ordinary bricks-and-mortar a joy as long as they shall exist.

From: The North American Review, June 1893, p.670-684

DISAPPEARING DICKENSLAND



By Charles Dickens, Jr.

Among the vast number of queer businesses in which people somehow or other manage to pick up a decent livelihood in London there is one which is hardly known to Londoners themselves, and but little known even to visitors from other parts of England, but with which a great number of enthusiastic American travellers are pretty well acquainted. Indeed, it is not too much to say that it is almost entirely among the pilgrims to English literary shrines and the indefatigable and omnivorous general sightseers from the great Western Continent that the professors of this singular and deceptive industry find their prey.

For it must be owned at the outset that, although in the ordinary conduct of their lives these people are fairly honest, perhaps, as the world goes, there is something of a predatory nature in their public career, and that the flights of fancy in which their peculiar avocation compels them to indulge are occasionally — I might almost say generally — very near akin to downright mendacity. It may be pleaded in mitigation of this somewhat severe judgment that long intercourse and familiarity with works of fiction have developed among them more brilliant imaginations, a higher inventive faculty and keener eyes for the picturesque than are found in ordinary mortals; but the fact after all remains that more thorough-paced disciples of Ananias and Sapphira than the guides to what is called Dickensland in London it would be difficult to find in all that vast army of untrustworthy people who have taken the great sights and shrines of the world into their peculiar keeping.

As a matter of fact, the London of the early books of Charles Dickens is, practically, as Mrs. Curdle said of the drama, “gone, absolutely gone.” Very little even remains of most of the places described in the later works. Dickensland in London, indeed, has nowadays hardly any more real existence than the Garden of the Hesperides or the Island of Atlantis. But what does that matter? The transatlantic pilgrim to the shrine of the master

clamors to be shown the house in which Mr. Pickwick lived, the court in which Mr. Krook made such a very uncomfortable end of it, the actual public-house which displayed Mr. Samuel Weller's extensive and peculiar knowledge of London in so remarkable a degree, the Old Curiosity Shop, Tom-all-alone's, the Wooden Midshipman and all the rest of it. Why should he not be gratified? It is true that a great many places of this kind were absolutely incapable of certain identification at any time, and that almost all the originals of those which were actually portraits have been swept from the face of the earth in the course of the extraordinary changes which have practically given us in fifty years a new London on the ruins of the old. But the demand inevitably creates the supply. Old illusions die hard. Dickensland lives again in the vivid imagination of the guides, and the truth of the old saying again asserts itself — *populus vult decipi et decipitur*. A curious instance of the way in which people are sometimes quite unconsciously and innocently led into error in these matters is to be found in John Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens*. Mr. Forster gives a picture of Tavistock House, which is, no doubt, accepted as a faithful representation of the house as it was when Charles Dickens lived in it. But, as a matter of fact, it is not. A later tenant added a portico, or porch, to the street door; and this portico, of which Charles Dickens knew nothing, figures in the picture. This is, perhaps, a trivial matter; but many of the Dickensland traditions have received credence on very similar, and equally inaccurate, grounds. Thus, for instance, to take a case outside London, local tradition at the little seaside village of Broadstairs in Kent has given the name Bleak House to the house on the cliff above the harbor, in which Charles Dickens lived during two or three summers, and which, in his time, was known as Fort House; and the legend — implicitly believed in those parts — is that *Bleak House* was written there. In point of fact, although much of Charles Dickens's work was done at Broadstairs — notably, as regards *David Copperfield* — it so happens that *Bleak House* was one of the books on which no work whatever was done in Fort House.

That there is really little or nothing left of what may fairly be called Dickensland in the London of to-day, a rapid survey of a few of the books which afford the guides their most popular and remunerative examples will amply prove.

The *Sketches* — to begin with the beginning — were written some fifty-seven years ago, and it is natural that the scenes described, and the manners

and customs of the actors in them, should have changed considerably in so long a period. But how the whole thing has been actually swept away is nothing less than astonishing.

“A few years hence,” Charles Dickens wrote in the description of Scotland Yard, “and the antiquary of another generation, looking into some mouldy record of the strife and passion that agitated the world in these times, may glance his eye over the pages we have just filled ; and not all his knowledge of the history of the past, not all his black-letter lore, or his skill in book collecting, not all the dry studies of a long life, or the dusty volumes that have cost him a fortune may help him to the whereabouts either of Scotland Yard or of any of the landmarks we have mentioned in describing it.” This prediction has been amply and speedily verified. Scotland Yard still exists, it is true, but the street of handsome buildings which leads from Whitehall to Northumberland Avenue has nothing but the name in common with the old world “territory, which was first accidentally discovered by a country gentleman who lost his way in the Strand,” and the “landmarks” have fared as badly. Northumberland House has gone altogether, and its site is occupied by the Grand Hotel and the northern end of Northumberland Avenue; the new market, the springing up of which at Hungerford is described as having first given the signal of change in Scotland Yard, itself made way for Charing Cross Railway Station in 1862; the Hungerford Suspension Bridge, which was not constructed until nine years after the date of the Sketches, was transported to Clifton near Bristol, at the same time. Absolutely no trace of the old place remains.

Following the *Sketches* in order, we find Seven Dials still existing, little altered in their main features but still considerably improved ; but the famous old clothes shops of Monmouth Street have gone the way of most of the frowsy slums of a like nature. Except as to the entrance from St. Paul’s Churchyard and what is called Dean’s Court, where some of the old buildings have been preserved, the same fate has attended Doctors Commons, the courts, so familiar to us through *David Copperfield*, were destroyed in 1867; the successors of Mr. Spenlow and the “coves in white aprons,” to whom the elder Mr. Weller fell so easy a prey, have vanished together into space. There is still a theatre on the site of Astley’s, but it is not the same as that in which Christopher Nubbles and his family and friends made such delightful holiday — nor, it may be incidentally mentioned, would it be possible for any gentleman in Kit’s position to give

that remarkable oyster supper nowadays for the simple reason that the price of oysters in London has increased in direct proportion to the increase of London itself.

Londoners get so many holidays in these days — and use them so much better than was too often the case in the old time — that they no longer require “a periodical breaking out. ... A sort of spring rash; a three days’ fever which cools the blood for six months afterwards, and at the expiration of which London is restored to its old habits of plodding industry as suddenly and completely as if nothing had ever happened to disturb them,” to quote the *Sketches*’ description of Greenwich Fair, and it is perhaps fortunate that this should be so, for Greenwich Fair was abolished as a crying nuisance many years ago. A more permanent, and, in its way, more respectable form of outdoor recreation, practically vanished when the public got tired of Vauxhall — celebrated by Thackeray both in *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis* — and the “Royal Property,” as it was called, was parcelled out into building lots, and when its sometime rival, Cremorne, which, oddly enough, is not mentioned by Charles Dickens, was also swallowed up by the advance of the enterprising London builder in the course of the sixties. The ill-contrived, ill-arranged, ill-constructed criminal courts at the Old Bailey still remain, as crying a disgrace to the greatest and wealthiest city in the world as ever. The prison of Newgate is not yet pulled down, but is practically disused and is to disappear into the limbo of London memories before very long, and, though it is still used as a place of execution, the miserable business is now done privately instead of in the presence of the horrible crowd which used to fill the open space before the frowning walls on “hanging Mondays” in the bad old time. The Samuel Wilkins of to-day could not take Miss Jemima Evans to the “Eagle,” for that place of amusement — afterwards, in the hands of John Rouse, and, later, of the two Conquests, father and son, famous as the “Grecian theatre” — has passed into the hands of the Salvation Army, and its concerts nowadays are provided only by the singularly inharmonious brazen instruments and flabby big drums in which the followers of General Booth appear to take so weird a delight, while the dancing platform in the garden, if it is used at all, must needs be utilized exclusively for the corybantic exercises of tambourine-pointing Hallelujah Lasses and Happy Elizas. As for the “White Conduit,” where Miss Amelia Martin realized all the bitterness of ill-

considered and disappointed ambition, its place knew it no more, and its site in Pentonville was built over, years ago.

It will be noticed that almost every place of amusement mentioned in the *Sketches* has disappeared entirely, and even a casual observer cannot fail to see that the amusements of the great mass of the London people have at the same time changed altogether. The Vauxhalls and Cremornes have gone, and, even if they had survived for a few years longer, would inevitably have been suppressed by the wisdom of our municipal rulers, who have decided that public dancing-places shall be tabooed, and would like, if they could, to refuse any refreshment but tea and lemonade to the visitors to the Crystal Palaces and Earl's Courts which have taken the place of the old pleasure resorts. To some extent the change may be and, I suppose, must be admitted to be for the better, but that the people of that day enjoyed themselves in simpler fashion than we do, and were content with a great deal less in the way of amusement — and spent very much less money in the process — than is demanded now must be patent to any reader of the *Sketches*. The monstrous growth of London and the enormously increased facilities for moving about, which have of late years been provided by railways, omnibuses, and trams, have made it almost impossible for the modern Londoner to take his pleasure, such as it is, except in droves and mobs, and I doubt very much whether our people really get half as much enjoyment for their money as their simpler-minded and more easy-going ancestors got out of their cheaper and far less frequent holidays and diversions.

The troubles of the Pickwickian explorer of Dickensland in London begin very early in his career, and the aspect of Goswell Street, now known as Goswell Road, which will meet him on the very threshold, is calculated to inflict upon him a severe shock to

his feelings. It is difficult to imagine how a gentleman of means, such as Mr. Pickwick is described to have been, could ever have taken up his abode in this noisy, bustling, and, if the truth must be told, decidedly unpleasant thoroughfare, or how Sergeant Buzfuz, even in the loftiest and most poetical flights of his eloquence, could ever have associated it with anything in the nature of tranquillity and retirement. And, even bearing in mind the fact that Mrs. Bardell's establishment was of a very modest kind, it would certainly require the boldest and most determined of guides to pitch upon any house in the Goswell Road as that from which Mr. Pickwick emerged on the memorable "thirteenth of May, one thousand eight hundred

and twenty-seven.” But the look of the thing changes when it is remembered that at that time Islington, which lies at the northern extremity of the Goswell Road, was a pleasant, outlying village; that the fields and lanes of Pentonville, Stoke Newington, Highbury, Hornsey, and Highgate were within an easy walk of Mr. Pickwick’s lodging, and that the miles and miles of streets which now separate the Goswell Road from the open country were not even thought of.

Possibly, as our traveller drives disappointed to the Golden Cross, he will wonder how ever Mr. Pickwick managed to have that instructive conversation with the cabman, which would under present arrangements be quite impossible, until he remembers that in those days the cabman sat on a kind of perch just outside the cab and handy for conversation with the fare, and recognizes, as he probably will, the infinite superiority of the modern hansom over the ancient “cabriolet;” while it will afford him food for reflection to consider that the prototype of the crowd of omnibuses through which he threads his way did not make its appearance in the streets of London until the 4th of July, 1829 — just about the time, indeed, that Mr. Pickwick had completed the sowing of his rather late crop of wild oats and had settled down at Dulwich.

As to the Golden Cross, that is only represented to-day by a comparatively modern hotel opposite Charing Cross station. The old Golden Cross was cleared away in 1829 or 1830 to make room for the present Trafalgar Square, which has itself been transmogrified in the course of time to such an extent that anybody who has to revisit it now after an absence of five and twenty years or so would scarcely recognize the place but for the Nelson Column, the National Gallery, and St. Martin’s Church.

Up to about six years ago there was still enough left of the old White Hart Inn in the Borough to swear by, for, although the buildings on the south side of the yard had been replaced by an exceedingly modern public-house, some of the old galleries and tiled roofs on the north and east still looked down forlornly on the pilgrim. Now there is not even that much consolation left. The whole place has been swept away, and is as unrecognizable as the “Belle Sauvage” on Ludgate Hill, the Pickwickian associations with which were long ago dissipated by the erection of a great printing office on the site of the house at which Mr. Weller, Senior, stopped “ven he drove up,” and which has only left its name as a puzzle to antiquaries. But if the White Hart is gone, a few doors farther to the southward there yet lingers a

considerable portion of one of those typical old taverns, “The George “ by name, and any one who wishes to know just what the extinct White Hart was like would do well to pay a visit to this quaint old hostelry. The yard has been annexed by a railway company as a depot for the receipt of goods, but all that part of the house which lies to the south is in admirable preservation, and “The George,” although not the rose itself, is at all events nearly next door to it.

The dry arches of Waterloo Bridge, which were so highly eulogized by Mr. Samuel Weller as a “fine sleeping plane — within ten minutes walk of all the public offices — only if there is an objection to it it is that the situation is rayther too airy,” still exist, it is true, but as they were utilized for warehouses, stables, and so on shortly after Mr. Weller s time they do not now offer any points of interest to the explorer, and the “Fox-under-the-Hill” tavern in the immediate neighborhood — where Mr. Roker’s friend Teddy Martin “whopped the coalheaver “ — was disestablished by the Victoria Embankment, and the last traces of it have been swept away by the vast alterations now going on between the Strand and the Embankment at the foot of Cecil and Salisbury streets.

It is of no use for the Dickens student to allow his guide to take him into the city in search of Messrs. Dodson & Fogg’s offices in Freeman’s Court, — they were pulled down four and thirty years ago: and I should very much doubt his succeeding in the discovery of that “ second court on the right hand side — last house on the same side of the vay,” the close acquaintance with which, extending even to an intimate familiarity with the peculiarities of the “box as stands in the first fire-place,” stamped Mr. Weller’s knowledge of London as being extensive and peculiar. It was about six or seven and thirty years ago that I first began my quest after that box in the first fire-place, and as I have never been able to come across it I presume it must have been improved off the face of the earth very soon after Mr. Weller’s time.

There is a George Yard off Lombard Street to this day, but it is a very different George Yard to that in which the George and Vulture was situated — Mr. Pickwick surely had odd tastes in the way of lodging — and the site of the hotel is now occupied by a part of the City Conservative Club, all that remains of the old place being its name on the door post of an adjoining chop house. The Blue Boar in Leadenhall Market, where they were so well acquainted with the elder Mr. Weller’s ways, fared as badly when the

narrow congeries of ramshackle lanes and alleys, which until quite recently contained the old market, were wiped out by the fine buildings of the present one. Hard by, the little timber midshipman — ” that which might be called, familiarly, the woodenest, that which thrust itself out above the pavement, right leg foremost, with a suavity the least endurable, and had the shoe buckles and flapped waistcoat the least reconcilable to human reason, and bore at its right eye the most offensively disproportionate piece of machinery “ — no longer stands “ taking observations of the hackney coaches “ from the side of Sol Gills’s door in Leadenhall Street; and the street itself and all the buildings in it are changed beyond recognition. There is no room any more in Bevis Marks for Mr. Sampson Brass’s residence, the parlor window of which was so close upon the footway that the passenger who took the wall brushed the dim glass with his coat sleeve. Bevis Marks is now a fairly broad street of warehouses and other well-to-do places of business, and one would as soon expect to see a giraffe in “The Marks” as a Punch and Judy show. Further to the southward again people walk about in Todgers’s neighborhood — or what would be Todgers’s neighborhood if Todgers’s still existed — as easily as they walk about anywhere else. It is no longer the fate of the pedestrian in this quarter to “grope his way for an hour through lanes and by-ways, and court-yards and passages,” and never once to emerge “upon anything that might be reasonably called a street.” Lanes and by-ways, court-yards and passages, all the “devious mazes “ of the district have been carted away, and nothing remains but the monument, now the centre of quite a respectable open space, to remind us that M. Todgers once kept house and wrestled with the commercial gentlemen’s appetite for gravy close by; while it is enough to give one look only at Cannon Street to feel that it is no longer the place for the “somewhat similar” establishment to which Mr. Jinkins took occasion to refer after a certain memorable dinner at which Todgers’s showed what it could do when it tried.

A very happy hunting-ground for the sojourner in Dickensland in London used to be the unsavory neighborhood “in the vicinity of Clare Market and closely approximating to the back of New Inn,” wherein was situated the Magpie and Stump Tavern, in which Mr. Lowton entertained Mr. Pickwick in so singular a manner, and I take it that more impossible guesses and audacious taradiddles have been gravely offered to the unsuspecting traveller in this particular portion of Dickensland than in any other. For not

only did the shabby, dirty, noisome courts and alleys of which these particular slums were composed — and almost all of which have been quite recently pulled down — answer to many of Charles Dickens’s descriptions of low neighborhoods; not only were there here many taverns which might well have stood for the “ Magpie and Stump “ — I think, indeed, that the weather-beaten sign-board “ bearing “ the half obliterated semblance of a magpie intently eyeing a crooked streak of brown paint which the neighbors had been taught from infancy to consider as the stump” really was still in existence up to a comparatively recent date; but just round the corner, as it were, where Portsmouth Street joins Lincoln’s Inn Fields, is the choicest and most generally believed in of all the bogus Dickens sights. This is a mean little building, now used as a waste-paper store, which describes itself as the veritable Old Curiosity Shop “immortalized by Charles Dickens,” and which has about as much to do with the genuine building — if Nell’s home had any actual brick and mortar original — as the Capitol in Washington itself. Curiosity shops were not such rarities in 1840 that it was important to take any particular specimen as a model to begin with, but let anybody recall the descriptions of the Old Curiosity Shop itself in the earlier chapters of the book, carefully consider Cattermole’s illustrations, and then take stock of that claimant to the title which is now under consideration, and I think he will have as little hesitation in arriving at the conclusion that the Portsmouth Street building is a complete fraud as I have myself. There is a description of a “small, dull yard” below the old man’s window, for one thing, which puts the whole matter beyond doubt, seeing that the very few windows in the house in Portsmouth Street look direct into the roadway; while the statement in the book that the “back parlour was very far removed from the old man’s chamber,” and the consideration of the circumstances that there were in the Curiosity Shop of the book two rooms on the ground floor besides the shop, and that in the Portsmouth Street house there could not be any possibility of finding room for a tenth part of the grandfather’s stock-in-trade, seem to knock the final nails into the coffin of Portsmouth Street. And if any further evidence is considered necessary it will be found, I think, in the description of the deserted house as “a dull barrier dividing the glaring lights and bustle of the streets into two long lines.” There are not many glaring lights and not much bustle in Portsmouth Street, and if there were, they could not, by any stretch of the imagination, make “two long lines.”

Not very far off, across Lincoln's Inn Fields and New Square, Lincoln's Inn, is an undoubtedly genuine bit of Dickensland, however; not long to remain it may be feared, as a great deal of pulling down and rebuilding are going on in the neighborhood, but well worth looking at while it lasts. This is the court in which Mr. Krook lived. It can be approached either by the little gate about midway in the east side of New Square, through which Miss Flite conducted "The Wards in Jarndyce," or by a passage adjoining the Three Tuns public-house in Chancery Lane, just opposite Bream's Buildings. It is known to ordinary mortals as Chichester Rents, and at the Lincoln's Inn end of it stands the Old Ship Tavern, which, I have no doubt whatever, was the original of the Sol's Arms. A careful and interesting article in the St. James's Gazette of June 27, 1892, claims the corner house opposite (Nos. 8 and 9) as Mr. Krook's, and relies for evidence especially on the fact that no other house in the court has an attic with an outside parapet — "Lady Jane," the Lord Chancellor's cat crouched "on the parapet outside for hours and hours" seeking to devour Miss Flite's birds, it will be remembered. But against that is to be set in

strict fairness the fact that we have it in Mr. Krook's own words that the Sol's Arms was "next door," while the coroner in the course of the inquest on Mr. Krook himself speaks of the "unlucky house next door;" and we are therefore compelled to conclude that "over the way" and "next door" were interchangeable terms both with Mr. Krook and the coroner, or to admit that it is absurd in considering such matters as this to insist on an absolute photographic accuracy in matters of detail. It is enough — or ought to be enough, of course it is not enough for the genuine enthusiast — that a place should bear sufficient resemblance to a description in one of the books to enable us to say with tolerable certainty, this is the scene which suggested so and so to the writer. To insist upon every brick, or on the absolute identification of every detail; to suppose that Charles Dickens held himself down in such cases to mere literal description, bringing to it no imagination or invention of his own, is manifestly absurd. And it seems to me that a judgment based on these considerations will be in favor of Chichester Rents, just as it will not admit the claims of the Old Curiosity Shop in Portsmouth Street. Chichester Rents has a rival claimant, by the bye, in Bishop's Court, a little to the northward. But what little remains — and it is not much — of the old houses in Bishop's Court only seems to point to the greater authenticity of "The Rents."

The particular *Bleak House* scenes associated with this neighborhood, it may be added, are very easily to be identified. There is no difficulty in recognizing Took's Court, Cursitor Street, as Mr. Snagsby's Cook's Court, for instance, and as yet the march of improvement has left there many houses, any one of which may well be that over which the "little woman" ruled with so iron a rod. The Courts of Chancery have been cleared away and their business has been transferred to the great legal palace in the Strand — that triumph of ill-arrangement and inconvenience which might almost be the work of the Court of Chancery itself — but the original of Mr. Tulkinghorn's chambers would not be hard to find somewhere about No. 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields; while farther west, half-way down Russell Court, which leads from Drury Lane to Catherine Street, are the "reeking little tunnel of a court," the steps which Jo swept so carefully and so cleanly because "he was so wery good to me, he was," and the "beastly scrap of ground" in which they buried Captain Hawdon. There is no offence about the little tunnel of a court now, the burying-ground has been asphalted over and is a playground for children, but that the little churchyard out of Russell Court was that which Charles Dickens had in his mind when he selected a last resting-place for poor "Nemo" cannot, I think, reasonably be doubted. As for Tom-all-Alone's, better supervision, sanitary and police — and especially the passing of Lord Shaftesbury's Common Lodging-Houses Act in 1851 — have cut Tom's claws and generally trimmed him up a good deal, but there are still many courts and alleys between Catherine Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields which would be unsafe enough in the daytime, and absolutely dangerous at night, for well-dressed people, not being doctors, nurses, sisters of charity, or scripture readers. Across Holborn, to the northward, Kingsgate Street still lingers precariously. Before long, no doubt, it will take the prevailing infection from the broad, new street at its northern end and burst out into that peculiar modern red brick which, like a sort of scarlet-building-fever, has seized upon so much of the neighborhood, but a fairly lively imagination can still make out Mrs. Gamp's first floor, which was so "easily assailable at night by pebbles, walking-sticks, and fragments of tobacco pipe" — although the modern successor of Mr. Sweedlepipe calls his shop a hairdressing saloon, and appears to have no connection in the bird line.

But I have wandered from the party at the Magpie and Stump and from Jack Bamber, whose stories about the old inns dealt with places of which

Charles Dickens was very fond, and which are described in many of his books. Several of these will well repay a visit from the careful and enthusiastic Dickens student, for those which still survive have changed but little in the last fifty years. The Temple has been altered a great deal, it is true, but Fountain Court has been left pretty much as it was when it served as a place of meeting for Tom Pinch and Ruth, and many other of the Dickens scenes which are laid in the Temple can still be easily identified in the course of a stroll among the old buildings which still remain. Furniss's Inn is still very much as it was when John Westlock had that charming little dinner party there; a memorial tablet marks the house in which Charles Dickens wrote the greater part of *Pickwick*; there has been little or no change in Gray's Inn, since Traddles took the "dearest girl in the world" there after their marriage; Staple Inn and Barnard's Inn — the latter the dingiest collection of shabby buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner as a club for tomcats — still real memories of Mr. Grewgious, Neville Landless, and Mr. Tartar, Pip, Herbert Pocket and Joe Gargery; while Clifford's Inn remains the dreariest of all the "shabby crew," as Charles Dickens called them. The extensive opening up which has been effected by the construction of Holborn Circus and the new streets in its vicinity has brought Thaives Inn out of its native obscurity; the archway through which Mr. Guppy conducted Esther Summerson to Mr. Jellyby's house has been removed, and the Inn is now one of the turnings out of the broad Circus itself. But it is still easily recognizable in bad weather as "a narrow street of high houses, like an oblong cistern to hold the fog," and has a curiously old-fashioned air among its brand new modern surroundings. Indeed, few of the localities in Dickensland in London answer more satisfactorily to the description than Thaives Inn. But a little way across the Circus are the splendid markets of Smithfield on the site of that disgraceful old cattle-market which seemed to Pip "all a-smear with filth, and fat, and blood, and foam," and which presented so desolate an appearance to Oliver Twist when he started on that terrible journey to Chertsey with Mr. Sikes. All the *Oliver Twist* district about here, it may be added, has disappeared as completely as Jacob's Island itself, not even a Holborn Hill or a Snow Hill — now connected by the Viaduct — remaining to serve as landmarks. Clement's Inn is being pulled down; New Inn is threatened with a like fate; the Globe and the Opera Comique Theatres occupy the site of Lyon's Inn; the place of Symond's Inn, where Mr. Vholes

had his office, and where Richard Carstone lived after the Court of Chancery had cast its evil spell over him, knows it no more.

The Marshalsea Prison, which figured so conspicuously in one of Jack Bamber's stories, which reappeared still more prominently in *Little Dorrit*, and to the recollection of which the many sad incidents of Charles Dickens's boyhood give so much painful interest, has altogether gone. Some of its ruins were still standing in 1856, but no trace of it is now to be found, although local tradition — unaccompanied by any sort of proof — has it that some portions of the old prison still exist among the houses to the northward of St. George's Church, in the Borough High Street. The Fleet prison was also pulled down long ago, and its site on the east side of the south end of Farringdon Street built over. With the debtors' prisons, and imprisonment for debt itself, have gone all the sponging houses about Cursitor Street — the Coavinses and others — and that mysterious institution known as the "Rules of the Bench," the memory of which has been preserved for us in "Nicholas Nickleby."

But it is not only individual houses belonging to Dickensland which have been lost to us in process of time. Whole neighborhoods have changed their nature; new and handsome quarters of the town have arisen, not only since the days of Mr. Pickwick, but since the death, only twenty-two years ago, of his creator himself. Trafalgar Square, as we have seen, dates only from about the close of Mr. Pickwick's career; the great work of the Victoria Embankment was not completed until 1870; the Northumberland Avenue change was of later date still. The Royal Exchange and the open space about it did not exist before 1844. The widening of the Poultry and Newgate street, the construction of the Holborn Viaduct, and the clearing away of Middle Row, Holborn, have made a fine thoroughfare which Mr. Pickwick would be quite unable to recognize as that along which he walked with Sam Weller from George Yard to Gray's Inn. Farringdon Street, Ludgate Circus, St. Bride Street, and New Bridge Street have completely changed all that neighborhood. The city has been absolutely transformed by the opening up of fine new streets in every direction. Shaftesbury Avenue, Theobald's Road, Rosebery Avenue, Victoria Street, the great market of Smithfield, and many other new streets and open spaces have made havoc of the networks of slums, the narrow thoroughfares and the intricate mazes of houses which people in the old days seemed to regard with perfect complacency. The Houses of Parliament, the Courts of Justice, and almost

all of the theatres have been built, and half the parks of London have been made — not to mention the extension of the railway system — not only since Mr. Pickwick's time, but even in quite recent years.

It is needless to multiply instances. It is enough to recognize the fact that the greater part of the London of fifty years ago has vanished already, and that the requirements of a vastly increased and more exacting population demand still further and more sweeping changes. We shall be fortunate if we can even save some of the great monuments of architectural art which were bequeathed to us by our forefathers ; but as to Dickensland in London, that in the course of a very few years will exist only in the books themselves and in the notes of explorers and commentators.

ROUND ABOUT DOTHEBOY'S HALL



From: *Temple Bar*, April 1889, p.507-513

By *H.F.A.*

“And at about six o’clock that night he and Mr. Squeers and the little boys and their united luggage were put down at the George and New Inn.”

So reads the ardent pilgrim who, after a beautiful walk from Barnard Castle by the wooded banks of Tees, and the stately demesne of Rokeby, finds himself leaning against the balustrade of the Greta Bridge, fired with a fresh perusal of ‘ Nicholas Nickleby,’ and bent on a pilgrimage in the footsteps of the great novelist.

But where is the George and New Inn?

Watling Street, or, to speak more correctly, a branch of Watling Street, called the Maiden Way, runs right and left, coming up from the South in a nearly straight line from Catterick Bridge, and proceeding westward by way of Bowes and Brough. There is not a human being in sight, and the only sound which breaks the stillness is the musical roar of Greta dashing over its rocky bed through the picturesque scenery of Rokeby Park on its way to join the Tees. But the pilgrim sees no George and New Inn, is unwilling to believe that the new-fangled Morrith Arms which he has just passed can be an old friend with a new face, and is beginning to feel a disappointment as great as he felt when he turned down Snow Hill before proceeding northwards to see the old Saracen’s Head, when his attention is attracted by a large, rambling old house with a long range of stables and coach-houses, which he instinctively divines must have been at one time an inn.

A chance native coming upon the scene confirms his opinion, and tells him that this was the identical Inn at which the party from the Saracen’s Head alighted, and whence they started for Dotheboys Hall in the rusty pony-chaise and cart. Being an unusually intelligent native, he adds that the pleasant country house about half-a-mile down the road in a southerly

direction, now known as Thorpe Grange, was originally, before the introduction of railways, built as an inn, and called the New Inn; which not only rivalled its elder brother by the bridge side, but took away its custom, so that its present owner claims for it the distinction of being the original hostelry celebrated by Charles Dickens. Our solution is that the novelist, not to be invidious, combined the titles of the two inns; and we may proceed with the rusty pony-chaise and cart along the old Roman road to Bowes, where is situated the immortal Dotheboys Hall.

In the brightest of weather it is a sad, desolate old road, so that we can readily realise the chill which struck upon poor Nicholas as he drove along it that bitter, snowy night — a straight road, dwindling in some places to the proportions of a mere grass-grown cart track, running on a high bank, according to the invariable old Roman fashion, through a sparsely-inhabited, quarry-dotted country. And an appropriate termination to so sad and desolate a highway is the first aspect of the village of Bowes.

The first house in Bowes — that grim, square building to the right, now known as Bowes Hall — was one of the Yorkshire schools crushed by the publication of ‘Nicholas Nickleby,’ and is moreover famous as having been for some time the residence of Richard Cobden. To the left goes the road to Gilmonby; from the right, by the railway station, comes another Roman road from Barnard Castle; and in front stretches battered, decayed, deserted, Pompeii-like Bowes. Geese straddle over the uneven grass-grown footpaths; a savage dog growls and slinks away at our approach; a few women and children peer curiously at us from the patched-up windows of tumbledown cottages; a native giant, swinging along with a pitchfork on his shoulder, pauses to have a look at us — otherwise Bowes seems to be a village of the dead.

But a hearty welcome is given us by the genial clergyman, who frankly tells us that a visitor from the metropolitan world — some one who has ideas above cattle and crops — comes like a ray of sunshine on a November day; and he directs us to Dotheboys Hall.

A word of advice here to intending pilgrims. Do not allude to Charles Dickens or to Squeers’ School, except in the presence of those whom you know to be above common prejudices and animosities. These subjects may be said, to use an expression more forcible than elegant, to stink in the nostrils of your true Bowes man. He believes that the village owes its decay entirely to the abolition of Yorkshire schools in general, and of Dotheboys

Hall in particular. He points to the fact that whereas half a century ago Bowes had close upon two thousand inhabitants, it has now short of four hundred. He has never read ‘Nicholas Nickleby,’ nor would he if a copy could be found in the place. If you question him about the school, he will either tell you flatly that he knows nothing about it, or will evasively refer you to other places infamous from their schools. If you mention the name of Dickens he will flush up and relate with glee the popular story that the great novelist, upon the occasion of a subsequent visit to Bowes, was pumped on and thrashed by the infuriated inhabitants. Of course all Bowes folk do not share these prejudices, as we shall afterwards see; but the broad fact remains that Bowes, which was ruined in common with many hundreds of country-places standing on our great roads elsewhere by the withdrawal of the stage-coaches, must be humoured if the visitor hopes to reap any profit from his exploration.

We pass by a grand old inn, once known as the George, now the Unicorn, whereat eight coaches changed horses daily on their road between London and Scotland — a typical inn of the old sort, with labyrinths of rooms, a huge kitchen, a large courtyard, and acres of outhouses — and, with the little Norman church and the grim keep of the old Norman Castle on our left, push on to Dotheboys Hall, which is the last house in the village.

“A long, cold-looking house, one storey high, with a few straggling outbuildings behind, and a barn and stable adjoining.” So we read. The house itself is unaltered, save that it is now decidedly the pleasantest and most cheerful-looking dwelling in the village, with its creeper-embowered windows looking on to a trim and well-kept garden. The stable and barn too remain; but the outbuildings, in which was comprised the school-house proper — the scene of the merciless thrashings, the starvation, the breaking of young hearts, the wrecking of young lives, the revolting misery and the bloodstirring barbarity — they have long disappeared.

A woman’s face looks out from a lower window, and we are about to turn in at the front gate, but our guide stops us, saying —

“Not that way! No admittance there. You would be asked if you wanted to buy the house, and have the door slammed in your face.”

So we follow the path, and turn in through the barn door. This leads us into a yard, where still stands the identical pump which, it may be remembered, Mr. Squeers discovered to be frozen on the morning after the long coach-ride from London.

From here we enter the kitchen — cautiously and silently, for the servant tells us that if her master discovered us we should assuredly be turned out with ignominy. There is nothing remarkable in the kitchen — a large, low, heavily-raftered apartment; nor in the little room leading from it, which was the schoolmaster's study; but we linger a long while as we gaze at the marks on the wall by the modern cooking-range, where stood the coppers wherein were boiled the potatoes which formed a principal part of the “young noblemen's” food; and as we peer through the study window, which the boys were set to clean when they had satisfactorily spelt “w-i-n-d-e-r, winder,” on to the garden, whither they were despatched to hoe and rake on the attainment of the word “bottiney,” we ask if a great number of people do not come here bound upon the same errand as ourselves. The reply is that a great many come; but that as they go to the front door they do not get in at all, but have to content themselves with an exterior view of Dotheboys Hall, so that we may deem ourselves lucky to have seen even the little we have.

So much for Dotheboys Hall itself. Still more interesting is the information we managed to pick up from various sources concerning Squeers and his School.

All our informants — country clergymen, intelligent residents, “oldest inhabitants,” and such natives as did not feel themselves in honour bound to keep their mouths shut — agreed on one point: that the system of Yorkshire schools was monstrous and iniquitous to an incredible extent; that frightful cruelties were practised upon the boys — who were chiefly the illegitimate offspring of London parents — but that the school typified by Charles Dickens was the only one to which he could gain access, and was the best of the lot. There were two other schools at Bowes, one at Gilmonby, one at Cotherstone, and one at Barnard Castle; and the proprietors of these, suspecting the presence of a famous literary Londoner amongst them, refused him admittance; but at Shaw's he was made welcome, and shown over the premises.

But in other respects the evidence was so conflicting that we must simply give it without pronouncing any opinion on its value or the reverse. For instance, one woman, a native of Bowes, whose sympathies one would naturally imagine to be with the maligned Squeers, told us that she distinctly remembered the boys coming in summertime to her father's fields to help get in the hay, goaded to the work of horses by ushers armed with whips. On the other hand a gentleman whose father, being a schoolmaster,

used to go up to the Saracen's Head with and on the same errand as Squeers, declared that the one-eyed schoolmaster was an estimable man, who cared for his pupils properly, and was generally respected and liked. He further stated that his father related to him how he happened to be at the Saracen's Head with Squeers after the Dotheboys Hall numbers of 'Nicholas Nickleby' had taken the public by storm; that the crowd literally besieged the inn, with the intention of lynching Squeers; that the commotion had such an effect upon the schoolmaster as to deprive him of reason, and that Mrs. Squeers died of a broken heart.

Another gentleman — once in holy orders — told us that he was at Bowes Grammar School contemporaneously with the existence of Shaw's School, that Shaw was known as the "King of the Road," because every half-year he hired a special coach to bring his pupils from London, and that the arrival of this coach at Bowes was the occasion of universal excitement and enthusiasm. He furthermore cited, as a proof that Shaw was maligned as to his treatment of his pupils, that great rivalry always existed between the Grammar School boys and those of Dotheboys Hall; that they played tremendous football matches together; and that every Easter Sunday it was a custom to appear in new suits and to pelt each other with Easter eggs. A fourth informant told us that the deaths at Shaw's School were frequent, that a large proportion of the boys were maimed by ill-usage, and that the neighbouring cottagers were continually giving shelter to runaways. A fifth spoke of the prototype of Fanny Squeers as a woman universally beloved and respected, who did infinite good among the poor and sick of the parish.

All however spoke of Shaw as a man subject to fits of violent passion, and admitted that he was addicted to using the cane unmercifully when under these influences.

In other instances, when we ventured to propound questions to more illiterate folk, we found that without committing themselves to giving any definite opinion, they tried to evade the questions, and thereby tacitly admitted that there was a great deal more truth in what Dickens had written than their local patriotism allowed them to express.

The graves of "Squeers," his wife, of "Fanny Squeers," and of young "Wackford," who died at the age of twenty-four, are to be seen in Bowes Churchyard. The late assistant station-master at Barnard Castle, Mackay by name, was said to be a son of the original of Nicholas Nickleby. John Browdie was one John Todd of Barningham, and died not very long ago;

and the original of poor Smike is said to have died during the year 1885, aged seventy-four.

When we add that the “original” bowl and ladle with which Mrs. Squeers used to dispense brimstone and treacle to the boys were sold a short time back for ten pounds, and that many of Squeers’s old pupils have done very well in life, and frequently come to revisit the old house at Bowes, we exhaust the information we were able to collect concerning Mr. Squeers and Dotheboys Hall.

There is much else that makes a visit to Bowes an interesting excursion. The little Norman Church, put into excellent order and well cared for by the present clergyman, Mr. Wardale, contains some curious old Saxon relics: and indeed there is a strong Saxon local colour all about this neighbourhood, as we may see in such names as Thorsgill, Wodenscroft, Baldersdale, and Romaldskirk. Under the west window of the Church, outside the wall, is a tablet erected to the memory of Roger Wrightson and Martha Bailton, better known as the Edwin and Emma of Mallet’s beautiful and pathetic ballad. Mr. Wardale told us that on Sundays it is quite amusing to note the number of rustic sweethearting couples who throng to this spot to vow love as true and lasting as was that of Edwin and Emma.

A curious stone in a cottage garden attracts the visitor’s notice and becomes interesting when he is told that where it now stands was once Bowes market-place, and that during a long bygone period of pestilence the people from untainted districts brought their dairy produce and placed it on this stone, retiring to some distance whilst purchasers from infected places took the goods away, placing the payment in a basin of water.

Of old Bowes Castle only the keep remains; but, mere shell as it is, the masonry is superb, being in places eleven feet thick, and in the days of catapults and archery must have made Bowes an awkward nut to crack.

Behind the Castle and Church are the intrenchments which mark the site of the important Roman station of Lavatrae, connected with Cataractorum or Catterick Bridge on the one side by the camp behind the Morritt Arms Inn at Greta Bridge, and with Verterae or Brough on the other by the earthworks at Spital. Here are the remains of the ubiquitous Boman bath, this one built by Valerius Fronto in A.d. 202; of an aqueduct connected with the Tees, which foams far below; and if funds were forthcoming doubtless other most interesting “finds” would be brought to light, although the site has been ransacked at a remote period.

There are probably few more utterly silent and desolate highways in Britain than this sturdy old Roman road upon which Bowes stands; but a six-mile tramp along it in a westerly direction is interesting. The road runs as it was laid down two thousand years ago, on a high-raised bank built up of the stone which abounds in this country; and on either side stretches a wild, picturesque moorland district, famous for its game, and with which are associated innumerable weird legends and traditions. At five miles distance is a large solitary old house standing amidst the only trees in the district, known as Old Spital, once a changing house for the coaches, and famous as being the scene of a dark tragedy related under the title of “The Hand of Glory.”

Beyond this house the scenery if possible grows more wild and desolate, and the pedestrian may on a winter’s day walk for miles along the old road without hearing any sound but the “cluck, cluck” of the partridges and the detonation of the breechloader, and without seeing a human being but a stray beater stirring the birds to flight by waving a flag.

Beyond a lonely turnpike, long disused, the road rises until it gains the summit of Stanemoor. Here, amidst intrenchments of some grandeur, stands in a trough a stone, known as the Rey Roy or Rere Cross, once the boundary between the kingdoms, of England and Scotland, now marking the border of Yorkshire and Westmoreland — and alluded to by Scott in ‘Rokeby,’ —

“And the best of our nobles his bonnet shall vail,
Who at Rere Cross on Stanmore meets Allan a Dale.”

It is also interesting as being the traditional spot where Malcolm Canmore and William the Conqueror met to decide by battle the boundary line of their respective kingdoms, but settled the dispute amicably, one of the articles of agreement being that “in the midst of Stainmoor there should be set up a cross with the King of England’s image on the one side, and the King of Scotland’s on the other, to signify that one is to march to England and the other to Scotland.”

Beyond this we are not tempted to go, as a bitter wind is rising, and dark night is falling; so we make the best of our way back to Bowes, well primed for a re-perusal of ‘Nicholas Nickleby’ over the fire in the cosy parlour of the Golden Lion, Barnard Castle.

From: *Temple Bar*, October 1902, p.413-420

THACKERAY AND DICKENS



By Lewis Melville

The first meeting of these two great writers took place early in 1836. 'Pickwick' was being published in monthly parts, and Robert Seymour, who invented the original design of Mr. Pickwick, after having completed the drawings for the first two or three numbers, had committed suicide. Another artist was wanted immediately, and Thackeray volunteered for the post. Years later, at a Royal Academy dinner, responding to the toast of "Literature," with which the names of Dickens and himself were associated, Thackeray referred to his now famous offer, the refusal of which he persisted in calling, "Mr. Pickwick's lucky escape."

"Had it not been for the direct act of my friend who has just sat down," he said, "I should most likely never have been included in the toast which you have been pleased to drink; and I should have tried to be, not a writer, but a painter, or designer of pictures. That was the object of my early ambition; and I can remember when Mr. Dickens was a very young man, and had commenced delighting the world with some charming humorous works, of which I cannot mention the name, but which were coloured light green, and came out once a month, that this young man wanted an artist to illustrate his writings; and I recollect walking up to his chambers in Furnival's Inn with two or three drawings in my hand, which, strange to say, he did not find suitable. But for the unfortunate blight which came over my artistic existence, it would have been my pride and pleasure to have endeavoured one day to find a place on these walls for one of my performances. This disappointment caused me to direct my attention to a different walk of art, and now I can only hope to be 'translated' on these walls, as I have been, thanks to my talented friend, Mr. Egg."

Thackeray was never tired of paying tribute, private and public, to the works of his contemporaries. He was outspoken in praise of Cruikshank and Leech, who, in some measure, might be regarded as his rivals in comic portraiture. "What would Punch be without Leech's pictures?" he wrote in

an article which not unnaturally annoyed the other contributors. And in 1863, a few months before his death, when Cruikshank was exhibiting his works, anxious to render what help he could to an old friend, “kind Thackeray came with his grave face, and looked through the little gallery, and went off to write one of his charming essays,” which only appeared in the *Times*.

He wrote with appreciation, not too strictly critical, of Macaulay and Washington Irving; of Hood (whose “Song of the Shirt” he pronounced the finest lyric ever written), of Lever, and of Charlotte Bronte. Even Bulwer Lytton, whom with caustic humour he had attacked in ‘The Yellowplush Papers,’ he praised for the example he set to other authors by being “thoroughly literate;” and, speaking at the Royal Literary Fund dinner in 1852, he eulogised Disraeli, whose ‘Coningsby’ he had reviewed in *The Pictorial Times*, and afterwards had so amusingly parodied in *Punch* — a parody which the victim amply avenged, when in ‘Endymion’ he wrote about “Sainte-Barbe” and ‘Topsy-Turvy’ (Thackeray and ‘Vanity Fair’). It is not generally known that Thackeray wanted to parody both Dickens and himself, but the proprietors of *Punch* declined to accept a parody of Dickens, and so both skits remained unwritten. When Thackeray, ill in bed, read “The Idylls of the King,” he wrote to the poet: “Oh! I must write to him now for this pleasure, this delight, this splendour of happiness which I have been enjoying;” and when Tennyson’s “Grandmother” appeared in *Once a Week*: “I wish I could have got that poem for the *Cornhill*, I would have paid fifty pounds for it,” the great novelist exclaimed: “But I would have given five hundred pounds to have been able to write it.” He revered “the great old Goethe,” and his enthusiasm was thoroughly aroused by the works of Dumas. “All the forenoon,” he wrote from Paris in 1849 to Mrs. Brookfield, “I read with intense delight a novel called ‘Le Vicomte de Bragelonne’: a continuation of the famous ‘Mousquetaires,’ and just as interesting, keeping one panting from volume to volume, longing for more.” A few years later in America, he said to Mrs. Cooke:

“Dumas is charming. He is better than Walter Scott. ... I came near writing a book on the same subject, ‘Les Trois Mousquetaires,’ and taking Monsieur D’Artagnan for my hero. D’Artagnan was a real character of the age of Louis XIV., and wrote his own ‘Memoires.’ I remember picking up a dingy copy of them on an old bookstall in London, price sixpence, and

intended to make something of it. But Dumas got ahead of me — he snaps up everything. He is wonderful.”

But though he thought Dumas greater than Scott, yet for the latter he felt much admiration and even reverence. When a popular novelist one day justified himself for something he had written by urging that Scott has written it also, Thackeray replied: “I do not think that it becomes either you or me to speak of Sir Walter Scott as if we were his equals. Such men as you or I should take off our hats at the very mention of his name.”

Thackeray was never so happy as when he could pay a compliment to his friends in a book. “The young Aga came for a pair of shoes; his contortions were so delightful as he tried them on that I remained with great pleasure, wishing for Leech to be at hand to sketch his lordship and his fat mamma, who sat on the counter,” he wrote in ‘From Cornhill to Grand Cairo.’ And in the same volume, a little further on: “You can’t put down in prose that delicious episode of natural poetry” (“The Bay of Glaucus”); “it ought to be done in a symphony, full of sweet strains of clear iambics, such as Milnes knows how to write.” In one of his latest novels, ‘The Adventures of Philip,’ he concluded a chapter: “There was a pretty group for the children to see, and Mr. Walker to draw.” In posthumous editions, however, this has been altered to “for an artist to draw.”

Above all his contemporaries Thackeray delighted to honour Dickens, and he never lost an opportunity of paying graceful tribute in his books or in his lectures; while his private correspondence is studded with remarks testifying to his sincere appreciation of his great rival’s works. “Get ‘David Copperfield,’ by jingo, it’s beautiful; it beats the yellow chap of this month (‘Pendennis’) hollow:” and writing of the same book in *Punch*, he said:

“How beautiful it is, how charmingly fresh and simple! In those admirable touches of tender humour — and I shall call humour, Bob, a mixture of love and wit — who can equal this great genius? There are little words and phrases in his book which are like personal benefits to the reader.”

Of ‘A Christmas Carol’ he wrote: “It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness”; and he referred to ‘The Battle of Life/ and the other Christmas stories as, “these charming little books of Mr. Dickens’s which are chorals for Christmas executed in prose.” In the lecture on ‘Charity and Humour,’ which he delivered in 1855 for a charitable purpose, he introduced the following story against himself.

“All children ought to love him” [Dickens]; “I know two that do, and read his books ten times for once they peruse the dismal preachments of their father. I know one who, when she is happy, reads ‘Nicholas Nickleby’; when she is unhappy, reads ‘Nicholas Nickleby’; when she is tired, reads ‘Nicholas Nickleby’; when she is in bed, reads ‘Nicholas Nickleby’; when she has nothing to do, reads ‘Nicholas Nickleby’; and when she has finished the book, reads ‘Nicholas Nickleby’ again. This candid young critic, at ten years of age, said, ‘I like Mr. Dickens’ books better than your books, papa,’ and frequently expressed her desire that the latter author should write a book like one of Mr. Dickens’ books. Who can?”

This charming passage drew an acknowledgment from Dickens.

“I have read in the Times to-day an account of your last night’s lecture,” he wrote to Thackeray, “and cannot refrain from assuring you in all truth and earnestness that I am profoundly touched by your generous reference to me. I do not know how to tell you what a glow it spread over my heart. Out of its fulness I do entreat you to believe that I shall never forget your words of commendation. If you could wholly know at once how you have moved me, and how you have animated me, you would be the happier, I am sure.”

Again, when Thackeray read the number of ‘Dombey and Son’ containing the description of the death of Paul, he put it in his pocket, went to the *Punch* Office, and flung it down before Mark Lemon. “There’s no writing against this,” he exclaimed excitedly. “One hasn’t an atom of chance; its stupendous.” And this, too, when ‘Vanity Fair’ was in course of publication, and the author of that “little book” was also describing a death scene:

“No more firing was heard at Brussels — the pursuit rolled miles away. The darkness came down on the field and city, and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.”

And nowadays, in spite of Thackeray’s praise, and Lord Jeffrey’s — “There has been nothing in literature like the actual dying of that sweet Paul,” this death-bed scene is regarded as typical of Dickens at his worst, as “the kind of thing that appears in Sunday-school books about the virtuous little boy that died!”

But Thackeray was too keen a critic unduly to depreciate his own writings.

“Have you read Dickens? Oh! it is charming! brave Dickens!” he wrote to Mrs. Brookfield. “It has some of his very prettiest touches, those inimitable touches, which make such a great man of him; and the reading of the book has done another author a great deal of good. In the first place, it pleases the other author to see that Dickens, who has long left off alluding to the author’s works, has been copying the O.A., and greatly simplifying his style, and overcoming the use of fine words. By this the public will be the gainer, and ‘David Copperfield’ will be improved by taking a lesson from ‘Vanity Fair.’ Secondly, it has put me on my mettle, for ah! madame, all the mettle was out of me, and I have been dreadfully and curiously cast down this month past. I say, secondly, it has put me on my mettle, and made me feel that I must do something: that I have fame, and name, and family, to support.”

Indeed, Thackeray was constrained to admit that Dickens was not a deep thinker, but, he said, “he has a clear and a bright-eyed intelligence, which is better than philosophy. I think he is equal to Fielding and Smollett — at any rate to Smollett. He is not such a scholar as Fielding was.” This, then, was the greatest difference between them: other things being equal, Thackeray’s literary culture was far wider. He was thereby enabled thoroughly to appreciate the many beauties of Dickens’s work. The latter, unfortunately, was not a discerning critic of writing other than that of his own kind, and read little and thought less of the master stylist of his day. “He” [Dickens] “can’t forgive me for my success with ‘Vanity Fair’ — as if there were not room in the world for both of us,” Thackeray wrote. And a few years later he remarked:

“Dickens is making ten thousand a year. He is very angry with me for saying so; but I *will* say it, for it is true. He doesn’t like me. He knows that my books are a protest against his — that if the one set are true, the other must be false. But ‘Pickwick’ is an exception, it is a capital book. It is like a glass of good English ale.”

It may confidently be assumed that Thackeray had not much doubt as to which set of books was right.

Regarded from almost any point of view these two great men present a striking contrast. Dickens at twenty-five was famous as the author of ‘Sketches by Boz’ and ‘Pickwick,’ and within the next ten years had published ‘Oliver Twist,’ ‘Nicholas Nickleby,’ ‘The Old Curiosity Shop,’ ‘Barnaby Rudge,’ ‘Martin Chuzzlewit,’ and the Christmas books.

Thackeray, who was a year older, in his twenty-fifth year, entirely unknown, contributed a short story entitled 'The Professor' to *Bentley's Miscellany*, then under the editorship of Dickens, and in the pages of which 'Oliver Twist' was appearing as a serial. In his thirty-seventh year he made his first serious bid for fame with 'Vanity Fair,' which, after the fashion set by Dickens, was issued in monthly parts. How it happened that popularity came to Thackeray so late (comparatively) in life was explained in an article on "Thackeray," printed in the June number of this magazine.

Their methods of working were different. Dickens was industrious in a manner that Thackeray could never claim to be. The former never doubted his powers, the latter always mistrusted his hold on the public. Even so late as 1849 he endeavoured to obtain a Government appointment.

"You are a good and lovable adviser and M.P.," he wrote to his friend Monckton Milnes, "but I cannot get the Magistrate's place, not being eligible. I was only called to the bar last year, and they require barristers of seven years' standing. Time will qualify me, however, and I hope to be able to last six years in the literary world; for though I shall write, I daresay, very badly, yet the public won't find it out for some time, and I shall live on my past reputation. It is a pity to be sure. If I could get a place and rest, I think I could do something better than I have done, and leave a good and lasting book behind me; but Fate is overruling."

What a longing for rest from the never-ceasing writing and revising is here! But while the pathos is marked a smile cannot be suppressed as one thinks of Thackeray, who had not then written 'Esmond' or 'The Newcomes,' hoping to be able to live for six years in the literary world by trading on his past reputation. Dickens, less sensitive, never doubted but that he could suit the public, though he lived to be three-score and ten. He knew what it wanted and he supplied the want. Thackeray, on the other hand, wrote as he desired to write — and the general reader is not easily trained to appreciate work of a class higher than that to which he has been accustomed.

Thackeray was terribly self-conscious, and usually presented a very poor appearance when he attempted to deliver a speech. "Why can't they get Dickens to take the chair?" he grumbled when he had to preside at the General Theatrical Fund. "He can make a speech — and a good one. . . . I'm of no use. . . . They little think how nervous I am; and Dickens doesn't know the meaning of the word." An amusing story is recorded of the

occasion when, with Mr. Fields, the well-known American publisher, Thackeray travelled to Manchester to make a speech at the founding of the Free Library Institution in that town. The would-be orator declared that although Dickens and Bulwer Lytton and Sir James Stephen were to precede him, he intended to beat each of them on this occasion. He insisted that Mr. Field should be seated directly in front of him, so that he should not miss a single word. Later, as he rose, he looked at his friend as much as to say, "I'll show you what speaking is." He began fluently, was excellent for two minutes, and then, in the midst of a most earnest sentence, stopped suddenly, gave a look of comic despair and sat down. "My boy," he said, when the meeting was over, "my boy, you have accidentally missed hearing one of the finest speeches ever prepared by a great British orator." Again, Thackeray hated the lecture desk, while Dickens declared he never felt the least diffidence in addressing an audience. The former appeared on the platform simply as a well-bred gentleman reading, to a large circle of friends, certain essays with which he was well acquainted; the latter gave dramatic readings from his books.

There are many meetings between the two men recorded, notably when they were both staying at Boulogne in 1854, and at the private theatricals at Tavistock House in 1855. Later in the same year, on October 11th, Dickens took the chair at a grand banquet given at the London Tavern to wish Thackeray God-speed on the eve of his departure to America to deliver the Lectures on the Georges, and proposed the health of the guest of the evening. Two years later, when Thackeray was canvassing at Oxford, he sent Dickens a droll note urging him to "come down and make a speech, and tell them who I am, for I doubt whether more than two of the electors have ever heard of me, and I think there may be as many as six or eight who have heard of you." But Dickens did not go.

And then came the unfortunate Edmund Yates affair. Into the details of this quarrel — of which a full account is given in 'The Life of William Makepeace Thackeray' — it is unnecessary to enter. At the time it was believed (and the belief has not yet been refuted), that Dickens, acting for Yates, conducted the matter in a spirit hostile to Thackeray. Mr. Yates has since declared that there was no real intimacy or anything like friendship between the two men, and he asserted that after the first Thackeray was more angry with Dickens than with the original offender who, much to his detriment, was made the subject of a trial of strength between them. Mr.

Jefferson has supported this opinion by avowing that Thackeray said to him, "You must not think, young 'un, I am quarrelling with Mr. Yates, *I am hitting the man behind him.*" How far these statements are accurate it is not difficult to determine. Certainly if jealousy existed between the two men it was not on Thackeray's side. No man with fewer literary jealousies and animosities ever existed. But it must be admitted that it was Dickens the author rather than Dickens the man whom he admired. "Genial? Yes," he once said of him. "But frank" — and a twinkle came over the spectacles — "well, frank as an oyster." As a result of the affair, the novelists did not speak for some years. At last they met on the steps of the Athenaeum Club a few days before the Christmas of 1863. They passed each other, then Thackeray turned back, and with outstretched hand went up to Dickens and said he could no longer bear to be on any but the old terms of friendship.

"I saw him . . . shortly before Christmas at the Athenaeum Club," Dickens has recorded, "when, he told me he had been in bed three days — that after these attacks he was troubled with cold shiverings which quite took the work out of him, and that he had it in his mind to try a new remedy which he described. He was very cheerful, and looked very bright."

A few days later Dickens was looking down into the grave of his great rival.

"You will have heard about poor Thackeray's death — sudden and yet not sudden — for he had long been alarmingly ill," Dickens wrote to a friend. "At the solicitation of Mr. Smith and some of his friends I have done what I would gladly have excused myself from doing if I felt I could, written a couple of pages about him in what was his own magazine. Therein I have tried so far as I could, with his mother and children before me, to avoid the fulsome and injudicious trash that has been written about him in the papers. . . . You can have no idea of the vile stuff . . . people who would have beslavered him living, began to bespatter him dead."

MEMORIES OF CHARLES DICKENS



From: *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, November 13, 1897, p.721-725

By Maltus Questell Holyoake

Much has been written about Charles Dickens, and much more will doubtless be written. The public delight in Dickensiana is not likely to be sated in our time. The slightest personal recollection of him, or discovery of fresh facts respecting the characters he created or the localities he depicted, is always read with universal avidity. Though one of those persons, daily getting less numerous, who remember Dickens in the flesh, my memories of him may not be very vivid or very remarkable; but such as they are, I doubt not that some lover of the dead author will read them with interest.

Some forty years ago, when the immortal writer whose name is now a household word in all countries was witching the world with noble writing, I was a very small boy; but even then Dickens was a much-appreciated novelist with me, and one of the first masters of fiction with whose works I became acquainted. I well remember, in my childhood's days, the issue of *David Copperfield*, in green - covered monthly parts, with two illustrations by 'Phiz' (Hablot K. Browne), price one shilling. The publication of these parts was awaited all over England with interest and impatience. In my own home their appearance was looked for with pleasurable expectancy; for, as a treat, my elder sister used to read to a select auditory, consisting of my mother, my brother, and myself, chapters of poor Doady's adventures. These informal readings took place after tea, and sorry were we when the part was exhausted, and we had to wait for the next instalment. In this way I became acquainted with the magniloquent Micawber, the good-humoured Traddles, the slimy Uriah, the child-wife Dora, the faithful Peggotty, the Royalist Mr Dick, and the rest of the characters of that delightful book, which I have re-read many times, and was reading only the other day with unabated enjoyment.

I am very conscious that such memories of the famous novelist as I have preserved in my mind must seem ‘stale, flat, and unprofitable ‘ reading, after the recent reminiscences of his son, Charles Dickens the younger — now, too, no more; but as some justification of my temerity in penning such few facts as I can recall, I may mention that my earliest recollections were associated with Dickens. At the time of which I write my home was a house overlooking the grounds of Tavistock House, where he resided, and I used frequently to see him walking in those grounds, taking, I imagine, a quiet constitutional when the demands upon his time did not permit of his taking the pedestrian exercise in the direction of Highgate or Hampstead, of which he was so fond. At the end of the garden of our house was a substantial outhouse, used as a play-room by us children. This outhouse was roofed with lead, and the roof being fiat, it formed a point of vantage from which I used to watch Dickens’s sons (each now of distinction in his own branch of life) playing cricket and other games, with, as often as not, their distinguished father looking on. Both before and since Dickens lived there, Tavistock House possessed other notable residents, and Perry of the *Morning Chronicle*, Frank Stone the Royal Academician, Mr (now Sir) James Stansfeld, Georgina Weldon, and Gounod the composer have at various times been occupants.

As I lived amid literary surroundings, and as my father, George Jacob Holyoake, combined the allied occupations of author, editor, publisher, and lecturer, it is not to be wondered at that as a youth I possessed literary aspirations; and, as is the case with many others, they were about all I did possess at that time. An ardent desire which actuated me to make the fortune of a publication with the discernment to recognise the genius of my pen was not gratified ; and although (he Thames flows conveniently near Fleet Street, I found that my efforts at authorship did not set that river on fire. They might, however, have assisted to create a fire of some sort in an editorial office; but if so, I knew it not. It was only natural that I should wish to give an editor for whose works I had such admiration as Dickens the advantage (?) of publishing some of the (in my own estimation) brilliant articles I was then producing. I therefore, being sixteen years of age at the time, sent one of my effusions to *All the Year Round*. It was promptly returned, as no doubt it deserved to be, with one of the usual notes of rejection in the lithographed handwriting of Dickens in the blue ink which he always used. Writers do not as a rule, I believe, trouble to keep the brief

and unwelcome editorial intimations that their contributions are ‘declined with thanks,’ ‘unsuitable,’ or returned ‘owing to want of space,’ but I have preserved the communication from *All the Year Round* thirty-five years, and here it is:

Office Of ‘All The Year Round,’
A Weekly Journal Conducted By Charles Dickens.
No. 26 Wellington Street, Strand,
London, W.G, *April 12th*, 1862.

Mr Charles Dickens begs to thank the writer of the paper entitled ‘A Reminiscence of the Prince Consort’ for having done him the favour to offer it a- a contribution to these pages. He much regrets, however, that it is not suited to the requirements of *All The Year Round*.

The manuscript will be returned under cover, if applied for as above.

All the Year Round has long ago been incorporated with *Household Words*, which it superseded on its first appearance on April 30, 1859, after the disagreement Dickens had with his publishers. It was in *All the Year Round* that Dickens’s novels *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations* first appeared. As most readers of Dickens’s works know, the original of Boythorn in *Bleak House* was Walter Savage Landor, the poet; and it is a singular fact that the last contribution of Dickens himself to the publication now absorbed by *Household Words* was an article on the irascible but kind-hearted author of *The Pentameron*.

Another document I possess in Dickens’s hand-writing is an old, torn, large-sized blue envelope endorsed “Charles Dickens Copy,” and addressed to ‘Mr James Birtles, Mr Whiting’s Printing Office.’ It was rescued from Mr Whiting’s waste-paper basket by a friend and given to me as a literary relic. I have treasured for many years this torn envelope that once contained Dickens’s



‘copy.’ ‘Copy,’ some readers may lie unaware, is a printer’s term for manuscript.

The eldest son of the novelist, in his recently published recollections of his father, states that in his opinion the strain and excitement consequent on Dickens’s public readings in England and America had a distinct effect towards shortening his life. I had the good fortune to hear him, read a selection from his works at St James’s Hall. One was the story of Little Emily, from *David Copperfield*, and I shall never forget the height of dramatic power to which he rose when describing the death of Steerforth. In my mind’s eye I can see him now. He so threw himself into the tragic spirit of the incident (and who should so truly interpret the meaning of a passage, I and the real effect intended, as the writer who created it?) that I never wondered to hear that at the conclusion of his reading he was exhausted and almost fainting.

Once, when a boy, I was reading *Bleak House*, after a long illness, and burst into tears when I came to the death of poor Jo, so greatly did Dickens’s touching description of the imaginary death of the little crossing-sweeper affect me. A pathetic passage in a book, or a pathetic voice in a play always gives me a cold shiver down the spine, and a choking sensation in the throat even now. If the mere perusal of the creations of Dickens’s genius, according as they were grave or I gay, could affect the sensibilities of his readers, as I doubt not they have others besides myself, how much more were their emotions aroused when under the spell of the author’s unequalled elocutionary powers!

Dickens acted every piece he read, and moved his audience to smiles or tears as his theme was humorous or pathetic. In the murder scene in *Oliver Twist*, where Bill Sikes slays Nancy, Dickens was especially dramatic, and his hearers held their breath, enchained by the honor and intensity of his

description. This piece, too, which involved study and both mental and physical strain, affected Dickens's nerves and health. Dickens it must be remembered was reading all the evening. No actor who impersonates a single character is ever so long and continuously at full tension as was the case with Dickens; and the actor has frequent rests between his appearances on the stage. The present generation cannot realise the intensity with which Dickens, a born actor, gave his wonderful representations. For an author to read his works in public was then a novelty; and Dickens's unparalleled success in his new and arduous undertaking created a sensation and excitement that nowadays cannot be adequately comprehended. The influence of his readings, too, was to awaken the better feelings of humanity; and how many seasonable and kindly thoughts and charitable deeds were inspired by

his reading of *A Christmas Carol* alone will never be known. It was a lay sermon that would tend to bring nearer the golden time when

Each man works for all men's good,
And all men work in noble brotherhood.

Another occasion on which I saw Dickens was at a meeting at the Adelphi Theatre in connection with the Royal Dramatic College. Charles Dickens, whose interest in theatrical matters needs no enlarging upon, was in the chair. At that time I was assisting my father at his Fleet Street publishing house, and being so near the Adelphi Theatre, I seized the opportunity of running down to hear what Dickens might have to say. The meeting was held in the afternoon, and it comes back to me after all the long years that have passed, how dull and dingy the theatre looked in the daytime. Dickens, to my disappointment, gave a thoroughly business-like address, unrelieved by brilliancies of thought or touches of Dickensian humour as I had hoped. He, however, made a model chairman, and dealt with several interruptions in a manner which showed intimate acquaintance with the procedure of public assemblies. Edmund Yates, the beau-ideal of a smart young literary 'man about town,' was there. Yates was then writing the 'Flaneur' in the *Morning Star*, a column of club gossip which was the pioneer of the personal paragraph so universal nowadays. He made the best speech of the afternoon, and in speculating upon the prospects of the College anticipated a time when it might possibly have

Prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.

I could not help remarking, in my own mind, how neatly the Tennysonian quotation was introduced, and how cleverly Yates led up to it.

The last time I saw Dickens was in 1863, at the funeral of William Makepeace Thackeray, to which I accompanied my father. Although December, it was as bright and sunny as a summer day. On getting out at the railway station we encountered George Cruikshank, with whom in early life Thackeray had studied etching, and whose illustrations were a feature of Dickens's earlier works. Cruikshank was then in his seventieth year. He walked with us to Kensal Green Cemetery, and the day being warm I carried his overcoat. The great temperance artist was as quaint and odd in manner and appearance as any of his own caricatures. 'George,' as his intimates called him, possessed histrionic tastes, and used to appear as Macbeth and in other Shakespearian characters at Sadler's Wells. He was associated with Dickens, too, in the amateur performances in connection with the promotion of the Guild of Literature and Art. Cruikshank was also a volunteer officer, and, on the occasion of some review, a comic bard wrote, in allusion to his temperance proclivities, lines which I still recall:

Fancy Cruikshank, if you please,
On a horse with groggy knees!

At Kensal Green Cemetery we found Mr Moncure D. Conway, then newly arrived in England, with whom I had already the pleasure of being acquainted. The biographer of Thomas Paine was then mid until recently the minister of South Place Chapel, Finsbury — a worthy successor of W. J. Fox, M.P., Unitarian preacher, Anti-Cornlaw agitator, and one of the founders of the *Westminster Review*. Another mourner at the graveside to whom my father introduced me was Louis Blanc, the French Republican, then in exile. I regarded with respect and attention the politician whose writings created the Revolution of 1848. Louis Blanc possessed an intellect as great as his form was diminutive, and was eminently one to

Be measured by his soul;

The mind's the standard of the man.

He was very sensitive of his small stature, which had exposed him on more than one occasion to the painful ridicule of the feeble-minded. It is related by a biographer of forty years ago, that at the outset of his public life he embraced the diplomatic profession, and having been appointed secretary to his cousin, he first attended one of the parties of the famous Duchesse de Dino. Reports of his attainments and ambitions had preceded him, and his appearance was awaited with interest. He was presented by his uncle, the celebrated Pozzo di Borgo; and on the announcement of the well-known name, all eyes were directed to the uncle, whose portly form concealed the dwarfish dimensions of his nephew. Arrived at the head of the room, the veteran Ambassador said to the Duchess, 'Permit me to introduce to your notice my nephew.' The lady raised herself with a languid air from the sofa, and exclaimed in a tone of sweet bewilderment, '*Where* is he? I should be delighted to see him.' That evening Louis Blanc resigned the post which had been obtained for him with much difficulty by his uncle. The result of his unfortunate reception may be traced in every line of his work, *The History of Ten Years*, which Louis-Philippe was often heard to declare acted as a battering-ram against the bulwarks of loyalty in France. At another time, in England, it is reported that Blanc was driven into a state of almost madness by a lady in whose country-house he was detained by stress of weather, asking him if he would mind sleeping in the child's bed. In 1839 Blanc was attacked one night in the streets of Paris and repeatedly stabbed by an unknown assailant. He was left for dead. His attempted assassination was an act of vengeance for a political article he had written. Louis Blanc had a twin-brother who was at that time in Spain, and who felt strange pains, as if from blows, in the same part of his body, and at the same moment, as his brother in Paris was wounded. Before information reached him, he had already written to know if any misfortune had occurred. The elder Dumas founded his play *The Corsican Brothers* on this incident. On the establishment of the French Republic, Louis Blanc returned to the country he had served, and suffered for, and for many years before his death enjoyed the honour to which he was entitled.

Grouped round the grave of Thackeray were many names distinguished in literature, art, or the drama. Anthony Trollope, the novelist; Mark Lemon, then editor of *Punch*; George Henry Lewes, philosopher and critic; Sir Theodore Martin; Isaac Butt, the predecessor of Parnell; Sir W. H.

Russell, the *Times*' war correspondent; Sir John Millais; Shirley Brooks, afterwards Lemon's successor in the *Punch* editorship; Miss Braddon, who had but recently disclosed *Lady Audley's Secret*; Charles Mathews, the actor; Henry Cole, C.B., of the first exhibition fame; Tom Taylor, afterwards the successor of Brooks in the *Punch* editorship; John Hollingshead, not then, I fancy, flickering round 'the sacred lamp of burlesque;' Creswick, the Royal Academician; Robert Browning; and many others, of more or less celebrity, were there. Charles Dickens stood beside Browning, and many besides myself gazed with interest at the keen-looking, handsome, starry-eyed writer. Dickens was not in mourning, and was wearing trousers of a check pattern, a waistcoat of some coloured plaid, and an open frock-coat. He seemed larger in stature and more robust than I had ever before noticed him. Most of those whose names are mentioned as assembled to pay the last tribute to Thackeray are now dead, and seven years later Dickens himself was no more: 'All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.'

Writing at the time to Wilkie Collins, Dickens thus expressed himself regarding the death of his fellow-novelist:

'You will have heard about poor Thackeray's death — sudden and yet not sudden — for he had been alarmingly ill; at the solicitation of Mr Smith and some of his friends, I have done what I would have most gladly excused myself from doing if I felt I could, and have written a couple of pages about him in what was his own magazine. Therein I have tried, so far as I could with his mother and children before me, to avoid the fulsome and injudicious hash that has been written about him in the papers, and delicately to suggest the true points in his character as a literary man. Happily, I suppose, you can have no idea of the vile stuff that has been written; the writers particularly dwelling on his being "a gentleman," "a great gentleman," and the like, as if the rest of us were of the tinker tribe.'

The original of this letter was recently sold at Sotheby's for fifty pounds.

In *Bleak House* Charles Dickens called attention to Chancery cases dragging their slow length along, and *Jarndyce v. Jarndyce* is doubtless entitled to the credit of lessening some of the law's delays. *Oliver Twist*, too, contained a vigorous attack on the shortcomings of the poor-laws, which have since been much amended. In another of his works, Dickens's description of the world-famed Circumlocution Office had a good effect on the red-tapeism of government departments. It is a wonder his powerful pen

was never tempted to ridicule the laws affecting the press, seeing that he was a victim to them; for it is a fact, forgotten by many and never known by others, that at the lime of the agitation for the repeal of the Newspaper Stamp Duty, proceedings were taken by the Inland Revenue authorities against Dickens for issuing the *Household Narrative of Current Events* unstamped, it being a publication ‘containing news to be dispersed, and made public,’ to use the phraseology of the long-dormant act of parliament entitled the Tenth of Queen Anne. It was known that Queen Anne was dead, and everybody thought the act was too; but it was not so. A great statesman held that nothing so soon secures the repeal of unjust laws as their stringent execution. It was with this object in view that the Committee for the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge, in their zeal for the cause of a free press, instigated the authorities to prosecute the great novelist. In doing this, however, they undoubtedly did Dickens a bad turn, as the publication of the *Household Narrative* was suspended at a loss to him of, it was believed, £4000 a year. My father, who gives an account of the matter in the chapter of his *Autobiography* entitled ‘The Trouble with Queen Anne,’ mentions that when the Dickens trial came on, the cry in the newspaper offices was — ‘What the Dickens *is* news?’ — a very obvious, but not remarkable witticism.

Dickens, like his great contemporary Thackeray, and the late Robert Louis Stevenson, was struck down in the midst of uncompleted work. The kindly satirist left *Denis Duval*, and the invalid exile of Samoa, *Weir of Hermiston* and *St Ives* as fragmentary memorials of undiminished powers. It is well-known, however, that the bust novel of Dickens, the unfinished *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, was not by any means equal to his other works; indeed, his friend Wilkie Collins in a pencil note to his copy of Forster’s *Life of Dickens*, described it, though with all sympathy, as ‘the melancholy work of a worn - out brain.’ The impending breakdown of the health and constitution of the bright, energetic, and genial writer was of course unknown to either his friends or the public, who regarded what had already appeared of *Edwin Drood* as a failure. Indeed, in one of the humorous periodicals appeared an imitation of it in Dickensian language, in which a nocturnal visitor is imagined, as penetrating into Dickens’s sanctum, where he is busy writing, and beseeching the author to reveal to him (for certain reasons, which I forget) the mystery in which all the world is interested.

‘Tell me what really is the mystery of *Edwin Drood*?’ urges the inquisitive intruder. At last, yielding to long-continued importunity, Dickens replies in low and sepulchral tones:

‘The mystery is how it sells.’

This anecdote sufficiently indicates that the adverse opinion of the critics must have been very strong to have found reflective expression in a comic journal.

John Forster, the biographer of Dickens, considered him ‘the most popular novelist of the century,’ a verdict endorsed by Wilkie Collins, with the proviso — ‘after Sir Walter Scott.’ It is, however, the fashion of certain writers nowadays to disparage Dickens’s works; but such comments would have little effect on those who have read his books. There are writers who claim to be authorities on literature, who, so to speak, put Dickens on to a pair of intellectual scales, and adjudge accurately to their own satisfaction his fictional merits or demerits, and define his exact position among literary luminaries. Without pretending to literary infallibility myself, it has always seemed to me that Dickens is so popular with the people, because he wrote of the people. Most of his scenes and characters were those of ordinary every-day life, and would be thus interesting to ordinary every-day people. We like to read of things familiar to us, just as we hail with pleasure known spot as the reproduction of some well-known spot as a scene in a drama. It is true that the characters of Dickens are pen caricatures, accentuating the characteristics that he wished to portray; but his incidents are natural, and such as might be expected to occur, and he strikes chords which we all recognise. Dickens represents the domestic virtues, the home scenes appealing to every one. President Lincoln said that God loved the common people, and that is why he made so many of them. Dickens also loved the common people, and that is why he wrote for them. Readers fond of a rattling tide of life on the ocean wave by a sailor would choose Marryat; admirers of backwoods and prairie adventure would prefer Mayne Reid; lovers of cultured and intellectual romance may perhaps select Bulwer Lytton; those in search of rollicking Irish fun put their faith in Charles Lever or Samuel Lover; whilst for playful and tender satire Thackeray is sought. But for life as we know it, thoughts that we think, and homely experiences common to us all, Dickens is paramount.

DICKENS'S CHARACTERS AND THEIR PROTOTYPES



From: Temple Bar, May 1888, p.28-48

By F.G. Kitton

It is well known that the characters most familiar to us in the writings of Charles Dickens had originals in actual life. The novelist, in common with other famous romancers, never produced, or intended to produce, a complete picture of a living person, hut only the leading traits, embodying in his portraiture of one individual his experience of fifty; although, as we shall see, the likeness in some cases bore a remarkable resemblance to the unconscious sitter, who naturally resented the publicity thus given to his personal or mental peculiarities. For those readers of the works of Dickens who are curious to learn something concerning the prototypes of the characters so happily portrayed by his magic pen, the present attempt at their identification may not be without interest.

Charles Dickens, on leaving school in his fifteenth year, obtained employment in the office of Messrs. Ellis and Blackmore, solicitors, of Gray's Inn, and during the period of his engagement in that capacity he availed himself of the numerous opportunities thus afforded him of observing, with a keenness which characterised him throughout life, the various peculiarities of lawyers, their clerks and clients; Mr. Blackmore, the junior partner, afterwards recognised, in the pages of 'Pickwick' and 'Nickleby,' several incidents that took place in the office, and the originals of many of the characters in those works were personally known to him. Dickens's early taste for theatricals was much stimulated by a fellow-clerk named Potter, with whom he chiefly associated. This boon companion afterwards figured under his proper name in one of the 'Sketches by Boz,' entitled "Making a Night of it," where he is described as a clerk in the city, whose income was limited, but whose friendship with his fellow-clerk, Mr.

Robert Smithers, was unbounded. It is undoubtedly the same young gentleman who appears as Jones, in another Sketch called “Misplaced Attachment of Mr. John Dounce,” for he is there referred to as a barrister’s clerk, “capital company — full of anecdote!” and having a *penchant* for “the play.”

Ordnance Terrace, Chatham, where the Dickens family resided (1816-21), is known to have furnished the characters for some of the early Sketches. “The Old Lady” was a Mrs. Newnham, who lived at No. 5; “The Half-pay Captain” was also a near neighbour, whose well-remembered oddity of behaviour was a constant source of amusement to the neighbours. It was principally in ‘Pickwick’ where Dickens most frequently utilised his knowledge of the traits of character which distinguish members of the legal profession and their victims. The thirtieth chapter commences with an elaborate analysis of the various species of the lawyer’s clerk. “There is the Articled Clerk, who has paid a premium, and is an attorney in prospective, who runs a tailor’s bill, receives invitations to parties, knows a family in Gower Street, and another in Tavistock Square, goes out of town every Long Vacation to see his father, who keeps live horses innumerable; and who is, in short, the very aristocrat of clerks.” Then comes the salaried clerk, “out-of-door, or in-door, as the case may be — who devotes the major part of his thirty shillings a week to his personal pleasure and adornment, repairs half-price to the Adelphi at least three times a week, dissipates majestically at the cider cellars afterwards, and is a dirty caricature of the fashion which expired six months ago.” Mr. George Lear, a fellow-clerk with Dickens at Gray’s Inn, informs me that he is convinced he stood for the portrait of the Articled Clerk, and that our friend Potter again appears as the salaried clerk. Mr. Lear entertains a belief that it was Dickens himself who is described as one of “the office lads, in their first surtouts, who feel a befitting contempt for boys at day-schools, club as they go home at night, for saveloys and porter, and think there’s nothing like ‘life.’” My informant is also of opinion that Potter figures still more prominently in ‘Pickwick,’ as the original of that prince of impostors and adventurers, Alfred Jingle, whose personal appearance is faithfully reproduced in the illustration representing Dr. Slammer’s defiance of Jingle. The portrait of the doctor is said to have been taken from Dr. Lamert, a regimental surgeon at Chatham, and an uncle of the novelist.

Many more or less eminent counsel (Serjeant Bumpus among others) have been pointed to as the prototypes of Serjeant Buzfuz; but, in all probability, the Serjeant was of a composite or mixed order of architecture, and burlesqued the foibles of more than one learned gentleman. Mr. Justice Stareleigh was a portrait of Mr. Justice Gazelee.

Mr. Perker, Pickwick's solicitor in the famous breach-of-promise case, was also drawn from life. Mr. Blackmore, in recording his recollections of Dickens's clerkship, says that he believes Perker was intended as a portrait of his partner Mr. Ellis, who certainly had some of Perker's peculiarities, especially that of incessant snuff-taking. There can be, however, no room for dispute as to the prototype of Mr. Pickwick himself, whose outward form has been rendered so familiar by "Phiz." His name was John Foster, a friend of Mr. Chapman (of the firm of Chapman and Hall), and he was described as "a fat old beau who would wear, in spite of ladies' protests, drab tights and black gaiters," and who lived at Richmond. The name of Pickwick may be traced to that of a Bath coach-proprietor, for it is recorded that Dickens, on seeing it painted on the door of a stagecoach which had passed him in the street, rushed into the publishers' office, exclaiming "I've got it. Moses Pickwick, Bath, coachmaster." It is interesting to learn that the same Moses Pickwick was a foundling, left one night in Pickwick Street, and brought up in Corsham workhouse till he was old enough to be employed in the stables where the mail coaches changed horses; then he got to be head ostler, and eventually coach-proprietor. His Christian name was given to him as being a foundling, and his surname from the village where he was left as an infant.*

It is fair to conjecture that Sam Weller's living prototype was a character named Simon Spatterdash (in Samuel Beazley's play called 'The Boarding-house'), a local militiaman, whose chief peculiarity lay in his quaint sayings and out-of-the-way comparisons. The part was taken by a low comedian named Samuel Vale, for whom the farce, a very popular one in the early part of the century, was revived at Drury Lane Theatre in 1822, the year after the removal of the Dickens family to London, Charles being then ten years old. Vale's quaint comparisons, like those so frequently employed by Sam Weller, were lavishly introduced by the actor into his part, and were doubtless the origin of Dickens's queer conceit. Vale had a mellowness of voice with an unctuousness of utterance which gave his drolleries of

expression an unusual value, and he was recognised as an actor of genuine ability.

The suggestion that “Weller” is a form of “Veller,” and the latter is a comparative form of Vale, is not altogether without weight, but so far as the origin of the name is concerned there is some evidence worthy of consideration. The name, by no means an uncommon one at the present day, was familiar to Dickens from his earliest childhood, for the maiden name of his nurse was Mary Weller+. It has also been pointed out that a Thomas Weller once

* A correspondent in *Notes and Queries* (Jan. 8, 1887) says that, curiously enough, there lives at Penarth, near Cardiff, a portly Pickwick, rejoicing in the prenomen Eleazar. Sergeant Eleazar Pickwick is an officer of police in that county, and bears not only a nominal but a personal resemblance to Dickens’s hero as represented in the illustrations.

+ “There lived in Liverpool for many years a gentleman named Samuel Weller, one of whose daughters was the mother of Mrs. Butler (nee Miss Elizabeth Thompson), the well-known painter of “The Roll Call,” etc., and the other married a brother of Charles Dickens. Mr. Weller denied being the prototype of the immortal “Samivel,” as ‘Pickwick’ had been published some years before he met the author.” — *Notes and Queries*, April 2, 1887

kept the Granby Head in High Street, Chatham, and both the inn and its master recall to one’s mind the fictitious Marquis of Granby of which Mrs. Weller (Sam’s stepmother) was director-in-chief. Mrs. Lynn Linton, who once resided at Gad’s Hill Place, says that “old Mr. Weller was a real person, and we know him. He was ‘Old Chumley’ in the flesh, and drove the stage daily from Rochester to London and back again . . . the good-natured, redfaced old fellow.”

In the story of ‘*Oliver Twist*,’* Dickens introduced Mr. Fang, a police magistrate, and described his mode of administering justice. This official, before whom Oliver was brought on a charge of “fogle-hunting,” was “a lean, long-backed, stiff-necked, middle-aged man, with no great quantity of hair: and what he had, growing on the back and sides of his head. His face was stern, and much flashed. If he were really not in the habit of drinking rather more than was exactly good for him, he might have brought an action against his countenance for libel, and have recovered heavy damages.”

These attributes of Mr. Fang were also possessed by his prototype, a Metropolitan magistrate then living, upon whom Dickens desired to inflict a literary castigation. Mr. Forster tells us that the novelist, wanting for the purposes of his story an insolent and harsh police-magistrate, bethought him of an original ready to his hand in one of the London offices; and instead of pursuing his later method of giving a personal appearance that should in some sort render difficult the identification of mental peculiarities, he was only eager to get in the whole man complete upon his page, figure and face as well as manners and mind. He wrote accordingly to Mr. Haines, a gentleman who then had general supervision over the police reports for the daily papers: — “In my next number of ‘Oliver Twist’ I must have a magistrate; and casting about for a magistrate whose harshness and insolence would render him a fit subject to be *shown up*, I have as a necessary consequence stumbled upon Mr. Laing of Hatton Garden celebrity. I know the man’s character perfectly well; but as it would be necessary to describe his personal appearance also, I ought to have seen him, which (fortunately or unfortunately, as the case may be) I have never done. In this dilemma it occurred to me that perhaps

* Oliver Twist is the name of a person that once existed, which is proved by the following entry in the parish register of Shelford, Notts — “1563. The Vth of Januar., Dorothe Twiste, daughter of Oliver Twiste.” — *Notes and Queries*, June 9, 1877.

I might under your auspices be smuggled into the Hatton Garden office for a few moments some morning. If you can farther my object I shall be really very greatly obliged to you!” The opportunity was found; the magistrate was brought up before the novelist; and shortly after, on some fresh outbreak of intolerable temper, the home-secretary found it an easy and popular step to remove Mr. Laing from the bench — a comfort to everybody, saving only the principal person.

In the preface to ‘Nicholas Nickleby,’ the author states that, during the progress of that work, he derived great amusement and satisfaction from the fact that several Yorkshire schoolmasters laid claim to being the original of Squeers’, one of whom, he had reason to believe, had actually entertained thoughts of bringing an action for libel to bear upon the case, whereas another, whom the cap likewise fitted, meditated a journey to London “for

the express purpose of committing an assault and battery upon his traducer"; a third perfectly remembered being waited on by two gentleman, "one of whom held him in conversation, while the other took his likeness; and, although Mr. Squeers has but one eye, and he has two, . . . still he and all his friends and neighbours know at once for whom it is meant, because — the character is so like him." Dickens explains that Mr. Squeers is the representative of a class, and not of an individual; that "where imposture, ignorance, and brutal cupidity are the stock-in-trade of a small body of men, and one is described by these characteristics, all his fellows will recognise something belonging to themselves, and each will have a misgiving that the portrait is his own." It will be remembered that Dickens and his illustrator travelled together to the North of England, for the purpose of collecting material for 'Nickleby,' making the King's Head, at Barnard Castle, their head-quarters. The novelist there made enquiries concerning the state of the neighbouring boarding-schools, and was directed to one known as Bowes Academy, at Greta Bridge. The master, whose name was William Shaw, received Dickens and his companion with extreme *hauteur*, and did not so much as withdraw his eyes from the operation of pen-making during their interview. It is said that "Phiz," watching his opportunity, sketched him on his nail (a branch of the Fine Arts of which I must confess extreme ignorance), *reproducing him so exactly*, that when the more finished representation of him appeared in the book, the school began to decline, and ultimately became deserted. There are many persons still living (who were pupils of William Shaw and well remember his academy at Bowes) who assert that the school in question was believed to have been one of the best of its kind, and that the master was by no means such a wretch as that depicted by the novelist. It was, indeed, warmly affirmed by some old residents in Barnard Castle that the alleged prototype of Squeers was, in private life at least, an excellent and amiable man, and believing the imputation to be levelled at himself (instead of, as was really the case, at the bad system which had long prevailed in that part of the country), his sensitiveness caused him to become an object of ridicule to his neighbours, and this, together with the subsequent loss of his pupils, utterly broke his spirit.

Further evidence confirming this account may be found in the autobiography of Mr. H. F. Lloyd, the well-known Glasgow comedian. He was a pupil of William Shaw, whom he represents as " a most worthy and

kind-hearted, if somewhat peculiar, gentleman. . . I can see him now as plainly as I did then, and can testify to the truth of the *outward* presentment of the man as described by Dickens, and depicted by his artist in the pages of his novel — allowing, of course, for both being greatly exaggerated. A sharp, thin, upright little man, with a slight scale covering the pupil of one of his eyes. Yes. There he stands, with his Wellington boots and short black trousers, not originally cut too short, but from a habit he had of sitting with one knee over the other, and the trousers being tight, they would get ‘ruck’d’ half-way up the boots. Then, the clean white vest, swallow-tailed black coat, white neck-tie, silvermounted spectacles, close-cut iron-grey hair, high-crowned hat worn slightly at the back of his head, and there you have the man.” Mr. Lloyd writes in almost glowing terms of the excellence of the school, its situation and internal arrangements; and as for Mr. Shaw’s lifting his hand to a boy, save in the way of kindness, such a thing was almost unknown! He would walk round the school-room, look over his pupils while writing, and here and there pat a boy on the head, making encouraging remarks the while. He was an adept on the flute, and would sometimes sit by the bedside of a sick boy for an hour or two together to amuse him. If these statements are true (and the evidence is strong in that direction), such was the man that Dickens, with the best intentions possible, pilloried as Squeers, and caused him to suffer for the misdeeds of his neighbours. It must be admitted, with feelings of regret, that both the novelist and the artist committed the error of too faithfully reproducing, by pen and pencil, the personal peculiarities of William Shaw, and in transferring him to another school then existing in the neighbourhood, which was similar to that described in the story, and was presided over by a genuine Squeers. There is, however, a rather curious coincidence in connection with this subject. In 1823, sixteen years before the publication of ‘Nickleby,’ two remarkable trials took place, bearing on the cruelties practised in the cheap boarding-schools of Yorkshire. The name and address of the defendant in both cases were identical with those of the prototype of Squeers, and the facts then made public strongly resembled the condition of things at Dotheboys Hall. It is more than probable that Dickens’s attention had been drawn to these particular cases, and that he subsequently utilised those facts as leading features in his story; but whether the defendant was in any way related to the unfortunate man whom “Phiz” sketched “not wisely, but too well,” there is no evidence to show.

Turning to a more genial subject, there is the novelist's authority for stating that the portraits of those most exceptional personages, the Brothers Cheeryble, were drawn from life; that their noble characteristics were not creations of his brain, but were absolutely founded on fact. Their prototypes were the Brothers Grant (Daniel and William), merchants and manufacturers, of Ramsbottom and Manchester, whose acquaintance Dickens made during his visit to that neighbourhood in 1838. The two brothers were born at Elchies, Morayshire, where their father, William Grant, was a small fanner, who, being ruined by a flood, afterwards became a cattle-drover. Subsequently he commenced business in a very small way in Manchester, and prospered, when in 1790 the family was located in a retail shop in the market-place, Bury, where they sold linen, prints, small-wares, etc.; the sons, at that time, being employed at some printworks in the neighbourhood. The Grants, through their perseverance and courtesy, rose so rapidly, that on the retirement of the first Sir Robert Peel, and by his special help and favour, they became, in 1806, the owners of the extensive works at Ramsbottom where they carried on the business of logwood grinding, calico printing, and dyeing. Within ten years the firm of William Grant and Brothers had become one of the most famous in Lancashire. Like the Brothers Cheeryble they laboured to help every good work, both privately and publicly, and were among the founders of the Royal Institution. Of private benefits conferred may be mentioned the encouragement given by direct commissions to Nasmyth, the painter, and the practical help accorded to his son, the eminent engineer. The Brothers Grant died many years ago, but in the district where they resided, their names are still remembered and dearly cherished.*

Mrs. Ewebank, whose husband kept the King's Head, at Barnard Castle (where the novelist stayed), knew the original of John Browdie, the good-natured Yorkshireman, quite well — his real name

* For many of these particulars I am indebted to Mr. Langton's paper on "The ' Brothers Cheeryble' and the 'Grant Brothers,'" published in the *Manchester Quarterly*. Jan., 1886.

was John F —, of Broadiswood, a farmer, and lie married a Miss Dent, a cousin of Miss Shaw.

It is generally supposed that Mrs. Nickleby is a portrait of Mrs. John Dickens, the novelist's mother. A writer says that Mrs. Dickens had been very nice-looking in her youth. She was a little woman, thoroughly good-natured, easy-going, and companionable, and the likeness between her and Mrs. Nickleby is simply the exaggeration of some slight peculiarities. "She possessed an extraordinary sense of the ludicrous, and her power of imitation was something quite astonishing. On entering a room, she almost unconsciously took an inventory of its contents; and if anything happened to strike her as out of place or ridiculous, she would afterwards describe it in the quaintest possible manner. In like manner she noted the personal peculiarities of her friends and acquaintances. She had also a fine vein of pathos, and could bring tears to the eye³ of listeners when narrating some sad event."

As the original of Miss La Creevy, the good-natured little miniature-painter, I would suggest Miss Rose Emma Drummond, who practised the same genteel profession at the time 'Nickleby' was written. This suggestion carries some weight on the discovery of the interesting fact that, in 1835 (about three years prior to the commencement of the novel), Dickens sat to Miss Drummond for his portrait on ivory, which was executed as an "engagement" present for Miss Catherine Hogarth, afterwards Mrs. Charles Dickens.*

Another character in 'Nickleby,' concerning whose prototype a clue is afforded, is Newman Noggs, the confidential clerk and factotum of Mr. Ralph Nickleby, whom he served "for rather less than the usual wages of a boy of thirteen." His name, as well as personality, was suggested by that of Newman Knott, an impoverished gentleman who went regularly to the offices of Messrs. Ellis and Blackmore during the period of Dickens's clerkship there, for the purpose of receiving the sum of seven shillings weekly, given, it is believed, by a friend at Chichester who had known him in his prosperity. Knott had previously held a fairly good position as a tenant-farmer in Sussex, but his expensive tastes ruined him. His eccentricities and personal history were a source of great amusement to the clerks, and the tricks and manoeuvres he resorted to in endeavouring to forestall the weekly allowance highly delighted Dickens, who doubtless availed himself of the hints thus afforded him in the portrayal of Newman Noggs.

During the time that Dickens and "Phiz" were investigating the

* The portrait, the first for which the novelist gave sittings, is now in the possession of his younger daughter.

subject of the Yorkshire schools, they lodged at the principal hotel in Barnard Castle, in the county of Durham, and immediately opposite the hotel was a watchmaker's shop, easily seen by the novelist from his sitting-room window. Over the shop-front was conspicuously placed the name of "Humphreys, Clockmaker," which fixed itself so indelibly on the author's mind, that he gave it to the clockmaker in his next story, and wrote to tell "Master Humphreys " what he had done, sending him, at the same time, a copy of 'Nicholas Nickleby.' As for the original of the famous clock itself, we learn that its manufacture was commenced in 1828 by William Humphreys, son of Thomas Humphreys, the then proprietor of the shop. On its completion the following year it was placed in a niche on the right-hand side of the glass shop-door, where Dickens first saw it, and where in passing he frequently consulted it for the correct time, thus becoming acquainted with the owner and his son, Master Humphreys. The shop was a veritable "curiosity shop," containing, as it did, such a miscellaneous collection of toys, clocks, philosophic instruments, and relics innumerable.*

One of the most amusing characters in the ' Old Curiosity Shop' is that of the small slipshod girl who wore "a dirty coarse apron and bib, which left nothing of her visible but her face and feet," and who was called " The Marchioness " by that choice spirit, Mr. Richard Swiveller, in order " to make it seem more real and pleasant." The novelist took his first impression of this domestic young person from a maid-of-all-work possessed by the Dickens family when living in Bayham Street, Camden Town. She was an orphan from the Chatham workhouse, and continued to wait upon her employers during their incarceration in the Marshalsea. Like young Charles Dickens, she had a lodging in the neighbourhood of the prison, that she might be early on the scene of her duties; and when Charles met her, as he would do occasionally, in his lounging-place by London Bridge, he would occupy the time before the gates opened by telling her most astonishing fictions about the wharves and the tower. "But I hope I believed them myself," he would say.

The room which young Dickens then occupied was a back-attic in the house of an insolvent-court agent, in Lant Street, Boro', where Bob Sawyer

lodged many years afterwards. His landlord was “a

* The clock, which is still in existence, is an interesting and scientifically constructed piece of mechanism, mounted in an ornamented wooden case of a much earlier period. It was removed in 1838 to Hartlepool, by William Humphreys, who commenced business there on his own account, his father making a new timepiece to take its place. Both clocks were shown in excellent condition in the Newcastle Jubilee Exhibition. — *Monthly Chronicle of North Country Lore and Legend*, Nov., 1887.

fat, good-natured, kind old gentleman. He was lame, and had a quiet old wife; and he had a very innocent grown-up son, who was lame too.” The elderly couple and their only son were dead when these particulars were related by Dickens to his biographer, who informs us that they live still very pleasantly, in another form, as the Garland family in the ‘Old Curiosity Shop.’ Turning to a minor character in the story, it is said that the first study for the poet of Mrs. Jarley’s waxwork was made from one of the rhymesters regularly employed by Robert Warren, the blacking manufacturer, whom Dickens remembered so well.

A personage who figures prominently in ‘Barnaby Rudge’ is Lord George Gordon, the veritable Lord George who led the Riots of 1780. He was born in 1752, and was the second son of Cosmo, third Duke of Gordon. He entered the Navy when a boy, in due time becoming a lieutenant, and soon afterwards conceived the project of entering Parliament, where he secured a seat. At this time he is described as being possessed of good looks and a cunning address, and to have had the art of making himself popular with all classes. Before long he began to disunite himself from both parties of the State, proclaiming himself to be “a friend of the people,” and continually bringing in matters concerning religion and the dangers of Popery. He instituted public meetings in support of the Protestant interest, declaring that the King was a Papist at heart and had violated the Coronation Oath. From that time the most disorderly scenes took place in the public thoroughfares, culminating in serious riots, the cry of “No Popery” being the only guarantee of security from violence at the hands of the mob. Lord George was arrested and charged with high treason, but was acquitted, much to the delight of his supporters. He was again arrested for treasonable acts, found guilty, and sentenced to be imprisoned in Newgate

for three years. There he was struck down by gaol fever; in a few days he became delirious, muttering sentences by which he had rallied round him his fanatical and vagabond followers. With a last effort he raised himself in his bed, and half-chanting the opening words of a republican song, he expired.* Such is an outline of the career of Lord George Gordon, and readers of 'Barnaby Rudge' will see how close a resemblance it bears to the facts there related by the novelist.

In describing the personality of the aristocratic Mr. John Chester (afterwards Sir John), Dickens undoubtedly had the celebrated Lord Chesterfield in his mind. Sir John is "soft-spoken, delicately made, precise, and elegant;" he preserves a calm and placid smile, is

* Vide Temple Bar, March, 1887.

a smooth man of the world, his speech is as elegant and as exactly ordered as his dress. Such attributes as these also characterised the alleged original, a fact which, together with the marked resemblance between their names, strengthens the supposition that Sir John is a copy of his Lordship.

The original of Grip the Raven, as every one knows, was in Dickens's possession for a considerable time, and its death was a domestic calamity. The famous bird was replaced by another, older, and larger Grip, so that 'Barnaby' should have the fruit of continual study of the habits of ravens, but he also met with an untimely end. "The first," says Dickens, "was in the bloom of his youth, when he was discovered in a modest retirement in London, by a friend of mine, and given to me. . . . He slept in a stable, generally on horseback," and "was rapidly rising in acquirements and virtues, when, in an evil hour, his stable was newly painted. He observed the workmen closely, saw that they were careful of the paint, and immediately burned to possess it. On their going to dinner, he ate up all they had left behind, consisting of a pound or two of white lead; and this youthful indiscretion terminated in death. While I was yet unconsolable for his loss, another friend of mine in Yorkshire discovered an older and more gifted raven at a village public-house, which he prevailed upon the landlord to part with for a consideration, and sent up to me." After describing the merits and eccentricities of this bird, Dickens wrote: "It may have been that he was too bright a genius to live long, or it may have been that he took some pernicious substance into his bill, and thence into his maw, which is

not improbable, seeing that he new-pointed the greater part of the garden-wall by digging out the mortar, broke countless squares of glass by scraping away the putty all round the frames, and tore up and swallowed, in splinters, the greater part of a wooden staircase of six steps and a landing, but after some three years he too was taken ill, and died before the kitchen fire. He kept his eye to the last upon the meat as it roasted, and suddenly turned over on his back with a sepulchral cry of ‘Cuckoo!’“ The remains of Grip the First were stuffed and sent home in a glass case, by way of ornament to his master’s study, and some years afterwards were sold by public auction for the fancy price of £120.

In the preface to an early edition of ‘Martin Chuzzlewit’ Dickens speaks of Mrs. Gamp as a fair representation, at the time the book was published, of the hired attendant on the poor in sickness: but, as Mr. Forster says, he might have added that the rich were no better off, for Mrs. Gamp’s original was in reality a person hired by a most distinguished friend of his own, a lady, to take charge of an invalid very dear to her; and the common habit of this nurse in the sick room, among other Gampish peculiarities, was to rub her nose along the top of the tall fender. In spite of Mrs. Gamp’s propensity for strong drink and other human weaknesses, we cannot resist the humorous side of her character, nor deny that she is a general favourite.

It has already been said that Dickens, when a mere lad, lodged near the Marshalsea during his father’s incarceration there. Before he lived with the originals of the Garland family, he was handed over to a reduced old lady long known to his parents, a Mrs. Roylance, who took children in to board, and had done so at Brighton. With a few alterations and embellishments, this lady unconsciously sat for Mrs. Pipchin in ‘Dombey and Son,’ when she took in young Charles Dickens. The well-known illustration, representing Mrs. Pipchin and Paul at the fire, greatly distressed the author because “Phiz” failed to realise the scene as the former had conceived it. “He felt the disappointment more keenly, because the conception of the grim old boarding-house keeper had taken back his thoughts to the miseries of his own child life, and made her, as her prototype in verity was, a part of the terrible reality.” In his paper of notes for the number in which she appears are the various names, beginning with that of her real prototype, out of which, by a process of evolution, the name selected came to him at last — “Mrs. Roylance, Mrs. Wrychin, Mrs. Tipchin, Mrs. Alchin, Mrs. Somching, Mrs. Pipchin.” In a letter to Mr. Forster he wrote — “I hope you

will like Mrs. Pipchin's establishment. It is from the life, and I was there — I don't suppose I was eight years old; but I remember it all as well, and certainly understood it as well, as I do now. . . ." In the picture referred to, Paul presents a striking contrast to the grim old harridan at whose face he looks with an expression half anxious and half timid, "studying every line and wrinkle of her countenance, and peering at the hard grey eye. . . . The good old lady might have been a witch and Paul and the cat her two familiars, as they all sat by the fire together."

It is perhaps not generally known that the original of Paul Dombey was a nephew of Dickens. He was the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Burnett (Fanny Dickens), and Master Harry Burnett is described, by one who knew the family well, as "a singular child, meditative and quaint in a remarkable degree. He was the original, as Dickens told his sister, of little 'Paul Dombey.' Harry had been taken to Brighton, as 'little Paul' is represented to have been, and had there, for hours lying on the beach with his books, given utterance to thoughts quite as remarkable for a child as those which are put into the lips of Paul Dombey. . . . The child seemed never tired of reading the Bible and his hymns, and other good books suited to his age: and the bright little fellow was always happy."* There can be no doubt that Dickens, in his pathetic description of Paul's experience of life, recorded some of his own recollections of the days when he was under the protection of that stern guardian, Mrs. Roylance.

The prototype of Mr. Dombey was supposed by some to be Mr. Thomas Chapman, the Chairman of Lloyd's in 1844, a gentleman with whom Dickens held much friendly intercourse; but Mr. Forster entirely refutes the supposition, considering that "few things more absurd or unfounded have been invented, even of Dickens, than that he found any part of the original of Mr. Dombey in the nature, the appearance, or the manners of this estimable gentleman." The novelist expressed great anxiety concerning "Phiz's" "delineation of Dombey, and fearing something in the nature of a caricature of his merchant-hero, he was induced to indicate by a living person the type of a city-gentleman he would have had the artist select. His urgent request that the artist should "get a glimpse of A., for he is the very Dombey," was often repeated, but was not to be complied with, and recourse was had to a series of heads, actual and fanciful, sketched on a sheet of paper by "Phiz," from which a selection was made. Beyond this

there is no further evidence as to the personality of the original of the purse-proud Dombey.

Mr. Forster had himself some knowledge of that “blue-stocking,” Miss Cornelia, the gifted daughter of Paul’s first schoolmaster, Dr. Blimber. The little wooden midshipman is such an interesting feature in ‘Dombey and Son’ that he must not be forgotten. “With his quadrant at his round black knob of an eye, and its figure in the old attitude of indomitable alacrity,” he is constantly intent on his discoveries. The present tense is here used advisedly, for the famous sign still exists. When the story was written he occupied his post of observation in Leadenhall Street, over a quaint old-fashioned shop first established in 1773 by Mr. William Heather as a “sea-chart, map, and mathematical instrument warehouse.” Mr. Heather was succeeded by Messrs. Norie and Wilson, who carried on

- *Memories of the Past. Records of Ministerial Life.* By James Griffin (1883). In the early part of Mr. Griffin’s ministry at Manchester, he made the acquaintance of two “genteel-looking people” who regularly attended the chapel. They were Mr. and Mrs. Burnett, and in the course of conversation the latter intimated that she was the sister of Charles Dickens, then in the height of his popularity. Her husband had passed many years of his life on the operatic stage, and when a pupil at the Royal Academy of Music, he met Miss Fanny Dickens, who was also a pupil at the same Institution, and who afterwards became his wife. His profession as a public vocalist proving uncongenial he quitted the stage, and, with his wife, taught music and singing. Their son Harry, like little Paul, died in his early youth.

the business in Dombey’s time; but some six years ago the house and shop were demolished, and the business transferred to the Minories, where the little midshipman may still be seen studying the heavens as of yore.

Dickens considered ‘David Copperfield’ as the best of his books, and the reason for his preference may be looked for in the fact that it is to a great extent autobiographical. The author has himself declared that many of the incidents in David’s career are identical with those experienced by himself, so that, up to a certain point, he may be considered as the prototype of the hero of the story. To a certain extent, also, Mr. Micawber was a portrait of the novelist’s father, who, like him, was remarkable for rhetorical exuberance, a peculiarity which found frequent and always agreeable

expression in many of the novelist's letters, written long before 'Copperfield' was thought of. "No one," says his biographer, "could know the elder Dickens without secretly liking him the better for these flourishes of speech, which adapted themselves so readily to his gloom as well as to his cheerfulness, that it was difficult not to fancy they had helped him considerably in both, and had rendered more tolerable to him, if also more possible, the shade and sunshine of his chequered life. . . It delighted Dickens to remember that it was of one of his connections his father wrote a celebrated sentence: 'And I must express my tendency to believe that his longevity is (to say the least of it) extremely problematical.'" There also existed in the personal appearance of Micawber a resemblance to that of his prototype. A friend and neighbour of Mr. John Dickens describes him as "a chatty, pleasant companion, possessing a varied fund of anecdote, and a genuine vein of humour. He was a well-built man, rather stout, of very active habits, a little pompous, and very proud (as well he might be) of his talented son. He dressed well, and wore a goodly bunch of seals suspended across his waistcoat from his watch-chain."

A writer says that Dickens also availed himself of certain peculiarities of Thomas Powell, "a so-called 'literary man,'" of America, many of whose idiosyncrasies were set forth in a story published in the 'Boston Index' some years ago. Like Micawber, Powell had a trick of becoming very confidential on small or no provocation. He also had a large family, and a perfect mania for writing letters, even to persons in the same room — other points of resemblance to Mr. Dickens's Micawber."

Dora Spenlow, David Copperfield's "child-wife," was drawn from a living person, for Dickens, too, had his Dora in 1829, who, like David's *fiancée*, "was striven for as the only thing to be attained, and even more unattainable, for neither did he succeed, nor happily did she die; but the one idol, like the other, supplying a motive to exertion for the time, and otherwise opening out to the idolator, both in fact and fiction, a highly unsubstantial, happy, foolish time." A letter from Dickens to his biographer confirms the statement that the Dora in fiction is founded on a Dora in fact. The description of Flora, in 'Little Dorrit,' was derived from the same original

The prototype of Miss Dartle may also be partly traced. In the -story, that lady is described as possessing "a slight, short figure, dark, and not agreeable to look at, but with some appearance of good looks too . . . she

had black hair, and eager black eyes, and was thin, and had a scar upon her lip.” We have Mr. Forster’s authority for stating that it was from one of Dickens’s lady friends, very familiar to him indeed, but whose name is not divulged, that he copied Miss Dartle’s peculiarity “of never saying anything outright, but hinting it merely, and making more of it that way.”

Of the original of Miss Mowcher something interesting may be told. Headers of ‘Copperfield’ will remember her as “a pousy dwarf, of about forty or forty-five, with a very large head and face, a pair of roguish grey eyes, and such extremely little arms. . . . Her chin, which is what is called a double chin, was so fat that it entirely swallowed up the strings of her bonnet, bow and all. Throat she had none; waist she had none; legs she had none, worth mentioning; for though she was more than full-sized down to where her waist would have been, if she had any, and though she terminated, as human beings generally do, in a pair of feet, she was so short that she stood at a common-sized chair as at a table.” Dickens, thinking that a grotesque little oddity among his acquaintance would be safe from recognition, had given way to the temptation of copying too closely the peculiarities of her face and figure. Although in Miss Mowcher’s ‘Ain’t I volatile’ his friends had quite correctly recognised the favourite expression of a different person, and other traits were not hers at all, yet he was shocked and grieved to discover that he had given pain to a person who saw in Miss Mowcher a strong resemblance to herself, and speedily remedied, as far as was practicable, the injury he had unintentionally inflicted by making certain alterations in the subsequent portrayal of the character.

In Harold Skimpole of ‘Bleak House’ Dickens deeply injured the susceptibilities of his friend Leigh Hunt, whose eccentricities he had unmistakably exaggerated in connecting them with Skimpole. Although the novelist felt that it was wrong in being thus tempted to utilise the power he possessed of reproducing the peculiarities of his friends and their natural traits of character, he apparently found it irresistible. Harold Skimpole’s likeness to that of his prototype was so easily recognised that it led to much remark; unfortunately, a part in the plot was assigned to him which no fascinating foibles or gaieties of speech could redeem from contempt. The story is a long one, and so well told by others that a repetition of it is unnecessary. Suffice it to say that Dickens’s intention was not an unkind one. He erred from thoughtlessness only, and often expressed his regret that he had made the character speak too much like his old friend. “Perhaps,”

suggests Mr. Forster, “the only person acquainted with the original who failed to recognise the copy was the original himself (a common case); but good-natured friends in time told Hunt everything, and painful explanations followed. . . I yet well remember with what eager earnestness ... he strove to set Hunt up again in his own esteem.” He endeavoured partly to make amends by inviting and persuading Leigh Hunt’s eldest son to write an essay, setting his father in a just light, for ‘ All the Year Round.’ * But the harm was done, and could not be undone, although the novelist made all the reparation in his power in order to bring about that most desirable result.

For the character of Lawrence Boythorne he was similarly indebted to another friend, Walter Savage Landor. Boythorne forms a strong and not unpleasing contrast to Skimpole, so that the consequences arising from the portrayal were not so disastrous as in the case of Leigh Hunt; in fact, no objection was made, as ludicrous traits were employed to enrich without impairing an attractive person in the tale.

A striking pamphlet on the subject of Chancery abuses and delays afforded Dickens a valuable hint in his treatment of the great Chancery suit, in ‘ Bleak House,’ of Jarndyce v. Jarndyce. The case of Gridley (said the author, in his preface to the story) was in no essential altered from one of actual occurrence, in which, as in Jarndyce v. Jarndyce, costs were incurred to an enormous amount. He also referred to another well-known suit in Chancery, not then decided, which was commenced before the close of the last century, and in which a still more considerable sum had already been swallowed up in costs. It has been said that a certain Chancery suit now proceeding was that from which the Jarndyce case originated. The suit is that of Jennings v. Jennings, which also commenced before the close of the last century, and it arose from the intestacy of Mr. Jennings, the original owner of the property in dispute. He was a Suffolk man, who, when staying in London, became so seriously ill that he felt it desirable to complete his will, which only required his signature to make it valid; but his spectacles, which were specially needed for the purpose, had been accidentally left at his country house, whither a

* The article drily appeared, under the title “A Man of Letters of the Last Generation,” and was considered by Dickens, who was deeply impressed by its calm tenderness of discrimination, to be the noblest piece of filial criticism he had ever read.

messenger was speedily despatched. Unfortunately, before his return the testator breathed his last, and the document was therefore valueless. The property then went to the next of kin, when the unexpected arrival on the scene of one who claimed that position (and the property appertaining thereto) caused a dispute as to the rightful heir; the property fell into Chancery, and, owing to the fact that the claimants (now numbering about four hundred) have not yet succeeded in identifying the real successor, the result is likely to be as unsatisfactory as that attending *Jarndyce v. Jarndyce*.

One of the suitors in that great case was “a little mad woman in a squeezed bonnet, who is always in court, from its sitting to its rising, and always expecting some incomprehensible judgment to be given in her favour. . . She carries some small letters in her reticule which she calls her documents; principally consisting of paper matches and dry lavender.” The name of the “Little Old Lady” was Flite, and her portrait was taken from life. One who knew her well informs me that she was always hovering in or about the Chancery Courts, generally in court, and that she was the victim of some prolonged Chancery suit which had turned her head.

Another character in ‘Bleak House’ can be identified. The portrait of that expert detective, Inspector Bucket, was taken from the late Mr. Field, Chief of Detective Police, who frequently had the honour of accompanying Dickens during his exploration of the haunts of crime, vice, and misery in the great Metropolis, where he found so much material for his famous stories.

We are told that the first notion of the ‘Tale of Two Cities’ occurred to the author while acting with his friends and his children in Mr. Wilkie Collins’s drama of ‘The Frozen Deep,’ and there can be no doubt that the idea was still further promoted by a perusal of Carlyle’s ‘French Revolution,’ written many years previously. The principal personage in Mr. Collins’s play, named Richard Wardour, is remarkable for extreme self-denial and other good qualities, the dramatic nature of which so struck Dickens that he availed himself of that conception of the character by reproducing the same qualities in the person of Sydney Carton, the hero of the story. Richard Wardour may therefore be considered as the original form of Sydney Carton.

Mr. Edmund Yates is, I believe, responsible for the statement that the character of Mr. Stryver, Sydney Carton’s great ally, was drawn from Mr.

Edwin James, a well-known legal functionary some thirty years ago. Mr. Yates says: "One day I took Dickens — who had never seen Edwin James — to one of these consultations. James laid himself out to be specially agreeable; Dickens was quietly observant. About four months after appeared the early numbers of 'A Tale of Two Cities,' in which a prominent part was played by Mr. Stryver. After reading the description, I said to Dickens: 'Stryver is a good likeness!' He smiled. 'Not bad, I think,' he said, 4 especially after only one sitting!"

The Christmas stories published with 'Household Words,' and 'All the Year Round,' were the joint product of several well-known writers, each preparing one or two chapters, which in reality form a series of distinct tales. The initial chapter of 'The Haunted House' was from Dickens's pen, and he there alludes to "Mr. Undery, my friend and solicitor . . . who plays whist better than the whole Law List, from the red cover at the beginning to the red cover at the end." The description of Mr. Undery is taken from the late Mr. Fred Ouvry, who was actually the novelist's friend and solicitor. In another Christmas Number, entitled 'Tom Tiddler's Ground,' there are three chapters by Dickens, in which is introduced a remarkable personage, Mr. Mopes, a hermit, who, "by suffering everything about him to go to ruin, and by dressing himself in a blanket and skewer, and by steeping himself in soot and grease and other nastiness, had acquired great renown in all that country side. . . . He was represented as being all the ages between five-and-twenty and sixty, and as having been a hermit seven years, twelve, twenty, thirty — though twenty, on the whole, appeared the favourite term." Mr. Mopes is no illusion or creation of the fancy. He really lived, moved, and had his being, much in the manner as described. His abode in the county of Hertford pretty closely resembled the rotting, tumble-down dwelling-place so picturesquely described in 'Tom Tiddler's Ground.' His real name was James Lucas, and the spot where he resided is about two miles from Stevenage, a station on the Great Northern Railway. The hermit was so well known, that any one in the neighbourhood could direct a stranger to the habitation of "Mad Lucas," as people familiarly called him. One of his visitors describes him as "distinctly dirty, comprehensively and permanently so, a fact that was by no means difficult to ascertain, for if on other days the hermit was so far extravagant in dress as to indulge himself in a blanket and skewer, he afterwards — from economical motives, perhaps — dispensed with the skewer and retained the blanket alone, which

he continually adjusted and readjusted that it might the more effectually fulfil the requirements of a fastidious public.”

James Lucas died nearly fourteen years ago, and shortly after that event a pamphlet was published giving the history of the hermit of Hertfordshire, from which we learn some interesting particulars concerning that eccentric personage. He was descended from an ancient and wealthy Irish family; his father was a man of fortune and had estates in various parts of England, besides owning large sugar plantations in the West Indies. His son, James, was born in London about the year 1811. The family residence is known as Elmwood House, situated at Redcoat's Green, midway between Hitchin and Stevenage. James Lucas, when he was eight or ten years of age, first went to reside there with his parents, and those who remember him at that time describe him as a strange child, the germs of his subsequent eccentricities being very apparent. As time advanced he allowed his hair to grow long, and rode on horseback, with or without a saddle, at all hours of the day and night. He was, however, intellectually most acute, well versed in Shakespeare, and in the standard works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, could compose and recite poetry, and was fond of athletics. The determining cause of that life of wretchedness and seclusion which he led for a quarter of a century was, without doubt, the death of his mother, when his eccentricity developed into madness. He was passionately fond of his mother, was intensely grieved at her death, and absolutely refused to allow her body to be interred, watching it night and day for thirteen weeks, immovable and unconsolable. The funeral at length took place, when he commenced to isolate himself from the world, closed up all the rooms in the house, and lived, as we have seen, in a state of filth and semi-starvation, in such manner passing the remainder of his days and becoming an object of interest to numerous visitors, with whom he would converse through the bars of a window. Mr. Forster, who was a Lunacy Commissioner, examined him to see if he could find any trace of insanity, and, far from discovering any aberration of mind, he found the hermit to be a man of most acute intellect. He was discovered in an apoplectic fit one morning in April, 1874, and death took place a few days later. Dickens, when staying with his friend Lord Lyttou at Knebworth, was driven over to see the original of Mr. Mopes, but Lucas said that the novelist never visited him. A copy of 'Tom Tiddler's Ground,' given him by a friend, bore unmistakable signs of having been carefully perused by the hero himself, who pronounced the

publication to be neither more nor less than one of the many attempts to injure and annoy him; he believed that an enemy, understood to be a relative, had instigated Dickens, and probably paid him well to make up the story, which, he said, was false from beginning to end, and contained many inaccuracies.

The story of 'Hunted Down' was specially written for the 'New York Ledger.' Dickens had seized upon the career of Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, the poisoner, as a foundation for his fiction, where his name appears as Mr. Julius Slinkton, of the Middle Temple. The actual facts incidental to the career of T. G. Wainwright are even more extraordinary than those related in the narrative, and it is worthy of remark that Lord Lytton, in his powerful novel, 'Lucretia,' also availed himself of the record of the villainy of the same notorious criminal.

After the completion of the first three numbers of 'Our Mutual Friend,' the illustrator of that work, Mr. Marcus Stone, told Dickens of an extraordinary trade he had discovered, through one of his painting requirements. It was the establishment of Mr. Venus, preserver of animals and birds, and articulator of human bones; the same establishment as that so minutely described by Mr. Venus himself. "My working bench. My young man's bench. A Vice. Tools. Bones, various. Skulls, various. Preserved Indian baby. African ditto. Bottled preparations, various. Everything within reach of your hand, in good preservation. The mouldy ones a-top. What's in those hampers over there again, I don't quite remember. Say, human various. Cats. Articulated English baby. Dogs. Ducks. Glass eyes, various. Mummied bird. Dried cuticle, various. Oh, dear me! That's the general panoramic view." Mr. Percy Fitzgerald has identified the shop as No. 42, St. Andrew Street, near "The Dials," which he describes as a shop whose window is filled with as disagreeable a category of objects as was found in the establishment of the apothecary in 'Romeo and Juliet' — skulls, jaw and thigh bones, skeletons of monkeys, stuffed birds, horns of all kinds, prepared skins, and everything unpleasant in the anatomical line. The proprietor of this miscellaneous stock-in-trade was, of course, the prototype of Mr. Venus. "This original character," writes Mr. Fitzgerald, "excited much attention; and a friend of the great writer, as well as of the present chronicler, passing through this street was irresistibly attracted by this shop and its contents — kept by one J. Willis. When he next saw Mr. Dickens, he said, 'I am convinced I have found the original of "Venus"; on which said

Mr. Dickens,' You are right!'“ Any one who then visited the place could recognise the dingy, gloomy interior, the articulated skeleton in the corner, the genial air of thick grime and dust; but now the place is changed, — Mr. Venus has departed, and his successor deals in secondhand clothing for ladies.

In the unfinished story of 'Edwin Drood,' considered by Longfellow as one of the novelist's most beautiful works, there are given but very slight indications of the prototypes of the characters. The picture of the opium-eater and her den was drawn from nature, the former being thus described by Mr. Fields, who accompanied the novelist to the spot: — "We found a braggart old woman blowing at a kind of pipe made of an old ink-bottle; and the words which Dickens puts into the mouth of this wretched creature in 'Edwin Drood,' we heard her croon as we leaned over the tattered bed in which she was lying."

A visitor, on being shown over Rochester Cathedral a few years ago, by chance asked the gossiping old verger whether Dickens had not got him for one of the characters in his last novel. Said he, "The question is whether I am not Tope." It is suggested that some of the better qualities and peculiarities of Durdles may be recognised in Mr. John Brooker, of Higham. The origin of some of the names may be traced to Rochester and neighbourhood, for that of Jasper is a common one in the old city, and Drood is an adaptation of Trood, the cognomen of the late landlord of the Sir John Falstaff at Gad's-hill.

Note. — Since this article was written, an item of Dickensian interest was elicited by an amusing digression in an action for damages recently heard in the High Court of Justice before Baa-on Huddleston. This was nothing less than the identification of the origin of the name of Pickwick. Mr. Henry Fielding Dickens, a son of the novelist, was retained as counsel for the defence, and in the course of the trial he intimated that he meant to call as a witness a Mr. Pickwick.

Baron Huddleston: "Pickwick is a very appropriate witness to be called by Dickens" (laughter). Mr. Dickens: "I fully believe that the sole reason why I was instructed in this case was that I might call Mr. Pickwick" (laughter). "And it may interest your Lordship to learn that the witness is a descendant — the grandnephew I believe — of Mr. Moses Pickwick, who kept a coach at Bath, and that I have every reason to believe that it was

from this Moses Pickwick that the name of the immortal Pickwick was taken. I daresay your Lordship will remember that that very eccentric and faithful follower of Mr. Pickwick — Sam Weller — seeing the name outside the coach, was indignant, because he thought it was a personal reflection upon his employer, and he was accordingly anxious to inflict condign punishment upon the offender.”

Mr. Dickens, having apologised for the digression, and admitted that the temptation was too strong for him, resumed the conduct of the case.

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THE FRIENDSHIP OF CHARLES DICKENS AND WASHINGTON IRVING



By T. Edgar Pemberton



CHARLES DICKENS IN 1842, THE YEAR OF HIS FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA AND HIS
MEETING WITH WASHINGTON IRVING.

From a pencil drawing by R. J. Lant.

THE PERSONAL AND LITERARY ASSOCIATION OF THE GREAT AMERICAN WRITER AND THE FAMOUS ENGLISH NOVELIST-DICKENS' OWN TESTIMONY TO IRVING'S INFLUENCE UPON HIS EARLIER WORK.

In the lives of eminent literary men genius there is nothing more interesting to note than the admiration one great genius will show for the work of another equally gifted author.

This was never better exemplified than by Washington Irving and Charles Dickens. The fact is perhaps all the more remarkable because in some ways they worked in the same grooves, and the young English writer was manifestly indebted, at the outset of his career, to the already famous American litterateur. The "Sketches by Boz" were probably suggested by the "Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon," and it seems certain that unless "Old Christmas" and "Bracebridge Hall" had been written the "Pickwick Papers" would never have been embellished with those glorious merrymakings which took place at Manor Farm, Dingley Dell.

In small-minded men such things might occasion irritation, but the real giants of the pen, having appreciated the work of a coming writer, can afford to be generous, and love to applaud it. Dickens knew his Washington Irving well, and had devoured the inimitable "Sketch Book" when he was a boy of fourteen, with results eminently beneficial to himself and his countless readers. But for this we might not have had the delightful journey on the stage coach to Muggleton, have quaffed a second bowl of the enlivening wassail, have met the Dingley Dell parson with his quaint stories, or have been thrilled with the episode at the rook-shooting, when Mr. Winkle, instead of shooting at the pigeon and killing the crow, shot at the crow and wounded the pigeon.

Irving's First Letter To Dickens.

Imagine, then, the delight of Dickens when in April, 1841, a letter came to him in which Irving expressed heartfelt delight in his writings and appreciation of himself. The historian of New York had, he wrote, read all the "Boz" productions, and could no longer repress his desire to let their author know his high opinion of his talents.

It may be noted that Irving was twenty-nine years older than Dickens, who was twenty-nine when he received this letter. He had already produced “Sketches by Boz,” “Pickwick,” “Oliver Twist,” “Nicholas Nickleby,” “The Old Curiosity Shop,” and “Barnaby Rudge.”

In his enthusiastic reply we see how well he knew the contents of the “Sketch Book” and Irving’s other works.

My Dear Sir:

There is no man in the world who could have given me the heartfelt pleasure you have, by your kind note of the 13th of last month. There is no living writer, and there are very few among the dead, whose approbation I should feel so proud to earn. And with everything you have written upon my shelves, and in my thoughts, and in my heart of hearts, I may honestly and truly say so. If you could only know how earnestly I write this, you will be glad to read it — as I hope you will be, faintly guessing at the warmth of the hand I autobiographically hold out to you over the broad Atlantic.

I wish I could find in your welcome letter some hint of an intention to visit England. I can’t. I have held it at arm’s length, and taken a bird’s-eye view of it, after reading it a great many times, but there is no greater encouragement in this way than on a microscopic inspection.) should love to go with you — as I have gone, God knows how often — into Little Britain, and Eastcheap and Green Arbor Court, and Westminster Abbey! I should like to travel with you outside the last of the coaches down to Bracebridge Hall. It would make my heart glad to compare notes with you about that shabby gentleman in the oilcloth hat and red nose, who sat in the nine-cornered back-parlor of the Masons’ Arms, and about *Robert Preston* and the tallow chandler’s widow, whose sitting-room is second nature to me; and about all those delightful places and people that I used to walk about and dream of in the daytime, when a very small and not over-particularly-taken-care-of boy. I have a good deal to say, too, about that dashing *Alonzo de Ojeda*, that you can’t help being fonder of than you ought to be; and much to hear concerning Moorish legend, and poor unhappy Boabdil. *Diedrich Knickerbocker* I have worn to death in my pocket, and yet I should show you his mutilated carcass with a joy past all expression.

I have been so accustomed to associate you with my pleasantest and happiest thoughts, and with my leisure hours, that I rush at once into full confidence with you, and fall, as it were naturally, and by the very laws of gravity, into your open arms. Questions come thronging to my pen as to the lips of people who meet after long hoping to do so. I don't know what to say first or what to leave unsaid, and am so constantly disposed to break off and tell you again how glad I am this moment has arrived.

My dear Washington Irving, I cannot thank you enough for your cordial and generous praise, or tell you what deep and lasting gratification it has given me. I hope to have many letters from you, and to exchange a frequent correspondence. I send this to say so. After the first two or three I shall settle down into a connected style, and become gradually rational.

You know what the feeling is, after having written a letter, sealed it, and sent it off. I shall picture your reading this, and answering it, before it has lain one night in the post-office. Ten to one that before the fastest packet could reach New York I shall be writing again.

Do you suppose the post-office clerks care to receive letters? I have my doubts. They get into a dreadful habit of indifference. A postman, I imagine, is quite callous. Conceive his delivering one to himself, without being startled by a preliminary double knock!

Always your faithful friend,
Charles Dickens.

THE ENGLISH NOVELIST IN AMERICA.

For a long time Dickens had been anxious to visit America, and his biographer, John Forster, tells us that this interchange of letters set him thinking seriously of the undertaking. Re this as it may, the February of the following year (1842) saw him at the Carlton Hotel, New York, where "Washington Irving came in alone with open arms." The friendship of the two famous authors was at once cemented. "Washington Irving is a *great fellow*," he wrote in a letter to Forster. "We have laughed most heartily together. He is just the man he ought to be." Having in his mind's eye painted an ideal picture of him, he could hardly pay his new friend higher tribute than this.

Dickens was only just in time to see him, for Irving had been appointed American minister to Spain, and was on the eve of his departure for Madrid.

But they had many happy meetings, and must have been on the most affectionate terms, for on March 17 Dickens wrote to Forster:



WASHINGTON IRVING ABOUT THE TIME OF HIS FIRST MEETING WITH DICKENS.

Drawn by N. Stein from an engraving by H. Mackay.

Irving was with me at Washington yesterday, and wept *heartily* at parting. He is a fine fellow, when you know him well; and you would relish him, my dear friend, of all things. We have laughed together at some absurdities we have encountered in company, quite in my vociferous Devonshire-Terrace style. The “Merrikin” Government have treated him, he says, most liberally and handsomely in every respect. He thinks of sailing for Liverpool on the 7th of April; passing a short time in London; and then going to Paris. Perhaps you may meet him. If you do, he will know that you are my dearest friend, and will open his whole heart to you at once.

But this was not to be the final farewell. On March 23, just before his journey from Baltimore to the West, Dickens wrote:

Washington Irving has come in for another leave-taking, and dines with me to-day.

This visit was no doubt in impulsive response to a letter that Dickens had written in Washington on March 21:

My Dear Irving:

We passed through, literally passed through, this place again to-day. I did not come to see you, for I really had not the heart to say good-by again, and felt more than I can tell you when we shook hands last Wednesday.

You will not be at Baltimore, I fear. I thought at the time you only said you might be there to make our parting the gayer.

Wherever you go, God bless you! What pleasure I have had in seeing and talking with you, I will not attempt to say. I shall never forget it as long as I live. What would I give, if we could have but a quiet week together! Spain is a lazy place, and its climate an indolent one. But if you ever have leisure under its sunny skies to think of a man who loves you, and holds communion with your spirit oftener, perhaps, than any other person alive — leisure from listlessness, I mean — and will write to me in London, you will give me an inexpressible amount of pleasure.

Your affectionate friend,
Charles Dickens.

During His second visit to America, when in Washington in 1868, nine years after Irving's death, Dickens, replying to a letter from Mr. Charles Lanman, said in recollection of that final meeting of March 23, 1842:

Your reference to my dear friend Washington Irving renews the vivid impressions reawakened in my mind at Baltimore the other day. I saw his fine face for the last time in that city. He came there to pass a day or two with me there before I went westward, and they were made among the most memorable of my life by his delightful fancy and humor. Some unknown admirer of his books and mine sent to the hotel a most enormous mint julep, wreathed with flowers. We sat, one on either side of it, with great solemnity (it filled a respectably-sized round table), but the solemnity was of short duration. It was quite an enchanted julep, and carried us among innumerable people and places that we both knew. The julep held out far into the night, and my memory never saw him otherwise than as bending over it, with his straw, with an attempted gravity (after some anecdote, involving some wonderfully droll and delicate observation of character) and

then, as his eyes caught mine, melting into that captivating laugh of his which was the brightest and best I have ever heard.

Dear sir, with many thanks,

Faithfully yours,

Charles Dickens.

IRVING AT THE GREAT DICKENS DINNER.

After Irving's death Professor Felton, addressing the Massachusetts Historical Society, recalled these bright days, and said:

The time when I saw the most of Mr. Irving was the winter of 1842, during the visit of Charles Dickens in New York. I had known this already distinguished writer in Boston and Cambridge. I had passed much of the time with Mr. Irving and Mr. Dickens, and it was delightful to witness the cordial intercourse of the young man in the flush and glory of his fervent genius, and his elder compeer, then in the assured possession of renown.

Great and rare as was the genius of Mr. Irving, there was one thing he shrank with a comical terror from attempting, and that was "an after-dinner speech." A great dinner, however, was to be given to Mr. Dickens in New York, as one had already been given in Boston, and it was evident to all that no man but Washington Irving could be thought of to preside. With all his dread of making a speech, he was obliged to obey the unusual call, and to accept the painful preeminence. I saw him daily during the interval of preparation, either at the lodgings of Dickens, or at dinner, or at evening parties. I hope I showed no want of sympathy with his forebodings, but I could not help being amused with the tragi-comical distress which the thought of that dinner had caused him. His pleasant humor mingled with the real dread, and played with the whimsical horrors of his own position with an irresistible drollery. Whenever it was alluded to, his invariable answer was, "I shall certainly break down," uttered in half melancholy tones, the ludicrous effect of which it is impossible to describe.

At length the long-expected event arrived; a company of the most eminent persons were assembled, and Mr. Irving took the chair. He had brought the manuscript of his speech, and laid it under his plate. "I shall certainly break down," he repeated over and over again. At last the moment arrived. Mr. Irving rose, and was received with deafening and long-

continued applause, which by no means lessened his apprehension. He began in his pleasant voice, got through two or three sentences pretty easily, but in the next hesitated, and, after a few attempts to go on, gave it up, with a graceful allusion to the tournament and the troop of knights all armed and eager for the fray; and ended with the toast: "Charles Dickens, the guest of the nation!"

"There," said he, as he resumed his seat amid applause as great as had greeted his rising, "there! I told you I should break down and I've done it!"

In the "American Notes," published after his return to England, Dickens, referring to a Presidential reception at Washington, said that nothing impressed him so much as the welcome accorded to Washington Irving — my dear friend who had recently been appointed minister at the court of Spain, and who was among them that night, in his new character, for the first and last time, before going abroad. I saw them turning with one mind from noisy orators and officers of state, and flocking with a generous and honest impulse round the man of quiet pursuits; proud in his promotion as reflecting upon their country; and grateful to him with their whole hearts for the store of graceful fancies he had poured out amongst them. Long may he dispense such treasures with unsparing hand; and long may they remember him as worthily!

The friends never met again, but they held each other in their heart of hearts, and corresponded until the day of Irving's death.

The portrait of Dickens on page 487, engraved from a drawing made in 1842, the year of his first visit to America, appeared in Mr. F. G. Kitton's monumental work, "Charles Dickens, By Pen and Pencil." Would that I could produce a picture of the two friends, whose names are enshrined amongst the immortals, as they sat together over that historic mint julep!

CHARLES DICKENS'S RELIGION



From: *The Spectator*, December 6, 1902, p.891-892

IT may be said at once by some that the religion of a man, even though he be dead, is a matter sacred to himself and to those yet surviving to whom he was most near and dear; and it may be said by others that there is no reason why any words about Charles Dickens's religious views should be of any use today. It seems to one person, however — and the same thought may be shared by others — that at a time when much is being said about education and religion, and the meaning of the words “religious education,” it may be of some service to set forth what religion meant to so unbiased, unprejudiced a mind as that of Dickens. He is not here and now being considered as a writer, a humourist, a plot-maker, but merely as a man who won in his day great popularity (by no unworthy means), had many friends while he was living and has many admirers now that he is dead, and who will be allowed by all, even by those who do not love his pathos, to have promoted kindly feeling among people and to have left the world in some ways better than he found it. If cleanliness of word and thought is one of the signs of “pure and undefiled religion,” as some think, it must be granted that this sign appears in all his books. Thackeray was giving utterance to what many other parents must have felt before and since he spoke when he thanked Charles Dickens for the “unsullied page” of - *David Copperfield*.”

Dickens, possibly, was not what would be called a decidedly “religious” man. He may not have had a passion for Church services and sermons, he may have had no great liking for the Athanasian Creed as a thing to be said by simple yokels or chanted by little boys in surplices, but religion was for him a very real thing. He had a creed that might be called a useful and a “working” creed, a handy thing for a man of so busy and so strenuous a life. It is not the intention of the writer of these lines to criticise the lovers of what may be called minute points of ritual and complicated creeds, but it is intended to put in a plea for the usefulness and beauty of a religion which is

simple. Educationists, whether interested in Church schools or in others, cannot in their hearts be very proud of the results of education during the past thirty years, whether those results are judged by the deeds of many youths or by what may be called the general conversation of the streets that assaults the ears of passers-by. It is not the talk of “loafers” that is here spoken of, but the talk of many who are known as “working men.” The talk is often blasphemous or filthy, or it may be both; the words, probably, are “idle” words, the speakers not caring or realising what they say. This page is not a pulpit, and the fact, for fact it is, is here brought forward to suggest that such conversation is not, either from an intellectual or moral point of view, a satisfactory result of the education, religious and otherwise, that has been talked of and been practised for the last thirty years.

Ideas as to the nature of Charles Dickens’s religious views may be gathered doubtless from his books, but his own statements in letters to his friends may be more certain guides. Writing in 1841 to a Dissenting minister, he says, with the liberality of view which would be natural to him: “There are more roads to heaven, I am inclined to think, than any sect believes; but there can be none which have not these flowers [detestation of cruelty, &c] garnishing the way.” Writing in the same year to a bereaved man, he observes: “You have already all the comfort that I could lay before you; all, I hope, that the affectionate spirit of your brother, now in happiness, can shed into your soul.” “Try, do try,” he says in the same year to another mourner, “to think that they have but preceded you to happiness, and will meet you with joy in heaven.” If Dickens was not devoted to the English Church, he did not for that reason love Nonconformists merely because they did not love the Church. One letter gives an account of a meeting at a funeral with a minister who may have sat unconsciously for a photograph of Mr. Chadband. This preacher said of a certain statement: “It is false, incorrect, unchristian, in a manner blasphemous, and in all respects contemptible. Let us pray.” Such remarks might have been made by Mr. Chadband.

On the other hand, in a letter to Mr. Macvey Napier written in 1843, Dickens showed no fondness for what may be called Church schools : — ” Would it meet the purposes of the Review [the Edinburgh] to come out strongly against any system of education based exclusively on the principles of the Established Church? If it would, I should like to show why such a thing as the Church Catechism is wholly inapplicable to the state of

ignorance that now prevails; and why no system but one, so general in great religious principles as to include all creeds, can meet the wants and understandings of the dangerous classes of society.” After some remarks about the “ragged schools,” he adds: — “I could show these people in a state so miserable and so neglected, that their very nature rebels against the simplest religion, and that to convey to them the faintest outlines of any system of distinction between right and wrong is in itself a giant’s task, before which mysteries and squabbles for forms must give way. Would this be too much for the Review?”

Turning back for a moment to his views about the other world, we find him in 1855, after referring to “A Journey from this World to the Next,” comforting a mother with these words: — “With no effort of the fancy, with nothing to undo, you will always be able to think of the pretty creature you have lost, as a child in heaven.” Certain Blue-books of great interest have lately brought before the notice of all England the principles and practice of education in America; from Baltimore Charles Dickens wrote in 1842: — “I am disappointed. This is not the republic I came to see j this is not the republic of my imagination. I infinitely prefer a liberal monarchy — even with its sickening accompaniments of court circulars — to such a government as this In everything of which it has made a boast — excepting its education of the people and its care for poor children [the italics are not in the original] — it sinks immeasurably below the level I had placed it upon,”

That Dickens was not very fond of missionary societies is a fact that might be gathered from his placing “Jo “ upon the steps of a building tenanted by such a society, whose officers had no work for Jo and such as Jo; but his ideas are clearly stated in a letter written in the course of 1852: “I am decidedly of opinion that the two works, the home and the foreign, are not conducted with an equal hand, and that the home claim is by far the stronger and the more pressing of the two.” After insisting that education of all kinds should begin at home, and “on the utter removal of neglected and untaught childhood from its [i.e., England’s] streets,” he adds: “If it steadily persist in this work, working downward to the lowest, the travellers of all grades whom it sends abroad will be good, exemplary, practical missionaries, instead of undoers of what the best professed missionaries can do.” Experience taught him that information was not always imparted in a seductive form, even when both the teacher and the taught were adults.

Writing in 1854, he tells Frank Stone about a certain man “who has read every book that ever was written, and is a perfect gulf of information. Before exploding a mine of knowledge he has a habit of closing one eye and wrinkling up his nose, so that he seems perpetually to be taking aim at you and knocking you over with a terrific charge. Then he looks again, and takes another aim. So you are always on your back, with your legs in the air.” That learned man has spiritual descendants in these days! It has been seen what was Dickens’s theory about mission work: namely, that every Englishman going out into the world — especially to other countries — should carry Christianity with him, or, rather, in him.

It is interesting to see, then, what was the sort of equipment that he provided for his own children, so far as it is set forth in these letters. Writing in 1868 to one son who was about to start his undergraduate life at Cambridge, after giving excellent advice about the management of money, candour, debt, and reminding the son of the father’s own hard work, Charles Dickens adds: — ” As your brothers have gone away one by one I have written to each of them what I am now going to write to you. You know that you have never been hampered with religious forms of restraint, and that with mere unmeaning forms I have no sympathy. But I most strongly and affectionately impress upon you the priceless value of the New Testament, and the study of that book as the one unfailing guide in life. Deeply respecting it, and bowing down before the character of our Saviour, as separated from the vain constructions and inventions of men, you cannot go very wrong, and will always preserve at heart a true spirit of veneration, and humility. Similarly I impress upon you the habit of saying a Christian prayer every night and morning. These things have stood by me all through my life, and remember that I tried to render the New Testament intelligible to you and lovable by you when you were a mere baby.”

The present writer has had the privilege, the great privilege, of reading that essence of the New Testament, so to call it, in its original MS., — it never has been published, and it never will be so long as the wishes of its compiler are respected. A letter of the same tenor was written to a son who went abroad in 1868, and unless our memory is playing tricks, Charles Dickens made in his last will and testament a like statement as to creed. It is possible that this collection of his views on education and religion may be of some interest and some use to-day.

CHARLES DICKENS IN ILLINOIS



By Dr. J.F. Snyder

From: *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, October 1910, p.7-22

A highly prized volume in my library is an old, stained copy of the first American edition of the *Pickwick Papers*, (published by Carey, Lea & Blanchard, Philadelphia, 1838), which my father gave me in 1841. Beading and re-reading that book with boyish delight during the school vacation of that summer interested me in its author, known then as "Boz," a nom de plume he had adopted early in his literary career. He was already famous out here, so that when the eastern papers announced his contemplated visit to the United States the next year, I shared with our people generally the hope and expectancy that he would extend his tour as far west as the Mississippi, which he subsequently did. No railroad had then penetrated the wilderness as far as St. Louis, at that time the frontier city of the vast west, and steamboats and stage coaches were about the only means for public transportation west of the Allegheny mountains. Mr. Dickens, accompanied by his wife, came by the old emigrant route, in steamboats, down the Ohio river from Pittsburg, and up the Mississippi, arriving at St. Louis on the 11th of April, 1842.

The steamboat *Fulton*, upon which Mr. and Mrs. Dickens had taken passage at Louisville, Ky., arrived at St. Louis in the evening (of the 11th), but as it was not expected until the next day, no reception committee appeared to meet the distinguished tourists, and they made their way, in a hack, to the *Planters House*, then by far the finest hotel west of the Mississippi, where they were regally entertained. When their arrival became known, the citizens of St. Louis spared neither pains nor expense in pressing upon them every social attention and the most cordial hospitality during their stay.

Mr. Dickens having expressed — as he says in his American Notes — ”a great desire to see a prairie before turning back from the furthest point of my wanderings; and as some gentlemen of the town had, in their hospitable consideration, an equal desire to gratify me, a day was fixed before my departure, for an expedition to the Looking Glass Prairie, which is within thirty miles of the town.” Friday, April 15, was the day selected for the excursion, and the 13th chapter of his Notes is devoted to the description of that “Jaunt to the Looking Glass Prairie and Back.”

Beside Mr. Dickens and the drivers of the four teams, there were nine men — and no ladies — in the party, only two of whom I could identify and can now remember. These were John J. Anderson, a banker, and George Knapp, of the Missouri Republican. They were all young men connected with the newspapers and business interests of St. Louis, bent upon affording their famous guest a glimpse of the grandeur of Illinois, the “two large baskets and two large demi-johns,” with ice and other extras, taken along, indicating the picnic aspect of the “jaunt,” and intent to make it as pleasant for him as possible. Seated in the several conveyances with one of their number on horseback as guide, they crossed the Mississippi in the early morning on one of the Wiggins Company ferry boats. At that season of the year the miry road across the seven miles of soft loamy soil of the American Bottom, and the succeeding seven miles of sticky clay uplands to Belleville, usually rendered traveling over it slow and difficult, and was, in fact, at times almost impassable.

To make matters worse, a heavy rain had fallen the night before, filling the chuck-holes in the road full of water, and further diluting the already deep mud. “We had a pair of very strong horses,” says Mr. Dickens in his Notes, “but traveled at the rate of little more than a couple of miles an hour, through one unbroken slough of black mud and water. It had no variety but in depth. Now it was only half over the wheels, now it hid the axletree, and now the coach sank down in it almost to the windows.” This description of traveling over that part of the great National Road at that day is not greatly overdrawn. But Mr. Dickens failed to notice the topography of that region further on, or forgot it in the two years transpiring between his visit and the publication of his American Notes, as, after leaving the French Village at the foot of the bluffs where the road ascends to an elevation of a hundred feet, he says: “We went forward again, through mud and mire, and damp and festering heat, and brake and bush, attended always by the music of the

frogs and pigs, until nearly noon, when we halted at a place called Belleville, * * * a small collection of wooden houses, huddled together in the very heart of the bush and swamp.” His memory of the continuation of mud all the way was certainly correct, but Belleville, situated on high rolling ground far removed from sloughs and swamps, was even then a flourishing, pretentious town containing quite a number of business houses and handsome residences substantially built of brick and stone. There was then no telegraph to apprise the Belleville people of the great novelist’s coming, or of his arrival at St. Louis, and but few of them knew that he had honored our town by his presence until the next issue of the weekly paper. Two years later, 1844, the first telegraph line to reach St. Louis was constructed by the O’Reiley Company alongside of the old stage road from Vincennes, with the wire fastened by insulators to the trees where it passed through the timber, and crossed the Mississippi from the top of a tall mast at Illinoistown (now East St. Louis) to a similar one on Bloody Island, and from there to the top of the shot tower near the Belcher sugar refinery on the other side.

Returning home, at about eleven o’clock in the forenoon of that 15th day of April, from an errand upon which I had been sent to the eastern part of the village, I had reached the public square when the line of carriages came pulling through the mud up Main street from the west. In doubt as to whether they formed a funeral procession, or transported some kind of show, I stopped to see them pass by. Just then Philip B. Fouke, editor of the Belleville Advocate, and in later years our Congressman, came down the street to the court house, and I asked him who those traveling strangers were. He had, a few minutes before, interviewed the horseman who had arrived in advance of them to have luncheon prepared for the party, and was hurrying into the court house — circuit court being in session — to inform the bench and bar the object and purpose of the novel expedition that had excited my curiosity. Startled by hearing that Boz, the author of the Pickwick Papers, was actually there, I turned about and, keeping abreast of the front carriage, followed it up the street until it stopped at the door of the Mansion House. On the way I was joined by several other boys, my daily associates, not one of whom perhaps had ever heard of Charles Dickens, but attracted by the unusual appearance of so many strange vehicles, went along gazing at them with open-mouthed wonder.

When the barouche conveying Mr. Dickens halted at the curbstone, he was the first of its four inmates to step from it to the sidewalk, and did so with a look of evident relief. It was a perfect day “overhead,” warm for the middle of April, with clear sky and the refreshing air of early spring. The landlord, Mr. McBride, came bustling out, bareheaded, to receive the company, and was introduced to the famous writer by one of his traveling companions. The man introduced as “Mr. Dickens” was (to me) a disappointing surprise. In fact, my youthful ideal of the genius who created Mr. Pickwick, Sam Weller and the Widow Bardell, was badly shattered. It is natural for the average man — woman or boy — when hearing much about any noted individual, to form a definite idea of that person’s appearance; or, upon reading an interesting book to draw an imaginary portrait of its author. Mr. Dickens was, on that day, a very ordinary looking man indeed, with no external indication of true greatness. In the estimation of “us boys” he compared very unfavorably with Col. Richard M. Johnson, of Kentucky, the slayer of Tecumseh, and late Vice President, who had, a short time before, visited Belleville, and had been given a grand reception with brass band accompaniment.

Mr. Dickens was at that time 30 years of age, of medium size — about 5 feet, 8 or 9 inches tall — square shouldered, erect, and well proportioned in figure, weighing (probably) 140 pounds. His complexion was not of the usual ruddy English cast; his eyes were brown, and dark, slightly curling hair surmounted a broad forehead and smoothly shaved face, then sunburned and mosquito bitten, but none too handsome at best. With the license of conscious superiority he dressed very carelessly, and on this occasion, incased in a common linen coat and coarse straw hat bound around with green ribbon, he attracted some public attention, but certainly ran no risk of being mistaken by strangers for either General Scott or Daniel Webster. He was not very talkative, but when he spoke his voice was soft and pleasant, with clear and distinct pronounciation of every word. He seldom laughed, but his frequent smile was expressive of his keen sense of humor, and appreciation of his novel surroundings. There was about his countenance a cynical expression; but no affectation perceptible in his speech or manners, yet every movement and gesture plainly indicated that he regarded the homage paid him by our simple people as justly his due, and that any courteous acknowledgement of it on his part would be an unwarranted condescension.

On this part of his American tour the memoranda he jotted down, from day to day, of transpiring events and objects and persons that interested him, must have been brief and disconnected, as his published Notes bear internal evidence of having been written out some time after his return to England, with many passages supplied by memory. And his memory of many things he tells of, unaided by his notes made at the time, was often at fault and much confused.

His description of Belleville, as being “in the very heart of the bush and swamp,” is an instance of this. Of the Belleville houses he further says, “Many of them had singularly bright doors of red and yellow, for the place had been lately visited by a traveling painter, ‘who got along,’ as I was told, by ‘eating his way.’” When this was written he drew upon his memory alone, it having retained an indistinct impression of the sloughs and lakes of the American Bottom, and the French Village, through which he passed and of Belleville, all mixed up together. The old French Village, at the foot of the bluffs, it is true, had recently been visited by a tramping painter who left the impress of his art on several gaudily colored doors in that vicinity, but he had not yet “eaten his way” through, or to, our town.

The sarcasm in Mr. Dicken’s account of his “Jaunt to the Looking Glass Prairie,” though pungent and stinging, is, in the main, amusing, in some instances just, but as often totally devoid of wit or humor, amounting simply to willful malignant, misrepresentation actuated by an animus difficult to comprehend. At the time of his arrival in Belleville, he says, “The criminal court was sitting, and was at that moment trying some criminals for horse stealing. * * * The horses belonging to the bar, the judge, and witnesses were tied to temporary racks set up roughly in the road, by which it is to be understood a forest path, nearly knee-deep in mud and slime.” True the circuit court was then in session, with Sidney Breese on the bench, Wm. H. Underwood, the prosecuting attorney, Wm. C. Kinney, the circuit clerk and Sam. B. Chandler, sheriff. The bar attending that court comprised Lyman Trumbull, Gustavus Koerner, James Shields, Joseph Gillespie, U. F. Linder, N. Niles, Wm. H. Bissell, P. B. Fouke and Governor John Reynolds,

His “forest path” was the public square in the middle of the town, just as it now is, excepting the paving and buildings it then contained. Northeast of its center was the fine old brick court house, and across the street, to the west, the two-story brick offices of the county officials. Fronting that on the

south was the new market, also of brick, and on the opposite corner, facing the court house, was the public well. There were hitch racks on the east and north of the court house, and — we may as well admit also — some mud in the streets, as usual in the spring months.

The “Mansion House,” on the northeast corner of Main and High streets, is still there. Solid and substantial, tho a dingy-looking relic of a past age in the midst of modern progress, it is yet (1910) serviceable as a business house, and, with pride, is pointed out to strangers, by the older residents as the hostelry where Mr. Dickens was entertained in 1842, Of it he says, “There was an hotel in this place, * * * an odd shambling, low-roofed outhouse, half cow shed and half kitchen, with a coarse brown canvas table cloth, and tin sconces stuck against the walls, to hold candles at supper time.” The Mansion House was really a large, roomy brick building, fully up to date in all respects, two stories high, with long two-story frame addition, erected only three years before, by Rev. Thomas Harrison, and was well arranged, well furnished and conducted in firstclass style by his daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. J. McBride.

Mr. Dickens and companions on arrival were escorted by the landlord up stairs to rooms provided with water, towels, etc., where they might perform their ablutions and “dress for dinner,” and the carriages, from which the horses were unhitched and taken to the stable, were left standing in front of the hotel.

Court having adjourned for the noon recess, Colonel Niles, Governor Koerner, Phil Fouke and two or three other members of the bar, with several citizens, came up to the Mansion House to pay their respects to the famous guest. Judge Breese and Jo. Gillespie declined to accompany them.

With boyish curiosity, and eagerness to see all that was going on, I followed Mr. Dickens — unasked and no doubt unwanted — to the foot of the stairs, and waited there until he came down and was introduced to the lawyers and some of the other visitors. I was in close proximity to his coat tail when he was presented to “Dr. Crocus,” and was an interested witness to that interview, which, as narrated in the XIII chapter of the American Notes, is substantially correct, with the exception that the landlord, Mr. McBride, was not addressed as “Colonel.” He was a quiet, unobtrusive, upright man, an exemplary citizen and rigid Methodist, but not a colonel. The man portrayed as “Dr. Crocus” was an adventurer calling himself Dr. Angus Melrose — perhaps an assumed name — who had, a few months

before, alighted in Belleville as a lecturer on phrenology, then a very popular fad, and incidentally offering his professional services for the healing of all known diseases.

To Mr. Dickens' question, "Do you think of soon returning to the old country?" Dr. Melrose answered, "Not yet awhile, sir, not yet. You won't catch me at that just yet, sir. I am a little too fond of freedom for that, sir. Ha, ha! It's not so easy for a man to tear himself from a free country such as this is, sir. Ha, ha! No, no! Ha, ha! None of that till one's obliged to do it, sir. No, no!" In this grandiloquent declaration the Doctor was very evidently — as Mr. Dickens intimated — "playing to the galleries," but he also intended Mr. Dickens to understand that he was speaking ironically and, by innuendo, expressing his contempt for American institutions. With proverbial English obtuseness of perception, however, Mr. Dickens failed to catch the Doctor's covert meaning.

Dr. Melrose was over six feet in height, and robust in proportion, with florid face and long nose. Of friendly, social disposition he was a fluent talker, speaking correct English with broad Scotch accent. To Mr. McBride he stated that he had recently graduated in medicine at the Edinburgh University, and having but limited means, to gratify his desire to see America, he had recourse to the lecture platform, phrenology, and the practice of medicine to defray expenses of touring the country. He remained in Belleville several months, but tho immortalized as "Dr. Crocus" by the American Notes, very few persons now living retain the slightest recollection of him.

For half an hour or more Mr. Dickens was surrounded by a throng of citizens, to several of whom he was formally introduced, but to none of whom he addressed anything more than curt, commonplace remarks. It was plain that he was both bored and amused by the curiosity and evident disappointment of the crowd inspecting him, and seemed glad when the dinner bell ended the impromptu reception. The glimpse obtained of him from the open dining room door, when all were seated at the long table, left no doubt as to the ample justice he was doing to the "chicken fixings" specially prepared for him. Dinner over he strolled out on the sidewalk in front of the hotel, viewing the part of town in the range of his vision, while conversing with his St. Louis friends until the horses were brought from the stable and all was ready to move on again.

“From Belleville,” says Mr. Dickens, “we went on through the same desolate kind of waste, and constantly attended, without the interval of a moment, by the same music” (the croaking of bullfrogs). Here again, with the American Bottom vaguely in mind, he drew upon his memory and it failed him. The road from Belleville to Lebanon — then almost the entire twelve miles through dense woods, broken here and there by the farms of Governor Kinney and other old settlers — is over high, undulating and beautiful country, remote from sloughs or swamps or other habitats of the festive mosquito or musical frog.

The hotel at Lebanon was more fortunate than the one in our town in catching the fancy of the great novelist, and he accorded it this dubious praise, “In point of cleanliness and comfort, it would have suffered by no comparison with any English ale house, of a homely kind, in England.” It was a large barn-like frame building, called the Mermaid Hotel, with a large square sign on a tall post, in front, on which was painted a full-sized mermaid standing on her tail on the waves, holding a looking glass before her with one hand, and combing her long golden tresses with the other. The house was owned and conducted as an inn and stage stand by Capt. Lyman Adams, a retired New England sea captain, of kind and genial disposition, who ended his days there, highly respected and esteemed by all who knew him.

The interest of Mr. Dickens’ visit to Illinois culminates in his impressions and description of the prairie, the objective point of his “jaunt,” thus recounted in his Notes, “It would be difficult to say why or how — though it was possible from having heard and read so much about it — but the effect on me was disappointment. Looking towards the setting sun, there lay, stretched out before my view, a vast expanse of level ground, unbroken, save by one thin line of trees, which scarcely amounted to a scratch upon the great blank; until it met the glowing sky, wherein it seemed to dip, mingling with its rich colors, and mellowing in its distant blue. There it lay, a tranquil sea or lake without water, if such a simile be admissible, with the day going down upon it; a few birds wheeling here and there, and solitude and silence reigning paramount around. But the grass was not yet high; there were bare, black patches on the ground; and the few wild flowers that the eye could see were poor and scanty. Great as the picture was, its very flatness and extent, which left nothing to the imagination, tamed it down and cramped its interest. I felt little of that sense of freedom and

exhilaration which a Scotch heath inspired or even our English downs awaken. It was lonely and wild, but oppressive in its barren monotony. I felt that in traversing the prairies I could never abandon myself to the scene, forgetful of all else, as I should do instinctively were the heather underneath my feet, or an iron-bound coast beyond; but should often glance towards the distant and frequently receding line of the horizon, and wish it gained and passed. It is not a scene to be forgotten, but it is scarcely one, I think (at all events, as I saw it) to remember with much pleasure or to covet the looking on again in after life.”

Immediately following this is his account of the sunset lunch that was eaten, which the great writer seems to have enjoyed much more and remembered better than his view of the prairie. “We encamped,” he goes on to say, “near a solitary log house, for the sake of its water, and dined upon the plain. The baskets contained roast fowls, buffalo tongue (an exquisite dainty, by the way), ham, bread, cheese and butter, biscuits, champagne, sherry, lemons and sugar for punch, and abundance of rough ice. The meal was delicious and the entertainers were the soul of kindness and good humor. I have often recalled that cheerful party to my pleasant recollection since, and shall not easily forget, in junketing nearer home with friends of older date, my boon companions on the prairie.”

There is a discrepancy in the prairie scene drawn by Mr. Dickens difficult to reconcile, excepting upon the grave suspicion that the “champagne, sherry, lemons and sugar for punch” must have operated as a disturbing element in his vision and memory. “Looking towards the setting sun,” he says, “there lay stretched out before my view a vast expanse of level ground with the day going down upon it.” Now, from Lebanon Mr. Dickens and party traveled almost directly east, a mile through the timber, and about a mile into the prairie to that “solitary cabin.” They were then on the western border of the prairie. From that point, therefore, in looking over that “vast expanse of level ground,” the setting sun was behind them. The time was sunset, and had Mr. Dickens been “looking towards the setting sun,” as he says, he would have seen no “vast expanse of level ground,” but instead only a half mile slope down to the rivulet and a corresponding half mile ascent on the other side up to the Silver creek timber surrounding Lebanon. In looking over the prairie his face was turned to the east, and the sun was sinking in the forest behind him. Nor is there any expanse of level land

there, no prairie in Illinois having more perfect natural drainage than Looking Glass.

A few years later, when a student at McKendree College, I paid several visits to that “solitary cabin,” made historic by Mr. Dickens’ champagne dinner, and his first and only view of our prairies. The cabin long since disappeared, and its site, made memorable by the pen and presence of the author of *Pickwick* and *David Copperfield*, is lost in the mazes of endless corn fields.

Mr. Dickens perhaps wrote his candid impression of the prairie as it appeared to him; but his disparaging description of “a level plain,” with the sun setting in the east, written many months later, warrants the belief that in that sketch he again relied altogether upon his capricious memory.

Looking Glass Prairie, in fact, at that time presented as charming a landscape as could be found in the prairie region of Illinois. It was merely one of the many prolongations, or offsets, of the grand treeless plain extending north and east beyond the limits of the State. Framed around, on the west and north, by the wooded hills of Silver Creek, and by the timbered line of Sugar Creek to the east and south, eight miles away, it presented to the eye, from the site of that “solitary log cabin,” a magnificent panorama of undulating plain diversified with isolated groves and brush-fringed rivulets. Seen as Mr. Dickens saw it — and as I first saw it — in its virgin freshness, undefiled by the plow, or yet marred by the embellishments of civilization, it was one of nature’s finest rural gems, fascinating in interest and wild sublimity.

After dining on the prairie, Mr. Dickens and party returned to Lebanon and passed the night at the Mermaid Hotel. The next morning he arose at 5:00 o’clock and, after a short walk about the village, returned to the tavern and amused himself for some time in the inspection of its public rooms and back yard, which seems to have afforded him more genuine enjoyment than his view of the prairie.

In his narrative of the “jaunt to Looking Glass Prairie and back,” he only mentions the topography of the country he saw to misrepresent and vilify it, and is silent regarding its productions, resources and future possibilities. But he describes in detail an old whisky-soaked settler of the backwoods type, and devotes an entire page to his interview with the tramping Scotch doctor, and more space to a pen picture of the Lebanon tavern and its stable yard than to the prairie he came specially to see. He was much impressed by

the sight of a tailor's shop on wheels, and brightly painted front doors, and the moving of a small frame house down the street from one locality to another, but makes no mention of those noted pioneer institutions of learning, McKendree College, at Lebanon, and Rev. John M. Peck's Rock Spring Seminary, three miles west of Lebanon, both very conspicuous objects by the roadside along which he journeyed.

In full sight of the spot where the party dined on the plain, and less than a mile away, stands Emerald Mound, the most prominent landmark of the prairie, one of the finest and most perfect of all the earthen monuments of the aborigines in the State. This remarkable vestige of a vanished prehistoric people is well calculated to attract the attention and interest of any intelligent foreign (or native) tourist; but not a word did Mr. Dickens write about it. He could not well have failed to see it, and that he did see it is confirmed by his trivial notice of its more majestic contemporaneous structure, the great Cahokia mound, near which he passed when returning to St. Louis by the upper, or more direct, road.

Of that wonderful work he merely says, "Looming in the distance, as we rode along, was another of the ancient Indian burial places, called the Monks' Mound in memory of a body of fanatics of the order of La Trappe, who founded a desolate convent there many years ago, when there were no settlers within a thousand miles, and were all swept off by the pernicious climate — in which lamentable fatality few rational people will suppose, perhaps, that society experienced any very severe deprivation."

Mr. Dickens does not mention, in his Notes, the name of any one of the young men who took him over to Illinois to see the prairie; nor did he write one word expressive of gratitude for their generosity in leaving their business and providing lavishly, free of all expense to him, everything necessary to conduce to his pleasure and satisfaction in that excursion. It seems that a sense of ordinary courtesy would have prompted him to at least return some slight public acknowledgment of that obligation.

Cairo was the only other locality in Illinois visited by Mr. Dickens. To see Cairo was really the main object of his journey to America. In 1837 one Darius B. Holbrook, a shrewd Boston Yankee, organized the Cairo City and Canal Company, a scheme as audaciously illusive as John Law's Mississippi Bubble of 1718; and going to Europe he plastered the walls everywhere there with flaming lithographs of a grand city at the junction of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers — in fact as mythical as the fabled Quivira

of Coronado 's search. In London was the banking house of John Wright & Co. — the same that, in 1839, confided the Illinois Fund Commissioners, Governor Reynolds, Senator Young, General Rawlings and Colonel Oakley, into depositing with them \$1,000,000 of Illinois bonds, resulting in a loss to the State of half their value. Through John Wright & Co., Holbrook actually sold bonds of his Cairo company to the amount of \$2,000,000. Among his numerous victims was Mr. Dickens, who, it is asserted, invested in those bonds a large part of his slender means.

A few years later, becoming, with other investors, suspicious of the flaunted magnificence of the American Cairo, Mr. Dickens concluded to satisfy himself by a personal inspection of it. He came, and thus described what he saw: "At length, upon the morning of the third day, we arrived at a spot so much more desolate than any we had yet beheld, that the forlornest places we had passed were, in comparison with it, full of interest. At the junction of the two rivers, on ground so flat and low and marshy that at certain seasons of the year it is inundated to the house-tops, lies a breeding place of fever, ague and death, vaunted in England as a mine of Golden Hope, and speculated in, on the faith of monstrous representations, to many people's ruin. A dismal swamp, on which the half-built houses rot away; cleared here and there for the space of a few yards, and teeming then with rank unwholesome vegetation, in whose baleful shade the wretched wanderers who are tempted hither, droop and die, and lay their bones; the hateful Mississippi circling and eddying before it, and turning off upon its southern course a slimy monster hideous to behold; a hotbed of disease, an ugly sepulchre, a grave uncheered by any gleam of promise; a place without one single quality, in earth or air or water, to commend it; such is this dismal Cairo."

This crushing disappointment and shocking dissipation of his cherished dreams of golden profits accounts for Mr. Dickens' malignant defamation of everything he saw west of Louisville, and explains the venom in his satirical novel that soon followed, entitled "Martin Chuzzlewit," in which he wreaks his vengeance upon the United States generally, and upon Cairo particularly under the pseudonym of "Eden."

PICKWICKIAN BATH



By Percy Fitzgerald

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BATH, which already owed so much to famous writers, owes even more to “Boz,” the genial author of “Pickwick” — a book which has so much increased the gaiety of the nation. The scenes at the old city are more minute and vivid than any yet offered. But if it owed much to “Boz,” it repaid him by furnishing him with a name for his book which has gone over the world. Everything about this name will be interesting; and it is not generally known when and how “Boz” obtained it.

There was a small hamlet some few miles from Bath and 97 from London — which is 106 miles away from Bath — bearing the name of “Pickwick.” The Bath coach, by the way, started from the White Horse Cellars, Piccadilly, at half-past seven in the morning, and took just twelve hours for the journey. Now it is made by the Great Western in two! Here many years ago, at the time of the story, was “Pickwick House, the seat of C. N. Loscombe, Esq.,” and also “Pickwick Lodge,” where dwelt Captain Fenton. “Boz” had never seen or heard of such places, but all the same they indirectly furnished him with the name. A mail-coach guard found an infant on the road in this place, and gave it the name of “Pickwick.” The word “Pickwick” contains the common terminal “wick,” as in “Warwick”: an affix which means a village or hamlet of some kind. Pickwick, however, has long since disappeared from the face of the map. Probably after the year 1837 folk did not relish dating their letters from a spot of such humorous memories.

This foundling, Eleazar Pickwick, was taken into the service of the coaching hotel, the White Hart, devoted himself to the horse and coaching business, and at the time of “Boz’s” or Mr. Pickwick’s visit, his grandson, Moses, was the actual proprietor of the coaches on the road. “The name,” said Sam, “is not only down on the vay-bill, sir, but they’ve painted vun on

‘em on the door of the coach.” As Sam spoke, he pointed to that part of the door on which the proprietor’s name usually appears, and there sure enough, in gilt letters of a goodly size, was the magic name of Pickwick. “Dear me,” said Mr. Pickwick, quite staggered by the coincidence, “what a very extraordinary thing!” “Yes; but that ain’t all,” said Sam, again directing his master’s attention to the coach-door. “Not content with writin’ up Pickwick, they put ‘Moses’ afore it, which I calls adding insult to injury.” “It’s odd enough, certainly,” said Mr. Pickwick. It may be noted here what an air of reality this imparts, and how unlikely we should be to find such a touch in a modern novel. When he was casting about for a good name for his venture, it recurred to him as having a quaint oddity and uncanniness. And thus it is that we owe to Bath, and to Bath only, this celebrated name. Many years ago, a Mr. Pickwick actually changed his name by public advertisement. This ordinary event caused quite a public sensation. The owner was reminded that it was an old and honourable name — coming originally from *Pique vite* — and it was *not* Count Smorltork who suggested this derivation.

In the course of his story, our author having thus to take Mr. Pickwick down to Bath, it occurred to him that the fact that his hero was transported by a coach bearing his own name on the door must have seemed odd to many of his readers, or possibly to the coach proprietor himself. He saw, too, an opening for some goodhumoured fun, and accordingly made Sam call his master’s attention to the matter. No city has had its society and manners sketched by such eminent pens as has Bath — Smollett, Miss Burney, Miss Austen, and “Boz” have all described it. The old walls and houses are thus made to live. “Boz” has given one of the most vivid and vivacious pictures of its expiring glories in the thirties, when there were still “M.C.s,” routs, assemblies, and sedans. His own connection with the place is personal, and a very interesting one. He was there in 1835 on election business, hurrying after Lord John Russell, all over the country, to report his speeches — a young fellow of three-and-twenty, full of “dash,” “go,” and readiness of resource, of immense energy and carelessness of fatigue, ready to go anywhere and do anything. While thus engaged on serious business he kept his eyes wide open, took in all the humours of Bath and noted them in his memory, though he made no use of this till more than two years later, when he was well on into “Pickwick.” Indeed, all “Pickwick” is full of his

own personal adventures at this time, Bath and Ipswich particularly contributing a substantial portion of the book.

Entering an old city by night leaves a curious romantic impression, and few old cities gain so much as Bath by this mode of approach. The shadowy houses have a monumental air; the fine streets which we mostly ascend show a mystery, especially as we flit by the open square, under the great black Abbey, which seems a beetling rock. This old Bath mysteriousness seems haunted by the ghosts of Burney, Johnson, Goldsmith, Wilkes, Quin, Thrale, Mr. Pickwick, and dozens more. Fashion and gentility hover round its stately homes. The Parade, North and South, and what adjoins the Parade, Pierrepoint Street, of quaint aspect, inspire a sort of awe. The Parade! What an antique twang about the name! And there it is: a genuine thing, and quite ready for company, with its capacious well-flagged promenade. Nothing, too, rouses such ideas of state and dignity as the Palladian Circus. There is a tone of mournful grandeur about it — something forlorn. Had it, in some freak of fashion, been abandoned and suffered, for a time at least, to go to neglect and be somewhat overgrown with moss and foliage, it would pass for some grand Roman ruin. There is a solemn greyish gloom about it; the grass in the enclosure is rank, long, and deep green.

Pulteney Street, too: what a state and nobility there is about it! So wide and so spacious; the houses with an air of grand solidity — no carvings or frittering work, but relying on their fine lines and proportion. To lodge there is an education, and the impression remains with one as of a sense of personal dignity from dwelling in such large and lofty chambers, grandly laid out with noble stairs and the like. The builders in this fine city would seem to have been born architects; nearly all the houses have claims to distinction, each has an expression and feeling of its own. The mellow blackened or browned tint adds to the effect. The mouldings are full of reserve, and chastened — suited exactly to the material. There is something, too, very stately about Laura Place, which opens on it.

From this point of view, Bath is a far more interesting city than Edinburgh.¹ Mr. Peach has written two most interesting little quartos on the “Historic Houses of Bath”; and Mr. Meehan, a well read bookseller, has compiled an admirable hand list or guide to these notable residences.

I don't know anything more strange and agreeable than the feeling of promenading these Parades, North and South — a feeling compounded of

awe, reverence, and exciting interest. The tranquil repose and dignity of these low, solid houses, the broad flagged Promenade, the unmistakable air of old fashion, the sort of reality and self-persuasion that they might in a moment be re-peopled with all these eminent persons — much as “Boz” called up the ghosts of the old mail-coach passengers in his telling ghost story — the sombre grey of the walls, the brightness of the windows: these elements join to leave an extraordinary impression. The houses on these Parades are charming from their solid proportions, adapted, as it were, to the breadth of the Parade. I always admire their compact, compressed, unpretending, yet substantial build, recalling the old Bruges mansions. Execrable, by the way, are the modern attempts seen side by side — feeble and incapable, not attempting any expression at all; extraordinary are the helplessness and lack of purpose which we find in our modern times. There is a row of meagre tenements beside the Abbey — attempts at pinnacled gables — which it is a sorrowful thing to look on, so cheap and starved is it. Even the newer shops in places like Milsom Street, with nothing to do but to copy what is before them, show the same platitude. Here and there you are constantly coming upon one of these beautifully designed old mansions piteously disguised, cut up in two or three it may be, or the lower portion fashioned into a shop. These have been well described by Mr. Peach.

1 Mr. T. Sturge Cotterell has prepared a singularly interesting map of Bath, in which all the spots honoured by the residence of famous visitors are marked down. It is very extraordinary the number and distinction of these personages.

No group of architectural objects is more effective or touches one more nearly than the buildings gathered round the Baths. There is something quaint and old-fashioned in the arrangement, and I am never tired of coming back to the pretty open colonnade, the faded yet dignified Pump-room, with the ambitious hotel and the solemn Abbey rising solemnly behind. Then there is the delightful Promenade opposite, under the arcades — a genuine bit of old fashion — under whose arches the capricious Fanny Burney often strolled. Everything about this latter conglomeration — the shape of the ground, and even the older portion of the municipal buildings, with their elegant decorations, sculptured garlands, &c. — bespeak the

influence of the graceful Adam, whose pupil or imitator Mr. Baldwin may have been.

“Boz’s” description of the tarnished Pump-room answers to what is seen now, save as to the tone of the decorations. I say “Boz’s,” for Pickwick, it should be recollected, was not actually acknowledged by the author under his proper name. It was thought that the well-known and popular “Boz” of the “Sketches” would attract far more than the obscure C. Dickens. Now “Boz” and the Sketches have receded and are little thought of. “Boz” and Pickwick go far better together than do Dickens and Pickwick. There is an old-fashioned solemnity over this Pump-room which speaks of the classical taste over a hundred years ago. How quaint and suitable is the inscription “Apitrov fiiv Hup” in the faded gilt characters. It is exactly suited — as to proportions — to its place. Within it is one stately chamber, not altered a bit since the day, fifty-three years ago, that “Boz strolled in and wrote his description. As I sat with a friend beside me in the newly finished concert-room, which is in happy keeping, I called up the old genial Pickwick promenading about under the direction of Bantam, M.C., and the genial tone of the old gaiety and good spirits. There is still to be seen the ugly Tompion clock (Tompion was a maker of celebrity) and the statue of Nash, M.C., in his niche, and the inscriptions, and the visitors’ book, and the bar with the row of glasses.

This “Tompion Clock,” which is carefully noted by “Boz,” seems to have been always regarded as a sort of monument. It is like an overgrown eight-day clock, without any adornment and plain to a degree — no doubt relying upon its Tompion works. It is in exactly the same place as it was sixty years ago, and goes with the old regularity. Nay, for that matter, it stands where it did a hundred years ago — in the old recess by Nash’s statue and inscription, and was no doubt ordered at the opening of the rooms. In an old account of Bath, at the opening of the century, attention is called to the Tompion clock with a sort of pride. I thought I had done with this eternal “Tompion Clock” in these quotations; but, to my astonishment, I came on it once more in Brayley’s large collection: “The Clock by Tompion, &c.” Neither is it passed over in the more modern guide-books.

The steep and shadowy Gay Street, which leads up to the inviting Crescent and the more sombre Queen Square, affects one curiously. Ascending, we see on the left a modest, compact-looking mansion — the Bath houses are rarely more than two or three stories high — and the only

one in the street that displays sculptured decorations. There lived and died Mrs. Piozzi. The Johnsonian must look on it with reverence and even with awe; for a perfect tide of incidents and associations rushes on him at the name, calling up the quick and sparkling vitality of the mercurial lady. Now it seems but her mausoleum ; and lower down at the corner, on the other side, we come upon another brilliant woman's home, with stone bow windows — introduced, I fancy, at a later period. Fanny Burney was a delightful creature, full of the true comedy vein, and many of her scenes are more sparkling than Boswell's. Well, here she lived in her heyday, and before her disastrous "come down " — her marriage, which was foolish as that of her friend. It may be said that all the buildings in Bath are placed most judiciously. We come on them unexpectedly, and find them just where they ought to be. Each has its tone and fitting atmosphere. How delightful to find ourselves stumbling, as it were, on the grand Circus, with its solemn and stately buildings, which contrasts so well with the bright open gaiety of the Crescent! I like this Roman gloom of the Circus, its comparative desolation and solemn old fashion.

The old Assembly Rooms is close to the Circus, between Alfred Street and Bennett Street — a stately, dignified pile, in the best classical style of Bath. One looks on it with a sort of mysterious reverence, and it seems charged with all sorts of memories of old bygone state; for hither all the rank and fashion of Bath used to make its way of Assembly nights. Many years ago there was here given a morning concert to which I found my way, mainly for the purpose of calling up ghostly memories of the Thrales, and Doctor Johnson, and Miss Burney, and, above all, of Mr. Pickwick. Though the music was the immortal "Passion" of Bach, my eyes were travelling all the while from one piece of faded decoration to another. "Boz" never fails to secure the *tone* of any strange place he is describing. We all, for instance, have that pleased elated feeling on the first morning after our arrival over night at a new place — the general brightness, surprise, and air of novelty. We are willing to be pleased with everything, and pass from object to object with enjoyment. Now, all this is difficult to seize or describe. "Boz" does not do the latter, but he conveys it perfectly. We see the new arrivals seated at breakfast, the entrance of the Dowlers with the M.C., and the party setting off to see the "Lions," the securing tickets for the Assembly, the writing down their names in "the book," Sam sent specially to Queen Square, and so on. All which is very exhilarating, and reveals one's own

feeling on such an occasion. The Pumproom books are formally mentioned in the regulations.

We see the Assembly Rooms in Phiz's plate, with its huge and elaborately framed oval mirrors and chandeliers. The dancing-room was set round with raised benches, after the pattern of Ridotto rooms abroad; there were card-rooms and tea-rooms. We note the sort of Adam or Chippendale chair on which the whist dowager is sitting with her back to us.

Considering that the rules of dress were so strict, pumps and silk stockings being of necessity, we may wonder how it was that the President of the Pickwick Club was admitted in his morning dress, his kerseymere tights, white waistcoat, and black gaiters. He never changed his dress for evening parties, save on one occasion. So accurate is the picture that speculation arises whether Phiz went specially to Bath to make his sketches; for the ideas caught in the most perfect way the whole *tone* of a Bath Assembly, and he could not have obtained this from descriptions by others. So, too, with his picture of the Crescent in Mr. Winkle's escapade. It will be remembered that "Boz" was rather particular about this picture, and suggested some minute alterations. Mr. Pickwick's costume was certainly in defiance of all rules and regulations. It is laid down in the regulations of Mr. Tyson, M.C., that "no gentleman in boots or half-boots be admitted into the rooms on ball nights or card nights." Halfboots would certainly apply to Mr. Pickwick's gaiters. Bantam the M.C., or "the Grand Master" as "Boz" oddly calls him, was drawn from life from an eccentric functionary named Jervois. I have never been quite able to understand his odd hypothesis about Mr. Pickwick being the gentleman who had the waters bottled and sent to Clapham. But how characteristic the dialogue on the occasion! It will be seen that this M.C. cannot credit the notion of anyone of such importance as Mr. Pickwick never having "*been in Ba-ath.*" His ludicrous and absurd, "Not bad — not bad! Good — good. He, he, re-markable! showed how it struck him. A man of such a position too; it was incredible. With a delightful conviction of this theory, he began: "It is long — *very long*, Mr. Pickwick, *since you drank the waters* — it appears an age." Mr. Pickwick protested that it was certainly long since he had drunk the waters, and his proof was that he had never been in Bath in his life! After a moment's reflection the M.C. saw the solution. "Oh, I see; yes, yes; good, good; better and better. You are the gentleman residing on Clapham Green who lost the use of your limbs from imprudently taking cold *after port wine*, who could

not be moved in consequence of acute suffering, and who had the water from the King's Bath bottled at 103 degrees and sent by waggon to his bedroom in town, where he bathed, sneezed, and same day recovered." This amusing concatenation is, besides an admirable and very minute stroke of character, and the frivolous M.C. is brought before us perfectly.¹

What a capital touch is that when he saw young Lord Mutanhead approaching. "Hush! draw a little nearer, Mr. Pickwick. You see that splendidly dressed young man coming this way — the richest young man in Bath?"

"You don't say so!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes, you'll hear his voice in a moment, Mr. Pickwick. He'll speak to me." Particular awe and reverence could not be better expressed,

¹ Mr. Bantam could fairly well afford to dress as handsomely as he is described; his fees, collections, &c., came to six or seven hundred a year.

It is curious how accurate the young fellow was in all his details. He describes the ball as beginning at "precisely twenty minutes before eight o'clock"); and according to the old rules it had to begin as soon after seven as was possible. "Stay in the tea-room and take your sixpenn'orth " — Mr. Dowler's advice — was after a regulation "that everyone admitted to the tea-rooms on dress nights shall pay 6d. for tea."

The M.C.'s visit to Mr. Pickwick was a real carrying out the spirit of the regulations, in which it was requested that "all strangers will give the M.C. an opportunity of being introduced to them before they themselves are entitled to that attention and respect."

"The ball nights in Ba-ath," said Mr. Bantam, "are moments snatched from Paradise, rendered bewitching by music, beaut)', elegance, fashion, etiquette, and — and — above all, by the absence of tradespeople, who are quite inconsistent with Paradise, and who have an amalgamation of themselves at the Guildhall every fortnight, which is, to say the least, remarkable. Good-bye, good-bye;" and, protesting all the way downstairs that he was most satisfied and most delighted and most overpowered and most flattered, Angelo Cyrus Bantam, M.C., stepped into a very elegant chariot that waited at the door, and rattled off. A perfect and spirited description of this airy fribble. One little touch alone is *de trop* and affected — " who are quite inconsistent with Paradise."

We all feel an interest in that capital character, Mr. Dowler, whom I always suspect to have been lightly sketched from “Boz’s” then new friend, the late John Forster. Of course, at the time he had not yet thoroughly become acquainted with the critic’s rather despotic fashions, and looked on him rather as an influential patron, with whom he would hardly venture to take such a liberty. Still, the likeness is extraordinary. John Forster was a true and fast friend to all who had the happiness of being his friends; but his methods were those of Mr. Dowler, who does everything as John Forster would have done it “Are you going to Bath?” he asked at the coach offices. “I am, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick. “And these other gentlemen?” “They are going also,” said Mr. Pickwick. “I’ll be damned if you’re going inside,” said the strange man. “Not all of us,” said Mr. Pickwick. “No, not all of you. I’ve taken two places. If they try to squeeze six people into this infernal box that only holds four, I’ll take a post chaise and bring an action. I’ve paid my fare. It won’t do, &c.” Exactly like him was his warm patronage of Mr. Pickwick at Bath, his at once bringing the M.C. “Bantam,” said Mr. Dowler, “Mr. Pickwick and his friends are strangers. They must put their names down. *Where’s the book?*” Here Forster *ipse loquitur*. The M.C. meekly declared it should be forthcoming; on which Dowler engaged to bring his friends to the Pump-room. “This is a long call. It’s time to go. I shall be here in an hour. *Come.*” Like Forster, Dowler had an amiable, gentle wife. At the ball or assembly we hear him: ““ Anybody here?” inquired Mr. Dowler suspiciously.”

But what most realises the good but impetuous Forster is Bowler’s speech at the Assembly Rooms, “Take your sixpenn’orth. They lay on hot water and call it tea. Drink it,” said Mr. Dowler in a loud voice, *directing Mr. Pickwick.*” This was exactly the deceased critic — ”directing” was his way.

I have often wondered why Phiz and his coadjutor did not choose for a subject the scene of “the swarry.” The inimitable figures of Tuckle, Whiffers, and Fred — the affected gentleman in blue — and Mr. Smauker himself would have come out in a racy fashion. But the truth is nothing could have been more judicious and more practical than the selection made, the subjects being confined to the strict business of the story. Other artists have tried their hand on these tempting passages, but somehow always with an indifferent success. They are too episodical.

Nothing is more gratifying to genuine Pickwickians than to find how all these old memories of the book are fondly cherished in the good city. All the Pickwickian localities are identified, and the inhabitants are eager in every way to maintain that Mr. Pickwick belongs to them, and had been with them. We should have had his room in the White Hart pointed out, and it would have been "slept in" by Americans and others, had it still been left to stand. Not long since the writer went to the good old city for the pleasant duty of "preaching Pickwick," as he has done in many places. There is an antique building or temple not far from the Parade, where an old society of the place — the Bath Literary and Scientific Institute — holds its meetings, and here to a crowded gathering, under the presidency of Mr. Austin King, the subject was gone into. It was delightful for the Pickwickian stranger to meet so appreciative a response, and many curious details were mentioned. At the close — such is the force of the delusion — we were all discussing Mr. Pickwick and his movements here and there, with the same *conviction* as we should have had in the case of Miss Burney, or Mrs. Piozzi, or Dr. Johnson.

The whole atmosphere was congenial, and there was an old world, old-fashioned air over the rooms. It was delightful talking of Mr. Pickwick's Bath adventures in Bath.

Nor is there anything unreasonably fantastical in these speculations. Bantam lived, as we know, in St. James's Square — that very effective enclosure, with its solemn houses and rich deep greenery, that recall our own Fitzroy Square. No. 14 was his house, and this, it was ascertained, was the actual residence of the living M.C. How bold, therefore, of "Boz" to send Sam up to the very square! Every one, too, could point out Mrs. Craddock's house in the Circus — at least, it was one of two. It was No. 15 or 16, because at the time there were only a couple in the middle which were let in lodgings, the rest being private houses. This was fairly reasonable. But how accurate was "Boz"! No doubt he had some friends who were quartered in lodgings here.

I scarcely hoped to find the scene of the footmen's "swarry" tracked out, but so it was. On leaving Queen Square in company with Mr. Smauker to repair to the scene of the festivity, Sam set off walking "towards High Street," then "turned down a bye-street," and would "soon be there." This bye-street was one turning out of Queen Square at the corner next Bantam's house; and a few doors down we come to a rather shabby-looking "public"

with a swinging sign, on which is inscribed “The Beaufort Arms “ — a two-storied, three-windowed house. This in the book is called a “greengrocer’s shop,” and is firmly believed to be the scene of “the swarry,” on the substantial ground that the Bath footmen assembled here regularly as at their club. The change from a public to a greengrocer’s scarcely affects the point. The uniforms of these gentlemen’s gentlemen were really splendid, as we learn from the text — rich plushes, velvets, gold lace, canes, &c. There is no exaggeration in this, for natives of Bath have assured me they can recall similar displays at the fashionable church — of Sundays — when these noble creatures, arrayed gorgeously as “generals,” were ranged in lines “waiting their missuses,” or, rather, *pace* Mr. John Smauker, employers. At this greengrocer’s, where the Bath footmen had their “swarry,” the favourite drink was “cold srub and water,” or “gin and water sweet;” also punch. “Srub,” a West Indian drink, has now altogether disappeared. It sounds strange to learn that a fashionable footman should consult “a copper timepiece which dwelt at the bottom of a deep watch-pocket, and was raised to the surface by means of a black string with a copper key.” A *copper* watch seems extraordinary, though we have now those of gun metal.

The Crescent, with its fine air and fine view, always strikes one with admiration as a unique and original monument, the size and proportions are so truly grand. The whole scene of Mr. Winkle’s escapade here is extraordinarily vivid, and so protracted, while Mrs. Dowler was waiting in her sedan for the door to be opened, that it has the effect of imprinting the very air, look, and tone of the Royal Crescent on us. We seem to be waiting with her and the chairmen. It seems the most *natural* thing in the world. The houses correspond almost exactly with Phiz’s drawing.

Pickwick, it has been often pointed out, is full of amusing “oversights,” which are pardonable enough, and almost add to the “fun” of the piece. At the opening Mr. Pickwick is described as carrying his portmanteau — in the picture it is a carpet-bag. The story opens in 1827, but at once Mr. Jingle begins to talk of being present at the late Revolution of 1830. The George and Vulture is placed in two different streets. Old Weller is called Samuel. During the scene at the Royal Crescent we are told that Mrs. Craddock threw up the drawing-room window “just as Mr. Winkle was rushing into the chair.” She ran and called Mr. Dowler, who rushed in just as Mr. Pickwick threw up the other window, “when the first object that met the

gaze of both was Mr. Winkle bolting into the sedan chair," into which he had bolted a minute before.

The late Charles Dickens the younger, in the notes to his father's writings, affects to have discovered an oversight in the account of the scene in the Circus. It is described how Winkle "took to his heels and tore round the Crescent, hotly pursued by Dowler and the coachman. He kept ahead; the door was open as he came round the second time," &c. Now, objects the son, the Crescent is only a half circle; there is no going round it, you must turn back when you come to the end. He is supposed to have been thinking of the Circus. Hardly — for he knew both well — and Circus and Crescent are things not to be confused. The phrase was a little loose; but, as the Circus was curved, "round" is not inappropriate, and he meant that Winkle turned when he got to the end, ran round, and ran back.

Then, we are told, if it were theatre night, perhaps the visitors met at the theatre. Now, did Mr. Pickwick ever go? This is an open question. Is the chronicler here a little obscure, as he is speaking of "the gentlemen" *en bloc*! Perhaps he did, perhaps he didn't, as "Boz" might say. On his visit to Rochester it does not appear that he went to see his "picked-up" friend Jingle perform.

The Bath Theatre is in the Saw Close, next door to Beau Nash's picturesque old house. The old grey front, with its blackened mouldings and sunk windows, is still there; but a deep vestibule or entrance, with offices, has been built out in front, which, as it were, thrusts the old wall back — an uncongenial mixture. Within, the house has been reconstructed, as it is called, so that Mr. Palmer, or Dimond, or any of the old Bath lights, to say nothing of Mr. and Mrs. Siddons, would not recognise it. Attending it one night, I could not but recall the old Bath traditions, when this modest little house supplied the London houses regularly with the best talent, and "From the Theatre Royal, Bath," was a delightful inducement set forth on the bill.

After his brilliant, genial view of the old watering-place it is a surprise to find "Boz" speaking of it with a certain acerbity and even disgust. Over thirty years later, in 1869, he was there, and wrote to Forster: "The place looks to me like a cemetery, which the dead have succeeded in rising and taking. Having built streets of their old gravestones, they wander about scantily, trying to look alive — a dead failure." And yet, what ghostly recollections must have come back to him as he walked those streets, or as he passed by the Saracen's Head in Walcot, where he had put up in those

old days, full of brightness, ardour, and enthusiasm; but not yet the famous “Boz”! Bath folk set down this jaundiced view of their town to a sort of pique at the comparative failure of the Guild dramatic performance at the Old Assembly Rooms, where, owing to the faulty arrangement of the stage, hardly a word could be heard, to the dissatisfaction of the audience. The stage, it seems, was put too far behind the proscenium, “owing to the headstrong perversity of Dickens, who never forgave the Bath people.” Charles Knight, it was said, remonstrated, but in vain. “Boz,” however, was not a man to indulge in such feelings, and the idea is far fetched.

There had, however, been a previous visit to Bath, in company with Maclise and Forster, to see Landor, who was then living at No. 35 St. James’s Square — a house become memorable because it was there that the image of his “Little Nell” first suggested itself. The enthusiastic Landor used, in his “tumultuous” fashion, to proclaim that he would set fire to the house and burn it to the ground, to prevent its being profaned by less sacred associations! He had done things even more extravagant than this, and would take boisterous roars of laughter as his odd compliment was discussed.

The minuteness of his record of the gaieties shows how amused and interested “Boz” was in all that he saw. Nothing escaped him of the routine, day, hour, and place; all is given, even the different rooms at the Assembly House. “In the ball-room, the long cardroom, the octagon card-room, the staircases, the passages, the hum of many voices and the sound of many feet were perfectly bewildering; dresses rustled, feathers waved, lights shone, and jewels sparkled. There was the music, not of the quadrille band, for it had not yet commenced, &c.” Here Bantam, M.C., arrived at precisely twenty minutes before eight, “to receive the company.” And such company! “Brilliant eyes, lighted up with pleasurable expectation, gleamed from every side, and, look where you will, some exquisite form glided gracefully through the throng, and was no sooner lost than it was replaced by another as dainty and bewitching;” the warmth of the description showing how delighted was the young man with all he saw. But how did he secure admission? — for it was a highly fashionable company; there were vouchers and tickets to be secured. But these were slight difficulties for our brilliant “pushful” young man. He could make his way, and his mission found him interest. He certainly saw as much of Bath as anyone could in the time. Yet» gay and sprightly as his account of Bath, there may have been a

reason why “Boz” may not have recalled the place with pleasurable feelings. It will be recollected that after giving a few lines to the account of Mr. Pickwick and friends being set down at the White Hart, he carries them off at once to lodgings in the Crescent. That first-class hotel was, alas! not open to the poor, overworked reporter; and he could tell of nothing that went forward within its portals. Hotel life on a handsome scale was not for him, and he was obliged to put up at far humbler quarters, a sort of common inn.

There is nothing more quaint or interesting than this genuine antique — the Saracen’s Head in Walcot. It may pair off with the old White Horse in the Canongate, where “Great Sam” put up for a night. It is surely the most effective of all the old inns one could see. It has two faces, and looks into two different streets, with its double gables, and date (1713) inscribed on a tablet outside. It is a yellow, well-worn little building. And you enter through darkened tunnels, as it were, cut through the house, coming into a strange yard of evident antiquity, with a steep, ladder-like flight of stone steps that leads up to a window much like the old Canongate houses. Here, then, it was that “Boz” put up, and here are preserved traditions and relics of his stay. One of the tales is that, after some exuberant night during the election he would light his candle, and, having to cross the court, would have it blown out half a dozen times, when he would go back patiently to relight it. They show his chair, and a jug out of which he drank, but one has not much faith in such chairs and jugs; they always seem to be supplied to demand, and must be found to gratify the pilgrims.

One of the examination queries which might have found a place in Mr. Calverley’s paper of questions is this: When did Mr. Pickwick sit down to *make entries in his journal*, and spend half an hour in so doing? — At Bath, on the night of Mr. Winkle’s race round the Crescent. What was this journal, or why did he keep it, or why is this the only allusion to it? Mr. Snodgrass was the appointed historiographer of the party, and his “notes” are often spoken of and appealed to as the basis of the chronicle. But half an hour, as I say, was the time the great man seems to have allotted to his posting up the day’s register: “Mr. Pickwick shut up the book, wiped his pen *on the bottom of the inside of his coat-tail*, and opened the drawer of the inkstand to put it carefully away.” How particular — how real all this is! This it is that gives the living force to the book, and to the persuasion — irresistible almost — that it is all about *some living person*. I have often

wondered how it is that this book of “Boz’s” has such an astounding power of development, such a fertility in engendering other books, and what is the secret of it! Scott’s astonishing Waverley series, Thackeray’s “Vanity Fair,” “Boz’s” own “Nicholas Nickleby,” “Oliver Twist,” in fact, not one of the whole series save “the immortal ‘Pickwick,’” has produced anything in the way of books or commentaries. I believe it is really owing to this. “Boz” was a great admirer of Boswell’s equally immortal book. I have heard him speak of it. He attempted parodies of it even. He knew all the turns, the Johnsonian twists, “Why, sirs, &c,” and used them in his letters. He was permeated with the Johnsonian ether; that detail, that description of trifling things that was in Boswell attracted him, and he felt it; and the fact remains that Pickwick is written on *the principles* — no copy — of the great biography, and that “Boz applied to a mere fictional story what was related in the account of a living man. Bozzy’s very natural and unaffected narrative of details suggested all this to “Boz” I firmly believe that this is the true solution. And it is really curious that Boswell’s “Life of Johnson” should be the only other book that tempts people to the same rage for commentary, illustrations, and speculations. These are of exactly the same character in both books. But to return.

The MS. that Mr. Pickwick so oddly found in the drawer of his inkstand at Mrs. Craddock’s, Royal Crescent, Bath, offered another instance of “Boz’s” ingenious methods of introducing episodic tales into his narrative. He was often hard put to it to find an occasion: they were highly useful to fill a space when he was pressed for matter. He had the strongest *penchant* for this sort of thing, and it clung to him through life. Those in “Pickwick” are exceedingly good, full of spirit and “go,” save one, the “Martha Lobbs” story, which is a poorish thing. So good are the others that they have been taken out and published separately. They were no doubt written for magazines, and were lying by him, but his Bath story — “The True Legend of Prince Bladud” — was written specially. It is quite in the vein of Elia’s Roast Pig story, and very gaily told. He had probably been reading some local guide-book, with the mythical account of Prince Bladud, and this suggested to him his own humorous version. At the close he sets Mr. Pickwick a-yawning several times, who, when he had arrived at the end of this little manuscript, which certainly could not have been compressed into “a couple of sheets of writing-paper,” but would have covered at least ten pages, replaced it in the drawer, and “then, with a *countenance of the*

utmost weariness, lighted his chamber candle and went upstairs to bed.” And here, by the way, is one of the amusing oversights which give such a piquancy to Pickwick. Before he began to read his paper we are carefully told that Mr. Pickwick “unfolded it, lighted his bedroom candle that it might burn up by the time he had finished.” It was Mr. C. Kent who pointed this out to him, when “Boz” seized the volume and humorously made as though he would hurl it at his friend.

Anyone interested in Bath must of necessity be interested in Bristol, to which, as all know, Mr. Winkle fled after the unhappy business in the Circus. He found a coach at the Royal Hotel — which no longer exists — a vehicle which, we are told, went the whole distance “twice a day and more “ with a single pair of horses. There he put up at the Bush, where Mr. Pickwick was to follow him presently. The Bush — a genuine Pickwick inn, where Mr. Pickwick first heard the news of the action that was to be brought against him — stood in Corn Street, near to the Guildhall, the most busy street in Bristol; but it was taken down in 1864, and the present Wiltshire Bank erected on the site.

It must have been awkward for Winkle to present himself once more at Mrs. Craddock’s in the Crescent. How was the incident to be explained save either at his own expense or at that of Mr. Dowler? If Dowler were supposed to have gone in pursuit of him, then Mr. Winkle must have fled; and if he were supposed to have gone to seek a friend, then Dowler was rather compromised. No doubt both gentlemen agreed to support the one story that they had gone away for mutual satisfaction, and had made it up.

Nothing is more wonderful than “Boz’s” propriety in dealing with his incidents, a propriety that is really instinctive. Everything falls out in the correct, natural way. For instance, Mr. Pickwick having received such a shock at the Bush — the announcement of the Bardell action — was scarcely in heart to resume his jollity and gaieties at Bath. We might naturally expect a resumption of the frolics there. He accordingly returned there; but we are told curtly, “The remainder of the period which Mr. Pickwick had assigned as the duration of his stay at Bath passed over without the occurrence of anything material. Trinity term commenced on the expiration of its first week. Mr. Pickwick and his friends returned to London; and the former gentleman, attended of course by Sam, straightway repaired to his old quarters at the George and Vulture.”

And now in these simple sentences have we not the secret of the great attraction of the book? Who would not suppose that this was a passage from a biography of some one that had lived? How carefully minute! and yet how naturally the time is accounted for — “passed over without the occurrence of anything material.” It is impossible to resist this air of *vraisemblance*.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY AT HIND HEAD



By Thomas Wright

From: *Hind Head, or the English Switzerland and its Literary and Historical Associations*, Thomas Wright, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd., 1898, p.41-46

A Roistering Humorist.

In the preceding chapter we spoke of Mr. Baring-Gould's story of the Punch Bowl. Another well-known novel that has reference to the locality is Charles Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*, where may be read the experiences on Hind Head of Nicholas and poor Smike.

Charles Dickens, it is interesting to recollect, was born at Landport, near Portsmouth, the town to which Nicholas and Smike were journeying. His early days were spent at Chatham, but in 1823 the family removed to London, where they fell into poverty, and Charles was at last obliged to work in a blacking factory. Rosier days arriving, he was sent to school, Wellington House Academy, the original of Salem House in the quasi-autobiographical *David Copperfield*. Subsequently he was placed with an attorney of Gray's Inn. His *Pickwick*, which appeared in 1837, was followed by *Oliver Twist*. Then came *Nicholas Nickleby*, the most hilarious, and on the whole the most pleasing of all his novels. Mr. Andrew Lang, however, in his delightful "Essays in Little," awards the palm to *Pickwick*. But *Nicholas Nickleby* has all the vivacity, piquancy, and humour of *Pickwick* with less vulgarity, and with fewer drunkards. On the other hand it has more buoyancy than the serious *Copperfield*, for *Copperfield* is serious, despite the joviality of the inimitable Micawber. The reason of the excellency of *Nickleby* is obvious. Dickens was at the summit of his fame, trouble had not yet left its print upon him, and he was in roistering spirits. Miss Squeers, Mr. Mantalini, Mr. Crummles, John Browdie, the Kenwigses,

what entertaining company they are! After saying this, it may seem ungracious to complain of the two stupid tales, *The Five Sisters of York*, and *The Baron of Grogzwig*, inserted in the text, after the mischievous example of Fielding. However the reader can easily skip them.

Dickens and the Punch Bowl.

Nicholas Nickleby, it will be remembered, proceeds to Yorkshire, and becomes assistant to Mr. Squeers of odious memory. Stung to madness by Squeers's brutality, Nicholas gives that gentleman a thrashing, and then trudges southward, in company with a poor half-witted youth named Smike. After various adventures in London they set out for Portsmouth, where Nicholas hoped to obtain employment, perhaps on board a ship. Their route lay through Kingston and Godalming, where they passed a night. The next day brought them to the foot of Hind Head; and no doubt Dickens is really describing a tramp of his own, for, at the time, he was very fond of making long excursions on foot out of London. Here is Hind Head as seen through Dickens's eyes:

It was a harder day's journey than that they had already performed, for there were long and weary hills to climb; and in journeys, as in life, it is a great deal easier to go down hill than up. However, they kept on with unabated perseverance, and the hill has not yet lifted its face to heaven that perseverance will not gain the summit of at last.

They walked upon the rim of the Devil's Punch Bowl, and Smike listened with greedy interest as Nicholas read the inscription upon the stone which, reared upon that wild spot, tells of a foul and treacherous murder committed there by night. The grass on which they stood had once been dyed with gore, and the blood of the murdered man had run down, drop by drop, into the hollow which gives the place its name. "The Devil's Bowl, "thought Nicholas, as he looked into the void, "never held fitter liquor than that."

At first I decided to omit the last sentence, but probably it is better, not to eliminate, but to gibbet it. Surely a more inane utterance was never made. A foul tenement in a London slum might be a fit place for a murder, but not a wild and lovely declivity carpeted with ferns and heather. And, yet after all, it was a suitable remark from so colourless and limp a creature as Nicholas

Nickleby. Curiously enough, nearly all Dickens's heroes are uninteresting persons of small mental calibre. None could excel him in depicting:

Thieves, paupers, women of the town,
And the black Thames in which they drown.

He made inimitable wags, disreputables, and devils, but insupportable saints. However, no tint of words, by what artist soever applied, can sully the beauty of the Punch Bowl.

A Golden Saying.

But if the reference to the Punch Bowl is detestable, the reference to the summit of Hind Head is just as felicitous. The inhabitants of the English Switzerland should take it as a compliment that it was their hill that suggested the golden remark: "The hill has not yet lifted its face to heaven that perseverance will not gain the summit of at last." For this, we can forgive Dickens even for the paragraph that succeeded it. Periander of Corinth, hundreds of years before, had said "Nothing is impossible to industry," men of grit in all ages have used similar expressions, but Dickens's variation is none the less welcome. It is a truth that cannot be hammered in too often or too vigorously.

On the Portsmouth Road. But to continue; —

Onward they kept with steady purpose, and entered at length upon a wide and spacious tract of downs, with every variety of little hill and plain to change their verdant surface. Here, there shot up almost perpendicularly into the sky a height so steep, as to be hardly accessible to any but the sheep and goats that fed upon its sides, and there stood a huge mound of green, sloping and tapering off so delicately, and merging so gently into the level ground, that you could scarce define its limits. Hills swelling above each other, and undulations shapely and uncouth, smooth and rugged, graceful and grotesque, thrown negligently side by side, bounded the view in each direction; while frequently, with unexpected noise, there uprose from the ground a flight of crows, who, cawing and wheeling round the nearest hills, as if uncertain of their course, suddenly poised themselves upon the wing

and skimmed down the long vista of some opening valley with the speed of very light itself.

By degrees the prospect receded more and more on either hand, and as they had been shut out from rich and extensive scenery, so they emerged once again upon the open country. The knowledge that they were drawing near their place of destination, gave them fresh courage to proceed; but the way had been difficult, and they had loitered on the road, and Smike was tired. Thus twilight had already closed in, when they turned off the path to the door of a road-side inn, yet twelve miles short of Portsmouth.

At the inn Nicholas fell in with Crummies the actor. They journey to Portsmouth together, and he and Smike join the company. How Nicholas and Smike subsequently returned to London, how Nicholas chastised Sir Mulberry Hawk, who had insulted his sister, how he met the Cheerybles, and entered their office, how Smike turned out to be the son of Nicholas's wicked uncle, how both Nicholas and his sister married happily, and the end of poor Smike — all this is as much history as the death of Rufus or the Wars of the Roses.

Nickleby's Successors.

At the time Dickens wrote *Nickleby* he was a dapper little man of twenty four, delighting in crimson velvet waistcoats, multi-coloured neckties with two breast pins joined by a little gold chain, and yellow kid gloves. He was a perfect toucan for colour; and even later in life he often wore as much jewellery as the proprietor of a travelling menagerie.

His next novel was *The Old Curiosity Shop*, 1840-41; *Martin Chuzzlewit* appeared in 1843, *Dombey*, 1846-8 ; *David Copperfield*, written partly at Broadstairs, and partly at Bonchurch, 1849-50; *Little Dorrit*, 1855-57; *Our Mutual Friend*, 1864-65; and the unfinished *Edwin Drood* in 1870.

For beauty Dickens had no eye. He was born in a commonplace house (though he couldn't help that), he lived at different times in some dozen of the very ugliest houses in London, and finally, in 1856, he bought, and settled in, the out-of-the-way, unlovely Gad's Hill Place (near Rochester), which he had yearned for from his boyhood. Domestic troubles darkened the second half of his life: and though his later works have scintillations of

humour, he who is in search of tumultuous hilarity must turn to his masterpieces.

When Prometheus, with the vulture tearing at his vitals, makes an attempt to be funny, his laughter is apt to sound hollow.

The Literary Crassus.

A great part of his life he wasted in reading, in public, selections from his works; and the consequent strain told upon his health. But his love of excitement, his desire to drown the recollection of his troubles, his intense vanity, and above all his eagerness for wealth — for he was the literary Crassus — forbade him to stop.

Late in 1869 he lunched with George Eliot, and at table told the story of the dream of President Lincoln the last night of his life. The President thought he was alone in a boat on a great river, and the dream ended by his exclaiming: “I drift — I drift — I drift.” “Dickens,” adds George Eliot, “told this very finely. I thought him looking dreadfully shattered.”

He died at Gad’s Hill on 9th of June 1870, at the comparatively early age of 58.



CHARLES DICKENS.

Beyond question, Dickens is the greatest humorist the world has seen. His historical story, "The Tale of Two Cities," a mere secondary reflection of Carlyle's "French Revolution," is a hopeless failure. Even Sidney Carton does not save it. Dickens exhibits no pathos, except in a few unpremeditated passages. The last man who wept, or thought he wept, over Little Nell has long "to the dust gone down."

I, for one, am sealed of the tribe of Charles, but I am not blind to his failings. As a man he could not bear fame. It spoilt him and rendered him foolish. In his younger days his bonhomie, his brightness, his good humour, were the light of any society; as he advanced in years he appeared to all, except a small band of bosom friends, in a very unpleasing light. His insolence and arrogance, on occasion, caused as much pain and indignation as surprise. He was one of the few really great men whom it is little loss not to have met. But what a debt of gratitude we owe him!" No other man," as Mr. Lang truly remarks," has caused so many sad hearts to be lifted up in laughter; no other has added so much mirth to the toilsome and perplexed life of men, of rich and poor, of learned and unlearned."

At Dorking in this county may be seen "The Marquis of Granby" (The King's Head) made famous by Pickwick. It is now the Post Office, and the horse-trough in which the Rev. Mr. Stiggins was dipped has disappeared.

The life of Dickens has been written by his friend Forster. As I am myself engaged upon an exhaustive biography of Dickens, I scarcely like to describe my predecessor's as the most slovenly written and incomplete biography on the great scale ever produced by a man of ability. And yet it is the truth. Now Dickens, whatever his faults, took immense pains with everything he put his hand to, so if Forster's ghost meets Dickens's ghost in that "country from whose bourn no traveller returns," there will be fierce looks and high words. Forster will then be able to point down to my biography (which, whatever its shortcomings, will be the result of great labour and careful investigation), with the observation that but for his, it would never have been written. Dickens will immediately be appeased, his features will relax, as they were wont to do at Gad's when his admirers piled the flattery higher than usual, the ghosts will embrace, and I shall be the happy medium of reconciling two irate but not unworthy shades, who but for me might have imbued their hands with each other's — ether.

LITERARY GEOGRAPHY: THE COUNTRY OF DICKENS



By William Sharp



Doyle's Hall

LITERARY GEOGRAPHY.

THE COUNTRY OF DICKENS.

BY WILLIAM SHARP.

From: The Pall Mall Magazine, February 1903, p.237-247

WE have each our pet superstition. Some of a morning look for a text of augury, and go about the day's business in comfort, or it may be in tribulation. Others are affected by the apparition of a black cat. There are persons who jealously count the teastrays in the breakfast-cup; others as sane who rejoice or lament accordingly as the first individual they see is hale, a hunchback, or red-haired. A lady whom I know cannot abide three sparrows at once on the window-sill. With her, I believe, four would not constitute a menace; two would be unworthy of notice; possibly two and a robin might be considered verging on the perilous. The fad of the present confessor is to glance casually into a volume that must be taken up at random before he begins to commit his accumulated wisdom to paper. I believe (for the creatures of whim have vagaries, of course) that the proper thing to do is to glance thus at random into one or other book (blindly

selected) by the author to be written of. But this is not always feasible. As a rule, Pythagoras or Confucius does not lie handy by one's pipe; "Lear" (Edwin) and the "Bab Ballads" may have been appropriated by the "buttons"; and one does not habitually carry the Encyclopaedia Britannica and the Library of the World's Best Literature along with one's bag and tackle to an anglers' inn in Wales or to a Highland hostelry by hill or loch. Besides, the theme may not be an author awaiting the decorator or slater. It may be a subject "walking its wild lone" (to quote from Mr. Kipling's latest) — such as "logarithms," or "gnosticism," or the "binomial theorem." In such desperate straits the only hope is to seize the right alphabetical volume of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and then follow the example of Mr. Pott, the editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette*, or rather of Mr. Pott's critic, who, that great editor told Mr. Pickwick, compiled his erudite and amazing article on Chinese metaphysics by taking Vol. M of the Encyclopaedia and reading it through for "Metaphysics," and Vol. C and reading it through for "China" — "and then combined his information, sir."

So, when I began to write this article for Mr. Pott — I mean for the Editor of the Pall Mall Magazine — I carefully became casual as I approached the Dickens row on my bookshelves. The result was not what I hoped. I had trusted to *David Copperfield* or *Great Expectations*; it was *Bleak House*. I sighed, and opened at the first page which my forefinger thrust out "from the dim destiny of things." And here is what I read (the seeker will find it in the twenty-sixth chapter, in the dialogue between Phil Squod and Trooper George): —

"And so, Phil," says George of the shooting-gallery, after several turns in

silence, 'you were dreaming of the country last night?'

"'Yes, gov'ner.'

"'What was it like?'

"'I hardly know what it was like, gov'ner,' said Phil, considering.

"'How did you know it was the country?'

"'On account of the grass, I think. And the swans upon it,' says Phil, after further consideration.

"'What were the swans doing on the grass?'

Dickens alludes through the mouth of Phil Squod (as earlier in *Bleak House* in the chapter headed "Fog on the Essex Marshes, Fog on the Kentish Heights") —the scenery, too, of some of Dickens' finest backgrounds, as in *Great Expectations*—are the Cooling Flats beyond Higham and Cliffe, along the reach of Thames some seven miles from Gad's Hill. But, at the moment, I am not thinking of that desolate region; nor of its heart, Cooling Castle ruins and lonely Cooling churchyard, where poor



A favorite spot of Dickens: The Warwick Inn, near the Old Bailey.

silence, 'you were dreaming of the country last night?'

"'Yes, Guv'ner'

"'What was it like?'

"'I hardly know what it was like, gov'ner,' said Phil, considering.

"'How did you know it was the country?'

"'On account of the grass, I think. And the swans upon it,' says Phil, after further consideration.

"'What were the swans doing on the grass?'

"'They was a-eating of it, I expect, says Phil. . . .

"'The country,' says Mr. George, applying his knife and fork: '...why, I suppose you never clapped your eyes on the country, Phil?'

"'I see the marshes once,' says Phil, contentedly eating his breakfast.

"'What marshes?'

"'The marshes, commander,' returns Phil.

"'Where are they?'

"'I don't know where they are,' says Phil, 'but I see 'em, gov'ner. They was flat. And misty.'"

The marshes and the country to which little Pip was compelled by the villainous Magwitch to promise his return on the morrow with "a file and

wittles,” on the penalty of having his quaking little heart and small liver summarily removed from his trembling little body.

For I am thinking, instead, of the aptness of this page selected at random. It might be paraphrased (and augmented) thus:

Reader: “And so you were dreaming of the country of Dickens last night?”

Writer: “Yes, gov’ner.”

Reader: “What was it like?”

Writer: “I hardly know what it was like, gov’ner.”



Cooling Castle. (“Great Expectations.”)

Reader: “How did you know it was the country?”

Writer: “On account of the explicit directions. An’ the bits of colour, an’ the purple patches on it.”

Reader: “What were the purple patches doing there?”

Writer: “They were just a-enjoying o’ themselves, I think.”

Reader: “The country” [here the Reader waves his paper-knife admonishingly] ...” why, I suppose you never clapped your eyes on the country of Dickens!”

Writer: “I see the ‘This - Way Private ‘-way into the heart of it once, gov’ner” [this with a conscious sniff of superiority].

Reader: “What do you mean, man?”

Writer: “The country . . . an’ the purple patches, an’ the Thames grey, an’ the Thames mud, an’ — an’ — an’ the whole 0’ London, from Wapping Stairs to Wormwood Scrubbs.”

Reader: “Why, you’re mixing up town and country! I expect you see hits of country a-straddle on London streets!”

Writer: “No; I think I see all London, flying country-kites on each of the four winds.”

Reader: “You mean that in Dickens’ country it’s mostly London?”

Writer: “Pretty much so, commander.”

Reader: “And what about that Private Way you spoke of?”

Writer: “That lies through Dickens’ heart and mind, guv’ner. If you’ll go through the one and round the other, you’ll soon find your way to Dickens’ country. And a beautiful country it is. But it isn’t London.”



The Fulstaff Inn, Gad’s Hill

Reader: “And what do you mean by that?”

Writer: “I mean what I say, commander. For it’s a *painted* country, the picture of a country or sketches of bits of a country we see in Dickens-land; but London’s never far off, and Dickens just steps down from it as from a coach, and notes down and sketches free just what he sees. Then he — and we — feel the pull o’ London again, an’ it’s off for Fogtown we are and the Thames shores. He writes like a man who lives in a big town, and enjoys getting out of it for a bit: and he writes like a clever journalist often, with his eye on all the salient features: and he writes sometimes like a fine artist, selecting and ignoring and heightening, and giving the whole (and a lot more) in the fewest lines, and with every word alive and every sentence as well groomed as (let us say) your irreproachable self.”

Reader: “But there’s any amount of fine stuff in Dickens about the country.”

Writer: “Right you are, guv’ner. And especially about the sea and the sea-coast, which isn’t exactly country, but still isn’t town, any more than a gull on the Serpentine is a land-mew. But you see, commander, if you was to take *all* the country out o’ Dickens, why, Dickens would still remain, though we’d miss a lot.



The “old curiosity shop,” Lincoln’s Inn.

It's what's *in* the country he cared about. 'Give me London and let the rest go,' he would have said, if he'd had to make the choice."

Reader: "But you might say the same

It's what's *in* the country he cared about. 'Give me London, and let the rest go,' he would have said, if he'd had to make the choice."
READER: "But you might say the same



The part marked 1 is pre-eminently the Dickens country, from Yarmouth on the north to Dover on the south. Apart from *David Copperfield*, *Pickwick*, *Great Expectations*, etc., it comprises Gad's Hill and Broadstairs, for long the novelist's two favourite places of residence. Rochester (the Cloisterham, Dullborough, Mudfog, etc., of the novels) may be called its literary capital. (Several of the novels, mostly cast in London or other towns, run into No. 1, as, beside those named, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Bleak House*, etc.)

No. 2. For parts of *Oliver Twist*, *Old Curiosity Shop*, *Barnaby Rudge*, etc.

No. 3. Mainly for *Nicholas Nickleby* in its two sections, and also in its upper part for *Master Humphrey's Clock*.

No. 4. The country of *Martin Chuzzlewit* away from London.

No. 5. The country of *Dombey and Son*.

thing of Scott, or Thackeray, or Thomas Hardy!"

Writer: "Not a bit of it, commander. Scott and Thackeray always had 'nature' (the country, you know) in one hand and 'human nature' in the other; and wherever they dabbed the one they leavened it with the other, or whenever they worked a bit at the clay they always struck it up agin the other so that we might see it better and in better proportions. And what Scott did more than Thackeray, Thomas Hardy does more than Scott. Why, there's more 'country' in almost any chapter of *The Return of the Native* or

Far from the Madding Crowd, in *The Woodlanders* or *Under the Greenwood Tree*, than in the whole of Dickens.”

Reader: “Well, I’m tired of this discussion, anyhow.”

Writer: “So am I, gov’ner.”

But that, though crudely put, and with striking exceptions ready for arraignment against one, is pretty well “the way of it.” To map out Dickens’ country would be inordinately to map out London; and for that literary-geographical task a directory and not a magazine article would be requisite. If one could depict the London scenes associated with Dickens’ offspring, one would have a Topographical Survey that would vie with the masterpieces of the Ordnance Department. One might start with Captain Sim Tappertit, from *Paper Buildings*, and go north, west, south and east, finding hardly a street or square or court untrodden once of the clan of Dickens. One may hear much good and ill of Furnival’s Inn; but has it any chronicle better than that here (in the first months of his married life) Dickens wrote most of *Pickwick*? Hungerford Stairs may now be forgotten in Charing Cross station, but the name is in the sure keeping of *David Copperfield*. Rumour has it that Lincoln’s Inn Fields is no longer what it was; but the pilgrim will not forget No. 58, where Forster lived, and where Dickens read the MS. of *The Chimes* to Carlyle, Maclise and others, and where, too, Mr. Tulkinghorn, of *Bleak House*, had his abode. Much minor poetry has been written at or near Fountain Court, but none so enduring as the unversified episode of Tom Pinch and Ruth. “The Wooden Midshipman” may be hard to find, but the thirsty explorer in the City may mention Captain Cuttle and perchance be guided to the Minorities. In fact, anywhere, from Clerkenwell Green, where the Artful Dodger educated Oliver Twist in the way his right hand should go, to the “Spaniards’ Inn” at Hampstead, where Mr. Pickwick and Mrs. Bardell enjoyed tea; from Bow Bells, where to-day another Dombey & Son succeed without a Mr. Carker as manager, to that far suburban west that may almost be said to reach to Stoke Pogis, where not alone lies Gray, but also (in the pious wish of many) Wilkins Micawber, who sighed, on one occasion, to be laid with the rude forefathers of that particular hamlet — anywhere, I repeat, one might wander, with surety of being in Dickens-land, of coming upon some house, court, street, square, or locality associated with the personages of that marvellous tragicomedy, the “world” of Charles Dickens.

But in this article, which is one of a series to deal with the geography of the imagination, we are to follow “Boz,” if not into “the real country,” at least into the perhaps more seductive country of Dickens-land, or to those provincial towns and localities which he commandeered with his pen. I doubt if mention of Warwick Castle and Kenilworth and Leamington Priors, with all their associations with Mr. Dombey and the Hon. Mrs. Skewton, and Withers, the wan page, and Major Bagstock, with his “Where’s my scoundrel ?” — or of the far north “King’s Head,” at Barnard Castletown, to which Newman Noggs (when he mysteriously pulled Nicholas Nickleby’s leg as that youth left in the North coach) specially recommended the forlorn traveller on his way to Dotheboys Hall, for its ale and other advantages — or even of Portsmouth, with its memories of the talented Crummles family, Miss Snevellicci, Mr. and Mrs. Lillyvick, and Nicholas Nickleby’s brief theatrical career as Mr. Johnson — or even of Ipswich and the “Great White Horse Hotel,” where Mr. Pickwick had his “romantic” and embarrassing adventure with a middle-aged lady in yellow curl-papers — or even of that inn of inns, the “Maypole,” at Chigwell, that every Barnaby-Rudgian loves with an ideal passion, as the Moslem ecstatic dreams of the “replete with every comfort” oases of Paradise — or even . . . But no, there is one locality that gives (as surely as the others mentioned do not give) a quicker thrill to the Dickens enthusiast than mention of Shadwell and Wapping and Rotherhithe, of Limehouse Reach and Ratcliffe Highway, of all the gloom-and-comedy dock-land from Southwark Bridge to Mill wall: and that, of course, is Yarmouth — Yarmouth and its neighbourhood. . . . Blunderstone, where the Copperfields lived; Hopton, through which Barkis was wont to drowse behind the laziest horse in literature; and Gorleston, or Fritton Decoy, whence (in Barkis’ van) David Copperfield and Danl Peggotty and the stout lady who said she was proud to call herself a “Yarmouth Bloater” “viewed the prospect” seaward, and the whole inland circuit from Nelson’s Point, the tongue of land where Peggotty and Little Em’ly had their house. Is not the land sacred to the loves of Joram and Miss Omer, the Aucassin and Nicolette of the undertaking business . . . as well as to Little Em’ly and Peggotty and ‘Am the good and brave, to say nothing of that gastronomic juggler of a waiter at the “Angel Inn,” who “assisted” little Copperfield to “finish” his dinner.

Yes, in Dickensland, London has only one possible rival in the imagination. The rest is episodic. Here is “the other ode” of life.

And as we have nothing to do here with such minor places as America — despite Martin Chuzzlewit’s voyage to that country — nor with such out-of-the-way little places as Geneva, though it was here that so much of *Dombey and Son* was written, and here that, with a longing which was an ache of pain, Dickens so yearned for the London he loved, and wearied for the streets and street-life which, he said himself, were his best inspiration, — as, I say, we have nothing to do with chance visitations of any members of the Dickens world in Paris or elsewhere beyond English shores, let us begin at Yarmouth. This is a much simpler plan than to attempt the hundred gates of London, in an effort to travel with Mr. Pickwick, with Nicholas Nickleby, with David Copperfield, with Martin Chuzzlewit, and the many lesser Dickensian wayfarers from the metropolis: a plan suitable for the leisurely procedure of a book, not for the summary disposal of a magazine article. I have heard of an



Dickens-land: old inn. Thames side.

enthusiast who yearly repeats the Pickwickian pilgrimage. He drives in a fourwheeler (as did Mr. Pickwick) from Goswell Street; he has, with the cabby, a Pickwickian argument, on arrival at the ‘Golden Cross’ Hotel; and though, as Mr. Pickwick did, he cannot now travel by coach from that

hostelry, he starts almost as expeditiously from Charing Cross, whence (very often) local trains emulate the fastest coach. It is his lasting regret that no Mr. Alfred Jingle has as yet rescued him from irate cabby or other perils of street or station. He would give much to hear that rapid interjectionalist warn him to beware of some arch or buttress, at least of uncertain ladder or shaky plank:

“Terrible place — dangerous work — other day — five children — mother — tall lady, eating sandwiches — forgot the arch — crash — knock — children look round — m other’s head off — sandwich in her hand — no mouth to put it in — head of a family o(f — shocking — shocking.”

Now, that enthusiast makes an obvious mistake. It is like that of the gentleman who took his second wife along the route of his first honeymoon. Dame Chance abhors the fatuous. Of course, this Pickwickian of to-day never encountered an Alfred Jingle. Perhaps, if he had gone in the opposite direction, and talked politics, or chess, or the Siamese succession, something might have happened. But never along the line of another’s merry or romantic fortune!

It is a much better plan to follow the example of Mr. Micawber when he made up his mind to visit Canterbury. What close reader of *David Copperfield* can have forgotten Mrs. Micawber’s explanation to David, of how Mr. Micawber had been induced to think that there might be an opening for a man of his talent, in the Medway coal trade – and how he had decided that, clearly, the first step to be taken was to come and see the Medway. And the inn at Canterbury, where Mrs. Micawber reposed in the odoriferous parlour, under the print of a race horse, and Mr. Micawber lived with epicurean abandonment when he was not on the look-out for something to turn up (and he expressly spoke, it will be remembered, of “the great probability of something turning up in a Cathedral town”), had seemed to the Medwayan pilgrims a proper starting-point whence to explore the region of coal trade opportunities.

So we may follow Mr. Micawber’s example, and say that as there’s an opening for our talent as cicerone to Dickens’ country, we may as well go and look at the country first; and that something may turn up, in the way of an inspiration of something to say, at Yarmouth, though that isn’t in the country, but on the sea-shore.

But, after all, when one has reached Bloaterville (as it has wickedly been suggested to call the ancient burgh), what is there to see...what, that is, of

the Dickensian or Copperfeldian Yarmouth? A great town lives on the Yare, with a proud suburban villadom on the sea-front; big hotels stare the little old inns out of countenance. True, on that sea front, about a mile and a half away, near Gorleston Pier, there is a wooden “shanty” called Peggotty’s Hut. Unfortunately, the truth ends there.

the reader of *Daniel Copperfield* can have forgotten Mrs. Macawber's explanation to David, of how Mr. Macawber had been induced to think that there might be an opening, for a man of his talent, in the Medway coal trade—and how he had decided that, clearly, the first step to be taken was to come and see the Medway.

to explore the regions of coal-trade opportunities.

So we may follow Mr. Macawber's example, and say that, as there's an opening for our talent as *cessant* to Dickens' country, we may as well go and look at the country first; and that something may turn up, in the way of an



One of Dickens' Juvenile Sketches: *Scenery of London*

And the inn at Canterbury, where Mrs. Macawber regaled in the odoriferous pillow, under the print of a race horse, and Mr. Macawber lived with epicurean abandonment when he was not on the look-out for something to turn up (and he expressly spoke, it will be remembered, of “the great probability of something turning up in a Cathedral town”), had seemed to the Medway pilgrim a proper starting-point whence

inspiration of something to see, at Yarmouth, though that isn't in the country, but on the sea-shore.

But, after all, when one has reached Blousterville (as it has wickedly been suggested to call the ancient borough, what is there to see? . . . what, that is, of the Dickensian or Copperfeldian Yarmouth? A great town lies on the Yare, with a proud suburban villadom on the sea-front; big hotels stare the little old inns out of

No, there is not much to be seen of the Yarmouth of Dan'l and Little Em'ly, of 'Am and David and the seductive Steerforth. Perhaps at dusk one can imagine, at the south end of the Marine Parade, a black upturned barge or smack, with little windows and a slim iron funnel doing duty as a chimney. If so, the gifted visionary may also hear the deep tumultuous roar of Dan'l Peggotty singing “When the stormy winds do blow, do blow, do blow,” or Little Em'ly's sweet laughter, or Steerforth warbling tears into the eyes of his companions. But the pilgrim to that spot — then solitary at the upper reach of a tract of sand and grass, and between the Wellington Pier and the South Battery — may much more likely see clusters of exuberant trippers, or hear the strains of the Jewish harp or the fell dissonance of the inflated Teuton. There are many of the kindred of Miss Mowcher, but that

gay and discursive immortal never visited any inn in Yarmouth save that in the Yarmouth of Dickens' imagination.

Many Barkises may be willing: the breed, to meet of a ramble, is extinct. Yet, behind the town, away by the Lowestoft road, or by Somerleyton Park to Blundeston (it was at Blunderstone Rookery Vicarage, it will be remembered, that Mrs. Copperfield bore her son David) there are still bits of East Anglian country unchanged since the days Barkis guided his carrier's cart (with the horse that could not be driven, but only gradually induced) through green lanes and pastoral byways. And the visitor who has reserved *David Copperfield* to read or re-read at Yarmouth will find certain pleasure in many passages in that enduringly fascinating romance, remarkable alike for their truth in local colour and for their charm in swift and deft impression. And here, too, Dickens showed what he could do as "a marine artist." The description of the great storm on the German Ocean that brought back the drowned seducer to the home he had ruined, and, with him, his would-be generous and unknowing saviour Ham, is one of the finest things of its kind in literature.

It would be natural to visit the *Barnaby Rudge* country, on the return towards London. The visitor should, for that, go to Buckhurst Hill, on the Ongar branch railway, for Chigwell and the famous "Maypole" inn.

On a fine May or June evening — early in the week — one may still have a possible quiet half-hour at the pleasant "King's Head" of fact, and imagine Mrs. Varden gloating to bewilderment over the superlativeness of that inn of inns, or John Willet ordering that lordly and copious "something of that sort," that might have been a roast peacock as well as not, or see for a moment, in the doorway, like a wild flower strayed from the neighbouring forest, pretty Dolly Varden, in her pretty cherry-coloured mantle and little tilted straw hat trimmed with cherry-coloured ribbons ("the wickedest and most provoking headdress ever devised"), or even see, in fancy, Chigwell churchyard, where Barnaby Rudge and his mother rested and ate their poor meal after their visit to The Warren, while Grip, the raven, having finished *his* dinner, stalked up and down with an appearance of having his hands under his coat-tails and of critically reading the tombstone inscriptions.

After that . . . well, one may go south with *Great Expectations*, and down the Thames reaches, past Cooling Marshes; or through Gravesend, and by Cobham Hall (where the great novelist's writing chalet, from Gad's Hill, now stands in a pleasant sequestered grove behind the beautiful old home of

the Earl of Darnley), to Rochester and the Pickwickian track; or, thence, to the Great South Road, going past the Devil's Punch Bowl on Hind head Heights, and so to Portsmouth by the long undulations of the Downs — the road traversed by Nicholas Nickleby and Smike on their eventful journey from London to where fate and the Crummles family awaited them.

This last is a country Dickens knew and loved, though it had not the fascination for him of the dreary Thames marshlands.

It was a harder day's journey than they had already performed, for there were long and weary hills to climb, and in journeys, as in life, it is a great deal easier to go down hill than up. Onward they kept with steady purpose, and entered at length upon a wide and spacious tract of downs with every variety of little hill and plain to change their verdant surface. Here there shot up almost perpendicularly into the sky a height so steep as to be hardly accessible to any but the sheep and goats that fed upon its sides, and there stood a huge mound of green, sloping and tapering off so delicately, and merging so gently into the level ground, that you could scarce define its limits. Hills swelling above each other, and undulations, shapely, uncouth, smooth, and rugged, graceful and grotesque, thrown negligently side by side, bounded the views in each direction, while frequently, with unexpected noise, there uprose from the ground a flight of crows, who, cawing and wheeling around the nearer hills, as if uncertain of their course, suddenly poised themselves upon the wing, and skimmed down the long vista of some opening valley with the speed of very light itself. . . .

Or, from London, one may start again at once for the Martin Chuzzlewit country, with Salisbury as the town to reach; or for Leamington and Warwick and Kenilworth, with solemn Mr. Dombey as companion; or north to the frontiers of York and Durham counties, where to-day no Squeers will ask you to spell “winder,” and rudely add, on your compliance, “then go and clean it”

But to get “right away into the real country” (as Richard Jefferies, for example, would take us) . . . h'm . . . that, indeed, is difficult. With the ancient dowager, the Hon. Mrs. Skewton, I may say, “seclusion and contemplation are my what's-his-name.” It may be remembered that, to this, her eldest daughter snapped that if she meant Paradise she had better say so. Well, by “the real country” I mean Paradise. . . . *my* Paradise, not the

background scenery for the comedy of life. And that I find difficult to discover in Dickens-land.

Let us see, now, how the geography of Dickens' country pans out. It is not of great extent geographically. In this respect it is unlike that of Scott, which, apart from embracing several continental tracts and wide and far regions of the East, reaches from the Shetland Isles to Dover Cliffs; or that of Stevenson, which occupies so much of the Scottish east and west, and straggles into England



and over to Flanders and down into France, and then throws long, thin, shining tentacles across the United States, from the Adirondacks to San Francisco, and thence across the Pacific to Samoa and the far isles; or that of Thackeray which lies "beyond London," embracing as it does Ireland and Virginia. It is, in a word, rather a huge county than a country. It may be described as lying between the marches of York and Durham counties on the north, and Portsmouth and the nose of Kent on the south; between Salisbury Plain, Warwick and Leamington on the west, and the sea-beaches of Suffolk and the Thames and Medway estuaries of the east.

A glance at the outline map herewith will bring this quicker to the reader's realization. But now just a word on the neglected literary side of Dickens' life-work.

Perhaps no more striking instance of the influence of Dickens, not only in France but in Germany, is to hand than a recent noteworthy article by M. Teodor de Wyzewa in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*,

Leamington on the west, and the sea
beaches of Norfolk and the Thames and
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Thereafter, having indicated where
Gustaf Frenssen's book is none the less
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spiration and style, M. de Wyzewa adds:

Yet none could question the derivation
from *David Copperfield*. The author finds
his inspiration in Dickens, as, before him,
Theodore Storm found it, as the still more
famous Fritz Reuter found it, as Freytag
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extraordinary influence exercised through-
out the whole of Europe by the author
of *David Copperfield* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*.



The author about the Dickens.

on a remarkable romance by the German novelist, Gustaf Frenssen.* After a brief summary of the German romance and of its leading personages, the critic adds:

But, it will be said, why do you thus recommend to us personages whom we have long known and loved under familiar English names? Your Joern Uhl is really called David Copperfield; the simple-natured and heroic Thiess Thiessen is, in truth, Dan'l Peggotty. The friend of his childhood whom the hero finally marries is not Lisbeth Junker, but Agnes Wickfield. Dora is the true name of the child-woman. And as to the uncle who sets out to find his seduced and abandoned niece, do we not at once recognise him as Peggotty's brother? All these folk of M. Frenssen are already old acquaintances, and it is in fact over half a century ago since Dickens moved us with the tale of their lives

Thereafter, having indicated where Gustaf Frenssen's book is none the less a genuine new book, within its own inspiration and style, M. de Wyzewa adds: Yet none could question from *David Copperfield*. The author finds his inspiration in Dickens, as, before him, Theodore Storm found it, as the still more famous Fritz Reuter found it, as Freytag himself found it, to leave unspecified a score other popular German writers. And, in truth, the present opportunity is one wherein to testify once more to the extraordinary influence exercised throughout the whole of Europe by the author of *David Copperfield* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. While the majority of his compatriots appear to see in him only an inimitable comedian, not only France and Germany but Russia have gained abundantly from the central wellspring of his genius. When the History of Modern Romance in the

second half of the Nineteenth Century comes to be written, “le nom de Dickens devra se trouver en tete de chacun des chapitres.”

I would recommend the literary student to read this short but suggestive article by M. de Wyzewa. The time is assuredly come when Dickens ought to be more understandingly appreciated. Relative neglect or indifference on the part of the small “reading world” (as distinct from the mainly indiscriminating public) has been succeeded by spasmodic eulogy as futile in kind. I cannot recall any English critic on Dickens who has written more discerningly on the novelist’s achievement as a whole, than M. de Wyzewa writes in the *etude* to which I have here drawn attention, and from which I am tempted to make this further brief excerpt:

The work of Dickens is so rich and variegated that different races have differently understood and enjoyed. To his Russian readers, for example, he is above all the creator of Little Nell, the poet of the scorned and the downtrodden: and it is in this respect he has been the master of Dostoievsky and Tolstoi — and it would be a curiously suggestive study to discover in what way and to what extent Dickens’ profoundly Christian spirit acted on the opposite temperaments of these two writers. For his French readers, on the other hand, he is the paramount revealer of a realism at once minute in detail and vivid in synthesis (“un realisme minutieux et vivant?”) . . . and, to them, seems to have no notable followers among the English novelists of to-day. But it is in Germany, perhaps, that his influence has been most potent. . . . In the work of Dickens the foremost German novelists of to-day appear to have discerned, above all else, the veritable types and models of contemporary romance.

Apropos of this foreign appreciation, I wonder if any of my readers has attempted a “foreign Dickens collection”? In a fit of aberration I tried it once. It was not (at first) the number of translations that daunted me: many French and a few German I expected. I hailed gladly a Portuguese “Senhor Martinho da Londra” in lieu of our friend Chuzzlewit, and welcomed an Italian edition of some of the *Sketches by Boz* under the title “Il Mistero di Orazio Sparkins.” But when it came to Polish and Russian I faltered. I had, indeed, already ingloriously withdrawn, when, from “Kjobenhavn” arrived a “Pickwick” yclept “Udtog af Pikvik-Klubbens.” For a moment I rallied, but a mystery in Muscovite finished me. Even long afterward I knew no

return of the craze, when a friend sent me from Prague a horrid-looking imprint of “eweckzey” consonants, with the (kindly meant) intimation that Cvrcek u Krbu was the Czech for “The Cricket on the Hearth.”

I have not, I regret to say, yet had time to read Cvrcek u Krbu.



The lodgings of the air gear travellers.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL



By Charles Dickens and Toby, M.P.



From: Punch, December 25, 1901, p.451-452

No. 10, Downing Street; Christmas Eve. — PRINCE ARTHUR, turning out of Parliament Street, walked along Downing Street with long stride, arms limply hung by his side, hat slightly tilted back from his feverish brow. Left in town at this festive time to look after the affairs of the nation, he had spent a tiring day at his desk. The night was in unison with his faltering spirits. Fog and frost hung over the street. Ghostly figures, suddenly emerging from the mist, sharply scanned him. They turned out to be policemen, who wondered what he was doing out on such a night, and it Christmas Eve.

Arrived at No. 10, he fumbled at the key-hole in vain attempt to insert his latch-key. Now it is a fact that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact that

PRINCE ARTHUR had seen it night and morning all through his official residence. Let it also be borne in mind that throughout the day he had not bestowed one thought upon OLD MORALITY. And then let any man explain, if he can, how it happened that Prince Arthur, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change, not a knocker but OLD MORALITY'S face!

OLD MORALITY'S face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the front of No. 10, Downing Street was. It had a faint flicker upon it such as might fall on an upturned countenance from the dying' light in the glass roof in the House of Commons when members answer to the cry "Who goes home?" It looked at PRINCE ARTHUR as OLD MORALITY used to look, with kindly but shrewd glance, as if doubting whether he were altogether, as he has described himself, "a child" in some matters. The hair (what was left of it) was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot air; and though the eyes were wide open they were perfectly motionless.

As PRINCE ARTHUR looked fixedly at this phenomenon it was a knocker again.

To say he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy — an earlier stage from that of the childhood alluded to — would be untrue. But he thrust the key into the key-hole, turned it sturdily, walked in and lighted his candle.

He made his way to the room nearest the doorway connecting No. 10 with No. 11, Downing Street. This was knocked through at the instance of the SQUIRE OF MALWOOD when he was CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, and LORD ROSEBERY, as Prime Minister, was his neighbour. He (the SQUIRE) liked to feel that at any moment, without the delay consequent upon passing out of one front door and through another, he could seek and find the counsel and companionship of his chief.

PRINCE ARTHUR thought of this touching incident with a sense of relief. He was alone in the house. All the servants were making Christmas holiday.

It was nice to think that by passing through a door he could, in case anything happened, be in the next house in no time.

"Pooh pooh!" he said, when he thought of OLD MORALITY'S face where the door-knocker ought to have been. Nevertheless, he doubled-locked the door. Thus secured against surprise, he took off his turned-down

collar, put on his dressing-gown and his slippers and his nightcap, and sat down before the fire to sup the gruel which the prevision of a faithful servant had left ready on the hob.

Half-an-hour passed; it may have been only twenty-five minutes. PRINCE ARTHUR heard a familiar step in the passage. It was coming straight towards the door. Whilst he was congratulating himself on the precaution he had taken of double locking it, the Something moved on through the massive door and entered the room. The dying flame leaped up as though it cried, "I know him; OLD MORALITY'S Ghost!" and fell again.

The same face; the very same. OLD MORALITY in his square morning coat, his usual waistcoat, his trousers of the last century, and boots of the same date. His body was transparent, so that PRINCE ARTHUR, looking through his waistcoat, could clearly see the bookstall at Charing Cross loaded with those newspapers he never reads.

"How now?" growled PRINCE ARTHUR, throwing into his voice a tone of Philosophic Doubt. "What do you want with me?"

"Much." OLD MORALITY'S voice; no doubt about it.

"Who are you?"

"In life I was First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons whilst you were Chief Secretary for Ireland."

"Can you — can you sit down?" asked PRINCE ARTHUR, looking doubtfully at him.

The Ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace as if he were quite used to it.

"Don't be frightened," he said genially, warming his hands at the fire and rubbing his leg in the place where the calf formerly was. "I daresay you didn't expect me. I can't stay long, though I don't suppose you are much troubled with cock-crowing in Downing Street. I just wanted to have a little chat with you about Procedure in the Commons. I hear something about you going to tighten up the Rules so as to choke off Obstruction. I don't want to say anything disagreeable. Merry Christmas: good-will on earth, and all that, you know. So I won't refer to the time when you and GRANDOLPH and WOLFFEY and JOHN GORST — how's GORST getting on? still respectful to his Chiefs, I suppose? — when you four did your best to make legislation impossible.

“What I wanted to say to you is — if I may quote a copy-book heading possibly not unfamiliar to you — when you put your hand to the plough, don’t turn back. No half measures: fill the flowing bowl: you know what I mean. I did something in my time to deliver the majority from the tyranny of the minority. Never had such a chance as you possess. You have an overwhelming majority. The Irish Party, under the leadership of a pinchbeck PARNELL, have given themselves away, alienated public opinion by openly declaring their intention of making the House of Commons a byword among Parliaments, impotent, ludicrous. Now’s your time. Snatch it and do your work thoroughly.”

PRINCE ARTHUR began to feel quite at home. Had never heard a ghost talk in so sensible a manner, or comport itself in such homely fashion.

“Well,” he said, “though unexpected, as you put it, I’m very glad to see you again. Won’t you take something?” lie was about to add when, catching a glimpse of the back of the chair through the lower part of his visitor’s waistcoat, he recognised the inappropriateness of the suggestion.

As he looked OLD MORALITY edged towards the corner of the seat, placed his hands on his knees and turned his head to the left in the direction where the Speaker’s chair is viewed from the Treasury Bench.

“He’s going to pounce!” cried PRINCE ARTHUR excitedly.

Pounce he did, clear off his chair, through the shut and double-locked door. PRINCE ARTHUR, his faculties strangely quickened, could hear the pattering of his feet along the passage.

“Pooh pooh!” he muttered as he finished his gruel, “I don’t believe my own eyes. No Foundations for Belief in this sort of thing. All the same there’s a good deal in what he said.”

THE FINAL STAVE OF “A Christmas Carol”

(With profound apologies to the Genius of Charles Dickens)

By F.A.

From: Punch, December 20, 1905, p.437-438

STAVE FIVE.

Scrooge was certainly under the impression, on going to bed after returning from that wonderful Christmas party at his nephew's, that he would not be required to have any further intercourse with Spirits, and would live henceforth on the Total Abstinence Principle.

But in this he was mistaken. There was no doubt about that. For barely, or so it seemed to him, had he laid his head on his pillow, when the curtains of his bed were once more drawn aside by a spectral hand.

However, on this occasion, he felt no solemn dread. Not a bit of it! On the contrary, he skipped out of bed as lively as a sandboy — or rather several dozen sandboys, every one of them endowed with preternatural agility.

“I know what you're here for,” he chuckled. “Come to take me out to some more Christmas Parties, eh? All right, I'm ready for you. I feel equal to facing any number of them now!”

“I am the Ghost of Christmas more than sixty years to come,” announced the Spirit in sepulchral tones.

“My *dear* Sir,” said Scrooge heartily, “delighted to see you — de-lighted! Thank'ee. Let us be off at once. Do we go out of the window, or through the wall, this time? Whichever it is, Spirit, lead on, and I shall be most happy to follow you anywhere you like!”

“Touch my robe!”

Scrooge did as he was told, and held it fast. The city had entirely vanished; they stood upon an open country road, before some tall wrought iron gates, flanked by pillars, upon which a pair of heraldic griffins ramped

— but amiably, as if even their stone hearts were softened somewhat by the influence of the Season. Through these gates they passed, and up a stately avenue to the portico of a noble mansion.

“One of the country seats of Lord Bredanbourne,” the Ghost explained.

“But why bring me to such a place, Spirit?” asked Scrooge, feeling slightly puzzled. “For really I can’t recollect ever to have heard of his lordship.”

“Have you so soon forgotten your fellow ‘prentice, Dick Wilkins?” inquired the Spirit. “He married, as you are doubtless aware, the eldest Miss Fezziwig, and died Sir Richard Wilkins, having been knighted during his Lord Mayoralty by His Gracious Majesty, King William The Fourth.”

“So he was,” cried Scrooge. “Bless his heart! So he was! Dear, dear! And yet, even now, I don’t quite”

“His son, Gabriel,” pursued the Phantom (who, by the way, was less reserved than any of its forerunners) “developed the warehousing connection of the firm of Fezziwig & Wilkins to such a prodigious extent that he eventually became a



Baronet. The second Baronet, Sir Peveril, in return for important services rendered to his party, was raised to the Peerage under the title of Baron Bredanbourne.”

“Bless my soul!” exclaimed Scrooge, rather impressed, “what services, Spirit?”

But the Phantom answered not. It is very possible that it did not know.

“The Lord Bredanbourne of the period we are now in,” it continued, “does nothing whatever but enjoy himself. He is at this particular moment entertaining a houseful of the smartest people in London for Christmas week.”

“*Is he, though?*” cried Scrooge, rubbing his hands with the delight of a boy. “What a feast he must be giving them, eh, Spirit? What a capital Turkey! What a wonderful Pudding! What bowls of seething Bishop! What pyramids of oranges and piles of chestnuts! Do let us go inside and look on, Spirit! Just for an hour or so!”

“I fancy they will have finished feasting by this time,” said the Spirit. “We shall probably find them all in the Long Drawing-room, playing”

““ Forfeits, I’ll be bound!” said Scrooge, eagerly. “Oh, I *must* go in, and see the fun! Make haste, Spirit, make haste! Hallo here! Whoop!”

Unseen by any there, they entered that lofty and splendid room — but scarce had they done so, ere Scrooge’s heart grew strangely chill within him.

The walls were decked with Christmas here and there, but yet resounded to no echoing ring of joyous Christmas laughter. Scrooge noted next that all these guests who sat, in groups of four, at little tables were so deep engrossed in studying the cards that fell — in such a solemn silence, too! — that they were blind and deaf to aught besides, unheeding holly — aye, and mistletoe! From time to time a hollow voice would cry, “I leave it!” Or one would quit his seat and wander around, like some uneasy soul that finds no rest, and then return, as powerless to resist the spell for long! Young girls there were, who, risking stakes that they could ill afford, doubled “No trumps,” and paled as Dummy’s hand, displayed, revealed the guarded King that doomed them to inevitable disaster!

“I suppose, Spirit,” said Scrooge, “they’ll have in the fiddles and begin to enjoy themselves presently, eh? They *can’t* keep up this sort of thing much longer! can they?”

“They *are* enjoying themselves,” replied the Phantom. “And they will keep it up till one or two in the morning, at least.”

“Then I don’t wish to see any more,” said Scrooge. “Remove me, Spirit. Let me see my dear nephew’s descendants keeping up this Festival in the time-honoured fashion with ‘How, when, and where,’ and ‘Blind-man’s buff.’”

Back to the town the Spirit led him next, and to a fine house in a terrace hard by the spot where Tyburn Tree once bore its ghastly fruit. There might have been a dozen people, old and young, in the solidly furnished drawing-room Scrooge and the Spirit visited next — but not one among them all was engaged in blind-man’s buff! He saw the same small tables, with similar

unsmiling parties of four seated at each — the very silence might have been the same! In one group Scrooge particularly noticed a grim hatchet-faced elderly gentleman who somehow rather reminded him of his former self. “Your great - nephew, Mr. Justice Merryweather,” explained the Phantom; “he is more learned, though perhaps slightly less genial, than his Early-Victorian father. That pallid young gentleman whose play he is just criticising with such refreshing candour is Ms great-nephew by marriage, young Topper, who has lately been called to the Bar, and has a case — his first brief — coming on in his relative’s court early next Hilary term. He has just remembered that circumstance.”

“Spirit, show me no more!” entreated Scrooge, “I cannot bear it. In mercy’s name take me from this hideous travesty of Christmas cheer to some humbler home, where all the dear old customs are not quite forgot! Let us drop in upon the descendants of my worthy clerk, Bob Cratchit! For I tell you plainly, unless I smell roast goose and hot punch, and hear a toast proposed, if not a song, within the next few minutes, I have a feeling that I might relapse into the man that I was wont to be!”

The Phantom inclined its head.... Their way led them past a row of spacious shops, above which Scrooge could read, in bold and glittering letters, the words, “Cratchit’s Cash Stores, Limited.”

“Yes,” remarked the Spirit airily, “the Cratchits have got on, too. The business is vastly improved since old Peter Cratchit first founded it in the early sixties. . . . No, the present people don’t live over the shop; they occupy a villa residence called ‘Chatsworth,’ in a new but highly select suburb, where they are known as the ‘De Crespigny-Cratchits.’”

To this suburb they repaired. But, as Scrooge passed through the stained-glass portal, his nostrils were not greeted by the savour for which he hungered, Mrs. De Crespigny-Cratchit being much too refined a woman to allow a roast goose to appear at *her* table, whether with or without such ungentle appurtenances as sage and onions.

The party he found in the “Art” Drawing-room to the right of the hall were all in the most correct evening costume, and far too fashionable to be festive. They passed no punch around, proposed no toasts, nor sang a single song. On the contrary, they were engaged in precisely the same occupation as were the two parties at which Scrooge had previously assisted.

“Spirit, I can’t stand it!” cried Scrooge. “In Heaven’s name, what is this fell pursuit that, in the space of sixty-odd short years, will banish harmless

mirth and jollity from every hearth alike?”...”They will call it ‘ Bridge,’“ the Spirit answered.

“Ghost of the Future,” cried Scrooge, quite agonised, “I fear you more than any Spectre I have seen! You seem to delight to torture me! If there is any respectable home in the town on which this fearful blight has not yet fallen, show that home to me, Spirit, I beseech you!”

“I cannot do so,” was the Phantom’s sorrowful reply, “for I know of none!”

“Then, for the love of Pity,” Scrooge implored it, “conduct me back to bed — and let me wake, to feel all this is but a dreadful dream!”

This time his prayer was granted. . . . He positively frisked out of bed next morning. Why, bless me, it’s Boxing Day!” he shouted. “What ridiculous nonsense I’ve been dreaming! Christmas blighted, indeed! And by a thing called ‘ Bridge,’ too! Pooh!! Stuff!!! That punch at my nephew’s last night must have been stronger than I fancied!”

“PHIZ” A MEMOIR



From Punch, July 22nd, 1882.

“Phiz.”

HABLOT K. BROWNE, Artist. Born, 1815. Died, July, 1882.

The Lamp is out that lighted up the text
Of Dickens, Lever — heroes of the pen.
Pickwick and Lorrequer we love, but next
We place the man who made us see such men.
What should we know of Martin Chuzzlewit,
Stern Mr. Dombey, or Uriah Heep?
Tom Burke of Ours? — Around our hearths they sit,
Outliving their creators — all asleep!
No sweeter gift ere fell to man than his
Who gave us troops of friends — delightful Phiz!
He is not dead! There in the picture-book
He lives with men and women that he drew;
We take him with us to the cozy nook
Where old companions we can love anew.
Dear boyhood’s friend! We rode with him to hounds;
Lived with dear Peggotty in after years;
Missed in old Ireland where fun knew no bounds;
At Dora’s death we felt poor David’s tears!
There is no death for such a man — he is
The spirit of an unclosed book! immortal Phiz!



“PHIZ”

PREFACE.

Taking into consideration the ability of the Artist whose name has become identified with the works of Dickens, of Lever, and of Ainsworth; and who has contributed in the course of the present century more largely (perhaps with the single exception of Cruikshank) to the embellishment of popular books than any other known illustrator; it would seem an inexcusable omission, almost amounting to neglect, if the life and labours of the late Hablot Knight Browne met with no more worthy recognition than the fleeting comments of the daily press.

Such, at least, is my opinion; and as a humble tribute to the memory of an able and industrious draughtsman, and fertile designer, I place on record the more generally interesting particulars of an honourable and exemplary career.

To Mr. W. G. Browne and Dr. Edgar Browne, sons of the deceased artist, my best thanks are due for a kindly interest in my work, manifested more especially by the loan of many interesting letters dashed off on various occasions by "Phiz" in the wildest spirit of fun; and a willing consent to their appearance in print.

I have also to acknowledge the courtesy of Messrs. H. Sotheran & Co., for permission to copy for publication a few letters written by "Phiz" to Charles Dickens, which are now published for the first time. For the Portrait (copied from a photograph, perhaps the best of the very few now in existence) I am indebted to the Proprietors of The Graphic.

And lastly, the Author desires to associate with this brochure the name of his friend, Mr. George Redway, who has rendered much valuable assistance in bringing it before the public.

FRED. G. KITTON.

25, Paultons Square,
Chelsea, S.W.

August, 1882.

“PHIZ” (H. K. BROWNE) A MEMOIR.

“Fizz, Whizz, or something of that sort,” humorous Tom Hood would say, when trying to recall the pseudonym that has since become so familiar by means of the innumerable works of art to which it was appended. At the time Hablot Knight Browne first used this quaint soubriquet, it was customary to look upon book-illustrators as second, or even third-rate artists — mere hacks in fact; and for this reason they usually suppressed their real names, in order to give themselves the opportunity of earning the title of artist, when producing more ambitious results as painters. Occasionally, whether by accident or design, the subject of this memoir would affix his real name to his illustrations; and the public were consequently under the impression that the two signatures were those of different artists, and were even wont to remark that “Browne’s work was better than that of ‘Phiz!’”

It is not, perhaps, generally known that the artist’s first nom de crayon was “Nemo,” which to some extent bears out the above statement that a book-illustrator was considered a “nobody.” Mr. Browne himself, in referring to the *Pickwick Papers*, gave the following explanation: — “I think I signed myself as ‘Nemo’ to my first etchings (those of No. 4) before adopting ‘Phiz’ as my soubriquet, to harmonize — I suppose — better with Dickens’ ‘Boz.’” It is only on the earliest printed plates in some copies of the *Pickwick Papers* that the signature of “Nemo” can be faintly traced.

Hablot Knight Browne, son of William Loder Browne, a descendant from a Norfolk family, was born on the 12th of July, 1815, at Kennington, London. He was educated at a private school in Norfolk, and from an early age evinced a taste for drawing, which, being recognized by his relatives, induced them to apprentice him to Finden, the well-known line-engraver. An anecdote is told of him during his apprenticeship which will bear repetition. Finding Browne very painstaking and conscientious, his master usually sent him with engraved plates to the printer, in order that he might superintend the operation of proof-taking. As printers usually take their own time over such matters, the youth found that this waiting the pressman’s pleasure tried his patience too much. It therefore occurred to him that to spend the interval in the British Museum, hard by, would be much more suited to his tastes. On his returning with the proofs, Finden would praise the boy’s diligence, little thinking what trick had been practised on him.

Line-engraving, however, did not find much favour with the future “Phiz,” the process being too tedious; for Finden would probably occupy some weeks to produce a small plate, which by the quicker process of etching, could have been executed in as many hours. He accordingly suspended operations in that quarter, and, in conjunction with a young kindred spirit, hired a small attic, and employed his time in the more fascinating pursuit of water-colour drawing, which he continued to follow with remarkable assiduity until a few days before his death.

These juvenile disciples of the brush then worked hard at drawing in colour. Browne paid his share of the rent in drawings, which he produced rapidly; indeed, there was a solemn compact between the co-workers to “do three a day” — they subsisting, meanwhile, on the simplest fare. At this time he attended the evening class at the “Life” School in St. Martin’s Lane, and was a fellow-pupil with Etty, the famous painter of the “nude.” It was Browne’s great delight to watch this talented student at work, and he considerably neglected his own studies in consequence.

At the age of seventeen, or thereabouts, he succeeded in gaining a medal offered for competition by the Society of Arts for the best representation of an historical subject; and was again fortunate in obtaining a prize, from the same Society, for a large etching of “John Gilpin.” Mr. George Augustus Sala, himself an artist of no small ability, remembers to have seen, in a shop-window in Wardour Street, a certain print by a young man named Hablot Browne, representing the involuntary flight of John Gilpin, scattering the pigs and poultry in his never-to-be-forgotten ride.



By the time he had attained his twentieth year he had acquired considerable facility with the pencil. Charles Dickens, but three years his senior, and with whom the name of “Phiz” is inseparably connected, had just then made a wonderful reputation by his “Sketches,” which first appeared, at intervals, during 1834-5, and were afterwards published in book form, illustrated by the renowned George Cruikshank.

In 1836, there appeared in print a pamphlet of some forty or fifty pages, entitled *Sunday under Three Heads* — As it is; as Sabbath Bills would make it; as it might be made; “By Timothy Sparks; illustrated by H. K. B.,” and dedicated to the Bishop of London. The author was Charles Dickens, whose satire was levelled at Sir Andrew Agnew and the extreme Sabbatarian party, and had immediate reference to a bill “for the better observance of the Sabbath,” which the House of Commons had recently thrown out by a small majority. The illustrations in this little work were drawn by Hablot Browne, and are very choice examples of wood-engraving of the school that existed half a century ago. Its original price was one shilling, but having become very scarce, it is now worth more than its weight in gold.

These early productions of Browne’s pencil at once introduced him to public notice, and Dickens showed his appreciation of their excellence by selecting him as the illustrator of the *Pickwick Papers*, which appeared during the early part of that year. It is well known to the readers of Forster’s

Life of Dickens, that the idea of "Pickwick" was suggested to the author by Robert Seymour, whose tastes induced him to etch a few plates of sporting subjects to which Dickens was to supply the text. Thus commenced that immortal work known as *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*. Seymour produced seven illustrations, when he committed suicide, which obliged the publishers to make arrangements with another artist. R. W. Buss succeeded Seymour, and etched two plates, which Dickens, who had by this time assumed the control of the work, thought so unsatisfactory (as indeed they were), that he declined his further services. Here a fresh opening was created, and William Makepeace Thackeray competed with Hablot Knight Browne for the post; both submitting to Dickens' inspection some specimens of their work.

The choice fell upon "Phiz," the artist whose ability has so admirably proved the wisdom of the selection; and Thackeray thereupon determined to adopt another profession, with what happy results let Esmond testify. Who could say whether *Vanity Fair* would ever have been written had this mighty penman been chosen to succeed Buss? It is curious to note Thackeray's great anxiety to become an artist; he even went abroad to study, but Sala tells us that "Mr. Thackeray drew, perhaps, rather worse than he had done before beginning his continental studies, although at that time he actually supplied a series of etchings to illustrate Douglas Jerrold's *Men of Character*, which were prodigies of badness."

When "Phiz" had been selected as the illustrator of the *Pickwick Papers*, his generous rival was the first to tell him the good news, and offer his congratulations.

"Phiz" may now be said to have fairly commenced his career as a book-illustrator. His sense of humour corresponded so exactly with that of Dickens, that a mere suggestion enabled him to vividly represent the scenes described by the author. It has been remarked (and truly) that in many cases the plates do not correspond with the text; but this can be accounted for. Dickens, then an enthusiastic young author, and somewhat impetuous in his demands for drawings, would arrive unexpectedly at Browne's studio, hurriedly read a few pages of manuscript, and exclaiming, "Now, I want you to illustrate that," would take an abrupt departure, carrying the manuscript off with him. As soon as the artist could collect his faculties, he would try to recall the scene so hastily described, and endeavour to put it on paper. Dickens himself, in his preface to the *Pickwick Papers*, gives a similar

explanation, viz. — "It is due to the gentleman, whose designs accompany the letterpress, to state that the interval has been so short between the production of each number in manuscript and its appearance in print, that the greater portion of the illustrations have been executed by the artist from the author's verbal description of what he intended to write." It is therefore not surprising that a few errors, in such details as the number of boys in a procession, or the dress of an individual, should occur.



Of Dickens' Novels, *Martin Chuzzlewit* contains, perhaps, our etcher's most vigorous productions, but the small woodcut illustrations in *Master Humphrey's Clock* are very praiseworthy, and without doubt conducted greatly to the popularity of the book.

The illustrations in the *Pickwick Papers* are on the whole inferior to many which "Phiz" subsequently executed. But an exception must be made in favour of the artist's realization of the character of Sam Weller, than which, even Seymour's happy invention of Mr. Pickwick did not more effectually ensure the popularity of Dickens' comic epic and give it a "deathless date."

The extraordinary demand for copies of the *Pickwick Papers* necessitated a re-etching of the copper-plates, which, owing to friction caused by the printer's hand, had become very much worn. This reproduction will account

for any slight difference in the details of the illustrations; for the repetition of subjects once etched, was a task by no means congenial to the artist; and this no doubt induced him to say, some years afterwards, in a letter to one of his sons, "O! I'm a' weary, I'm a' weary of this illustrating business."

Artists frequently experience great difficulty in realizing, to the author's satisfaction, the description of scenes and characters. An illustration is here given showing Browne's various "fancies for Mr. Dombey," all of which failed to please Dickens, who also expressed his disapprobation of this artist's treatment of another subject in *Dombey and Son*. "I am really distressed," writes he, "by the illustration of Mrs. Pipchin and Paul. It is so frightfully and wildly wide of the mark. Good Heaven! in the commonest and most literal construction of the text, it is all wrong. She is described as an old lady, and Paul's 'miniature arm-chair' is mentioned more than once. He ought to be sitting in a little arm-chair down in the corner of the fire-place, staring up at her. I can't say what pain and vexation it is to be so utterly misrepresented. I would cheerfully have given a hundred pounds to have kept this illustration out of the book. He never could have got that idea of Mrs. Pipchin if he had attended to the text. Indeed, I think he does better without the text; for then the notion is made easy to him in short description, and he can't help taking it in."

As the tale proceeded, the artist more than compensated for his unsuccessful rendering of this incident; and with "Micawber," in *David Copperfield*, he obtained the author's entire approbation, who says, "Browne has sketched an uncommonly characteristic and capital Mr. Micawber for the next number." Again, with reference to an illustration in *Bleak House*, "Browne has done Skimpole, and helped to make him singularly unlike the great original."

Of the private life of "Phiz" little is known. His extreme nervousness and dislike to publicity was often misconstrued as pride; and Dickens even had considerable difficulty in occasionally persuading him to meet a few friends and spend a pleasant evening. When he did accept such invitations, he invariably tried to seclude himself in a corner of the room, or behind a curtain. His desire for a quiet, unobtrusive life, induced him to pass most of his time in country retirement, all business matters in town being transacted by an intimate friend. Authors or publishers wishing to have a personal interview with "Phiz" were compelled to visit him at his residence, a few miles from town, and many were the contretemps on dark nights as they

crossed a bleak moor to reach their destination. His sons looked forward to the time when visitors were expected, in order to hear the stories of wild adventure which generally befell them, and to laugh at their discomfiture.

“Phiz” had been from his boyhood accustomed to horses, and frequently hunted with the Surrey hounds. To this circumstance is due the extreme facility with which he delineated the horse in action in the hunting field and elsewhere. At one time he contributed sketches to *The Sporting Gazette*. This industrious artist was never known to take a lengthened holiday, but occasionally spent a few days at the seaside, where, no doubt, his pencil was fully employed. A letter, written while staying at Margate, to his son Mr. Walter G. Browne (whom, for some unknown reason he styled “Doctor”), shows his innate sense of humour.

Tuesday, June 19, 6a, Crescent Place, Margate.

My dear Dr.,

“I hve my W. C. White: — but I have no white *collars* — and as I am swelling it about without a necktie — mine having mysteriously disappeared, left behind in a bath probably — perhaps it would be coming it too strong to appear without collars also, and it is hardly warm enough for it either. Your P.O. is from the Miscellany — to H. K. Browne — from Mr. Barrett — Xtian name unknown — and no matter. Any blocks that come, forward on. Send me a * * * * * before I return. I did some very good shades myself — of myself — unconsciously — yesterday evening. The baths run along one side of the High Street, flush with the pavement — and I found when I had nearly finished my toilet that the gas-burner was so ingeniously placed, that it was impossible for any bather to avoid casting gigantic studies of the nude upon the window blind. — This sort of thing. —”



[Here follow several other sketches of the bather in various attitudes].

His appreciation of fun is thus referred to by Dickens in a letter to Mrs. Dickens, dating from the Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury. "Thursday, Nov. 1st, 1838. — We were at the play last night. It was a bespeak — 'The Love Chase,' a ballet (with a phenomenon!), divers songs, and 'A Roland for an Oliver.' It is a good theatre, but the actors are very funny. Browne laughed with such indecent heartiness at one point of the entertainment, that an old gentleman in the next box suffered the most violent indignation."

In 1837, "Phiz" accompanied Dickens to Flanders, for a ten days' summer holiday; and in 1838 they went to Yorkshire, a journey which resulted in the production of *Nicholas Nickleby*.

The following year he made one of a party of four, and visited, with Dickens, Macready and Forster, nearly all the London prisons. These joint tours of Author and Artist could not fail to assist the realization of the scenes they intended to depict.

It is an interesting fact in connection with the career of "Phiz," that he would never agree to draw from the living model, — all his representations of moving crowds, and the various types of humanity, which his etchings exhibit, being drawn from recollection. He would sometimes make a few

jottings in pencil — mere memoranda — when anything struck him as being worthy of reproduction, but beyond that he depended on his excellent memory. For example, he would go to Epsom on the Derby Day without taking a pencil even, and, on returning home, would draw to the life exact portraits of any conspicuous or eccentric character he had seen on the course.

As previously stated, Browne was extremely fond of water-colour drawing, and executed some thousands during his life; not unfrequently a day's work would be represented by three or four of these productions. They were not caricatures, as one might suppose, but rural scenes à la Watteau, and allegorical subjects. This fact controverts the statement made in a daily paper, that "unfortunately, without a text to illustrate, 'Phiz' never had half-a-dozen ideas in his head" (!). For many years he was a constant contributor of pictures — figure subjects of a humorous and dramatic character — to the Exhibitions of the British Institution, and of the Society of British Artists. Among his more ambitious efforts was a cartoon of considerable dimensions, representing "A Foraging Party of Cæsar's Forces surprised by the Britons," which appeared as No. 65 at the Westminster Hall Exhibition of 1843. This, notwithstanding the "scratchy" manner of its execution, displayed remarkable skill and abundant energy of design. At the same gathering another cartoon was attributed to him, of which the energy bordered on caricature; it was named, "Henry II defied by a Welsh Mountaineer."



At one time “Phiz” received an extraordinary commission to reproduce in water-colour all his illustrations to the Novels of Dickens. The Artist reminded his patron of the magnitude of the undertaking, but the request was persisted in, and the work duly executed.

His love of bracing air induced him to pay frequent visits to the seaside; but on one occasion he lodged in a house not remarkable for its odoriferous nature; and, in order to produce a current of fresh air in his bed-room, he opened door and window, and slept in the draught caused thereby. For many years before his death, he suffered from incipient paralysis, the result, no doubt, of this incautious act, and to which may be attributed his disappearance from the art world some fifteen years ago.

“Phiz,” notwithstanding his crippled condition, still worked hard with admirable perseverance, though his difficulties were increased by an injury to his thumb, which compelled him to hold his pencil between the middle and fore fingers. His friends endeavoured to persuade him to draw his pictures on a larger scale, in order that they might be photographed to the required dimensions, but, with one or two exceptions, he refused to act on this suggestion. He gradually lost that facility which characterized his work, and latterly yielded to proposals to illustrate boys’ literature of a rather low class.

The time is past, no doubt, which encouraged the method of book-illustration adopted by "Phiz." It has given place to wood-engraving, and multifarious phototypic processes, that, perhaps, are commercially preferable, but from an artistic standpoint much inferior. We must, however, except the wonderful results some wood-engravers have produced from time to time, which etchers, even, cannot hope to excel.

Dr. Edgar Browne describes his father's indifference to the value of his work, or the time and labour bestowed upon it: — "He never understood the art of husbanding or developing his powers, — he never set to work to learn any technical process; when he had a little leisure from 'illustration' work, he used to start a picture 'to get his hand in' — generally taking some unimportant or trivial subject for this purpose. His facility of hand both in large and minute work was something marvellous. At one time, he produced a very remarkable series of sketches in chalk made during a tour in Ireland. They are scattered now, but are as fine as anything he did, and are certainly the best records of a people who have practically vanished. He was astonishingly careless about his work. Hundreds of original designs were thrown into the waste-paper basket; apart from their local interest similar sketches have found willing purchasers of late years."

Like many other artists whose pecuniary reward had not been commensurate with their ability, he became the recipient of a pension. The kind instrumentality of a few Royal Academicians obtained for him an annual grant which had been previously enjoyed by the late George Cruikshank.

On the 8th of July, 1882, the death occurred of the famous "Phiz." At the quiet village of Hove, near Brighton, where the last few years of his life were spent, he succumbed in his sixty-seventh year to infirmity rather than old age. Almost forgotten as a man, his productions have remained in our memories, and will continue to do so as long as the works of Dickens and Lever are read and appreciated. His remains were interred at the extra-mural Cemetery, Brighton. The funeral was private, the only mourners present being the four sons of the deceased, Dr. Ambler, Mr. George Halse, and Mr. Robert Harrison.

As admirers of his artistic ability we place this Memoir as a wreath upon his grave.



6
 Crescent Place - Margit.
 Tuesday.

to observe.
 the address -
 when I mentioned
 that I was going to
 command without
 "any fuss"!
 - this style

3 given in a former epistle

— Perhaps had you visited the original
 with intention in London —

CORRESPONDENCE.

The following letters were addressed by the artist-humorist to his son, Mr. Walter Gr. Browne: —

Blenheim Crescent, Sept., Saturday, 3 o'clk. p.m., a.d. 1867.

My Dear Dr.,

I have nearly bursted my heart out, and proved, that my soul or soles (I have two) is'nt — or an't — immortal, — by wearing on 'em out running to and fro after yr. Balmorals — Bootless errands! The wretched slave (of awl) has but just brought them! I bristle with wrath! and could welt him! — but

— no — I won't — he may want his calf's skin whole, to mend his own Bad-morals!!

I rush! I fly! to the Gt. W. R. Station! — — !!!!



I sink — breathless into the arms of the astounded clerk — point to the boots — —

My-mouth faintly whispers “Wey-mouth in his pen-adorned Ear!!” and — and — ”Bless me! where am I?” — and, and — I wish — you may get ‘em!

If you visit Portland again, make a note of any peculiarities of spot — convict dress, &c. — as I have a touching bit of horse-y sentiment (!) connected therewith, which will do for Spg. Gazette. — I should think you ought to find painty bits — within walking distance — say — right or left ten miles?

Yrs. affecty.,

Dad.

Sunday.

Really, my dear Walter, I thought you did know better than to disturb my devotional frame of mind on this blessed Sabbath morn by forwarding me such a thoroughly worldly and evil-thought-producing thing as a wretched milliner's bill!!! — The wretch must wait — he gorged £5 not long before I left home. — The greediness of some men!!

The Pic. Gall. circular I return — as you may like to enquire about it — the doz. others, “cheap bacon” — ”patent teeth and everlasting gums,” &c., &c., &c., &c. I shall manure the grounds of Colyton with — — .

I think you might get some background material for coast scenes down here.

Yr. affec. Dad,

H. K. B.

69, Blenheim Crescent, Notting-Hill, Saturday.

My dear Doctor,

I send the Tenpounder, may it reach you in safety!

The Commander has returned. I sent you a paper containing the important news, which, however, may not have reached you, although I don't think it contained any remarks upon the “Hemperors personal appearance,” &c., &c., &c.

Tom is in the bosom of the family for a few days. — His Pipe is tuned differently now to what it used to was, for he now declareth that St. John's is “a jolly school!” He seems to get on very well indeed, and has brought home what Dr. Lowe calls a “well-earned prize.”

He laments daily over the supposed loss of 4d invested in a letter to you — from school — as it was directed, he says, — 21, Rue Mussel wine — I express doubts of its having reached you — and he groans aloud over the Bull's eyes it would have bought! — —

I am (at present) on a Sporting Paper — supported by some high and mighty Turf Nobs, but, I fear, like everything I have to do with, now-a-days, it will collapse — for — some of the Proprietors of the Paper are also Shareholders, &c., &c., in the Graphotype Co., so they want to work the two together. — I hate the process — it takes quite four times as long as wood — and I cannot draw and express myself with a nasty little finiking brush, and the result when printed seems to alternate between something all as black as my hat — or as hazy and faint as a worn-out plate. — If on wood, I should like it well enough — as it is — it spoils 4 days a week — leaving little time for anything else. O! I'm a'weary, I'm a'weary! of this illustration business. — —

Tom is just off to the R.A., as it is not likely I shall go much before it's close. I will get him to write you a critical description of all the wonderful

works in Turps, Varnish, and “Hile.”

Yr. affectionate Dad,

H. K. B.

Monday Morning, 25 m. 40 s. p. 11 a.m.

My Dear Walter,

There is a man playing “Home, sweet home” upon the key bugle — it is too much for me — my heart yearneth — I feel I must write just a line or two — especially as it is raining hard — and I don’t exactly know what to be at.

Splendid effects yesterday evening — sun-set, twilight, crescent moon — stormy clouds, — tide out — reflections — dark fishing-craft — very good — quite the thing for you.

There are no people here at present — decidedly nothing Belgravian — chiefly masculines — from the Saturday to the Monday sort — it striketh me — a few I think have strayed here from Southend — I saw this sort of thing [see page 29] on the Grand Promenade — which looks like it. — —

There was a great wind yesterday — Boreas had been taking concentrated essence of ginger — It fairly took me off my legs once as I was walking along the cliffs to Broadstairs, luckily for me it blew off the sea — and I was brought up short by some railings in this wise — [see page 22] otherwise I should (no doubt) have been carried across a 5 acre field of *Cloveria Trifolia Browniensis*. — I am glad to say I was also of service to humanity yesterday — I heard the shrill shrieks of a child and a woman’s cry for help behind me — I turned — and saw there was not a moment to lose, the wind had caught a poor child — ’s hat (and woman’s too) and bore it rapidly to the edge of the cliff — with my usual agility I bounded over the rails fencing the cliff — and saved — yes, saved the child — ’s — ’at! — another puff and it would have been in the deep, deep sea — the blue, the fresh, &c. — Stout mama thanked me politely, and turning to her husband (who, of course, had come up too late to be of any use — those husbands always do) — she remarked “That the vind had blown both her and her child’s ‘at hoff and if she’d know’d it — she wouldn’t have brought the young-un hout.”

I dare say humanity is amusing here when the place is full — there seems a good deal of “os” exercise — and basket-carriage driving on Sundays —

which is good to behold — this gentleman [see page 25] was driving with supreme self-content — having one rein all snug and tight under his pony's tail — luckily the beast did not seem to have any kick in him — so perhaps he got safe back to Margate.

Yr. affec. Dad,

H. K. B.



29th Sept. 1868.

My Dear Doctor,

I have sent you a couple of canvasses — if you put little Clara's head on one of them, you will immortalize her and yourself too.

Also therewith you will find a Surplice, and if you will only "hold forth," next Sunday, in the Grande Place of Colyton — I will guarantee to say that the simplicity of yr. vestment and the flowing eloquence of yr. tongue will draw out — (as irresistibly as the Piper did the children) the congregations of the "High" Church and the Conventicles which will — one and all — rush forth for to see and to hear, and admiringly surround you! — If windy, you might take this for yr. text — "What went ye forth for to see? — " A reed shaken by the wind? &c., &c.

There must have been a splendid Sea on at Sea-ton, these last few days, — tons of sea, eh? As “I took my walk abroad” this morning — I saw the Serpentine in all its grandeur — and observed several vessels in distress — some clipper yachts on their beam ends — the waves were prodigious — great rollers — two especially — one a six horse fellow — t’other a steamer — crunching and grinding — levelling and sweeping all before them!

Have you seen the Doge of Colyton yet? or any of the Dog-es?

By all means cultivate the acquaintance of the Doge’s kinswoman. Miss P — — (pray give my love to her) — fac-similed on the stage or in a novel, she would be a “tremendous hit.”

I hope you are not belying the good character I have given of you to the boys — and are doing Elephant, Tiger, and Rhinoceros to their perfect satisfaction — though, considering yr. predecessor — it will test your utmost powers, not to be a wretched failure, possibly — much the same sort of thing — as your attempting to sing a comic song immediately after the Great Vance!!! Good Night,

Yr. affectionate Dad,

H. K. B.

The following notes have been selected from the unpublished correspondence of “Phiz” with Charles Dickens: —

My Dear Dickens,

I have just got one boot on, intending to come round to you, but you have done me out of a capital excuse to myself for idling away this fine morning. — I quite forgot to answer your note, and Mr. Macrone’s book has not been very vividly present to my memory for some time past. I think by the beginning of next (week) or the middle (certain) I shall have done the plates, but in the scraps of copy that I have I can see but one good subject, so if you know of another pray send it me. I should like “Malcolm” again, if you can spare him.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

Hablot K. Browne.

Charles Dickens, Esq.

Sunday, Sept.

My Dear Dickens,

Can you conveniently send me the subject or subjects for next week by Thursday or Friday? as I wish, if practicable, to start for Brussels by the Sunday's boat — a word in reply will oblige,

Yours truly,

Hablot K. Browne.

Charles Dickens, Esq.

P.S. — Upon second thoughts I send you the enclosed epistle — (if you read it, you will find out why) — the writer thereof is “Harry Lorrequer,” alias “Charles O'Malley” — to whose house I am going.

H. K. B.

P.S. Second — A fortnight's furlough would suit me better than a week, if it could be managed, as I should like to return by Holland.

My Dear Dickens,

I am sorry I cannot have a touch at battledore with you to-day, being already booked for this evening — but I will give you a call to-morrow after church, and take my chance of finding you at home.

Yours very sincerely,

Hablot K. Browne.

Charles Dickens, Esq.

33, Howland Street.

My Dear Dickens,

I shall be most happy to remember not to forget the 10th April, and, let me express a disinterested wish, that having completed and established one “Shop” in an “extensive line of business,” you will go on increasing and multiplying such like establishments in number and prosperity till you become a Dick Whittington of a merchant, with pockets distended to most Brobdignag dimensions.

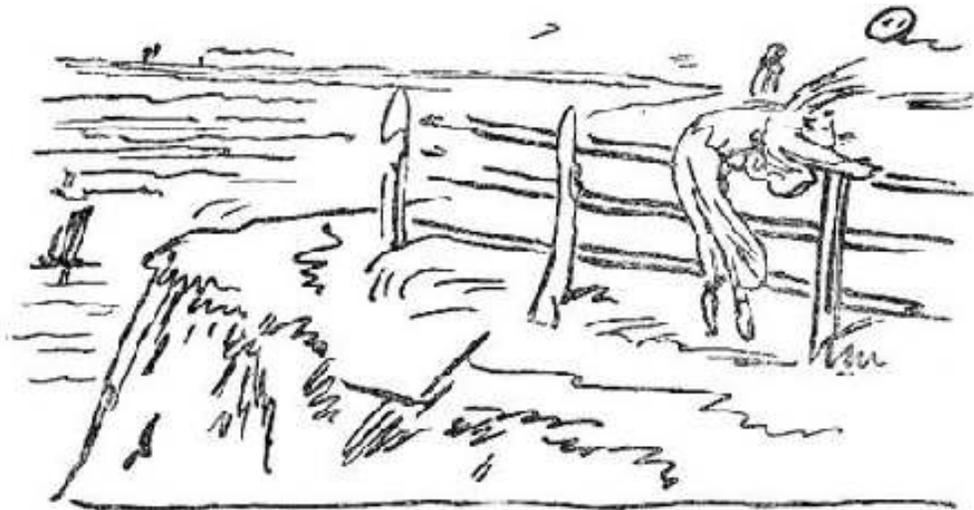
Believe me,

Yours very truly,

Hablot K. Browne.

Charles Dickens, Esq.

I return you the Riots with many thanks.



Sunday Morning.

My Dear Dickens,

Will you give me some notion of the sort of design you wish for the frontispiece to second vol. of Clock?[K] Cattermole being put hors de combat — Chapman with a careworn face (if you can picture that) brings me the block at the eleventh hour, and requires it finished by Wednesday. Now as I have two others to complete in the meantime — something nice and light would be best adapted to my palette, and prevent an excess of perspiration in the relays of wood-cutters. You shall have the others to criticise on Tuesday.

Yours very truly,

Hablot K. Browne.

Charles Dickens, Esq.

How are Mrs. Dickens and the “Infant?”

FOOTNOTES:

[A] Pronounced Hab-lo, after a Monsieur Hablot, a captain in the French army, and a friend of the family.

[B] It was Buss who illustrated Mrs. Trollope's Serial Story, *The Widow Married*, which was published in *The New Monthly Magazine*, 1840.

[C] See *Dombey and Son*, Vol. I, p.113 — "Doctor Blimber's Young Gentlemen."

[D] Leigh Hunt.

[E] Mr. R. Young, who also undertook the precarious task of "biting in" his plates.

[F] Water-colour white.

[G] Publishers frequently availed themselves of his facile pencil, and would instruct him to furnish illustrations for books already in the press, for which he was often inadequately paid.

[H] The Sculptor, and an old coadjutor on *Once a Week*. He is also the author of *A Salad of Stray Leaves* now in the press, which contains a frontispiece by "Phiz," the last design from his pencil. This he executed under some difficulties, for owing to an attack of rheumatism in his hands, the design — teeming with fancy — had to be made on a large scale, and afterwards reduced by the process of photography.

[I] A favourite game with the children.

[J] *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

[K] *Master Humphrey's Clock*.

A List of the Principal Works Illustrated by "Phiz."

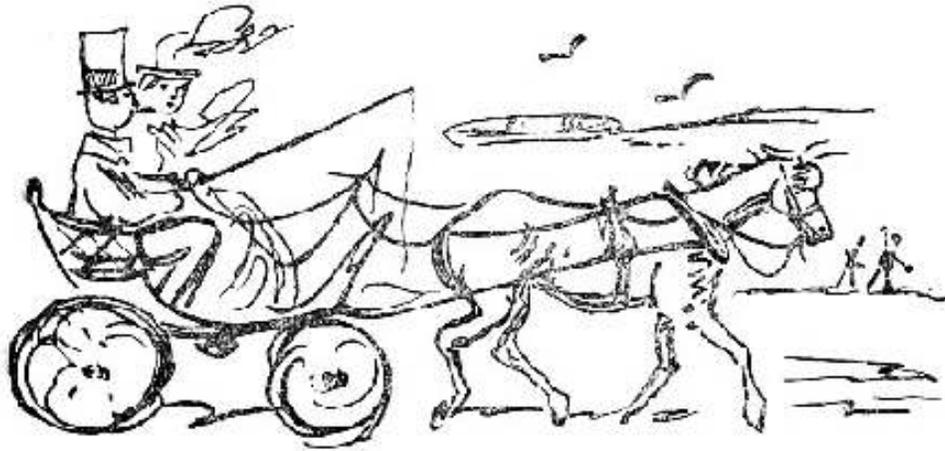
To enumerate all the works illustrated by "Phiz" would be a next to impossible task, for "their name is legion." No artist was so popular or so prolific as a book-illustrator, with the exception, perhaps, of George Cruikshank. It may fairly be questioned whether the works of Charles Dickens, with which the name of "Phiz" is most intimately associated in our minds, would have achieved such notoriety without the aid of the etching needle so ably wielded. Mr. John Hollingshead, in his essay on Dickens, says: —

"The greater the value of a book as a literary production, the more will the circle of its influence usually be narrowed. The very shape, aspect, and garments of the ideal creatures who move through its pages, even when drawn by the pen of the first master of fiction in the land, will be faint and confused to the blunter perception of the general reader, unless aided by the

attendant pencil of the illustrative artist. For the sharp, clear images of Mr. Pickwick, with the spectacles, gaiters, and low crowned hat — of Sam Weller, with the striped waistcoat and the artful leer — of Mr. Winkle, with the sporting costume and the foolish expression — more persons are indebted to the caricaturist, than to the faultless descriptive passages of the great creative mind that called the amusing puppets into existence.”

It was not the fame of Dickens only that was enhanced by “Phiz,” for the numerous illustrations in the works of Charles Lever, Harrison Ainsworth, the brothers Mayhew, and a host of minor novelists were executed by his unwearied hand. It was Dickens, however, who introduced him to public notice, in a pamphlet, now very scarce, entitled *Sunday under Three Heads*, embellished with four delicately executed engravings drawn by “H. K. B.”

It was his succession to Seymour as the illustrator of the *Pickwick Papers*, that really excited public interest in the youthful artist, who created, pictorially, the second hero in the work, the inimitable Samuel Weller. Those who are familiar with the original edition of the *Pickwick Papers* will remember with some amusement, the artist’s introduction of the indefatigable “Boots,” as represented in the yard of the “White Hart” Inn, Borough. The identical Inn exists at the present day. “Mr. Pickwick in the Pound” is another amusing plate, where the laughing, jeering crowd of spectators crowned by a jubilant and juvenile chimney sweeper, the braying of a jackass in the ears of the astonished hero, who sits somewhat uncomfortably in a wheelbarrow, are incidents so cleverly depicted as to excite unqualified admiration. “Mr. Pickwick Slides” is another truly artistic production. The delicate execution of the extreme distance where is seen a manor house of the olden time nestling amongst the trees, and a farmyard hard by, leaves nothing to be desired. Mr. Sala somewhat harshly criticises the illustrations in this work, which, he says, “were exceedingly humorous, but vilely drawn. The amazing success of his author seems, however, to have spurred the artist to sedulous study, and to have conduced in a remarkable degree towards the development of his faculties. A surprising improvement was visible in the frontispieces to the completed volumes[L] of *Pickwick*.” Undoubtedly faults exist, but to characterize the illustrations as “vile,” seems too severe a term, for after all, the exaggerated types of face, form, and feature, do but harmonize with the somewhat exaggerated descriptions of them by the author. This defect, if such it can be called, was remedied considerably in his later productions.



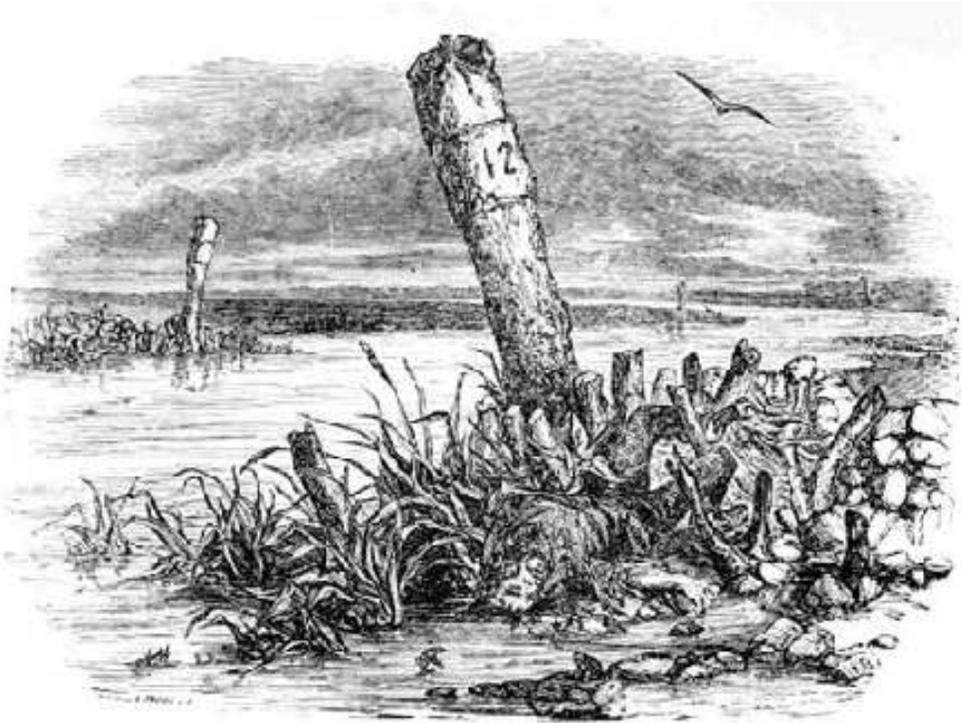
In 1837, "Phiz" accompanied Dickens into Yorkshire, there to gather material for *Nicholas Nickleby*, a work which exposes the tyranny practised by some schoolmasters on their helpless pupils. In this book, published in 1839, is presented to us the despicable "Squeers," which type of brute in human form was so successfully realized by both Author and Artist, that the indignation of innumerable Yorkshire pedagogues was raised to threats of legal proceedings, for traducing their characters, one of them actually stating that "he remembered being waited on last January twelvemonth by two gentlemen, one of whom held him in conversation while the other took his likeness." The most familiar representation of "Squeers" is seen in the second plate, where he stands sharpening his pen, and is timorously approached by the stout father of two wizen-faced boys who are about to become his pupils. The face of the schoolmaster, in which are combined hypocrisy and cruelty, and the expression of sympathy for the new comers exhibited by the boy on the trunk, are worthy of the closest inspection. The effect of the school treatment at Dotheboy's Hall is visible in the illustration where "The Internal Economy" is depicted. Here we see the starveling lads during and after the "internal" application of superabundant doses of brimstone and treacle, administered by Squeers' worthy partner. The eighth plate happily depicts the wild excitement of the pupils when "Nicholas astonishes Mr. Squeers and family" by making a furious attack on the former with the cane; as well as "The breaking-up at Dotheboy's Hall," where the boys revenge themselves on their former tormentors. There are two more etchings in this volume especially remarkable as artistic productions, viz., "Mr. and Mrs. Mantalini in Ralph Nickleby's Office," where the expression of an intent listener on the face of Ralph, and of horror on that of Mantalini,

is capitally rendered; and the plate entitled "The Recognition," which shows poor Smike in the act of rising from a couch of sickness as he recognizes "Broker," who had conveyed him as a child to school.

Master Humphrey's Clock, written in 1840-1, includes the stories of the Old Curiosity Shop and Barnaby Rudge which have been happily termed "two unequalled twin fictions upon one stem." The illustrations were drawn on wood by H. K. Browne and George Cattermole, and the former created, pictorially, Little Nell, Mrs. Jarley, Quilp, Dick Swiveller, the Marchioness, Sally Brass, and her brother Sampson. "Phiz" revelled in wild fun in the vignettes relating to the devilries of Mr. Daniel Quilp and the humours of Codlin and Short, and of Mrs. Jarley's waxwork show. His "Marchioness" was a distinct comic creation; but in the weird waterscape, showing the corpse of Quilp washed ashore, he sketched a vista of riparian scenery which, in its desolate breadth and loneliness, has not since, perhaps, been equalled, save in the amazing suggestive Thames etchings of Mr. James Whistler. To be sure, Hablot Browne was stimulated to excellence during the continuance of the Old Curiosity Shop by the friendly rivalry of the famous water-colour painter, George Cattermole, who drew the charming vignettes of the quaint old cottages and school-house and church of the village where "Little Nell" died. In Barnaby Rudge, however, Hablot Browne had things graphic his own way, and again towards the close he manifested genuine tragic power. His "Barnaby with the Raven" is lovely in its picturesque grace.[M] When the first cheap series of this work was published, plates by H. K. Browne were issued, which are now so scarce, that they are often catalogued at eight or ten times their original price.

Two years after the visit of Dickens to America in 1842, Martin Chuzzlewit was published, the illustrations to which excel in vigour all the previous efforts of "Phiz." Here we are brought face to face, in a pictorial sense, with the hypocrite, Mr. Pecksniff, the abstemious Mrs. Gamp and her bosom friend, Betsy Prig, simple Tom Pinch and his charming sister, Ruth. The frontispiece is a most ambitious work, but none the less successful, for "Phiz" has represented, in the space of a few square inches, all the leading events, humorous and pathetic, described in the novel. In the illustration where Mark Tapley is seen starting from his native village for London, "Phiz" exhibits his sense of the picturesque in the old gables and dormers of the cottages which form the background. The plate, "Mr. Pecksniff on his Mission," is full of interest, and gives us an insight into the character of

Kingsgate Street, Holborn, at that time. The female neighbours of Mrs. Gamp, the midwife, flock round Pecksniff, commiserating with him on his supposed domestic cares, and advising him to “knock at the winder, Sir; knock at the winder. Lord bless you, don’t lose no more time than you can help — knock at the winder!”



But the etching in Chuzzlewit which most strikes the reader as a ludicrous conception, is that where “Mrs. Gamp propoges a toast.” Here he has admirably illustrated the text, wherein is described, with other details of a droll character, how some rusty gowns and other articles of that lady’s wardrobe depended from the bed-posts; and “these had so adapted themselves by long usage to her figure, that more than one impatient husband, coming in precipitately, at about the time of twilight, had been for an instant stricken dumb by the supposed discovery that Mrs. Gamp had hanged herself.” In the background of the picture are represented these indispensable articles of dress, while at the table sit, in friendly chat, Mrs. Gamp and Betsy.

“Betsy,” said Mrs. Gamp, filling her own glass and passing the tea-pot, “I will now propoge a toast. My frequent pardner, Betsy Prig!”

“Which, altering the name to Sairah Gamp; I drink,” said Mrs. Prig, “with love and tenderness.”

In 1846, *Dombey and Son* commenced, with forty illustrations by “Phiz.” The frontispiece is similar in design to that of *Chuzzlewit*, introducing the principal characters and events in the novel. The austere and pompous (not to say selfish) Mr. Dombey, whom “Phiz” had great difficulty in realizing to the author’s satisfaction,[N] is introduced in many of the plates, although the artist has somewhat failed in preserving the same type of face throughout. He has succeeded better with the genial Captain Cuttle. Little Paul, as he sits in his diminutive arm-chair, contrasts most favourably in his childish innocence, with the grim Mrs. Pipchin, whose Ogress-like character is strongly marked. The scene in which Mr. Dombey introduces his daughter Florence to Mrs. Skewton, is one of the most successful in the book, and contains the best type of Dombey. Here also, the face of Florence is truly pretty, and the artist has well portrayed the handsome but vindictive Edith denouncing Carker for his treachery. A very effective etching entitled, “On the Dark Road,” represents the flight of the enraged and disappointed libertine. The horses are being urged on their mad career by the whip and spurs of a postilion, under the dark sky with a glimmer of light in the horizon caused by the rising sun. The artist at this time essayed a process of working on plates over which a half-tint had been previously laid by means of a ruling-machine, and in which the “high-lights” were afterwards “stopped out,” and the “whites” “burnished out.” He frequently availed himself of these ready means of producing effect. Full-length portraits of the principal characters in *Dombey*, which were issued as additional plates by “Phiz,” are now very scarce.

David Copperfield (1850), with forty illustrations, was the next venture, but was not so much an artistic as a literary success. A favourite character in it of course, is Micawber, a kindly caricature of the Author’s father, the realization of whom, by Browne, obtained the hearty approval of Dickens.

The most characteristic and, perhaps, most successful work of “Phiz” is to be seen in the illustrations to *Bleak House*. A view of the “House” itself forms the subject of the frontispiece. “The Ghost’s Walk,” the “Drawing-room at Chesney Wold,” “Tom All-alone’s,” and the gateway leading to the burial ground where Lady Dedlock has fallen lifeless, are instances where the artist has obtained some fine effects by the “ruled-plate” process. A writer in *The Daily Telegraph*, of July 11th, 1882, speaks somewhat disparagingly of these illustrations, but *The Academy* of a few days later, in the following remarks, thus demurs to his criticism: —

“In the Bleak House illustrations hardly anything is wrong; there is no shortcoming. Not only is the comic side, the even fussily comic, such as ‘the young man of the name of Guppy,’ understood and rendered well, but the dignified beauty of old country-house architecture, or the architecture of the chambers of our inns-of-court is conveyed in brief touches; and there is apparent everywhere that element of terrible suggestiveness which made not only the art of Hablot Browne, but the art of Charles Dickens himself, in this story of Bleak House, recall the imaginative purpose of the art of Méryon. What can be more impressive in connection with the story — nay, even independently of the story — than the illustration of Mr. Tulkinghorn’s chambers in gloom; than the illustration of the staircase at Dedlock’s own house, with the placard of the reward for the discovery of the murderer; than that of Tom All Alone’s; the dark, foul darkness of the burial ground shown under scanty lamplight, and the special spot where lay the man who ‘wos very good to me — he wos!’? And then again, ‘the Ghost’s Walk,’ and once more the burial ground, with the woman’s body — Lady Dedlock’s — now close against its gate. Of course it would be possible to find fault with these things, but they have nothing of the vice of tameness — they deliver their message effectually. It is not their business to be faultless; it is their business to impress.”



A very successful rendering of character in Bleak House is that of Harold Skimpole, whose prototype was Leigh Hunt, an intimate friend of the Novelist, who, by his unintentional disregard for the feelings of Hunt in caricaturing his peculiarities, nearly severed that friendship. Again, there is

intense humour in the illustration facetiously styled, "In re Guppy, extraordinary proceeding." The love-sick Guppy is seen in a kneeling posture, while declaring to Miss Summerson the burning passion that consumes him. The expression on the face of the young lady shows that she is more amused than flattered by his preference.

In *Little Dorrit* (1855-7) the experience gained by both Author and Artist during their tour of the London prisons, stood them in good stead, for here the Marshalsea is fully described, the type of a debtor's jail. The first illustration represents the interior of a French prison, in which are incarcerated Monsieur Rigaud and Signor John Baptist. The effect of deep gloom in the cell is produced by the "ruled-plate" method, and is quite Rembrandt-like. In contrast with this, the illustration of "The Ferry," is a delightful country aspect, with trees and winding river; and another plate entitled "Floating away," an evening scene, the moon rising behind the trees, is quite romantic. The old house in the last picture but one — "Damocles," — again shows Browne's appreciation of the picturesque architecture of bygone times, in the effect of light from the setting sun as it falls upon the house front, throwing into relief the quaint old carvings of door and window.

The last work illustrated by "Phiz" for Dickens was *The Tale of Two Cities* (1859), containing sixteen etchings full of vigour, as the character of the story justifies.

For some reason, at this time, a rupture was caused between author and artist, [O] which resulted in the engagement of Mr. Marcus Stone and Mr. Luke Fildes as illustrators of *Our Mutual Friend* and *Edwin Drood*. These accomplished painters avoided the old system of caricature, the old, forced humour; but it is certain that their designs are less intimately associated with the persons in the stories they illustrated than those of "Phiz" with the earlier and more popular works of Dickens.

Having devoted the larger portion of the space at our disposal to a description of the most famous productions of Browne's pencil, which are prominent in the original editions of the Novels of Charles Dickens, we can but briefly enumerate the plates he etched for Lever, Ainsworth, and others.



In Charles Lever's *Harry Lorrequer* (1839) and Charles O'Malley (1841), the uproarious mirth and jollity of Irish military life is well portrayed by the needle of the artist. "The last night in Trinity" in the latter work, is an example of this, wherein is seen the worthy Doctor perched on a table, surrounded by a batch of Irish dragoons, and being elevated by an explosion of combustibles. The horses in the illustrations are admirably drawn.

In Jack Hinton (1842) the artist shows remarkable force in depicting the death of Shaun, and has well realized the humour of "Corney's Combat with the Cossack."

Tom Burke of Ours (1844) contains forty-four illustrations by "Phiz," many of which represent the scenes connected with the battles of Austerlitz, &c., during the reign of the great Napoleon. Most especially noticeable is the scene in a court of justice, with "Darby in the Chair;" the face of that hero with an expression apparently abashed, but really full of roguishness, as he gazes at the counsel, is one of the most successful of Browne's efforts.

The O'Donoghue (1845), has twenty-six illustrations, most of which are well conceived. The falling body of a man in the frontispiece is a remarkable drawing. The girlish figure of Kate O'Donoghue, as she bends over the form of her heart-broken brother Herbert, is well depicted.

St. Patrick's Eve (1845), with four etchings and several woodcuts. The most remarkable of the former is "The Cholera Hut."

The Knight of Gwynne (1847), with forty illustrations.

Roland Cashel (1850), with forty illustrations.

The Daltons (1852), with forty-eight illustrations.

The Dodd Family Abroad (1854), with forty illustrations. The shrewd simplicity of Kenny Dodd is well delineated.

The Martins of Cro' Martin (1856), with forty illustrations.

Davenport Dunn (1859), with forty-four illustrations.

One of Them (1861), with thirty illustrations.

Barrington (1863), with twenty-six illustrations.

Luttrell of Arran (1865), with thirty-two illustrations.

The following works of W. Harrison Ainsworth contain etchings and woodcuts by "Phiz:" —

Revelations of London, published about 1845, but never completed, has an illustration which represents a tumble-down house in Vauxhall Road, which is almost Rembrandt-like in its power. The artist was about thirty years of age when he executed this.

Old St. Paul's (1847), contains only two plates by "Phiz," but The Spendthrift (1857), Mervyn Clitheroe, and Crichton were wholly illustrated by him.

Some Miscellaneous Works Illustrated by "Phiz."

A Paper: of Tobacco, &c., by Joseph Fume (1839). With six plates by "Phiz." Fiddle Faddle's Sentimental Tour, in search of the Amusing, Picturesque, and Agreeable (1845). The Union Magazine. Vol. I (1846). Containing three plates by "Phiz." The Illuminated Magazine. Conducted by Douglas Jerrold (1843-5), with woodcut illustrations by Leech, "Phiz" (H. K. Browne), and others. Fanny, the little Milliner, or the Rich and the Poor (1846), illustrated by "Phiz" and Onwhyn. Wits and Beaux of Society. Sketches of Cantabs, by John Smith (of Smith Hall), Gent. (1850). The Cambridge Freshman. With woodcut illustrations. Paved with Gold, or Romance and Reality of the London Streets, by Augustus Mayhew (1858). A Medical, Moral, and Christian Dissection of Teetotalism by Democritus (1846). New Sporting Magazine (1839). The Pottleton Legacy, by Albert Smith. Christmas Day, and how it was spent by four persons in the house of Fograss, Fograss, Mowton, and Snorton, bankers, by C. Le Ros (1854). Home Pictures (Durtin & Co., 1856). A series of seven charming and characteristic plates. Dame Perkins and her Grey Mare, or the Mount for Market, by L. Meadows (1866). With coloured illustrations. H. B.'s Schoolboy Days. Illustrations of the Five Senses. Adventures of Sir Guy de Guy, by George Halse. The Baddington Peerage, by G. A. Sala (published in The Illustrated Times). In addition to these may be added an illustrated

edition of Byron's works, the "Abbotsford" edition of Sir Walter Scott's Novels, besides numerous cuts in The Sporting Gazette, The Illustrated Times, the early volumes of Once a Week, and the Comic Papers.



(Some Signatures

adopted by H. K. Browne.)

From: *The Bookman*, June 1914, p.394-402

THE CITY OF EDWIN DROOD



By Burton Egbert Stevenson

The little old town of Rochester, snuggled up into the curving arm of the Medway on the Kentish border, must always be the chief place of pilgrimage for the Dickensian. It fairly reeks of Dickens; it was the scene of his first story and his last, and of many others in between. Hither Mr. Pickwick and his three companions journeyed on their first historic expedition out of London. They stopped at the Bull Hotel, still standing, practically unaltered, where their rooms may yet be seen — and even slept in! It was here that Mr. Alfred Jingle and Mr. Tracy Tupman attended a ball — in a room still used for balls — and had an altercation with Dr. Slammer of the Ninety-seventh, which involved the bewildered Mr. Winkle in a duel next day. It was in this same Bull Hotel, masquerading under the name of the Blue Boar, that Pip and Mrs. Gargery and Uncle Pumblechook and the Hubbies and Mr. Wopsle celebrated a windfall of twenty-five guineas — the price of Pip's freedom — by a great dinner, at which, rather late in the evening, Mr. Wopsle favoured with Collins's Ode, and threw his blood-stained sword in thunder down with such effect that the commercials underneath sent a waiter up to protest.

It might be added that the Bull lives largely on its Pickwickian reputation. At either side of the wide entrance gateway is a board bearing Mr. Jingle's words, "Good house. Nice beds"; the words appear also on the bill of fare and the hotel stationery; and if one wishes to explore the place, a fee of sixpence must first be paid. One other title to fame has the Bull, and this, too, is proudly proclaimed by a board above the entrance, which informs the visitor that "Queen Victoria Stayed at This Hotel." Indeed, the inn is known officially as "The Bull and Royal Victoria Hotel," the latter part of the title having been added in 1836, when the Queen, then Princess Victoria, travelling to London with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, was overtaken by a terrific storm and forced to take refuge at the inn over night. Mr. Jingle's eulogium was pronounced by a man who had never stayed in

the house, and Princess Victoria was forced to put up there against her will; so that the two principal items of its advertisement will not bear a critical examination. Nevertheless, it is a good house, with pleasant rooms and a beautiful stairway and a snug bar and a bright, clean coffee room, where some of the old furniture from Gad's Hill Place has been installed, and a great yard such as one sees nowhere but in these old coaching taverns; and the pilgrim to Rochester will do well to stop there.



ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL. THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE IS IN THE CORNER TOWER MARKED WITH A CROSS

One must stop some days, if one wishes to exhaust the Dickens interest of the town and neighbourhood, for Dickens's tales are filled with references to Rochester under various disguises. Naturally enough, for he spent six impressionable years of childhood in the adjoining town of Chatham, and, nearly forty years later, realised a childhood dream by buying Gad's Hill Place, three miles out on the Gravesend road, where he lived until his death.

But this paper is concerned only with Rochester's connection with *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. To students of that unfinished tale — a mystery in a double sense — Rochester is exceedingly interesting, for, under the thin disguise of "Cloisterham," it is used as the scene of its principal events with remarkable exactness of detail. The action centres about the old cathedral, itself one of the most picturesque in England, and it has always been the hope of the present writer that a careful examination of the ground might give some clue to the solution of the story which Dickens had in mind. It was his good fortune to have been able to make that examination last summer, and his further good fortune to have had as companion and guide Mr. Edwin Harris, perhaps the most famous Dickensian now living at Rochester, and the author of a number of monographs dealing with

Dickens's connection with the town. If any results were to be obtained at all by a careful survey of the ground, they would have been obtained in such company; but it may as well be said at once that such results as were obtained were wholly negative. In a word, they showed that certain things could not have happened, but they pointed to no certain solution of the mystery.

The protagonist of *Edwin Drood*, it will be remembered, is John Jasper, choir-master of Cloisterham cathedral, and uncle of the fated Edwin. He is painted as a dark and sinister individual, addicted to opium and subject to fits — rather a stage villain, all in all,



Jasper's Gatehouse “The old gate still stands, a solid and handsome four-square piece of masonry. Above it is the little one-story-and-attic frame extension where Jasper dwelt.”

scarcely convincing, and by no means so fearful as Dickens tried to make him. He lived in rooms over the old gate which shut the cathedral close from the High Street of the town. “One might fancy that the tide of life was stemmed by Mr. Jasper's own Gatehouse. The murmur of the tide is heard beyond, but no wave passes the archway, over which his lamp burns red behind the curtain, as if the building were a light-house.”

This old gate still stands, a solid and handsome four-square piece of masonry, duly marked as “Jasper's Gatehouse” by a bronze plate put up by the Dickens Fellowship. Above it is the little one-story-and-attic frame extension where Jasper dwelt. It has been remodeled inside, so that the rooms no longer correspond with Dickens's description of them — perhaps they never did — but so far as the exterior goes, it has not changed since the day Dickens wrote of it. The march of improvement, however, has swept

back the houses from one side and cut a street through, so that one may now enter the close without going through the gate at all. In Dickens's day, the houses hugged it closely on both sides, and one had only to close and bar the postern gate, which still hangs on its ancient hinges, to shut off ingress effectually.

Just within the gate, on the left as one enters, is the door where Mr. Datchery was wont to sit, his white hair about his ears, to watch Jasper's comings and goings. This was the house of Mr. Tope, the verger, and one may enter it now, for a sign above the door proclaims it, in language somewhat too archaic, to be "Ye Olde Gate House Tea Shoppe." The room beyond is as quaint as could well be imagined, with its low, beamed ceiling, its uneven floor, and quite authentic air of antiquity. But if one is looking for lunch, a better one may be had at the frankly modern shop on the other side of the High Street.

A hundred paces or so beyond the gate is the old graveyard adjoining the cathedral, shut off from the street by a high iron fence. It was through this fence that "Stony" Durdles, weaving his devious way homeward with Deputy at his heels, was wont to gaze admiringly at his creations in the tombstone line — "surrounded by his works, like a popular author." "Your own brother-in-law," as Durdles remarked one night to Jasper, "introducing a sarcophagus within the railing, white and cold in the moonlight. 'Mrs. Sapsea!' introducing the monument of that devoted wife. 'Late Incumbent;' introducing the Reverend Gentleman's broken column. 'Departed Assessed Taxes;' introducing a vase and towel, standing on what might represent the cake of soap. 'Former Pastrycook and Muffin-maker, much respected;' introducing gravestone. 'All safe and sound here, sir, and all Durdles's work. Of the common folk, that is merely bundled up in turf and brambles, the less said the better. A poor lot, soon forgot.'"

It is naturally for the Sapsea monument that one looks. As described in the book, it must have been a sort of burial vault which one could enter, for Durdles asks Sapsea for the key, in order that he may be sure that it is shipshape inside as well as out. Many hints in the story point to the likelihood that this monument was to play a most important part; most commentators believe that it was hither Jasper dragged his nephew's body and buried it in a bed of quicklime; some believe that Edwin died there, or was already dead; others think that Durdles, on his trip of inspection, stumbled upon the still-living body, snatched it forth, and brought it back to

life, to confront the would-be murderer at the end of the story. Whatever purpose it was to serve, it need only be noted here that no monument even remotely resembling that assigned to Mrs. Sapsea exists in the churchyard, or, apparently, ever has existed there. It seems to have been wholly a creature of Dickens's fancy — which, of course, only makes it the more important,



Photograph by the Author

THE CRYPT

“Since then, the crypt has been swept and whitewashed, and the air of mystery quite banished”

since he would scarcely have been at so much pains to imagine it in detail unless he had a very definite use for it.

Just beyond the graveyard is the west front of the cathedral, with its beautiful round-headed doorway — one of the finest Norman doorways to be seen anywhere. To gaze through it into the dim and picturesque interior is, indeed, as Mr. Grewgious declared, “like looking down the throat of Old Time”; but it is not the purpose here to deal with the architecture of this “venerable pile,” except as it concerns Edwin Drood. From this point of view, the crypt is easily first in interest, for it was in the crypt that Durdles was constantly nosing about, turning up an “old un” now and then, or creeping into one of its dark corners to recover from the effects of a debauch; it was the crypt which Jasper carefully explored, with Durdles as guide, one moonlight night — an expedition about which Dickens sought to throw such an air of mystery and which he called “unaccountable” so often that every one agrees it had some close connection with the plot, the most obvious explanation being that Jasper was seeking a suitable place in which

to make away with his nephew and dispose of his body, and had about decided that the crypt would do.

Forty years ago, the crypt was a dark and gloomy place, half-filled with dirt and rubbish — stone fragments, old tombstones, and debris of every sort, the accumulation of centuries. The glass was broken from the narrow windows, which were yet wide enough for a small boy to squeeze through, and so the boys of the neighbourhood used the place as a kind of gang headquarters. There are many men in Rochester, now verging into the sixties, who were more familiar with it at that time than they have ever been since, and who remember distinctly its damp and earthy smell, its darkness and general air of neglect and decay. It was in this condition that it was familiar to Dickens, and it must have seemed to him a very fitting place for the commission of such a crime as the murder of Edwin Drood. Here, too, a body could have been concealed, or placed in a bed of quicklime, with very little danger of discovery except by Durdles, and every one seems to be agreed that it was by Durdles the discovery was to be made.

Since then, the crypt has been swept and whitewashed, the glass restored to the windows, and the air of mystery quite banished. Throngs of visitors, at sixpence a head, troop through it daily, under the guidance of a verger, and it would now be quite impossible to conceal anything there, as a glance at the accompanying photograph will show. So it takes some effort of the imagination to reconstruct the place as it appeared on the night of the “unaccountable expedition.”

Dickens has described its progress with great detail, and one can follow it step by step. Jasper calls for Durdles at the hole in the city wall in which he lives, just back of the Travellers’ Twopenny, and together they cross the Monks’ Vineyard and come to Minor Canon Corner, and pause behind a “piece of old dwarf wall, breast high, the only remaining boundary of what was once a garden, but is now the thoroughfare,” and which has long since been swept away. Then they walk on toward the cathedral along a narrow passage past the ruined cloisters which still exists, and enter the crypt by a small side door of which Durdles has the key. The door and the “rugged steps” which they descend are, of course, easily identified.

They walk up and down the crypt for some time, then mount the flight of steps leading ‘into the nave of the cathedral, and pause while Durdles unlocks the heavy door at the top, “with the key he has already used.” It is perhaps worth remarking that this door does not need a key to be opened

from the inside. Indeed, a key cannot be used, as the bolt of the lock is controlled by a catch. The catch is a trick catch, as the present writer found, after he had been shut into the crypt by the verger, spent an interesting half hour there, and then tried to get out again, for it was some time before he mastered the trick and regained his liberty. The lock is very old, and the key which is needed to work it from the outside is a heavy iron one — perhaps the very one which Durdles is supposed to have carried and which Jasper examined so minutely.

Another short flight of steps leads to the choir, which is a few feet higher than the nave, and here there is another gate, an iron one in the beautiful old choir-screen, which Durdles also unlocks. Once in the choir, they cross it diagonally to the far corner, pass through the door leading to the corner tower, and “go up the winding staircase, turning and turning, and lowering their heads to avoid the stairs above, or the rough stone pivot around which they twist. Twice or thrice,” Dickens adds, “they emerge into low-arched galleries, whence they can look down into the moonlit nave.” This is a curious mistake for Dickens, who had presumably been up this staircase many times, to make, for there is no opening from the stairway into the triforium, nor any through which one can look down into the nave.

It has been the theory of many people that Jasper killed his nephew by pushing him from the top of this tower on the night of the great storm, after having inveigled him up there in a semi-intoxicated condition, and that he then descended and bundled the body into the crypt. A visit to the tower disproves this theory, because there is no way in which this could be done. There is no way to get out to the top of it, for it is covered by a solid four-square roof, and the single narrow door opens upon the gutter of the church-roof, which is guarded by a parapet some three or four feet high. Over the parapet at this point a body might, indeed, be thrown, and would fall a sheer hundred feet or more to the pavement below. If the body was thrown over at all, it must have been just here, for at every other point the gutters overlook the lower roofs of the aisles or of similar projections built against the main body of the church. There can be little doubt that it was from this point Jasper and Durdles looked down on Cloisterham, “fair to see in the moonlight.”

They seem to have descended without going any farther; but this is really only the beginning of a most interesting journey. Passing along this gutter, one enters a little door



THE CATHEDRAL TRANSEPT

"Another short flight of steps leads to the choir, which is a few feet higher than the nave, and here there is another gate, an iron one, which Durdles also unlocks"

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THE CATHEDRAL CLOSE

"They walk on toward the cathedral along a narrow passage past the ruined cloisters"



Photograph by the Author
MINOR CANON ROW

“A wonderfully quaint row of brick tenements, with odd little porches over the doors, like sounding-boards over old pulpits”

leading into the great central tower of the church. There is a platform here, from which a long steep ladder leads to a trapdoor opening on the platform above the bells. On either side stretches a dim space, circumscribed above by the heavy timbers of the roof, and below by the rolling masses of the stone vaulting of the transepts. A narrow walk of planks spans this vaulting, and one creeps forward cautiously above the billows of stone, bending low under the great cross-timbers of the roof, and peering down into abysses masked in blackness.

To the expert in architecture, this vaulting in reverse must be most interesting; to the student of Edwin Drood the thought occurs that this dark and eyrie place is more suggestive of tragedy than the crypt could ever have been, and one wonders if it was not in one of these black pits, whose depths are quite secure from any casual observation, and where even Durdles never came, that Edwin Drood's body was to be concealed, after he had been strangled with the long neckcloth. Dickens was, of course, familiar with it, and the picture which appeared on the cover of the original issue of the story, drawn from directions given by Dickens himself, might be held to give some basis for the theory. For, at the right of the cover, is shown a spiral stair up which three men, obviously Tartar, Grewgious and Crisparkle, are hastening. It is undoubtedly the tower stair which is depicted, and the present writer has always believed that the three men were hastening in pursuit of the fleeing Jasper, who was to be captured by the agile Tartar after a fierce chase over the cathedral roof; but the cause of their haste may really be the chance discovery of the body somewhere in the dim recesses overhead. Or perhaps the conscience-stricken Jasper, drawn back to the body of his victim, as murderers so often are in fiction, and sometimes even in real life, may be all unconsciously leading them to it.

One point more. Andrew Lang hazarded the guess that Jasper might have killed his nephew by drugging him and then pushing him down the winding staircase of the tower. Any one who has been up that staircase will realise the absurdity of this, for it is so narrow and turns so sharply that no one could possibly fall down it more than a few steps.

The first turning beyond the cathedral, as one leaves it by the west door, is Minor Canon Corner, leading to Minor Canon Row, “a wonderfully quaint row of brick tenements, with odd little porches over the doors, like soundingboards over old pulpits.” In one of them — the second one from the far end, so Mr. Harris says — the athletic Crisparkle lived with his mother, and took the ill-fated Neville Landless to stay as a pupil. This row of houses is quite unchanged, as may be seen from the accompanying photograph, and is still, no doubt, inhabited by the minor canons of the cathedral.

A hundred yards farther on is a public park known as The Vines, which was once the vineyard belonging to the Priory of Saint Andrew, connected with the cathedral. That the good monks were fond of wine the size of the vineyard shows. It is mentioned many times in *Edwin Drood*. Three days before his death, Dickens, who was finding the writing of the story unexpectedly difficult, walked over from Gad’s Hill, and spent a long time in The Vines, leaning against the fence, apparently so deep in thought that he did not notice, as he certainly did not heed, the salutations of chance passers-by. That he was pondering his story cannot be doubted, for the Monks’ Vineyard figures in the pages written a few hours before his death.



EASTGATE HOUSE

“It was here that Miss Twinkleton kept her Select Seminary for Young Ladies”

If one leaves The Vines by the gate in front of Restoration House and turns to the left along Crow Lane, one comes in a few minutes to the site of the “Travellers’ Twopenny,” as it is known in *Edwin Drood*. Its real name was “The White Duck,” and Dickens certainly does not exaggerate its shady character, for its memory still survives in Rochester as a public house so disreputable that any girl seen coming out of it, or out of the alley

leading to the rear entrance, lost her good name at once and forever. It was torn down many years ago.

The alley which runs back past the place leads to the fragment of the ancient city wall, in which Stony Durdles had his abode. The yard in which his monuments were cut and polished was in front of it, and it will be remembered that, on the night Jasper paid the place a visit, he nearly stepped into a heap of quicklime.

“‘Ware that there mound by the yardgate, Mister Jarsper,’ says Durdles.

“‘I see it. What is it?’

“‘Lime.’

“Mr. Jasper stops, and waits for him to come up, for he lags behind.

“‘What you call quicklime?’

“‘Ay!’ says Durdles; ‘quick enough to eat your boots. With a little handy stirring, quick enough to eat your bones.’”

That is all that is said about the quicklime, but the suggestion is obvious. The one thing which has puzzled the commentators is to explain how Jasper managed to get enough of the stuff to bury a body in inside the Sapsea vault, or into the crypt. Mr. Lang, or perhaps it is Mr. Proctor, suggests that Jasper spent a strenuous night wheeling it there in a barrow, and points out the emphasis which Dickens lays upon the fact that the close is absolutely silent and deserted after nightfall, so that Jasper would stand in small danger of discovery. But to get to the close, he would have had to come out past the Travellers’ Twopenny, the one place in Cloisterham where stragglers were almost certain to be encountered at any hour of the night. It is possible that Dickens may have had at the back of his mind when he began to tale some such development, but he must have abandoned it when he came to consider it more carefully.

Returning to Crow Lane and proceeding on in the direction of the High Street, one presently finds one’s self opposite a great, rambling, three-storied brick building, with many bays and dormers. It is known as the Eastgate House, and is now a museum owned by the town; but it is also both the Nuns’ House of *Edwin Drood* and the Westgate House of the *Pickwick Papers*. It was here that Miss Twinkleton kept her Select Seminary for Young Ladies; it was here that Rosa Bud and Helena Landless went to school, and it was in the garden attached that Jasper made his violent and threatening declaration of love. It is a most interesting pile, dating from 1591; originally the mansion of a great gentleman, Sir Peter

Bucke, it fell from that high estate, and for many years was really used as a school for girls. It is 'as a girls' school that it figures also in *Pickwick*, for it was here, one dark night, that Sam Weller boosted his portly employer over the wall, in the effort to prevent an elopement — an adventure which ended in Mr. Pickwick's discomfiture and confusion.

Just across the street is the three-storied house — each story overhanging the one below — where dwelt Mr. Sapsea, auctioneer and mayor of Cloisterham. The date 1684 is on a shield between the gables; and, by a curious coincidence, the lower story -is the office of a firm of auctioneers.

All of which shows how closely Dickens followed local topography, and how clearly he had it in mind, as he built up his tale. No doubt he fancied he could thus give an added verisimilitude to a plot sadly in need of it! Only when there was absolute necessity did he invent a detail — and its invention proves how necessary it was. For instance, there is not and never has been a weir in the river near Cloisterham. Dickens, to furnish an additional clue to the person he wished suspected of the murder, placed a weir about two miles above the town. As has been said already, there was no burial vault in the churchyard such as the one assigned to Sapsea. And the dark, mysterious, Wilkie Collinsey atmosphere which Dickens tried to throw about the cathedral precincts existed, of course, only in his imagination.

Some months ago, the present writer hazarded some conjectures, in *The Bookman*, as to the outcome of the story. The careful examination of its scene, as here outlined, has added nothing new to these, nor suggested any modification of them, except perhaps a more pronounced leaning toward the belief to which Andrew Lang, after long continued effort to find a reasonable solution, ultimately came: that Dickens himself did not see clearly how the story was to end, and had need to ride most carefully and adroitly to avoid a cropper at the last.

“BOZ” AND BOULOGNE



By Deshler Welch

From: Harper's Magazine, August 1908, p.361-363

CHARLES DICKENS spent three summers in Boulogne-sur-Mer — only a few hours from England, “but if it were three hundred miles farther away, how the English would rave about it!” said he. He thought its picturesqueness, its coloring, and the character of its domestic life filled the eye and fancy quite to the measure of Naples. It was in 1853 that Dickens first went there, and selected a house to live in on the high cliffs then known as the Calais road, and on a recent pilgrimage to Boulogne I set out to find it. I had memoranda with me that told of its situation in the novelist’s own words: “The house is on a great hillside, backed up by woods of young trees. It faces the Haute Ville with the ramparts. . . . On the slope in front, going steep down to the right, all Boulogne is piled and jumbled about in a very picturesque manner. The view is charming — closed in at last by the tops of swelling hills, and the door is within ten minutes of the post-office and a quarter of an hour of the sea. The garden is made in terraces up the hillside, like an Italian garden.”

This was all that I had written down; there had been a great deal more of it, and I remembered to have read in his charming sketch, “ Our French Watering Place,” much that in some way had given me impressions of a dreamful and sequestered spot with thousands of roses enveloping it, leaving only enough of it uncovered for the eye of the house to look out upon the sea in its various moods. I gathered, too, that Dickens loved it in the tempest, and when the great sea fog came rolling in.

I began to make my inquiries almost directly I had located in the odd little hotel Meurice on the Rue Victor Hugo. I did not ask to see the fine old landlord, M. Loyal Derasseur, for that was only the fictitious name in the sketch, but I felt that I must behold

Monsieur Beaucourt, the real, amiable, and almost loving host who so won the heart of the novelist.

I was not surprised to find how little was known of Dickens's association with the place, but I was hardly prepared to hear that Monsieur Beaucourt was still remembered, and almost familiarly so, by my French Boniface. Subsequently I learned, from the tourist's most friendly bookseller of Boulogne, where the dear old gentleman was buried — at Condette, a little village near by. I found his grave lying by a Gothic steepled church, covered by a stone cross. On one side is written:

“Ici repose le corps de Monsieur Ferdinand Beaucourt, epoux de Francoise Mutuel, ne a. Bethune, decide a Condette, le 8 Mai, 1881, á Vage de 75 ans et 8 mois.”

But on the other side of it I read these lines that will forever make the name of Monsieur Beaucourt famous:

“The landlord of whom Charles Dickens wrote: ‘ I never did see such a gentle, kind heart.’”

There was everything in the physical conditions of Boulogne, as well as in the times, to have attracted Dickens that first summer. It was in the period of the French-English alliance; the return of the troops from the Crimea, and of the exposition of English paintings, and of the visit of the Prince Consort to the Emperor: and meanwhile he was at work on his *Little Dorrit*. As for the town itself, it had the fascinating attraction of the old world; its venerable ramparts on which many exiles make their promenade and the streets below where many poets ended their days — such as Le Sage and Campbell. — and it had the charm of “color,” of foreign life, and of water life, and always a brilliant port.

Although I had in some degree informed myself as to the location of Monsieur Beaucourt's “chateau,” through certain unpublished letters of the master that I had been permitted to have and to hold on a former pilgrimage of mine when I visited his Villa Rosemont in Lausanne a few weeks previous, I was nevertheless somewhat mystified now by my surroundings. I finally proceeded along the Grande Rue which ascends to the “Haute Ville,” which is the old part of the town on the height. I passed the Boulevard Mariette and the esplanade, and a little farther on the park of Lea Tintelleries, where the people dance in the summer-time. Three of the four gateways dating back to the thirteenth century still open into the Haute Ville, which is enclosed by ramparts ornamented by turrets. From the Porte

de Calais the view was superb. The day was full of glory — full of ozone, and inspiring. Below me stretched the dunes, a train travelling along them with a musical rumble on the way to Calais; near by was the Napoleon Column, and away off in the great distance arose the white cliffs of the English coast. It was a scene that Dickens had often looked upon. I turned back and soon entered the Rue Beaurepaire — not much of a street, — that would lead me, so I was told, right to the chateau where Dickens had dwelt, and which under his familiar penname of “Boz” he had described so lovingly and at much length in his letters and sketches. It was a pretty steep road, shabbily built up, that must have been a charming ramble a half century ago. I was confronted suddenly by a stone wall and a churchlike building, where I had in my mind located the chateau; it had been built on Monsieur Beaucourt’s property, but somewhere nestling in the corner back of it under a group of trees I espied a spot of yellow, and then the chateau itself grew from it, and finally it was all there before me with its triangular pediment and green blinds. There was something of a field around it, sloping to a road that ran up higher beyond it, divided by a wall of cobblestones.

So it was here that “Boz” looked down upon the old town and the great distance; — from here that he looked down into the great depths of mankind and riveted their hearts with the spell of his pen! It was here that Wilkie Collins, Jerrold, and Forster who became his Boswell, used to come and make merry, and where his children played — the children of his flesh. It was with conflicting emotions I thought of that withered past, and out of which the mental child — little Dorrit — was born to live, and live so long that the old ramparts of the town would crumble away during her mere youth. As I sit on the cobbled fence trying to repeople the place in my mind, I open some of his precious letters I have been entrusted with. What a prodigious and warm-hearted correspondent he was! Those with whom he had most to do in a material way were not so well favored as his friends of the heart. In one place he writes (it is headed, “Villa des Moulineaux, Rue Beaurepaire “): “This place is beautiful — a burst of roses. Beaucourt — who *will not* put on his hat — has thinned the trees and greatly improved the garden.”

Another: “We have a beautiful garden with all its fruits and flowers and a field of our own, and a road of our own away to the Column, and everything that is airy and fresh. The great Beaucourt hovers about us like a

guardian genius.” Another: “The prettiest French grounds in the most charming situation I have ever seen, the best place I have ever lived in abroad, except at Genoa. You can scarcely imagine the beauty of the air in this richly wooded hillside.” And one more I finally read that causes me to look sadly at the house and the hillside and on the great beyond: “*Do* come and pass a little time here. Excellent light wines on the premises, French cookery, millions of roses, two cows (for milk punch), vegetables cut for the pot and handed in at the kitchen window; fine summer-houses, fifteen fountains (with no water in ‘em), and thirty-seven clocks (keeping, as I conceive, Australian time; having no reference to the hours on this side of the globe).”

A great affection sprang up between Dickens and M. Beaucourt. He was an “obliging landlord” of the kind that must have been the last of his race. Said Dickens: “He is wonderful; he is a portly jolly fellow with a fine open face — he is supposed to have mortgaged his business (that of a linen - draper) all along of this place which he has planted with his own hands; which he cultivates all day; and which he never on any consideration speaks of but as ‘the property.’ If the extraordinary things in the house defy description, the amazing phenomena in the gardens never could have been dreamed of by anybody but a Frenchman bent upon one idea. There is a plan of ‘the property’ in the hall. It looks about the size of Ireland; and to every one of the extraordinary objects there is a reference with some portentous name . . . the Cottage of Tom Thumb, the Bridge of Austerlitz, the Bridge of Jena, the Hermitage, the Bower of the Old Guard, the Labyrinth (I have no idea which is which); and there is a guidance to every room in the house, as if it were a place on that stupendous scale that without such a clue you must infallibly lose your way and perhaps perish of starvation between bedroom and bedroom!”

It was the summer of 1853 that Dickens first stopped with M. Beaucourt. In 1854, while still his tenant, he was housed in another cottage higher up the hill which afforded a better view — a great stretch of the sea. It was named the “Villa du Camp de Droite.” It was along the cliffs toward Calais that the French camp was formed, and Dickens watched the making of it with intense interest, although his walks were frequently discommoded by the military arrangements. On the night of the arrival of the Prince Consort the villa was a blaze of glory. Dickens himself set a French flag over the Union Jack flying from a haystack, and judging by all accounts, as I find

them in his letters, became a veritable jumping-jack in his excitement over the *entente cordiale* and the displays of colors, cocked hats, and English condescension.

As I walked along the Calais road in *the* gloaming, for time had passed so quickly during my retrospection on the cobble wall that I had only witnessed the departure of the day as one would gaze with hypnotic vacancy into an iridescent glass, I came upon another note by “Boz “: “Coming home by the Calais road, covered with dust, I suddenly find myself face to face with Albert and Napoleon jogging along in the pleasantest way, a little in front, talking extremely loud about the view, and attended by a brilliant staff of sixty or seventy horsemen. I took off my wideawake without stopping to stare, whereupon the Emperor pulled off his cocked hat; and Albert (seeing, I suppose, that it was an Englishman) pulled off his.”

It was during his third summer at Boulogne, again at the Villa Moulineaux, that he worked on *Little Dorrit*. Previous to that it had been on *Hard Times* and *Copperfield*. I have no doubt that many of his impressions formed during his prowling around the old town and along the lower streets and the pier shaped themselves somehow in his literary work. Beaucourt must have influenced more than the mere sketch of “Our French Watering Place.” It was in this summer that Wilkie Collins spent several weeks with Dickens, and Jerrold too was a frequent visitor, and it was here that Collins concocted *The Frozen Deep*. In the late afternoons, as they would discuss their literary co-operation for *Household Words*, “Boz” would lie at lazy length among the roses, as he said, “middle-aged Love in a blouse and belt,” and in the evening they would wander down to the pier, where I dare say it looked very much as it looks to-day.

I passed once more before the door of the Villa des Moulineaux as I hunted my way back to the gates of Haute Ville. Alas! alas! on the monastic building of which the little villa was now a part was this sign:

“*Maison a Vendre ou a Louer.*”

As I stood for a moment in contemplation I could not help the weakness — if so it be; my eyes became filled with tears. In the dim and misty light were two figures — Dickens and Beaucourt. It was their last meeting. “And you, Monsieur Beaucourt — you are unfortunate too, God knows!”

“Ah, Monsieur Dickens, thank you; don’t speak it” — ” and backed himself down the avenue with his cap in his hand as if he were going to

back himself straight into the evening star!”

From: *The Home Counties Magazine*, April 1908, p.123-127

DICKENS AND GRAVESEND



By Alex J. Philip

ALTHOUGH Dickens' works are exceedingly popular in Gravesend, and a numerous branch of the Dickens' Fellowship has been founded, it is a curious fact that no effort has been made to establish the very close relationship that existed between the famous novelist and the town, or to identify the town and its surroundings in his works; or to perpetuate the many Dickens' memories connected with the place. This is the more remarkable as all these are not only of the greatest interest from a literary and personal point of view, but they would form a valuable asset from a commercial standpoint, as has been the case elsewhere.

This article is an endeavour to rescue from oblivion the recollections of Dickens in the town, and to segregate the obscure references to Gravesend in the novels, and to emphasise the personal relationship that undoubtedly existed when Dickens was living at Gads Hill Place, on the Rochester Road.

One of the earliest authenticated instances of Dickens' presence in the town, after the commencement of his literary career, dates from the year 1836. A short mile from Gravesend on the Dover Road lies the parish of Chalk. It is now a comparatively populous and prosperous village, and although it has increased considerably since 1836, probably it has not changed so much as might be naturally expected in the passage of more than seventy years. In that year, the year of his first marriage, Dickens spent his honeymoon in this rambling, but characteristic Kentish village. Both the late Mr. Kitton and Laman Blanchard, the former probably on the authority of the latter, decided that what is now known as "The Manor House" was the place of his residence. It is unlikely that any conclusive proof, such as letters dated from his holiday address, will be discovered at this late date, and it is therefore necessary to rely upon extraneous evidence. Fortunately there is a fair amount of a trustworthy nature. The claim on behalf of "The Manor House" rests entirely on a statement of Laman Blanchard (unless Kitton had some private information which he did not put on record) that he

generally met Dickens “at the same spot — at the outskirts of the village of Chalk, where a picturesque lane branched off towards Shorne and Cobham . . . the brisk walk of Charles Dickens was always slackened, and he never failed to glance meditatively at the windows of a corner house on the southern side of the road ... it was in that house he lived immediately after his marriage.”

Taking this as the only evidence available on the one side, that on the other is much more conclusive, and may be tabulated as follows: —

(a) In 1836 “The Manor House” was occupied by a M. Lereaux, a French surgeon of some considerable means, sufficient at all events to make it unnecessary for him to take lodgers or boarders.

(b) The gardener at the Manor House in that year is still alive and living in the village. He emphatically states that no newly-married couple stayed at the house in 1836 in any capacity, either as lodgers or guests.

The foregoing may be termed negative evidence; *c* and *d* may be classed as positive evidence:

(c) On the authority of some of the oldest inhabitants of the village a honeymoon couple spent some time during the year 1836 in a smaller house situated on the angle of the upper and lower roads less than a hundred yards nearer Gravesend.

(d) The landlady of the house at that time was a Mrs. Craddock, and Mr. Pickwick lodged with a Mrs. Craddock when he went to Bath. The coincidence lies in the fact that Dickens was writing Pickwick at the time he was stopping at Chalk.

When I was making enquiries relating to this subject I asked an ancient light of the village if Dickens stayed here. “No,” replied the old man, “Dickens never stopped there, but Mr. Pickwick, ‘e did. ‘E ‘ad supper there one night and breakfast next morning.”

While dealing with Pickwick it may be of interest to detail the identification of Gravesend and Muggleton. It is impossible within the limits of any article to give the arguments *pro* and *con* on all the places in Kent which have been pointed out as the prototype of this fictitious town. There is not the slightest doubt that the identity of the town was intentionally and carefully disguised; no one town in the county answers the description. The suggestions most favourably received many years ago were — Maidstone, Faversham, and Town Malling. But the utmost endeavours of the various partisans failed to establish an unequivocal

resemblance. Gravesend was put aside chiefly because it was not fifteen miles from Rochester,



The cottage at Chalk where Charles Dickens spent his boyhood.

whereas it is quite obvious that Dickens relied chiefly upon the misstatement of distance for his disguise. The actual distance between Gravesend and Rochester is about half of the fifteen miles of the book. The resemblance between Muggleton and the old post-town is sufficiently striking to be adduced as evidence. Gravesend has had a mayor and corporation for centuries; and it boasts that it is an “ancient and loyal borough.” As a matter of fact in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries it frequently paraded its loyalty when in its corporate capacity it desired a concession from the crown. It has a market place dating back some centuries, which in the early 19th century was partly open. A picturesque inn with a large posting connection at that time existed in what is now Milton Road, and the distances between the stages in the chase after Jingle correspond very nearly with those on the road from Gravesend to London, except that Dickens has added one stage; although it is significant that the last stage has no defined limits, nor is it described at any length. Pickwick and Wardle are left on the road to find their way to town, and they next reappear in the inn in the Boro’. But one of the most important pieces of evidence is that found in *Pickwickian Manners and Customs*. The late Miss Dickens — “Mamie,” as she was affectionately called — in her pleasing and very natural little book, *My Father as I Recall Him*, has casually dropped a hint which puts us on the right track. When driving on the

beautiful back road to Cobham once he pointed out a spot. "There it was," he said, "where Mr. Pickwick dropped his whip." The distressed travellers had to walk some twelve or fourteen miles — about the distance of Muggleton — which was important enough to have a mayor and corporation, etc. We ourselves have walked this road, and it led us to Gravesend. Gravesend we believe to be Muggleton, against all competitors. Further, when chasing Jingle, Wardle went straight from Muggleton to town, as you can do from Gravesend; from which there is a long walk to Cobham.

Having accepted Muggleton as Gravesend, I am now endeavouring to identify Dingley Dell and the Manor Farm, but my evidence is not yet complete, and as it will require and deserve more than the passing notice which would be all it could receive here, I must hold it over for another occasion.

There is little reason to doubt that "one of the most secluded churchyards in Kent, where wild flowers mingle with the grass, and the soft landscape around forms the fairest spot in the garden of England," in which Heyling's wife and child were buried, is the churchyard at Shorne, where in later years Dickens wished to be laid to rest.

David Copperfield contains several references to Gravesend either stated or implied. But it will be found when more careful and exact criticism has been brought to bear upon the subject that *Great Expectations* contains more allusions to Gravesend and its immediate neighbourhood than any other of Dickens' works, with the exception of the *Pickwick Papers*. Joe Gargery's forge has been located by popular consent at Cooling, in the marshes. Without any very careful enquiry Kitton accepted this version and gave Cooling as the place in his *Dickens' Country*. Joe's forge had a door communicating direct with the kitchen; and no such forge is remembered in Cooling. Here again enquiries at Chalk have resulted in an interesting discovery. On the opposite side of the road to that on which Mrs. Craddock's cottage is situated, a rambling forge still stands. It is still possible to see the door which at one time gave direct access from the forge to the kitchen. Not only must Dickens have seen this when stopping in the village in that memorable year 1836, but he must have passed it many times in later life on his walks and drives from Gads Hill to Gravesend, and the marshes of Denton and Chalk are sufficiently close to justify the reference; and, moreover, the smith was well known to Dickens. It is more than

probable that the “Ship Inn” mentioned towards the end in *Great Expectations* is the “Ship and Lobster” in the neighbouring parish of Denton, for many years a famous resort.

Dickens’ personal relations with the town and its surroundings are not less interesting. Chalk Church, with the quaint carvings over the porch, now falling into decay, was a favourite spot with Dickens. Not only this spot but the whole of Chalk was endeared to him, and he promoted village sports and other things which are still affectionately remembered. A red sash — one of the prizes in these sports, and tied on the winner by Dickens himself — still exists in the village.

The “ Commercial Hotel,” situated at the western end of the Promenade at Gravesend, is not now so large as it was in Dickens’ time, as the part of the structure lying nearest to the



The Manor House, Chalk.



“ Joe Gangery’s Forge,” Chalk.

river has been pulled down. The remainder, however, is still much as it was in 1841 when Dickens first “put up” there. The inn was then known as “Waite’s Hotel,” and was perhaps one of the best known and most frequented of the river hotels. Dickens again stopped there for a short time just prior to the completion of the purchase of Gads Hill Place.

Even to those who did not know Dickens he had two distinct features, the one when he drove and the other when he walked through the town, although neither of them can be described as personal. He frequently walked to Gravesend Station when on his way to London some two or three times a week, but when walking for pleasure he was accompanied by two black retrievers, and the dogs became eventually as well known in the district as their master. When driving in his carriage the tinkling of the bells announced his coming some distance away, and with the large affection sometimes found in rural districts, the villagers of Chalk were often overheard to remark — ,” Here comes old Charlie.”

Gads Hill and Cobham, with the far-famed “Leather Bottle,” although more easily reached from Gravesend than from any other point, have been so often described with more or less topographical and historical accuracy that it is not necessary to enter into any details regarding either of the places.

DICKENS IN SWITZERLAND



SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS AND REFLECTIONS

By Deshler Welch

From: *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, April, 1906, p.714-719



ROSEMONT VILLA, LAUSANNE, WHERE CHARLES DICKENS LIVED.
The two middle windows opening on the balcony were in Dickens's study.

AS a devout lover of Charles Dickens and all his works I was extremely gratified during the past summer in being able to take many long journeys by foot and coach in Switzerland over roads and passes that he knew so well and so delightfully described in certain private letters at the time, which have never been printed, and which I now have the privilege of making public. Charles Dickens loved Switzerland. It was his refuge in his hunt for happiness and health; it was his haven when he had the printers after him for "copy." In Geneva, Lausanne, Vevey, and elsewhere along the Rhone Valley in many of the pretty Swiss villages, in the comfort of one of the characteristic inns for a night, he did some of his most effective writing. It was in Switzerland that he wrote *The Battle of Life* and *Dombey and Son* and much of *David Copperfield* and *Bleak House*, and thought of much more that subsequently entered into his immortal work. If he had never been in Lausanne he never would have created Lady Dedlock, for it was there that he formulated her character through suggestive conditions. It was there that Dickens had the beginnings of many corollaries in the friendships that controlled much of his future life.

The villa Rosemont was his summer residence first in 1846. The room in which he did his writing occupied the two centre windows of the balcony, and as he sat there and wrote, his eyes often rested in a transport of admiration on the wonderful hues of Lake Geneva and the mountains of Savoy. It was there he first met the Hon. Richard and Mrs. Watson of Rockingham Castle, England, and M. de Cerjat, with whom he corresponded during the rest of their mutual lives, and also Mr. Haldimand. It was to Mr. and Mrs. Watson that he dedicated his own favorite book, *David Copperfield*, and it is with his copious flow of letters to them that I have now to do- — a correspondence full of the utmost human feeling in its most triumphant moods. These priceless documents of unaffected genius, and domestic sweetness beyond all else in autobiographical literature I ever read, were confided to me by the Baroness von Roeder, the daughter of Mrs. Watson, and whose birth and youth were objects of much solicitude to Dickens. I felt it indeed a privilege to be permitted the acquaintance of this charming woman at her summer home in Interlaken, and to hear from her lips the interesting details concerning his every-day life. "It was a most remarkable friendship, that sprang up between Mr. Dickens and my father and mother," said the Baroness, "and these letters show but a small part of

it. It was wonderful that he had the time and the patience to attend to the private correspondence that he did and he filled it so full of passing detail and serious observation that one wonders that he could have afforded the expenditure of so much valuable material. He appeared to be much broken by my father's death, but after it he kept up his letter-writing with my mother with the same bubbling over thoughts and rare good literature. Of course I was very young up to the time of his death, but I have a splendid memory of the man — of his combination of tenderness and ruggedness, and his affectionate nature, that showed itself in his communication with men and women alike. In his family he was companionable. He loved to write books and letters and to read before an audience and to act on the stage, as every one knows, but few could comprehend how much of a passion all this amounted to. Yet his ideas of home life were full of extraordinary sentiment; he had the most happy thoughts of the coziness of the fireside — he liked to contemplate it and meditate before it, and in pleasant mental arraignment of his friends it was always in the glamour of a fireside circle. He was moderate in his eating and drinking, but to hear him speak of plum pudding or of a glass of mulled wine was enough to make one's mouth water — you remember the famous 'Plum Pudding' edition of his books?"



The Honorable Mrs. Watson

To her and her husband Dickens dedicated his favorite book, David Copperfield

The Dickens - Watson correspondence extended over a period of nearly twenty years, beginning after the Lausanne summer in 1846, the first communication from Dickens being a recipe for a summer drink which he christened "Moonbeams," and I give space to it here as a valuable addition

On July 3, 1850, Dickens wrote from Devonshire Terrace to the Watsons:

I am in a very despondent state of mind over Peel's death. He was a man of mark, who would be ill-spared from the great Dust Heap down at Westminster. When I think of the joy of the Disraeli's, Richmond and other Importers and Humbugs I think of flying to Australia and taking to the bush. What do you think of entering into the scheme, asking Haldimand to join us, and founding a settlement to be called the Paradox 1

Every one is cheering David on, and I hope to make *your book* a good one. I like it very much myself — thoroughly believe it all and go to the work every month with an energy of the finest description.

In August, 1852, Dickens lost one of his very dearest friends — thus cutting off one of the tenderest associations of Switzerland — Richard Watson. He had visited Rockingham Castle in the spring and had been shocked at his friend's decline, although there seemed no need to fear that the inevitable in life would come so soon. 'He dined with Dickens at Tavistock House in July, but, in August. Dickens wrote:

"My dear Watson! Dead after that illness of four days. I loved him as my heart, and cannot think of him without tears."

In 1852 Dickens wrote to Mrs. Watson giving his impressions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Parts of this letter were published in a collection of letters after his death, but it is here printed as he wrote it, for the first time:

In the matter of Uncle Tom's Cabin. I partly though not entirely agree with Mr. James. No doubt a much lower art will serve for the handling of such a subject in fiction, than for a launch on the sea of imagination without such a powerful bark; but there are many points in the book very admirably done. There is a certain St. Clair, a New Orleans gentleman, who seems to me to be conceived with great power and originality. If he had not a Grecian outline of face, which I began to be a little tired of in him in earliest infancy, I should think him unexceptionable. He has a sister too, a maiden lady from New England, in whose person the besetting weakness and prejudices of the Abolitionists themselves, on the subject of the blacks, are set forth in the liveliest and truest colors and with the greatest boldness. She (I mean Mrs. Stowe) is a leetle unscrupulous in the appropriatin' way. I seem to see a writer with whom I am very intimate (and whom nobody can possibly

admire more than myself) peeping very often through the thinness of the paper. Further I descry the ghost of Mary Barton, and the very palpable mirage of a scene in the children of the mist; but in spite of this I consider the book a fine one, with a great and gallant purpose in it and worthy of its reputation.



M. de Cerjat



ROCKINGHAM CASTLE, ENGLAND, HOME OF THE WATSONS
The original of Dickens's "Chesney Wold"

In 1853 Dickens was very hard at work on *Bleak House*. The subject of it had entered his mind during that summer in Lausanne, and Mrs. Watson was the original of Lady Dedlock in outward drawing, as was her home, Rockingham Castle, the original of Chesney Wold. He wrote to her from the Villa de Moulineaux, Boulogne, on August 27, on the subject, saying: "Lowestoft I know, by walking over there from Yarmouth, when I went down on an exploring expedition, previous to 'Copperfield.' It is a fine place. I saw the name 'Blunderstone' on a direction-post between it and Yarmouth, and took it from the said direction-post for the book. In some of the descriptions of Chesney Wold, I have taken many bits, chiefly about

trees and shadows, from observations made at Rockingham. I wonder whether you have ever thought so!”

Now as to the “Skimpole” talk of the time. It is well known in literary controversy that Dickens was accused of holding up his quondam friend Leigh Hunt in that character. I will not say here that I have discovered in the Watson letters any verification of that. On September 25, 1853, Dickens wrote to Mrs. Watson from Boulogne:

Skimpole. I must not forget Skimpole — of whom I will proceed to speak as if I had only read him and not written him. I suppose he is the most exact portrait that was ever painted in words! I have very seldom, if ever, done such a thing. But the likeness is astonishing. I don’t think it could possibly be more like himself. It is so awfully true that I make a bargain with myself



FACSIMILE OF FIRST PAGE OF A LETTER FROM DICKENS TO MRS. WATSON

Saturday Twenty-Sixth October 1850.

My Dear Mrs. Watson.

As Copperfield is *your book*, you know, it has occurred to me that you might possibly like to see the end of it before the rest of the world does. Being in town to-day, I send you the sheets of the conclusion. Will you and Watson (to whom my love) kindly keep them to ourselves until publication-time?

They are not finally corrected, and have several verbal errors in them, I dare say. We return to town on Monday evening for good. I am going to meet Kate and Georgina at Tunbridre Wells this afternoon, on my way home. Believe me, dear Mrs. Watson,

Very faithfully yours,
Charles Dickens.

“never to do so any more.” There is not an atom of exaggeration or suppression. It is an absolute reproduction of a real man. Of course I have been careful to keep the outward figure away from the fact; but in all else it is the life itself.

The summer of 1853 was spent in Boulogne, as I have said, at an old chateau that he had heard of, and leased from its Switzerland owner. He described it as “a queer old French place, but extremely well supplied with all table and other conveniences . . . standing in the middle of a great garden surrounded by flowers.” It was on the Rue Beaurepaire, on a green hillside, overlooking a beautiful open country. It was during this and successive summers at Boulogne that he worked on *Bleak House* and *Little Dorrit*. In a letter to Mrs. Watson from Folkestone he tells her that the name first proposed for the latter story was “Nobody’s Fault.” In 1854 Mr. Dickens left the old chateau in Boulogne and rented the Villa du Camp de Droite of the same landlord, M. Beaucourt. It was on the top of a still higher hill, and it was there that he began *Hard Times*. In the summer of 1856, however, Dickens returned to the Villa Moulineaux.

In the letter, of which the first page is printed here in facsimile, the large flourish to the signature was carefully preserved as it really was up to the time of his death. He frequently joked about it in his letters. On one occasion he wrote to Mrs. Watson: “P. S. — I am in such an incapable state, that after executing the foregoing usual flourish I swooned, and remained for some time insensible. Ha, ha, ha! Why was I ever restored to consciousness!!!”

At another time: “P. S. — I find I am not equal to the flourish.”

In much of his correspondence with the Watsons I find frequent and insistent reference to Switzerland — especially to Lausanne and Lake Lehman. Of the latter he wrote: “It runs with a spring tide, that will always flow and never ebb, through my memory; and nothing less than the waters of Lethe shall confuse the music of its running until it loses itself in that great sea, for which all the currents of our life are desperately bent.” He painted it in many of his books; if not so as every dog could read it, there were many indications of the Alpine atmosphere perfectly apparent to his

friends. He loved it greatly in retrospection — Mont Blanc, St. Bernard, the Wetterhorn, Jungfrau, Monch, and Eiger; and above all, the Matterhorn in its lonely majesty — theatrical almost in its impassiveness and dramatically significant in its mysteries, terrors, and tragedies! Then he liked the quiet rest of their valleys, that he said often daunted him compared to the reality of a stirring life.

CHARLES DICKENS' MANUSCRIPTS



From: *Potter's American Monthly*, February 1878, p.156-158

Charles Dickens's Manuscripts. — A glimpse of the manuscripts of the late Charles Dickens, which now form part of the "Forster Collection" in the South Kensington

Museum, conjures up a vision of numerous characters in his popular novels. On looking attentively at the manuscripts, we are at once struck by the number of alterations and interlineations with which the pages abound; and our first sentiment is one of surprise that the books which appear so wonderfully natural and fluent when we read them, should evidently have been the result of much anxious thought, care, and elaboration.

The collection comprises the original manuscripts of the following works: "Oliver Twist," published in 1838-39; "Master Humphrey's Clock," comprising "The Old Curiosity Shop" and "Barnaby Rudge," published in 1840-41; "Barnaby Rudge," a separate volume, 1840-41; "American Notes, 1842; "Martin Chuzzlewit," 1843-44; "The Chimes," Christmas, 1844; "Dombey and Son," 1846-48; "David Copperfield," 1849-50; "Bleak House," which has in the original manuscript a secondary title, "The East Wind," 1852-53; "Hard Times," 1854; "Little Dorrit," 1855-57; "A Tale of Two Cities," 1859; and "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" (his last but unfinished work), 1870. There are also proof volumes from the printers, consisting of "Dombey and Son," "David Copperfield," "Bleak House," and "Little Dorrit," the pages of which bear marginal and other corrections and alterations, in ink, by the author.

Of course, as the collection is placed under a glass case, the public can only see one or two pages of each work; but even with this meagre guide, the acute observer is able in some degree to trace the working of the writer's mind, and to follow to some extent the development of his ideas. As we have already remarked, the first thing which strikes us is the comparatively large number of alterations and interlineations which occur

in the manuscript. It is evident that Charles Dickens wrote with the greatest care, and scrupulously revised his writing, in order to render each sentence as perfect as might be. Taking the works in their chronological order, we may notice that in "Oliver Twist," which is open at "Chapter the Twelfth" — "In which Oliver is taken better care of than he ever was before, with some particulars concerning a certain picture" — there are few alterations in the manuscript; the writing also being larger and firmer than in the majority of the later works. Charles Dickens made his alterations so carefully that it is difficult to trace the words which he had originally written; but the one or two which occur on this page give us some little insight into the careful manner in which the author worked up his sentences into a well-rounded and euphonious form. The passage at which this manuscript is opened runs as follows: "The coach rattled away down Mount Pleasant and up Exmouth Street — over nearly the same ground as that which Oliver had traversed when he first entered London in," and here occurs the first alteration, " the D "is erased, and "company with the Dodger," is written in its place; the author evidently considering the latter a more euphonious form of expression than "in the Dodger's company," as it was doubtless his original intention to make the passage. The alteration to which we have referred may appear, as indeed it is, of exceedingly small significance; but we have mentioned it simply as an instance of the extremely careful way in which Dickens studied the details and minutiae of composition.

The next manuscript in point of date is "Master Humphrey's Clock," which is open at "No. IV.," headed, "Master Humphrey from his clock-side in the chimney coiner," and commences as follows: "Night is generally my time for walking. In the summer I often leave home early in the morning and roam about fields and lanes all day, or even escape for days or weeks together; but, saving in the country" [this originally stood " but at other seasons of the year;" but Dickens doubtless saw that the expression as it now stands would be more consistent with the context], "I seldom go out until after dark, though, heaven be thanked, I love its light and feel the cheerfulness it sheds upon the earth as much as any creature living." This page of manuscript has only a moderate share of alterations.

Then we come to the volume of "Barnaby Rudge," which is opened at "Chapter One," and also contains only a moderate number of alterations, one being in the height of the Maypole sign, and another in the distance of

Epping Forest from Cornhill; both of which are noticeable as further illustrations of the conscientious love of accuracy which characterized the author's mind. Next in order follows the "American Notes," which has very few corrections, and is opened at the page headed "Chapter the First. Introductory and necessary to be read;" in which the author challenges the right of any person "to pass judgement on this book or to arrive at any reasonable conclusion in reference to it without first being at the trouble of becoming acquainted with its design and purpose." Surely a caution fair and reasonable enough on the part of the writer of a book which he could not but feel would probably give offence, where such an end was farthest from his wish.

"The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit" comes next, open at "Chapter I. Introductory. Concerning the pedigree of the Chuzzlewit Family;" and giving us a brief but telling satire on the pride of birth by assuring us that this family "undoubtedly descended in a direct line from Adam and Eve, and was in the very earliest times closely connected with the agricultural interest." This page is notably full of alterations, and seems a fair indication that with Charles Dickens, as with many others, the first step was the most difficult of all. The caligraphy in this as in all the other manuscripts is legible but rather small, the letters being distinctly formed, and the use of abbreviations studiously avoided.

We next turn to "The Chimes," one of those delightful stories with which Dickens introduced to us those Christmas annuals, which now form so important a section of our periodical literature. This again is open at the commencement, where the author lays down the dogma that there are not many people who would care to sleep in a church: "I don't mean at sermon-time in warm weather (when the thing has actually been done once or twice), but in the night and alone." This sentence originally finished with "in the night;" but we can readily imagine the development of the idea in the brain of the writer, and the words "and alone" suggesting themselves as lending an additional ground of fear for the situation. The manuscript of this page bears a moderate number of alterations.

In "Dombey and Son" we find a large number of alterations on the first page, the very title itself having been altered more than once. The sketch of the newly-born Paul, who was placed in front of the fire, "as if his constitution were analogous to that of a muffin, and it was essential to toast him brown while he was very new," is very good indeed; but it is evident

that the passage was rather the result of careful elaboration than of spontaneous humor. And the same remark will apply to the opening chapter of "David Copperfield," in which, although the passage descriptive of the birth of the hero is very neat and natural as it now stands the same careful revision and alteration are again apparent.

"Bleak House" too is notably full of alterations on the first page, especially in the passage which tells us that in the muddy condition of the London streets "it would not be wonderful to meet a mesalosaurus forty feet long or so waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill."

In "Hard Times," where we are introduced to the gentleman who wants nothing but "facts," and in the opening chapter of "Little Dorrit," in which we have a description of Marseilles as it "lay broiling in the sun one day," we find a large number of alterations; but in these, as in most of the other instances, the primary words have been erased so carefully that it is next to impossible to form an idea of how the passages originally stood. "The Tale of Two Cities," on the contrary, contains remarkably few corrections; and the opening passage descriptive of "the period" is telling, and apparently written spontaneously. "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" has been opened with good judgment at the last page. The manuscript is very small, but fairly legible, and having but a moderate number of alterations. In a literary sense, it is not perhaps so interesting as some of the others; but it possesses a sad and melancholy claim upon our attention and sympathy, inasmuch as it is the last page of manuscript ever written by this gifted hand.

In the proof volumes with corrections in the handwriting of the author there is nothing which calls for special note save an unimportant deletion in "Bleak House," and a more interesting alteration in "David Copperfield." In the former there is a passage marked "out," in which Sir Leicester Dedlock speaks to Mrs. Rouncewell of her grandson in the following passage: "If (he said) the boy could not settle down at Chesney Wold, in itself the most astonishing circumstance in the world, could he not serve his country in the ranks of her defenders, as his brother had done? Must he rush to her destruction at his early age and with his parricidal hand strike at her!"

In "David Copperfield" we find by a passage in which Mr. Dick is referring to his memorial that his original hallucination took the form of a "bull in a china shop;" a rather trite idea, and it was not until after the proof had actually been submitted to him by the printers that Charles Dickens introduced the whimsical and happier notion of "King Charles's Head."

Before bringing our brief paper to a conclusion, we would venture to suggest to the gentleman or gentlemen to whom is intrusted the arrangement of these manuscripts, that the present position of the manuscripts and printed volumes should be transposed, so that the manuscripts should occupy the lower half of the case, as in their present position it is rather difficult to decipher the caligraphy; and to any one below the ordinary height it must involve an amount of physical contortion as uncomfortable as it is inelegant. The manuscript being of course of greater interest than the printed proofs, should certainly occupy the more prominent space, especially as the latter could be read without any difficulty if placed in the rear rank.

We have no doubt that many of those who read this short article will have seen the Dickens manuscripts for themselves; many more doubtless will see them; but there will still be a large number who will not have the opportunity; and while we think that our remarks will be endorsed by the first and second classes, we hope that they will prove interesting to the third less fortunate class, and will enable them to enjoy, at least in imagination, a somewhat closer intimacy than they have known before with that great and gifted man, whose books have effected so many beneficial changes both in society at large and in many an individual heart and life, uprooting and casting to the winds much that was base, worthless, and contemptible, and implanting in their stead the seeds of those gentler sympathies and nobler aspirations which find their fruition in a well-spent life — the highest tribute to moral worth and excellency of character.

DICKENS



From: *Memoir of Henry Compton*, Edited by Charles and Edward Compton, Tinsley Brothers, 1879, p.192-196

The author, who has appealed to a larger audience than that of any of his contemporaries, is the next to be considered. Dickens, from this point, is the English novelist of the present century. My father's reading of Dickens began with the first number of "Pickwick," and ended with the last number of "Edwin Drood." When "Pickwick" came out he was in the country with Mr. Chute. He would often recall how, when their appetites had been whetted by the earlier numbers, they would eagerly look for the next number. With what a zest it was read; with what frequent laughter was the reading interrupted; what discussions they had over Sam Weller and his aged parent, over the simple Pickwick and the artful Jingle! I have before referred to my father's delight in humour; it was in Dickens's humour — free, fresh, and unequalled — that he found the quality common to them both. The strength of that first impression was never lessened; "Pickwick" remained his favourite novel of Dickens throughout his life. The works of Dickens are too numerous for me to give my father's opinions of them separately, and I must therefore only endeavour to give his view of Dickens's genius as a whole.

Dickens's distinctive qualities he considered to be humour and accurate delineation of the lower classes. Of his humour my father never tired; he declared it to be the best of its style ever produced or likely to be produced. His difference from his predecessors was not more marked than his distance from his imitators — a class for which my father had a very decided antipathy. As to Dickens's portrayal of lowlife, he thought it alone sufficient to have made the author's success. This opinion was valuable, as he knew London low life better than nine-tenths of Dickens's readers, having gained his knowledge by observation, not from reading. Great geniuses have great faults, and my father was not one of those injudicious admirers who insist

on the absolute perfection of Dickens's works. He thought that the humorist was greater than the novelist, the man than the author. He thought that the habit of writing against a grievance, or with a purpose, as it is called, a special defect of Dickens. He perceived a tendency to exaggeration, and a want of connection in plot, which weakened the effect of some of his best works. But though he was ready to acknowledge defects in Dickens, there was no warmer advocate of his distinctive qualities than my father. The praise of a reader who discriminates impartially is more valuable than that of one who follows the fashion of lauding unreservedly the successful author. My father had made Dickens's acquaintance shortly before his marriage, and they afterwards became intimate. He frequently visited at Dickens's house, where he met the most celebrated men of the day. The dining tables were purposely made very narrow, to facilitate opposite guests talking with one another. Sometimes the end of the table touched a mirror, which reflected the whole scene, and increased the brilliance of its appearance. "These dinner-parties," he said, "were very enjoyable." Dickens himself was a faultless host, and knew the art of putting his guests at their ease, so that each appeared at his best. The example of their host's brilliance and animation aroused the energies of this company, causing each individual to exert his powers of entertainment and conversation to their utmost. The effect was what would be expected from the entertainer and his friends. Every subject of the day came under the discussion of the men best fitted to discuss it; politics, literature, and the drama were each treated with a felicity of phrase, a practical knowledge, and a subtlety of discrimination seldom met with. A rare humour and keen wit were brought to the consideration of every theme, with sometimes a boldness of paradox that refreshed and delighted the company. Altogether, my father said he had been to few parties where the pleasure was more exquisite and more sustained. It was always a matter of regret to him that the domestic affairs of the great humorist should have interrupted an intercourse productive of the intellectual enjoyment he preferred to any other amusement.

THE SHADOW ON DICKENS'S LIFE



By Edwin P. Whipple

From: *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1877, p.227-233

The first number of the romance of Little Dorritt was issued on January 1, 1856, and was concluded in June (a double number), 1857. The work has a twofold interest: first, because in writing it Dickens had begun to doubt the fertility of his genius in creating new forms of character, and secondly, because he was discontented with his home and was brooding over the ideal ills which led to his separation from his wife.

It may be said, also, that his misgivings regarding the continuance of his creative impulse were connected with his domestic disappointments. Both seem to have sprung from a pervading restlessness of body and mind, beginning about the year 1854, and culminating in the breaking up of his home in May, 1858. As his representations of life and character increased in earnestness and depth with the growth of his genius, they required more and more isolation of mind to be adequately embodied; and this isolation he either found it difficult to secure, or was indisposed to make sacrifices in order to obtain it. Apart from social distractions interfering with his serious work, he threw himself with ardor into political agitation for administrative reforms, and engaged heartily in "quasi - public" private theatricals for charitable objects. This mode of life, however consistent with the comparatively superficial characterization of Pickwick and Nickleby, springing as it did from the happy combination of spontaneous genius with glad animal spirits, was not favorable to the more intense and profound characterizations of his later works, which exacted complete and long continued self - absorption in the imagined persons whose interior and external life he aimed to realize and make actual. He thought his genius was deserting him when he should have seen that he was rather deserting his genius. The root of the difficulty was in his domestic discontents. He felt "

an unhappy loss or want of something;" his imagination pampered this sense of loss and want by suggesting ideals of wives and children which were perfect in themselves; and hence, in the words of David Copperfield, he began to live, mentally, in the "so happy and yet so unhappy existence which seeks its realities in unrealities, and finds its dangerous comfort in a perpetual escape from the disappointment of heart around it." To this mood of mind we undoubtedly owe such beautiful embodiments of domestic perfection as Florence Dombey, Agnes, Esther Summerson, and Little Dorrit; but the period when he realized these ideals in his imagination was the same period in which his morbid discontent with his own domestic establishment was most marked. Harriet Martineau, in a letter dated March 20, 1873, referring to Forster's *Life of Dickens*, says: "In the second volume, I am much struck by Dickens's hysterical restlessness. *It must have been terribly wearing to his wife.* His friends ought to have seen that his brain was in danger, — from apoplexy, not insanity. To how great extent the women of his family are ignored in the book! The whole impression left by it is very melancholy." Yet Miss Martineau had in her *Autobiography* — written in 1855, when she felt she was under sentence of death — previously declared: "Every indication seems to show that the man [Dickens] himself is rising. He is a virtuous and happy family man, in the first place. His glowing and generous heart is kept steady by the best domestic influences; and we may fairly hope now that he will fulfill the natural purpose of his life, and stand by literature to the last; and again that he will be an honor to the high vocation by prudence as well as by power, so that the graces of genius and generosity may rest on the finest basis of probity and prudence; and that his old age may be honored as heartily as his youth and manhood have been admired. Nothing could exceed the frank kindness and consideration shown by him in the correspondence and the personal intercourse we have had; and my cordial regard has grown with my knowledge of him."

Miss Martineau, as a critic of persons she knew, never sinned on the side of toleration. Her picture, however, of Dickens as a husband and father, was altogether too flattering at the time (1855) she wrote the panegyric. A year at least before this period his morbid discontent with matters connected with his household had flashed out in his correspondence with his father-confessor, John Forster. His restlessness then, and for nearly four years afterwards, is evident in his private letters. "Too late," he says, in reply to

Forster's monitions, "to put the curb on. I have no relief but in action. I am incapable of rest. I am quite confident I should rust, break, and die if I spared myself. Much better to die, doing. What I am in that way, nature made me first, and my way of life has of late, alas, confirmed. . . . I have felt of myself that I must, please God, die in harness. ... It is much better to go on and fret than to stop and fret. As to repose — for some men there 's no such thing in this life. . . . The old days — the old days! shall I ever, I wonder, get the frame of mind back as it used to be then? Something of it, perhaps, but never quite as it used to be. / *find that the skeleton in my domestic closet in becoming a pretty big one.*" Again he writes, in 1857: "Poor Catherine [his wife] and I are not made for each other, and there is no help for it. It is not only that she makes me uneasy and unhappy, but I make her so too, and much more so. She is exactly what you know, in the way of being amiable and complying; but we are strangely ill-assorted for the bond there is between us. God knows she would have been a thousand times happier if she had married another kind of man, and that her avoidance of this destiny would have been at least equally good for us both. I am often cut to the heart by thinking what a pity it is, for her own sake, that I ever fell in her way; and if I were sick or disabled to-morrow, I know how sorry she would be, and how deeply grieved myself, to think we have lost each other. Her temperament will not go with mine. It mattered not so much when we had only ourselves to consider, but reasons have been growing since which make it all but hopeless that we should try even to struggle on." . . . "You," he replies to Forster's remonstrance, "are not so tolerant as perhaps you might be of the wayward and unsettled feeling which is part (I suppose) of the tenure on which one holds an imaginative life, and which I have, as you ought to know well, often only kept down by riding over it like a dragoon — but let that go by. I make no maudlin complaint. I agree with you as to the very possible incidents, even not less bearable than mine, that might and must often occur to the married condition when it is entered into very young. I am always deeply sensible of the wonderful exercise I have of life and its highest sensations, and have said to myself for years, and have honestly and truly felt, this is the drawback to such a career, and is not to be complained of. I say it and feel it now as strongly as ever I did; and, as I told you in my last, I do not with that view put all this forward. But the years have not made it easier to bear for either of us; and, for her sake as well as mine, the wish will force itself upon me that something might be

done. I know too well it is impossible. There is the fact, and that is all one can say. Nor are you to suppose that I disguise from myself what might be urged on the other side. I claim no immunity from blame. There is plenty of fault on my side, I dare say, in the way of a thousand uncertainties, caprices, and difficulties of disposition; but only one thing will alter that, the end that alters everything.”

These private confidences to Forster are valuable as exhibiting Dickens’s moral and mental condition during the four years preceding his final separation from his wife. In March, 1858, when he had concluded to give public readings from his works for his own benefit, as he had given them before for charitable objects, he wrote to Forster: “Quite dismiss from your mind any reference whatever to present circumstances at home. Nothing can put *them* right, until we are all dead and buried and risen. It is not with me a matter of will, or trial, or sufferance, or good humor, or making the best of it, or making the worst of it, any longer. It is all despairingly over. Have no lingering hope of or for me, in this association. A dismal failure has to be borne, and there an end.” The formal separation occurred in May, 1858. “Henceforward,” says Forster, “he and his wife dwelt apart. The eldest son went with his mother, Dickens at once giving effect to her expressed wish in this respect; and the other children remained with himself, their intercourse with Mrs. Dickens being left entirely to themselves.

If we read Dickens’s confessions to Forster in connection with numerous passages in *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, and *Little Dorrit*, we have little trouble in deciding that the cause of the separation between husband and wife was “incompatibility” of disposition and character. It will be remembered that Miss Martineau, after reading Forster’s biography of her friend, speaks of his “hysterical restlessness” as something which must have been “terribly wearing to his wife.” From this we are led to suppose that Mrs. Dickens, no less than Mr. Dickens, had reasons for believing that each would be happier by living apart from the other; and the separation itself was the result of a mutual agreement. There was no evidence presented at the time, and no evidence has since been brought forward, that the husband was guilty of that crime which, in England, is vaguely indicated in the phrase of “keeping two establishments.” There was nothing in the case which could have justified a suit for divorce, on the part of either husband or wife. Forster, who was the friend of both, had exerted all his influence to

prevent the separation; and, when his endeavors proved fruitless, he declared it to be an “arrangement of a strictly private nature,” and “that no decent person could have had excuse for regarding it in any other light.” But the fact was that, as soon as the “arrangement” was known, persons who would have been shocked at not being classed among decent people began at once to circulate rumors invented by indecent persons as to the true cause of the separation. Now Dickens was known wherever the English language was read, and it therefore took but a very short time to make a world-wide scandal out of this “strictly private” affair. In India, Australia, and the United States, as well as in Great Britain, the news was industriously circulated that the great romancer, whose special distinction it was that he had shed new consecrations around the fireside and the home, was a hypocrite and an adulterer, who had imposed on the public by a Pecksniffian pretension to sentiments of purity and honor which his conduct belied. As the lies were in some degree circumstantial, they became a matter of wonder for a fortnight or a month, and were then consigned to the social gutters from which such lies commonly originate. Burke speaks somewhere of those occasions which furnish delicious opportunities for “low, sordid, ungenerous, and reptile souls to swell with their hoarded poisons;” and the moment that Dickens’s separation from his wife was known, such creatures began to distribute their poisonous gossip through the whole community of Dickens’s readers. The present writer clearly remembers with what a shock of painful surprise he first heard a circumstantial statement of these horrible calumnies, and how eager he was for an authoritative denial of them. Forster, in his biography, thinks that Dickens made a mistake in printing in *Household Words* his reply to these aspersions; but Dickens knew, as by a sort of subtle freemasonry, that his readers all over the world would hear of the scandal, and would demand some explanation. As he was on the point of appearing in person before the public as a reader, it was specially important that his audiences should know that he did not submit to the imputation of being a heartless adulterer without a sturdy protest. The additional “private letter,” given to Mr. Arthur Smith “as an authority for correction of false rumors and scandals,” was published against his wish and intention. He always referred to it afterwards as the “violated letter.”

In the communication printed in *Household Words*, Dickens says little which the libels on him did not compel him to say. The periodical itself

might have been banished from all respectable families, had its editor, by his silence, given a kind of sanction to the calumnies noised about him. The calumnies, to be sure, were the creations of that body of scandal-mongers who have been aptly classed as “ intermediate links between man and the baboon; “ but still, in his case, they were calculated to have a pernicious effect on his reputation and popularity; for he had, by his works, domesticated himself as a member of the countless families that rejoiced in his genius, and an indelible stain fixed on his domestic character would have closed against him the doors which had previously gladly opened to receive him as an ever welcome ideal guest. The tone of the letter in which he made his direct communication with the public was that of a wronged man, suffering under partially suppressed impulses of moral irritation and moral wrath. “Some domestic trouble of mine,” he says, “of long standing, on which I will make no further remark than that it claims to be respected, as being of a sacredly private nature, has lately been brought to an arrangement which involves no anger or ill-will of any kind, and the whole origin, progress, and surrounding circumstances of which have been throughout within the knowledge of my children. It is amicably composed, and its details have now but to be forgotten by those concerned in it. By some means, arising out of wickedness, or out of folly, or out of inconceivable wild chance, or out of all three, this trouble has been made the occasion of misrepresentations most grossly false, most monstrous, and most cruel, — involving not only me, but innocent persons dear to my heart, and innocent persons of whom I have no knowledge, if, indeed, they have any existence, — and so widely spread, that I doubt that if one reader in a thousand will peruse these lines, by whom some touch of the breath of these slanderers will not have passed, like an unwholesome air. Those who know me and my nature need no assurance under my hand that such calumnies are as irreconcilable with me as they are, in their frantic incoherence, with one another. But there is a great multitude who know me through my writings, and who do not know me otherwise; and I cannot bear that one of them should be left in doubt, or hazard of doubt, through my poorly shrinking from taking the unusual means to which I now resort, of circulating the truth. I most solemnly declare, then, — and this I do both in my own name and in my wife’s name, — that all the lately whispered rumors touching the trouble at which I have glanced are abominably false; and that whosoever repeats one of them, after this denial, will lie as

willfully and as foully as it is possible for any false witness to lie, before heaven and earth.”

All this was thoroughly manly, resolute, and noble. There was no reference to the interior, the real causes of discontent between the husband and wife, such as were stated in the private letters (from which we have already largely quoted) of Dickens to Forster. But Dickens conceived that something further must be done to vindicate his character. Mr. Arthur Smith was the person selected to be the business manager of his public readings; and he wrote to him an elaborate, half-defiant, half apologetic letter, containing the private reasons which led to his separation from Mrs. Dickens. This letter was accompanied with a note to this effect: “You have not only my full permission to show this, but I beg you to show it to any one who wishes to do me right, or to any one who has been misled into doing me wrong.” Mr. Smith not only showed it to individuals whose false impressions he desired to correct, but gave a copy of it to the London correspondent of the New York Tribune, in which paper it was published in full, and thence made the tour of the world. Such letters, indeed, written to be shown to this person and that, but not to be published, ever end in getting into print. Rufus Choate, in a Whig speech delivered during the ex; cited period when Polk was a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, had occasion to quote almost the whole of a private letter signed by prominent antislavery democrats, which had been “surreptitiously” published in a New York journal. When he had completed the reading of it he affected to be suddenly startled, and, holding the newspaper up before the eyes of the immense audience, he added, with an inimitable look of mock gravity: “By the way, gentlemen, I find that this document is marked ‘private and confidential,’ and such, I trust, you will all consider it!” So it may be said in regard to Dickens’s “violated “ letter to Arthur Smith, that it contained information which invited violation, and which was sure to fall into the hands of some one who would violate it.

Before commenting on this letter it is but just to reprint it.

London, W. E., Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, *Tuesday, May 25,* 1858.

To Arthur Smith, Esq.: Mrs. Dickens and I have lived unhappily together for many years. Hardly any one who has known us intimately can fail to

have known that we are, in all respects of character and temperament, wonderfully unsuited to each other. I suppose that no two people, not vicious in themselves, ever were joined together who had a greater difficulty in understanding one another, or who had less in common. An attached woman servant (more friend to both of us than a servant), who lived with us sixteen years, and is now married, and who was and still is in Mrs. Dickens's confidence and mine, who had the closest familiar experience of this unhappiness in London, in the country, in France, in Italy, wherever we have been, year after year, month after month, week after week, day after day, will bear testimony to this.

Nothing has, on many occasions, stood between us and a separation but Mrs. Dickens's sister, Georgina Hogarth. From the age of fifteen she has devoted herself to our house and our children. She has been their playmate, nurse, instructress, friend, protectress, adviser, companion. In the manly consideration towards Mrs. Dickens which I owe to my wife, I will only remark of her that the peculiarity of her character has thrown all the children on some one else. I do not know — I cannot by any stretch of fancy imagine — what would have become of them but for this aunt, who has grown up with them, to whom they are devoted, and who has sacrificed the best part of her youth and life to them.

She has remonstrated, reasoned, suffered, and toiled, and came again to prevent a separation between Mrs. Dickens and me. Mrs. Dickens has often expressed to her her sense of her affectionate care and devotion in the house — never more strongly than within the last twelve months.

For some years past Mrs. Dickens has been in the habit of representing to me that it would be better for her to go away and live apart; that her always increasing estrangement was due to a mental disorder under which she sometimes labors; more, that she felt herself unfit for the life she had to lead, as my wife, and that she would be better far away. I have uniformly replied that she must bear our misfortune, and fight the fight out to the end; that the children were the first consideration; and that I feared they must bind us together in "appearance."

At length, within these three weeks, it was suggested to me by Forster that, even for their sakes, it would surely be better to reconstruct and rearrange their unhappy home. I empowered him to treat with Mrs. Dickens, as the friend of both of us for one and twenty years. Mrs. Dickens wished to add, on her part, Mark Lemon, and did so. On Saturday last

Lemon wrote to Forster that Mrs. Dickens “gratefully and thankfully accepted” the terms I proposed to her. Of the pecuniary part of them I will only say that I believe they are as generous as if Mrs. Dickens were a lady of distinction and I a man of fortune. The remaining parts of them are easily described: my eldest boy to live with Mrs. Dickens and to take care of her; my eldest girl to keep my house; both *my* girls and all my children, but the eldest son, to live with me in the continued companionship of their aunt Georgina, for whom they have all the tenderest affection that I have ever seen among young people, and who has a higher claim (as I have often declared, for many years) upon my affection, respect, and gratitude than anybody in this world.

I hope that no one who may become acquainted with what I write here can possibly be so cruel and unjust as to put any misconstruction on our separation, so far. My elder children all understand it perfectly, and all accept it as inevitable.

There is not a shadow of doubt or concealment among us. My eldest son and I are one as to it all.

Two wicked persons, who should have spoken very differently of me, in consideration of earnest respect and gratitude, have (as I am told, and indeed to my personal knowledge) coupled with this separation the name of a young lady for whom I have a great attachment and regard. I will not repeat her name, — I honor it too much. Upon my soul and honor there is not on this earth a more virtuous and spotless creature than that young lady. I know her to be innocent and pure, and as good as my own dear daughters.

Further, I am quite sure that Mrs. Dickens, having received this assurance from me, must now believe it, in the respect I know her to have for me, and in the perfect confidence I know her in her better moments to repose in my truthfulness.

On this head, again, there is not a shadow of doubt or concealment between my children and me. All is open and plain among us, as though we were brothers and sisters. They are perfectly certain that I would not deceive them, and the confidence among us is without a fear.

C. D.

The essential wrong committed in this letter consisted not so much in its publication as in its composition. The mutual agreement between the parties to the separation proceeded on the ground that there should be no statement

of the reasons for the separation. That agreement was practically broken by Dickens when he placed such a garrulous and querulous letter in the hands of Mr. Arthur Smith, to be "shown" to persons who credited the current rumors against his character. In defending himself he assails his wife. He gives the reasons why he can no longer live with *her!* One naturally asks for the reasons why she cannot live with Aim. There was no guilt on either side; but Mrs. Dickens, had she chosen to reply, might doubtless have shown that, as a family man, he developed qualities of temper and disposition which, from her point of view, were as repugnant to domestic happiness and harmony as any which, from his point of view, appeared to make her an unsympathetic, unsatisfactory, repellent wife. The whole matter should have rested on the original statement of "incompatibility;" but if the husband entered into details, the wife would have been justified in following his example. From Mrs. Dickens, however, proceeded no word of remonstrance and complaint; yet, by submitting to the imputations conveyed or implied in her husband's unfortunate letter, she placed him unavoidably in a position repugnant to the feelings of a gentleman and man of honor. Without any malicious purpose, he was heedlessly impelled, by the atrocity of the libels against himself, into making explanations which injured her in public estimation; and her silence must have self convicted him, when the heat and irritation of the hour had passed away, of a violation of that sense of chivalry towards women which was as much a permanent sentiment of his heart as it was a constant inspiration of his genius. In truth, the circumstances connected with his separation from his wife exhibited Dickens in his most ungenial and unamiable mood. The same force of will which made so effective all his good qualities, both of disposition and of genius, was subject at times to strange fits of willfulness, when he became altogether unmanageable and defiant of external control, even of that control which the love, the reason, and the prudence of his nearest and dearest friends brought to bear on his headlong self-assertion. Against the admonitions of Forster, to whom he opened his heart, he persisted in pushing his domestic discontents to the point of separating from his wife; and, until the scandals arising from that act were forced on his attention, he thought the public would not trouble itself with his domestic concerns. Up to this point he had carried out his will freely; the reaction against him was terrible, but it only stimulated his combativeness; his combativeness intensified his will into self-will; and the result was the letter to Mr. Arthur

Smith, in which he forgot the rights of his wife in emphasizing his own. The whole thing is a wretched episode in Dickens's life; but we must still remember that it was an aberration of character, and not an example of its normal and healthy exercise. For years after this unfortunate event, as for years before it, Dickens showed that his character was sound at the core. He was betrayed into injustice by the perversion of qualities excellent in themselves.

EXTRACT FROM “*Crowding Memories*”



by Mrs. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920, p.96-109

CHAPTER X

IN the “Life” of Mr. Aldrich his biographer says: “Despite the pleasantness of the life at Hancock Street, the Aldriches were from the first looking about for a still more homelike shelter. Finally in December, 1866, Aldrich purchased the quaint little house 84 Pinckney Street, two thirds the way down toward the bay where the lazy Charles rests after its circuitous course through the Cambridge marshes, and gave it to Mrs. Aldrich for his remembrance on the second Christmas of their life together. They furnished it at their leisure during the winter and settled there in the spring of 1867. Of the characteristic charm of this their first home there are many records. The compact little house soon became celebrated as the happy home of a happy poet.”

It was in the autumn of this year that Boston had the great excitement of welcoming Mr. Dickens on his second visit to America. For several years Mr. Fields had been persistent in his efforts to induce Mr. Dickens to make the visit; but it was not until this time that the suggestion received any encouragement. In the early spring Mr. Dickens wrote to Mr. Fields the following letter:

“Your letter is an excessively difficult one to answer, because I really do not know that any sum of money that could be laid down would induce me to cross the Atlantic to read. Nor do I think it likely that any one on your side of the great water can be prepared to understand the state of the case. For example, I am now just finishing a series of thirty readings. The crowds attending them have been so astounding, and the relish for them has so far out-gone all previous experience, that if I were to set myself the task, ‘I will make such or such a sum of money by devoting myself to readings for a

certain time,' I should have to go no further than Bond Street or Regent Street, to have it secured to me in a day. Therefore, if a specific offer and a very large one, indeed, were made to me from America, I should naturally ask myself, 'Why go through this wear and tear, merely to pluck fruit that grows on every bough at home?' It is a delightful sensation to move a new people; but I have but to go to Paris, and I find the brightest people in the world quite ready for me. I say thus much in a sort of desperate endeavor to explain myself to you. I can put no price upon fifty readings in America, because I do not know that any possible price could pay me for them. And I really cannot say to any one disposed toward the enterprise, 'Tempt me,' because I have too strong a misgiving that he cannot in the nature of things do it.

"This is the plain truth. If any distinct proposal be submitted to me I will give it a distinct answer. But the chances are a round thousand to one that the answer will be no, therefore I feel bound to make the declaration beforehand."

In the summer, however, things looked more promising; the second letter bringing more assurance:

"I am trying hard so to free myself as to be able to come over to read this next winter!"

On the 21st of August he writes: "I begin to think 'nautically' that I 'Head westward.'" And soon after that the date was set for sailing.

It was on a blustering evening in November that Mr. Dickens arrived in Boston Harbor. A few of his friends steamed down in the Custom-House boat to welcome him. It was pitch dark before the Cuba ran alongside. Mr. Dickens's cheery voice was heard welcoming Mr. Fields before there was time to distinguish him on the steamer. He looked like a bundle of animated wraps, and was in most exuberant spirits; the news of the extraordinary sale of the tickets to his readings having been carried to him by the pilot twenty miles out. Mr. Fields, having heard that a crowd had assembled in East Boston and was waiting the arrival of the steamer, decided to take his guest in the tug to Long Wharf where carriages were in waiting, and very shortly Mr. Dickens was well ensconced at the Parker House, sitting down to dinner with a half-dozen friends, quite prepared, he said, "to give the first reading in America that night if desirable."

There had been the greatest excitement over the sale of the tickets for the readings. A box office was established at Ticknor & Fields', and a rule

made that only four tickets would be sold to one person. A queue was formed twenty-four hours before the sale began, and the stir and commotion for places in the line were without precedent heretofore in the city. As Mr. Aldrich was doing editorial work for Ticknor & Fields, and that house being the headquarters of literary Boston, the air was full of Dickens — we breathed it. The struggles to get the best seats, the triumph with which, after much hustling, they were secured, linger most pleasantly in my memory, especially our own little chuckles — we being behind the scenes, as it were, and sure of our places.

Boston has changed much since the days when she dined at two o'clock, asked her more formal friends to tea at six, and made the stranger within her gates the all-absorbing topic. Now we talk of balls, dinners, dances, and our literary guest closes his book and goes to the opera or the vaudeville with us.

What memories unfold themselves to my vision of that night, December 2, 1867; the night of the first appearance of Mr. Dickens in the Tremont Temple! Again I am conscious of the expectant hush as Mr. Dickens appears, book in hand, white *boutonnière* in buttonhole. With quick, elastic steps he takes his place. The whole audience spring to their feet, while round after round of applause, cheer after cheer, shout after shout of welcome greet him. On the stage is a simple device, designed by Mr. Dickens, looking like a reading-desk, with a light so arranged as to illuminate the reader's face; behind it stands a long, dark, purplish screen. With a magician's touch the simple desk transforms itself, supple to the master's will . — at one time a kind of pulpit with brass rail, the witness box; next the enclosed seats where the jurymen sit; then a numerous muster of gentlemen in wigs, the barristers' seats; then it became the table for Mr. Justice Stareleigh, "who put his little legs underneath it and his little three-cornered hat upon it; and when Mr. Justice Stareleigh had done this, all you could see of him was two queer little eyes, one broad pink face, and somewhere about half of a big and very comical looking wig. The officer on the floor of the court called out, 'Silence!' in a commanding tone, and the great case of Bardwell and Pickwick began," holding the listeners still and motionless until the foreman brought in the verdict of "Guilty" and fined the defendant seven hundred and fifty pounds. Then Sam Weller's father touched him on the shoulder and, with a mournful expression, said, "O, Sammy, Sammy, vy worn't there a alleybi!" With this the great audience

shouted with laughter, and the wild applause began again with gathered volume, until even the walls of Tremont Temple itself seemed to echo and vibrate as a pendulum disturbed from rest and swinging to and fro.

Never to be forgotten is the accent and modulation of Mr. Dickens's voice as he spoke the words: "Marley was dead to begin with." The great audience was held in breathless silence as the ghost and Scrooge and the jocund travellers, the phantom, the spirits, went and came through the pages of the "Christmas Carol"; until little Tiny Tim observed, "God bless us, every one!" And with these words, the wonderful evening was over.

Walking home through the still wintry air, Mr. Aldrich spoke of a letter he had seen written to Professor Felton when the book was first published, showing what the writing of the book had meant to Mr. Dickens:

"In the parcel you will find a Christmas Carol in prose, being a short story of Christmas by Charles Dickens, over which Christmas Carol Charles Dickens wept and laughed and wept again, and excited himself in the most extraordinary manner in the composition, and thinking whereof he walked about the black streets of London fifteen and twenty miles many a night."

So distinct is the memory of the first time Mr. Dickens came to our house in Pinckney Street that I even see the figure in the carpet on which he stood. Mrs. Hawthorne had named this small house "Mrs. Aldrich's workbox." It was mostly composed of white muslin and pink ribbons, white muslin and blue ribbons, all excepting Mr. Aldrich's study, which Mr. Howells, to our great discomfiture, always spoke of as "Aldrich's boudoir"; as he always spoke of his own study as his workshop, our feelings were hurt and bitter. We said to each other it was nothing but sheer envy, and endeavored in this way to soothe the wound.

If the Sultan of Zanzibar, the Czar of all Russia, the Grand Mogul of India, and all the crowned heads of Europe combined should knock at our door, it would not throw the entire household into such a frenzy and flutter as that simple card did, with its magic name, "Mr. Charles Dickens."

I well remember the quick beating of my heart as I descended the stairs to the "boudoir," where I found Mr. Dickens seated in the easiest chair in the bay window. A rather short, slight figure, so he seemed to me then, without the manner that stamps the caste of "Vere de Vere." He was dressed — I think dressed is the right word — in a very light, so light that I don't know how to describe it — I can almost say soiled white color — top coat. It was wide and short, and stood out like a skirt, the collar of a much darker shade

of velvet. His waistcoat was velvet of another shade of brown, with brilliant red indentations; his watch chain was buttoned into the centre button of his waistcoat, and then it divided itself. I found myself saying, "How do you do," and wondering, if the watch was in one pocket, what was at the other end of the chain in the other pocket, and was tempted to ask him the time, in the hope that he might make a mistake and bring out the other thing. I don't remember what he wore on his feet, and I don't know the plaid of his trousers, but I rather think it was a black-and-white check — what the Englishman calls "pepper and salt." I don't remember any one topic of conversation on that first visit, but I remember well the laughter and good cheer; the charming way in which the guest made these two young people feel that to him they really were persons of consequence and were so regarded by this prince of strangers who tarried within their gates.

On our first Thanksgiving in this box of a house, Mr. Fields by chance came in. It was a cold day and snowing, which made the house, in contrast to the "biting and nipping air" outside, seem more gay and cheerful with the open fires, flowers, and the table set for dinner with the wedding presents of silver and glass. Mr. Fields said, "Oh, Dickens has got to come and see this!" So off he went to bring him.

In those happy days my mainstay and dependence was an austere lady who consented to live with us for the modest sum of five dollars per week, which would include the services of herself and daughter. It is true that this daughter had lived in this great world of ours but six years; but Mrs. Sterling felt that Lizzie was a sufficient grown-up to answer the doorbell, wait at the table, and, as Mrs. Sterling said, "serve it all," if she, Mrs. Sterling, "waited in the pantry to lift the heavy dishes to and fro from the table." Lizzie was also an accomplished duster, and could run up and down stairs on all kinds of errands, and also knew cause and effect, as I remember her assuring me one day, when the fire bells rang, "that she supposed some one had been fiddling with kerosene."

Added to all these accomplishments, Lizzie was a composite portrait of all the old Dutch masters, in her mouse-colored dress reaching almost to the ground; a long white tire with full bishop sleeves, hair braided on each side of her brow, and tied with the same mouse-colored ribbon in a prim bow.

Mr. Fields soon returned with his distinguished guest, who was, I remember, to dine with Mr. Longfellow that day. After a pleasant chat in the library, Mr. Dickens turned to me saying, "Now I want to see the little maid.

I have heard all about her.” So I went on the quest; and soon the demure little Dutch picture walked in with her silver tray, decanter, and wine-glass. Going up to Mr. Dickens she said, with her alluring lisp, “If you please, sir, will you take a glass of wine and a biscuit?” Mr. Dickens poured out his glass of wine, and with a courtly bow to us, and a lower one to the little maid, drank to our health and happiness; and when the little maid departed put his head on the cushion of his chair and laughed and laughed. Then turning to me he said, “Now I want to see this wonderful house from top to bottom, from cellar to attic.” We showed it to him with honest and possessive pride, and when his visit was over he said, in leaving, that nothing in our country had interested him more. We have wondered since if, in telling of his visit to others, he did not say that nothing in our country had amused him more.

The next play on our happy stage of life was the “walking match” and the dinner Mr. Dickens gave to the victorious champion.

Mr. Fields says, in his “Yesterdays with Authors,” that it was in Baltimore that Mr. Dickens conceived his idea of a walking match between Mr. Osgood and Mr. Dolby, and that he went into this matter with as much earnest directness as if he were planning a new novel.

The articles of this joyous joke were drawn up and sent to the house of Ticknor & Fields with as much circumstance and official dignity as if they were papers relating to the making of a new president.

When this great international battle was over, and America had won, came the brilliant dinner at the Parker House.¹ Impressed on my memory for all time will be the picture of that night: a long table with its beautiful arrangement of flowers arranged by Mr. Dickens himself, and so designed that at the end of the feast they easily disintegrated, giving each woman a lovely *bouquet de corsage*. The dinner place cards were an innovation new to Boston. Mine was a gay little colored picture of a table laid for two, and the bridegroom (for I am sure it was a bridal party) with uplifted glass drinking a benediction to his bride.

There were no set speeches that night, as indeed there need not be with that company; such wit and laughter that made even the sparkle of the champagne seem dull and lifeless. The host at the head of his table was the incarnation of joy on a cruise of pleasure. Every fibre of his body was unrestrained and alert with good-fellowship, so that even the youngest and

shyest guest, who “had nothing to contribute to such a company but her youth and appreciation, forgot to be self-conscious.

1 “Distinguished Company.

“Charles Dickens to preside and James T. Fields to be seated opposite. Mrs. Annie Fields, Charles Eliot Norton and Mrs. Norton, Prof. James Russell Lowell and Mrs. Lowell, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes and Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Howard Malcolm Ticknor and Mrs. Ticknor, Mr. Aldrich and Mrs. Aldrich, Mr. Schlesinger, and an obscure poet named Longfellow (if discoverable) and Miss Longfellow.”

A few weeks after the memorable visit of Mr. Dickens, the composite little Dutch picture appeared in the “boudoir” bringing with her a tiny silver tray on which lay a visiting card, “Mr. Henry W. Longfellow.” The lisping voice made haste to say, “I said the Master and Mistress was home. I askeded him into the dining-room and I told him to set down.”

Mr. Longfellow at this time had passed his sixtieth birthday. The awful chasm which, without the slightest warning, had opened at his feet in the tragedy of his wife’s death had made him look much older than his years could count. Time never assuaged the wound of that bereavement. He spoke or wrote of it only in the fewest words. Once in writing to Mr. Curtis he said, “I am utterly wretched and overwhelmed; to the eyes of others outwardly calm, but inwardly bleeding to death.” The spiritual beauty of Mr. Longfellow’s expression, the dignity and gentleness of his manner, his smile of peculiar sweetness, all had great charm, and made him seem the ideal poet.

The distinguished guest was soon placed in the easiest chair in the study, his hostess vainly endeavoring to appear at ease, and to hide as much as possible her sense of the high honor paid by this visit, which to her was much the same as it would be to the English subject should the King, without retinue or warning, depart from his palace to visit a simple gentry of his kingdom. After a half-hour’s friendly chat of books and men, Mr. Longfellow said: “May I tell you how I am impressed with the atmosphere of home and cheer you have given to this little room? Its crimson walls, the flowers, the crowded shelves of books, all tell their story of the fortunate, the happy day, when a new household found its place among the innumerable homes of earth.” Then, turning to his hostess, he said: “I

should so much like if you would show me all of this small house. Mr. Dickens told me of its charm." With shy pride we took our guest from room to room, and when we came to our bedroom with its blue chintz hangings Mr. Longfellow said that all the bluebirds printed on them should know it was a poet's home and sing to him their sweetest melodies both day and night.

When the short tour of the house was over, lingering a moment at the dining-room door Mr. Longfellow said: "Ah, Mr. Aldrich, it will not always be



I hear in the chamber above me,
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

Sept. 6. 1872.

Henry W. Longfellow.

LONGFELLOW IN HIS STUDY

the same round table for two. By and by it will extend itself, and about it will cluster little faces, royal guests, drumming on the table with their spoons. And then, as the years go by, one by one they will take flight to build nests of their own. The round table will again recede until it is set for two and you and Mrs. Aldrich will be alone. This is the story of life, the pathetic poem of the fireside. Make an idyl of it; I give the idea to you." Mr. Aldrich did not use the *motif*, and Mr. Longfellow himself later wrote the poem "The Hanging of the Crane," for which poem Mr. Bonner paid him three thousand dollars for the right to publish it in his paper. Thus the little visit, which Mr. Longfellow in his kindness made, brought for him a dual

reward — money and fame, and a larger asset, the pleasure and matronly pride it gave its young recipient.

This visit was soon followed by an invitation to dine at Craigie House. As our carriage stopped at the gate our host appeared at the open door, and coming down the long walk with courtly grace gave his arm to his young guest. The picture of the scene is indelible: the tender grace of the dying day; the lilacs just in bloom; the green of the grass; and a poet, bareheaded, with whitening hair, standing in the twilight.

EXTRACT FROM “*Old Friends. Being Literary
Recollections of Other Days*”



by William Winter, Moffat, Yard and Company, 1909, p.181-202

VII.
CHARLES DICKENS

It was my privilege, many years ago, to clasp the hand of Charles Dickens and to hear from his lips the cordial assurance of his personal regard. “If you come to England,” he said, “be sure to come to *me*; and it won’t be my fault if you don’t have a good time.” The great novelist said those words as we sat together aboard a little tug-boat, on the morning of April 22, 1868, steaming to the *Russia*, which was anchored in the bay of New York, and about to sail for England. It was a lovely morning. The air was genial, the broad expanse of the Hudson and the bay sparkled in brilliant sunlight, and the whole silver scene was vital with motion and cheerful sound. Dickens had expressed the wish to slip away unimpeded by a crowd, for his many Readings, together with much travel and continuous social exertion, had taxed his endurance, and he was weary and ill. Accordingly, accompanied by his friend and manager, George Dolby, he drove from his hotel, the Westminster, to the pier at the western end of Spring Street, where a few friends were to meet him and embark with him for the steamship. The party included James T. Fields, James R. Osgood, Sol Eytinge, Jr., A. V. S. Anthony, H. C. Jarrett, H. D. Palmer, George Dolby, and the present writer, — who is the sole survivor of that group. When Dickens alighted from the carriage and glanced at the river he uttered the joyous exclamation: “That’s *home!*” We were soon aboard the tugboat, — called “The Only Son,” — and as we sailed down the river it pleased the novelist to talk with me about many things. I had heard all his Readings in New York, and had written about them, and on that subject he had many

pleasant words to say. Mention being made of the English poet Matthew Arnold, he spoke warmly, saying: "He is one of the gentlest and most earnest of men." Of the renowned foreign actor Charles Fechter, — who had not visited America, but was soon to come, — he said: "When you see Fechter you will, I think, recognize a great artist." So the talk rambled on, till presently I ventured to speak of the benefit and comfort that I, in common with thousands of other readers, had derived from his novels. My favorite, in those days, was "A Tale of Two Cities," and in a fervor of enthusiasm I declared to him the opinion that it is the greatest of his works. He seemed much pleased, and he answered, with evident conviction: "I think so too!" Study and thought, in years that since have passed, convince me that we were both somewhat mistaken, for the indisputable supremacy of Dickens is that of the humorist, and surely the foremost of his novels, in respect of humor, are "David Copperfield" and "Martin Chuzzlewit"; but the avowal he then made affords an interesting glimpse of his mind, and therefore it is worthy to be remembered.

The humorist not infrequently undervalues his special gift, and fancies himself to be stronger in pathos than in mirth. Dickens, as shown by many denotements in his writings, was fond of melodrama, meaning the drama of astonishing situations, — a branch of art by no means to be despised, but not the highest, — and he liked positive, literal effects rather than suggestions to the imagination: it is known, for example, that he ranked the performance of Solon Shingle, by John E. Owens, which was reality, above the performance of Rip Van Winkle, by Joseph Jefferson, which, in that actor's treatment of it, was poetry. No critical considerations, however, affected our discourse, in the conversation that is now recalled. The novelist had labored through a toilsome season: his work was done, his mind was at ease, and he was blithe in spirits, — only subdued, at moments, by consciousness of impending separation from dear friends. There was about him the irresistible charm of ingenuous demeanor and absolute simplicity. His appearance, that day, afforded a striking contrast with the appearance he had presented at the reading desk. When before an audience Dickens assumed the pose of an actor. He wore evening dress, but he used the accessories of footlights and also a colored screen as a background, and he "made up" his face, as actors do. There was, in his reading, an extraordinary facility of impersonation, and he employed all essential means to heighten the desired effect of it. Now he was himself. The actor had disappeared. The

man was with us, unsophisticated and unadorned. He wore a rough travelling suit and a soft felt hat; his right foot was wrapped in black silk, for he had been suffering from gout; and he carried a plain stick. After he had boarded the steamship, and while he was talking with the captain and other officers, the members of our little party assembled in the saloon with what he afterward jocosely described as "bitter beer intentions." Soon he approached our group and, addressing me, he said: "What are you drinking?" I named the fluid, and, responding to his request, filled a tumbler for him. He shook hands with us, all around, with a grasp of iron, emptied his glass, put it on the table, and turned to greet the old statesman Thurlow Weed, who had just then arrived: whereupon, immediately, I seized that glass, and, to the consternation of the attendant steward, put it into my pocket, — mentioning, as I did so, Sir Walter Scott's appropriation of the glass of King George IV, at the civic feast in Edinburgh, long ago. The royal souvenir, it is recorded, fared ill, for Sir Walter sat upon it and broke it. The Dickens souvenir survives and is still in my possession. When the farewells had been spoken and we had left the ship, Dickens stood at the rail, his brilliant eyes (and surely no eyes more brilliant were ever seen) suffused with tears, and, placing his hat on the end of his stick, he waved it to us till distance had hidden him from view. I never saw him again. Nine years later, in 1877, when I first went to England, though I could not seek for him at his home, I stood with reverence beside his grave. He rests in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. As I drew near to that sacred spot I saw a single red rose lying on the pavement that bears his name, and almost at the instant a heedless visitor, indolently strolling along the transept, trod upon the flower and crushed it.

The general heart of mankind was touched by Charles Dickens. Criticism, in its examination of his writings, may refine and discriminate to



POCTW CORNELL, WPTW/UNITED ARMY

the utmost possible extent, but it cannot obliterate that solid, decisive truth. His own words tersely and convincingly declare the consummate, conquering principles of his faith and his works:

Ages of incessant labor, by immortal creatures, for this earth, must pass into eternity, before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. . . . Any Christian spirit, working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. . . . There is nothing in the world so inevitably contagious as laughter and good humor.

Upon those principles Dickens continuously acted, and in his literary life, of more than thirty years of conscientious labor, he created enduring works of art, — peopling the realm of pure fiction with a wide variety of characters, interpreting human nature in manifold phases, reflecting the passing hour, demolishing social abuses, teaching the sacred duty of charity, comforting and helping the poor, and stretching forth the hands of loving sympathy to the outcast and the wretched. Thus laboring, he enriched the world with a perpetual spring of kindness, of hope, and of innocent, happy

laughter; he inculcated devotion to noble ideals; and he stimulated and strengthened the spiritual instincts of the human race. Any relic of such a man is precious, and the Dickens souvenir to which I have adverted, — the glass from which he took his parting drink, on the day of his final departure from America, — has been tenderly cherished. Once in a while it is brought forth and shown, for the pleasure of a literary visitor. On one occasion of exceptional and peculiar interest, when Charles Dickens, the younger, dined with us in our home, March 3, 1883, it was placed in his hands, and thus, after the lapse of fifteen years, the farewell glass of the illustrious father was touched by the lips of the reverent and honored son.

The younger Charles Dickens, a man of uncommon talents and of a singularly amiable and winning personality, possessed abundant and deeply interesting recollections of his father, and, naturally, he was fond of talking about him. Adverting to his father's Readings, he mentioned several picturesque and significant incidents, all tending to show the deep interest that the great novelist felt in that branch of his art, and the scrupulous care with which he trained himself for the vocation of public reader. The home of Dickens, Gad's Hill Place, a house that he had known and fancied when a boy, and that he bought in 1856, is near to Rochester and Chatham, where there is a military and naval establishment. "Noisy brawls sometimes occurred in the neighborhood," said the younger Dickens, "but we did not regard them. One morning I heard a great din, shouts and screams, as of a violent, drunken quarrel. At first I did not heed it, but after a while, as it steadily continued, I went out to our grove, across the road, where I found my father, alone. 'Have you heard the row?' I asked. 'Did you hear any noise?' he answered. 'Yes,' I replied, 'I thought somebody was being killed. What can have happened? Did *you* shout?' '*I* made the row,' he replied; 'I have been rehearsing the murder scene in "Oliver Twist." It was the wrangle of Bill Sykes and Nancy that you heard; I have just been trying to kill Nancy.' 'Well,' I said, 'I should think you have succeeded, for a more damnable racket was never made.'" The earnest narrator proceeded to tell me that his father was warned against the prodigious exertion necessitated by those Readings of his, and especially by the reading from "Oliver Twist." The death of Dickens (aged only fifty-eight) was precipitated by his implication in a frightful railroad accident, which occurred at Staplehurst, a year before he died, but, undoubtedly, the efforts that he made as a public reader hastened the close of his great career. Indeed, toward the last, his son

Charles, acting in obedience to the imperative order of his father's doctor, invariably sat in front, near to the stage, and, — as he told me, — had, privately, provided himself with a short ladder, by means of which he could obtain immediate access to the platform, in order to aid his father in case he should be smitten with a stroke of apoplexy. Such an end was expected, and such was the end that came; but, happily, not in public. Dickens gave his last reading on March 19, 1869, at St. James's Hall, London. He died, suddenly, of apoplexy, in his dining room at Gad's Hill Place, June 9, 1870. The younger Charles Dickens long survived his father, dying on July 21, 1896, — and so one of the kindest men, one of the gentlest spirits, one of the best speakers in England, vanished from our mortal scene.

The name of the Dickens house and of its locality is spelled both ways — Gad's Hill and Gadshill. In the second act of the First Part of Shakespeare's great play of "Henry IV" it is spelled Gadshill, and it is used as the name of a place and as the name of a person, — the servant of *Falstaff*. The place is westward from Rochester. On a brilliant day in the summer of 1885 I made a pilgrimage to that literary shrine, — driving from the Bull, at Rochester, Mr. Pickwick's tavern, and passing many hours among the haunts of Dickens. There is, or was, a quaint little inn, called the Falstaff, near to Gad's Hill Place, on the opposite side of the turnpike road, and from that resort I dispatched a card to the owner of the mansion, Major , signifying that one of the American friends of Dickens would gratefully appreciate the privilege of viewing the house. The Major received me with cordial hospitality, and so it happened that a stranger spoke, upon the threshold of Dickens, the welcome that the great author himself intended and promised to speak. There was the study, unchanged, — the room in which "Great Expectations," "Our Mutual Friend" and "Edwin Drood" were written; there was the writing-desk at which the magician would never sit again; there was the vacant chair; there, on the back of the door, was the painted book-case, with the mock volumes, bearing comic titles, invented by the novelist; and over all the golden summer sunshine glimmered and a magic light of memory that words are powerless to paint. I sat in the chair of Charles Dickens and reverently wrote my name in the chronicle of pilgrims to his earthly home. The dining room had, on that day, been prepared for a banquet for many persons, but no guests had yet arrived, and the Major kindly permitted me to enter it and see the sofa on which Dickens died; and later he conducted me through a tunnel underneath the road, giving access

to a field and grove where was the Swiss chalet presented to Dickens by friends of his in Switzerland, a snug retreat to which he often resorted to escape interruption when at work, and where he passed his last day as a living man. I recalled his words, as I stood there: "If you come to England be sure to come to *me*" and it seemed to me that he was actually present, and that I felt again the hearty grasp of his hand and heard the ringing tones of his cheery voice. The garden was gay with red roses. "Dickens loved these," said the Major, and, so saying, he placed a cluster of them in my hands, by way of gracious farewell.

THE READINGS OF DICKENS

Dickens was not only an excellent reader but a good actor. The discerning reader of his novels perceives that he possessed a keen dramatic instinct. The auditor of his Readings was soon convinced that he also possessed a positive dramatic faculty. In reading scenes from his novels he entered into characters that he had created, and his correct assumption of diverse personalities was decisively effective. Now he was *Scrooge*; presently *Mr. Fizgig*; then *Bob Cratchitt*; and by and by he passed, easily, by the expedient of artistic suggestion, — and by something more, which it is difficult to define, — through the contrasted guises of *Serjeant Buzfuz*, the little *Judge*, *Mrs. Cluppins*, *Sam Weller*, *Mr. Winkle*, *Micawber*, *Pecksniff*, and *Sairey Gamp*. The skill that merges personality with a fictitious character, and yet does not efface the performer's individual quality, is indispensable in acting. Dickens possessed it. He knew the effect that he wished to produce. His method was characterized by simplicity and delicacy. In the copious, mellow, musical vocalism (a little marred by the monotony of rising inflection), the authoritative manner, the unaffected, free gesticulation, and the spontaneous accordance of the action with the word the authentic art of the actor was conspicuous. As an interpreter of tragic character and feeling he was consistent and often impressive, as in his reading of the storm chapter, much condensed, in "David Copperfield," — that wonderful blending of the terrors of the tempest with the tragic and pathetic culminations of human fate, — but he was, distinctively, a humorist, and his humorous embodiments, for embodiments, practically, they were, and not merely denotements, were his indubitable triumphs of dramatic art. In outbursts of passionate emotion, while he did not lack

fervor, he lacked vocal power; but the moment he entered the realm of humor he was a monarch. His whole being then seemed aroused. His clear, brilliant, expressive eyes twinkled with joy; his countenance expressed bubbling mirth that was with difficulty restrained; his tones grew deep and rich; he, manifestly, escaped from all consciousness of self; and he completely captivated his auditor.

At this distance of time, — forty years having passed since last I heard his voice, — it is not easy to name his superlative comic achievements; but my clearest remembrance of them would specify *Micawber*, *Mrs. Gamp*, *Sam Weller*, *Mrs. Raddles*, *Pecksniff*, *Mrs. Gummidge* and the little servant of *Bob Sawyer* as gems of his humorous acting. There was a sweet, gentle strain of humor in his exposition of the delicate episode of poor little *Dora Spenlow*; but the scenes in which he revelled and greatly excelled were such as display the festival with *Micawber* at Canterbury; the supper with *Bob Sawyer*, in the lodging-house of the shrill, spiteful *Mrs. Raddles*; and the tipsy altercation between *Mrs. Gamp* and *Mrs. Prig*. His finest impersonations, — finest, because of the dramatic interpreter's absolute fidelity to the author's designs, and also because of their integral revelation of his genius, — were, as I remember them, those of *Dr. Marigold* and *Mrs. Gamp*. The latter portrayal was a consummate type of his humor; the former of his pathos. That fat, fussy heathen, that prodigy of eccentric, comic selfishness, that ungainly, sagacious, piggish cockney, *Mrs. Gamp*, — herself possessing no perception, however slight, of either good feeling or mirth, — delights by the grotesque comicality of a character, both serious and ludicrous, which is skilfully developed and displayed under ingeniously humorous conditions. All lovers of broad fun have rejoiced in *Sairey*, — in her copious loquacity, her store of anecdote, her appropriate aphorisms, her belief in the utility of regular habits, her talent for sarcasm, her partiality for gin, her naive suggestion of “ a bottle on the chimbley-piece, to set to my lips when so disposed,” her ample resources of unconsciously ludicrous illustration, her fecund, inexhaustible vocabulary, her mythical friend *Mrs. Harris*, her formidable compatriot *Betsy Prig*, and her ever memorable quarrel with that audacious associate. Dickens must have rejoiced in creating *Mrs. Gamp*, for he evinced the keenest artistic enjoyment in depicting her, — his portrayal of her exemplifying absolute harmony between the imaginative ideal and the executive intellectual purpose. Our stage was adorned, in old times, by three comedians, George Holland,

William Davidge, and Marie Wilkins, any of whom could have personated *Mrs. Gamp* perfectly well; but none of them, though aided by the accessories of costume and scenery, could have made the character more actual to the material vision than Dickens made it to the eyes of the mind. He read it, and, at the same time, he contrived to act it.

The same felicity of achievement was perceptible in the portrayal of *Dr. Marigold*. No other one of his Readings contained more — if so much — of himself. In whatsoever way interpreted, the story of *Dr. Marigold* would touch the heart. As interpreted by Dickens, its harmony of humor and pathos was irresistible. The sketch itself is exceptionally representative of the essential characteristic of its author's genius — vital humanity. No writer has shown himself more capable than Dickens was of pointing those afflicting contrasts which reveal human nature as, at times, so noble, and social conditions as, at times, so tragic. No writer ever was more quick to see or more expert to show, the heart that beats beneath the motley, and, therewithal, the masquerade of living, in which so many human beings, of fine feeling and high motive, are doomed to participate, — often through many arid years of smiling endurance. When Dickens assumed *Dr. Marigold* the formal English gentleman, in evening dress, seemed to disappear, while in his place stood the coarsely clad, loquacious pedler, on the footboard of his Cheap-Jack cart, — his dying daughter clasped to his breast, her arms around his neck, her head drooping on his shoulder, — vending his wares — voluble, facetious, resolute — hiding his sorrow — the veritable incarnation of heroism — even while the gray shadow of death was stealing over the face of his child. It was an inexpressibly pathetic presentment of dramatic contrast: on one side, self-abnegation, the celestial element of human nature; on the other side, innocent, helpless, forlorn childhood, made doubly sacred by misfortune. I have seen all the important acting that has been shown on the American stage within a past of more than fifty years: I have seen but little, in the serio-comic vein, that was better than that of Charles Dickens in the character of *Dr. Marigold*. This humble tribute can suggest only the general character of his art. His Readings were the spontaneous expression, wisely guided, of a great nature, in the maturity of its greatness, and those persons who heard them enjoyed a precious privilege, never to be forgotten.

Contemporary interest in those Readings, no doubt, was intensified by admiration, — then very general, — of the reader's writings; and perhaps,

by reason of that admiration, they seem, in remembrance, to have been finer than they actually were. I do not, however, credit that conjecture. I recall, even now, the action of Dickens when, as *Bob Cratchitt*, he seemed to be throwing a kiss to *Tiny Tim*, and brushing away a tear, as he prepared to propose the health of *Scrooge*. Those persons only who have children and fear to lose them, or, loving them, have lost them, could understand how much that simple action meant. I recall his sad tones and direct way when, as *Pegotty*, he told of the weary search for *Little Em'ly*, and "the fine, massive grandeur in his face" when he spoke those touching words: "And only God knows how good them mothers was to me." I remember the exalted, awe-stricken expression of his countenance when, as he closed his narrative of the storm, in "Copperfield," he spoke of the dead man, whose name is unmentioned, and the pathetic tone in which he said: "I saw him lying with his head upon his arm, as I had often seen him lie at school." Those indescribably beautiful strokes of art, and many like them, denoted a consummate artist. It is not, however, to be questioned that the intrinsic power and authentic supremacy of Dickens consisted in authorship, and not in the histrionic illustration of it. He enriched literature with creations that can never perish. Humor and pathos blend in his works and make an exquisite music. The geniality of Christmas is nowhere so fully expressed as in "Pickwick" and the "Carol," — where great fires blaze upon spacious hearths, and bright eyes sparkle, and merry bells ring, and sunshine, starlight, and joy make a delicious atmosphere of comfort, kindness, and ardent good-will. There is no terror more ghastly than that on the face of *Jonas Chuzzlewit*, as he breaks out of the woods, after doing the murder. There is no written tempest more actual and terrible than the tempest in which *Ham* and *Steerforth* go to their death. There is no emblem of self-sacrifice more sublime than the figure of *Sidney Carton* at the guillotine. But it is only a glimpse of a great author that is here intended, — not a critical estimate of works long since accepted into the sacrarium of English Literature. The world knows them by heart, and the judgment of the most exacting of human intellect has recognized and celebrated the scope and the opulence of their writer's genius: the vitality of his thought; the sincerity of his virtuous emotion; the certainty of his intuition; the felicity of his inventive skill; the rosy glow of his copious, captivating humor; the fineness of his perception of tragic and comic contrast in human experience; the depth of his sympathy with the common joys and sorrows of the human

race; the eloquence of his fluent, nervous, forcible, convincing style; and the profound, steadfast, consistent purpose of his life and his art to inculcate the religion of charity and love. The world is happier and better because Charles Dickens has lived in it.

The Poetry



LIST OF POEMS



IMPROMPTU

POETICAL EPISTLE FROM FATHER PROUT TO BOZ

TO C. DICKENS, ESQ.

TO CHARLES DICKENS ON HIS PROPOSED VOYAGE TO AMERICA, 1842

BOZ IN MINIATURE

A TRIBUTE TO CHARLES DICKENS

SONG WRITTEN FOR THE DINNER GIVEN TO CHARLES DICKENS BY THE YOUNG MEN OF BOSTON, FEB. 1 1842

TO CHARLES DICKENS ON HIS "CHRISTMAS CAROL"

CHARLES DICKENS

TO CHARLES DICKENS, ON HIS "OLIVER TWIST."

A SONNET TO CHARLES DICKENS

"BOZ"

THE AMERICAN'S APOSTROPHE TO BOZ

A FRIENDLY EPISTLE FROM ALDOBRANDENSIS

TITANIA DICKENS TO BOTTOM, "THE DAILY NEWS"

THE BLIND GIRL TO THE ROSE (FOR MUSIC)

HOMAGE TO THE AUTHOR OF THE "CHRISTMAS CAROL"

TO CHARLES DICKENS

CHARLES DICKENS

LITTLE NELL

TO THE AUTHOR OF OLIVER TWIST, NICHOLAS NICKLEBY, &C.

A SONNET TO CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

TO CHARLES DICKENS

SONNET TO CHARLES DICKENS

TO CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

TO CHARLES DICKENS

LINES ADDRESSED TO CHARLES DICKENS

MARTHA

THE DEATH OF LITTLE NELL

LITTLE ADDRESSES TO BIG NAMES

AN ODE TO BOZ

CHARLES DICKENS: OBIT JUNE 9TH, 1870

IN MEMORIAM – JUNE 9, 1870

CHARLES DICKENS

IN MEMORY

CHARLES DICKENS

TO HIS MEMORY

BOZ

A MAN OF THE CROWD TO CHARLES DICKENS

ACROSTIC ON THE LATE CHARLES DICKENS

THE VOICE OF CHRISTMAS PAST

A TRIBUTE TO DICKENS.

IN MEMORIAM: JUNE 10TH, 1870

DICKENS IN CAMP.

MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

CHARLES DICKENS

A WELCOME TO DICKENS ON HIS FIRST VISIT TO THE WEST.

UNTITLED

WELCOME TO BOZ

THE CENTENARY OF DICKENS

DICKENSIA

Impromptu

From *Bentley's Miscellany*, Volume One, No.2 March, 1837 p.297

By C.J. Davids

Who the *dickens* "Boz" could be
Puzzled many a learned elf;
Till time unveil'd the mystery,
And *Boz* appear'd as DICKENS' self!

Poetical Epistle from Father Prout to Boz

From *Bentley's Miscellany*, Volume Three, No.1 January 1838 p.71

I.

A RHYME! a rhyme! from a distant clime, — from the gulph of the Genoese:

O'er the rugged scalps of the Julian Alps, dear Boz! I send you these,
To light the *Wick* your candlestick holds up, or, should you list,
To usher in the yarn you spin concerning. Oliver Twist.

II.

Immense applause you've gained, oh, Boz! through continental Europe;
You'll make Pickwick oecumenick; of fame you have a sure hope:
For here your books are found, gadzooks! in greater *luxe* than any
That have issued yet, hotpress'd or wet, from the types of GALIGNANI.

III.

But neither when you sport your pen, oh, potent mirth-compeller!
Winning our hearts "in monthly parts," can Pickwick or Sam Weller
Cause us to weep with pathos deep, or shake with laugh spasmodical,
As when you drain your copious vein for Bentley's periodical.

IV.

Folks all enjoy your Parish Boy, — so truly you depict him;
But I, alack! while thus you track your stinted poor-law's victim,
Must think of some poor nearer home, — poor who, unheeded, perish,
By squires despoiled, by "patriots" gulled, — I mean the starving Irish.

V.

Yet there's no dearth of Irish mirth, which, to a mind of feeling,
Seemeth to be the Helot's glee before the Spartan reeling:
Such gloomy thought o'ercometh not the glow of England's humour,
Thrice happy isle! long may the smile of genuine joy illumine her!

VI.

Write on, young sage! still o'er the page pour forth the flood of fancy;
Wax still more droll, wave o'er the soul Wit's wand of necromancy.
Behold! e'en now around your brow th' immortal laurel thickens;

Yea, SWIFT or STERNE might gladly learn a thing or two from
DICKENS.

VII.

A rhyme! a rhyme! from a distant clime, — a song from the sunny
south!

A goodly theme, so Boz but deem the measure not uncouth.

Would, for thy sake, that “PROUT” could make his bow in fashion finer,
“*Partant*” (from thee) “pour la Syrie,” for Greece and Asia Minor.

Genoa, 14th December 1837.

To C. Dickens, Esq.

From: *The Regrets of Memory*, a poem, with minor poems, translations, etc., Anonymous, Henry Wix, 1840, p.85-86

ALL hail, O Boz! — the magic of whose name
Frees us at once from devils blue, and vapours,
E'en Envy's self cannot deny the fame
Thou'st gain'd from thy immortal Pickwick Papers.

And where is now that gallant hero? Where
Poetic Snodgrass? Winkle, rich and racy?
Tupman, whose thoughts are ever with the fair,
Tupman — rejoicing in the name of Tracy?

All other written characters survive
But in the monuments which art employs;
Thy living portraits shall for ever live,
In Pickwicks — Tupmans — Winkles — and fat boys.

To Charles Dickens on His Proposed Voyage to America, 1842

From: *The New Monthly Magazine*, February 1842, p.217

By Thomas Hood

PSHAW! Away with leaf and berry,
And the sober-sided cup!
Bring a Goblet and bright Sherry!
And a bumper fill me up —
Tho' I had a pledge to shiver,
And the largest ever was, —
Ere his vessel leaves our river,
I will drink a health to "Boz"!

Here's success to all his antics,
Since it pleases him to roam,
And to paddle o'er Atlantics,
After such a sale at home!
May he shun all rocks whatever,
And the shallow sand that lurks, —
And his Passage be as clever
As the best among his works!

BOZ IN MINIATURE

Or Small Change for the “American Notes”, Coined By Alfred Jingle.

From: *The Dublin Monthly Magazine*, December 1842 p.354-356

“Mr. Pickwick — Well, Sam, how do you like this country?

Sam Weller — Vy, I admires it — as much as I can — as the connoisseur expressed hisself ven the old gemman showed him the shocking bad pickter.” — Slick’s Recollections of Pickwick:

I.

Never shall I forget how much I wondered
When first the Steamer’s state room met my eyes.
On which my wife and I so long had pondered;
But now its smallness filled us with surprise;
We saw, indeed, that we had greatly blundered,
Making our luggage of so large a size:
Sore was the joke, but we were patient under it,
Reflecting that experience makes one wise.

II.

The Stewardess told us all would be so pleasant, —
(God bless the woman for her well-meant lies!)
That children absent were as near as present,
And well she knew no wicked winds would rise.
But soon our party thought of being sea-sick
With ominous fears, though nothing yet was said;
At length we all gave up, and some took physic,
Some took roast pig, and others went to bed.

III.

As for our passage, it was somewhat stormy,

For in ten days a heavy gale came on,
And all the things above, behind, before me
Were turned, in one short moment, upside down.
Oh! that dark night amid the wild Atlantic!
Only a dream can image it again,
And each strange untie, which the ship, grown frantic,
Played with the waves, her victory to gain!

IV.

At length it chanced that we were nearly lost on
The rocks near Halifax, I scarce know how,
But we got off, and soon arrived at Boston,
Where from the shore we felt a sharp wind blow
Well may the stranger praise this beauteous city,
Which looks as if intended for a show;
The houses seem as slight, and bright, and pretty
As children's toys, which in a box they stow.

V.

Great good is done in this place by the College,
(Far more than by some others I have known,
Which set up silly prejudice for knowledge,
And recognize no world beyond their own;)
The ladies here are very lovely creatures,
Although their forms are miserably thin; —
Much time they spend in running after preachers,
Who make them think that mirth is mortal sin.

VI.

New York appeared more mercantile than Boston,
Though like it in its dinners, and its lunches;
Their business every one appeared engrossed in,
And so no Organs cheer the streets, or Punches.
The ladies here are singularly pretty,

And fond of gaudy dress beyond belief. —
Pigs are the scavengers of this great city,
(And hence the pork brought in by Peel's tariff.)

VII.

To Philadelphia I must give my praises —
There by the regular streets I was confused,
And the good folk had some pedantic phrases,
To show their taste, by which I was amused. —
To Washington I went, and there they asked me
“What struck me in the Legislator's heads?”
So (looking sharp at them when thus they tasked me)
I saw that all their cheeks were stuffed with quids.

VIII.

On to the South and West we now proceeded,
With much to praise, and little to reproach;
The bruises that we got we scarcely heeded,
While tumbling on in many a clumsy coach.
The scenery seemed to me not very ugly,
With all its stunted trees half hid in swamp,
With nothing neatly trimmed, or settled snugly.
And ev'n the houses looking new and damp.

IX.

Our inconveniences were few in number, —
We missed the cleansing element indeed;
Hard were th' uncurtained beds, forbidding slumber,
And foul the use of the Virginian weed!
The roads were nought but swamps and pits of gravel —
The river — one great ditch of liquid mud;
Yet there was much in all our modes of travel
Which gave me great delight and did me good!

X.

Oft as I saw the slimy waters creep by,
How far away did my departure seem!
Oh! never may I see that Mississippi,
Save in the visions of some hideous dream!
To cheer one's spirits vain was the endeavour,
At formal meals where not a soul would speak;
Ev'n now the cold remembrance makes me shiver,
Of that dark spell I had no power to break!

XI.

At length how gladly did I leave for ever
All I had been at so much pains to seek —
The deadly river, spreading round it fever,
The Steamers which blow up — two every week —
The vast and dull Prairie, where scarce a tree grows,
(A dreary sight, enough to make one mope,)
And, worse than all, the slavery of the Negroes,
That cruel knavery which no power can stop.

XII.

Our hardships still were frightful beyond measure,
As on we jolted 'mid the stunted logs;
Yet often now do I recall with pleasure
Our weary journey through the woods and bogs.
And oft as I enjoy myself at leisure,
Amid my comforts, sitting at my ease,
How fondly does my faithful memory treasure
Locations dear to me beyond the seas!

XIII.

Niagara, however, gave me Rapture,
Far more than aught which elsewhere I had seen;

The Feelings that I felt would fill a Chapter,
So Grand they were, yet Peaceful and Serene. —
With Spray to blind me, and the noise to stun me,
I missed at first the Vastness of the Scene,
But soon Sublime Sensations came upon me —
Great Heavens! what mighty Waters Bright and Green!

XIV.

On Lake Champlain the Steamer that I sailed in
Was ev'n more exquisite than those at home,
Nothing (that London travell'rs want) it failed in.
And upon deck we sat, like some neat room —
All I had seen in Canada was decent;
“All right,” is there the word, not “go a-head;”
I own I felt the contrast very pleasant,
Though these are thoughts which should not be
betrayed.

XV.

And now we gazed on scenes indeed romantic,
Whose pictures by no common hand are traced;
Far famed they are on both sides of th' Atlantic,
And fresh they live on every mind impressed —
The Kaatskill mountains, and the Sleepy Hollow,
The Tappaan Zee, we softly glided past;
And glad we were that nothing more should follow,
But that on scenes like these we looked the last!

XVI.

Thus to New York in happy mood returning,
We made our preparations to depart,
And to our friends we spoke that word of mourning,
Which all through life must cut the tender heart!
Still, when we thought about our nest and chickens,

Our nice clean floors, and sleep-inviting beds,
We said, “as surely as our name is D-ck-ns,
We’ll never visit more the Land of Quids.”

A Tribute to Charles Dickens

From: Albert Schloss's "English Bijou Almanack" for 1842

By the Hon. Mrs. Norton

“Not merely thine the tribute praise,
Which greets an author's progress here;
Not merely thine the fabled bays,
Whose verdure brightens his career;
Thine the pure triumph to have taught
Thy brother man a gentle part;
In every ling a fervent thought,
Which gushes from thy generous heart:
For thine are words which rouse up all
The dormant good among us found —
Like drops which from a fountain fall,
To bless and fertilize the ground I”

**Song Written for the Dinner Given to
Charles Dickens by the Young Men of
Boston, Feb. 1 1842**

From: *Poems*, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Hurst and Company,
N.D. p.130-131

By Oliver Wendell Holmes

The stars their early vigils keep,
The silent hours are near,
When drooping eyes forget to weep, —
Yet still we linger here;
And what — the passing churl may ask —
Can claim such wondrous power,
That Toil forgets his wonted task,
And Love his promised hour?

The Irish harp no longer thrills,
Or breathes a fainter tone;
The clarion blast from Scotland's hills,
Alas! no more is blown;
And Passion's burning lip bewails
Her Harold's wasted fire,
Still lingering o'er the dust that veils
The Lord of England's lyre.

But grieve not o'er its broken strings,
Nor think its soul hath died,
While yet the lark at heaven's gate sings,
As once o'er Avon's side;
While gentle summer sheds her bloom.
And dewy blossoms wave,
Alike o'er Juliet's storied tomb

And Nelly's nameless grave.

Thou glorious island of the sea!
Though wide the wasting flood
That parts our distant land from thee,
We claim thy generous blood;
Nor o'er thy far horizon springs
One hallowed star of fame,
But kindles, like an angel's wings,
Our western skies in flame!

To Charles Dickens on his “Christmas Carol”

From: *The Illuminated Magazine*, February 1844, p.189

By W.W.G.

Honour to Genius! When its lofty speech
Stirs through the soul, and wakes its echoing strings:
But honour tenfold! When its day-words reach
The selfish heart, and there let loose the springs

Of pity, gushing blood-warm from a breach
Rent in its close-bound, stony coverings.
Yea! Tenfold honour, and the love of men,
The kind, the good, attend on Genius then,
And bless and sanctify those words divine.
Such words, Charles Dickens, truly have been thine;
And thou hast earned true glory with all love:
Long may the torch of Christmas gladly shine
Upon thy home, while voices from above
Music thy carol and again impart
Mirth and good tidings to the poor man’s heart.

Charles Dickens

From: *The Examiner*, September 21, 1844 p.598

By Walter Savage Landor

Go then to Italy; but mind
To leave the pale low France behind;
Pass through that country, nor ascend
The Rhine, nor over Tyrol wend:
Thus all at once shall rise more grand
The glories of the ancient land.

Dickens! how often, when the air
Breath'd genially, I've thought me there,
And rais'd to heaven my thankful eyes
To see three spans of deep blue skies.

In Genoa now I hear a stir,
A shout . . . Here comes the Minister!
Yes, thou art he, although not sent
By cabinet or parliament;
Yes, thou art he. Since Milton's youth
Bloom'd in the Eden of the South,
Spirit so pure and lofty none
Hath heavenly Genius from his throne
Deputed on the banks of Thames.
To speak his voice and urge his claims,
Let every nation know from thee
How less than lovely Italy
Is the whole world beside; let all
Into their grateful breasts recall
How Prospero and Miranda dwelt
In Italy; the griefs that melt
The stoniest heart, each sacred tear
One lachrymatory gathered here;

All Desdemona's, all that fell
In playful Juliet's bridal cell.

Ah! could my steps in life's decline
Accompany or follow thine!

But my own vines are not for me
To prune, or from afar to see.

I miss the tales I used to tell
With cordial Hare and joyous Gell,

And that good old Archbishop whose
Cool library, at evening's close

(Soon as from Ischia swept the gale
And heav'd and lift the darkening sail)

Its lofty portal opened wide
To me and very few beside:

Yet large his kindness. Still the poor
Flock round Taranto's palace-door

And find no other to replace
The noblest of a noble race.

Amid our converse you would see
Each with white cat upon his knee,

And flattering that grand company:
For Persian kings might proudly own
Such glorious cats to share the throne.

Write me few letters: I'm content
With what for all the world is meant;

Write then for all; but since my breast
Is far more faithful than the rest,

Never shall any other share
With little Nelly nestling there.

To Charles Dickens, on his “Oliver Twist.”

From: *Tragedies, to which are added a few Sonnets and Verses*, by T.N. Talfourd, Edward Moxon, 1844 p.244

By T.N. Talfourd

Not only with the Author’s happiest praise
Thy work should be rewarded: ‘tis akin
To DEEDS of men, who scorning ease to win
A blessing for the wretched, pierce the maze
Which heedless ages spread around the ways
Where fruitful Sorrow tracks its parent Sin;
Content to listen to the wildest din
Of passion, and on fellest shapes to gaze,
So they might earn the power which intercedes
With the bright world and melt it for within
Wan Childhood’s squalid haunts, where basest needs
Make tyranny more bitter, at thy call
An angel face with patient sweetness sheds
For infant suffering to the heart of all.

Christmas Day, 1838

A Sonnet to Charles Dickens

From: *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, March 1845
p.250

Oh, potent wizard! painter of great skill!
Blending with life's realities the hues
Of a rich fancy; sweetest of all singers!
Charming the public ear, and at thy will
Searching the soul of him thou dost amuse,
And the warm heart's recess, where mem'ry lingers,
And child-like love, and sympathy, and ruth,
And every blessed feeling, which the world
Had frozen or repressed with its stern apathy
For human suffering!" crabbed age, and youth,"
And beauty, smiling tearful, turn to thee,
Whose "Carol" is an allegory fine,
The burden of whose "CHIMES" is holy and benign

“Boz”

From: *Joe Miller the Younger*, V.1, 1845 p.13

IT'S so long since Dickens has written a book,
That all the world's authors consider it rum of him;
They hint that he's dead, with a wink and a look,
If he's not, what the Dickens on earth has become of
him?

The American's Apostrophe to Boz

From: *The Book of Ballads*, Edited by Bon Gaultier (Theodore Martin and W.E. Aytoun), Wm. S. Orr and Co. 1845, p.81-86

Rapidly As oblivion does its work now-a-days, the burst of amiable indignation with which enlightened America received the issue of Boz's "Notes," can scarcely yet be forgotten. Not content with waging a universal rivalry in the piracy of the work, Columbia showered upon its author the riches of its own choice vocabulary of abuse; while some of her more fiery spirits threw out playful hints as to the propriety of gouging the "strannger," and furnishing him with a permanent suit of tar and feathers, in the very improbable event of his paying them a second visit. The perusal of these animated expressions of free opinion suggested the following lines, which those who remember Boz's book, and the festivities with which he was all but hunted to death, will at once understand. We hope we have done justice to the bitterness and "immortal hate" of these thin-skinned sons of freedom.]

Sneak across the wide Atlantic, worthless London's
puling child,
Better that its waves should bear thee, than the land
thou hast reviled;
Better in the stifling cabin, on the sofa should'st thou
lie,
Sickening as the fetid nigger bears the greens and bacon
by.
Better, when the midnight horrors haunt the strained
and creaking ship,
Thou should'st yell in vain for brandy with a fever-
sodden lip;

When amid the deepening darkness and the lamp's
expiring shade,
From the bagman's berth above thee comes the boun-
tiful cascade.
Better than upon the Broadway thou should'st be at
noon-day seen,
Smirking like a Tracy Tupman with a Mantalini mien,
With a rivulet of satin falling o'er thy puny chest,
Worse than even N. P. Willis for an evening party
dressed!

We received thee warmly — kindly — though we knew
thou wert a quiz,
Partly for thyself it may be, chiefly for the sake of
Phiz!
Much we bore and much we suffered, listening to
remorseless spells
Of that Smike's unceasing drivellings, and these ever-
lasting Nells.
When you talk of babes and sunshine, fields, and all
that sort of thing,
Each Columbian inly chuckled, as he slowly sucked his
sling;
And though all our sleeves were bursting, from the
many hundreds near,
Not one single scornful titter rose on thy complacent ear.

Then to show thee to the ladies, with our usual want of
sense
We engaged the place in Park Street at a ruinous
expense;
Ev'n our own three-volumed Cooper waived his old pre-
scriptive right,
And deluded Dickens figured first on that eventful
night. .
Clusters of uncoated Yorkers, vainly striving to be cool,
Saw thee desperately plunging through the perils of La

Poule;
And their muttered exclamation drowned the tenor of
the tune, —
“Don’t he heat all natur hollow? Don’t he foot it like
a ‘coon?.”

Did we spare our brandy-cocktails, stint thee of our
whisky-grogs?
Half the juleps that we gave thee would have floored a
Newman Noggs;
And thou took’st them in so kindly, little was there then
to blame,
To thy parched and panting palate sweet as mother’s
milk they came.
Did the hams of old Virginny find no favor in thine
eyes?
Came no soft compunction o’er thee at the thought of
pumpkin pies?
Could not all our care and coddling teach thee how to
draw it mild?
But, no matter, we deserve it. Serves us right! We
spoil the child!

You, forsooth, must come crusading, boring us with
broadest hints
Of your own peculiar losses by American reprints.
Such an impudent remonstrance never in our face was
flung;
Lever stands it, so does Ainsworth; *you*, I guess, may
hold your tongue.
Down our throats you’d cram your projects, thick and
hard as pickled salmon,
That, I s’pose, you call free-trading, I pronounce it utter
gammon.
No, my lad, a cuter vision than your own might soon
have seen,
That a true Columbian ogle carries little that is green.

Quite enough we pay, I reckon, when we stump a cent
or two
For the voyages and travels of a freshman such as you.

I have been at Niagara, I have stood beneath the
Falls,
I have marked the water twisting over its rampagious
walls;
But “a holy calm sensation,” one, in fact, of perfect
peace,
Was as much my first idea as the thought of Christmas
geese.
As for “old familiar faces,” looking through the misty
air,
Surely you were strongly liquored when you saw your
Chuckster there.
One familiar face, however, you will very likely see,
If you’ll only treat the natives to a call in Tennessee,
Of a certain individual, true Columbian every inch,
In a high judicial station, called by ‘mancipators, Lynch.
Half-an-hour of conversation with his worship in a wood
Would, I strongly notion, do you an infernal deal of
good.
Then you’d understand more clearly than you ever did
before,
Why an independent patriot freely spits upon the floor,
Why he gouges when he pleases, why he whittles at the
chairs,
Why for swift and deadly combat still the bowie-knife
he bears: —
Why he sneers at the Old Country with republican
disdain,
And, unheedful of the negro’s cry, still tighter draws his
chain.
All these things the judge shall teach thee of the land
thou hast reviled;
Get thee o’er the wide Atlantic, worthless London’s

puling child!

A Friendly Epistle from Aldobrandensis

From *Mephystopheles*, January 24, 1846

CHARLEY DICKENS, be not too bold,
Your Daily News is very old,
And will not prove a mine of gold.

How could you, Charley, lend your name
To such a vulgar, losing game,
The winding-sheet of all your fame?

Charley, my friend, retreat by times,
Attend to my prophetic rhymes:
He hazards much who wayward climbs —

From height to height the Alpine steep,
The eagle's nest, the giant's leap;
Slow and sure's the way to creep.

Stick to your novels, tales, and chimes,
Or seek Italia's sunny climes,
Not think to supersede the Times.

Titania Dickens to Bottom, “The Daily News”



From: *Mephistopheles*, February 14, 1846

Come rest in this bosom, my own stricken donkey,
Nor heed Times nor Chronicle, Grandma nor Flunkey:
Though the leaders are scorned by my own Daily News,
I who wrote them, to read them will never refuse.

What's an Editor made for, if he isn't the brick,
Circulation or none, to his paper to stick?
I know not, I ask not, if they buy you or not,
I but know that I edit thee — therefore they ought.

Thou hast called me thy “Dickens” in moments of bliss,
Still the Dickens I'll play with thee even in this;
While there's shot
in the locker thy fortune is mine,
While a copper is left I am thy valentine.

The Blind Girl to the Rose (for music)

From: *The Dramatic and Musical Review*, February 14, 1846, by J.H. Jewell [relating to an incident in chapter two of *The Cricket on the Hearth*]

By J.H. Jewell

Sweet flower, the joyous sun is on thee shining,
Tinting thy blossoms with its ruddy beams,
And all night long, gay fancy hath been twining
Thy opening blossoms in my rosy dreams.

Sweet flower, I know around me thou art flinging
Thy sweetest fragrance on the balmy air;
While on the floating breeze thine odour's winging
Its incense to the throne I seek in prayer.

Sweet flower, I love thee; and that love possessing,
My *mind* beholds thee, beautiful to see;
And to thee, Heaven, I offer up my blessing,
For sending gifts so precious unto me.

Homage to the Author of the “Christmas Carol”

From: *Poems* by Harriet and Rose Acton, printed for the authors by George Ibbs, 1847, p.97-99

By H.A.

There is a name, a magic name,
That bringeth visions bright,
And calleth lasting memories up,
With fire each eye to light.

Familiar as a household word,
Who loveth not its sound
Whene'er it comes, with smiles or tears,
Its spell to cast around?

Steals there not ever o'er our souls,
Beneath its sway, a gleam
Of noble thoughts and stirring truths,
As 'twere a sunny dream?

Whose, then, that name so widely known,
To which with pride we bow?
Whose, then, the mighty hand that strikes
A chord untouched till now?

Who, in the ever-varied page
Of trying woe or mirth,
Hath roused our better self to aid
The lowly ones of earth?

Friend of the humble and the poor!
Oh! proud may England be,

‘Mid princely wealth and high renown,
To boast of one like thee.

Ne’er shall the Christmas holly green
Our festal board entwine,
But ‘twill recall, with deathless voice,
Each thrilling word of thine.

Ne’er shall we feel the winter blast,
Or hear the tempest wild,
But thy remembrance will invoke
Our aid for Sorrow’s child.

Pass, then, upon thy proud career,
Still wider fame to seek;
Thy hand hath pointed out the tear
On Poverty’s wan cheek.

Shine ever from thy lofty height,
As doth a brilliant star;
Yet hast thou nobly sought and won
A brighter glory far.

The erring and the hardened heart,
That, touched by thee, hath turned
To aid, in penitence and tears,
The misery it spurned.

The prayers and blessings of the poor,
That greet thee day by day,
These, these shall twine for thee a wreath
That fadeth not away.

To Charles Dickens

From: *The Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith*, by John Forster, March, 1848

By John Forster

GENIUS AND ITS REWARDS ARE BRIEFLY TOLD:
A LIBERAL NATURE AND A NIGGARD DOOM,
A DIFFICULT JOURNEY TO A SPLENDID TOMB.
NEW-WRIT, NOR LIGHTLY WEIGHED, THAT STORY
OLD
IN GENTLE GOLDSMITH'S LIFE I HERE UNFOLD:
THRO' OTHER THAN LONE WILD OR DESERT-
GLOOM,
IN ITS MERE JOY AND FAIN, ITS BLIGHT AND
BLOOM,
ADVENTUROUS. COME WITH ME AND BEHOLD,
O FRIEND WITH HEART AS GENTLE FOR
DISTRESS,
AS RESOLUTE WITH WISE TRUE THOUGHTS
TO BIND
THE HAPPIEST TO THE UNHAPPIEST OF OUR
EIND,
THAT THERE IS FIERCER CROWDED MISERY
IN GARRET-TOIL AND LONDON LONELINESS
THAN IN CRUEL ISLANDS 'MID THE FAR-OFF SEA.

Charles Dickens

From: *The Examiner*, October 5, 1850

By Walter Savage Landor

Call we for harp or song,
Accordant numbers, measured out, belong
Alone, we hear, to bard.
Let him this badge, for ages worn, discard;
Richer and nobler now
Than when the close trimm'd laurel markt his brow,
And from one fount his thirst
Was slaked, and from none other proudly burst
Neighing, the winged steed.
Gloriously fresh were those young days indeed!
Clear, if confined the view;
The feet of giants swept that early dew;
More graceful came behind,
And golden tresses waved upon the wind.
Pity and Love were seen
In earnest converse on the humble green;
Grief too was there, but Grief
Sat down with them, nor struggled from relief,
Strong Pity was, strong he.
But little Love was bravest of the three,
At what the sad one said
Often he smiled, the Pity shook her head.
Descending from their clouds,
The Muses mingled with admiring crowds;
Each had her ear inclined,
Each caught and spoke the language of mankind
Prom choral thraldom free. . . .
Dickens! didst thou teach them or they teach thee?

Little Nell

From: *The Poetical and Prose Remains of Edward Marsh Heavisides*, Longman, Brown, Green and Longman, 1850, p.131-132

By E. Marsh Heavisides

Sweet, gentle, patient, angel Nell!
Earth doth not inherit,
Since she is dead, one human shape
That holds so pure a spirit;
Hopeful, truthful, loving, kind,
Artless, graceful, mild,
Struggling through the ways of life,
A woman-thoughted child.

No childish joys her spirit knew —
No laughing playmates came,
With merry hearts and bounding steps,
To join in gladsome game;
To break the gloom that seemed to hang
Around her dwelling-place,
And take the sorrow from her heart,
The sadness from her face.

Without a mother's care to tend,
When most such care is needed;
Growing, like a wild-wood rose,
Uncultured and unheeded:
No father's loving voice to teach,
Or loving hand to guide;
But a lonely child in a lonely house,
And an old man by her side.

A feeble, care-worn, poor old man,
With sunken cheek and eye
That long had lost the light of thought,
And dwelt on vacancy:
White his thin hair as white could be —
And on his aged brow,
That bent beneath its inward weight,
The wrinkles gathered now.

With such a mate the child was left —
With such a poor old man,
Who held her dearer than his breath,
Her round of life began.
She seemed the genius of Spring,
With Winter looking o'er her,
Herself the rosy bud of life,
The leaf of age before her.

Yet, oh! she loved this poor old man
Beyond imagining,
And hovered round his high-backed chair
Like bird upon the wing:
Went like a beam of light around
His home, a dreary place,
Till the very walls seemed giving back
The sweetness of her face.

Through many a trial, nobly borne,
The child of sorrow passed,
And traces sad of grief and care
Her sweet face overcast —
Yearning for all things pure and good,
With spirit still sublime,
She wandered on, temptation proof,
Mid poverty and crime.

Hunger and pain she heeded not —

But, toiling on her way,
She blessed each moon-encircled night
And sun-bright Summer day —
A pilgrim with unwearied feet
She struggled nobly on,
Nor drooped in heart, nor pined in woe,
Until the goal was won.

To the Author of *Oliver Twist*, Nicholas Nickleby, &c.

From: *Sermons on Sonnets; with a text of the New Year and other poems*, Chauncy Hare Townsend, Chapman and Hall, 1851 p.293-294

By Chauncy Hare Townsend

Man of the genial mind! to thee a debt
No usurer records I largely owe!
Thy portraitures of life so warmly glow,
They clear the spirit of its old regret,
And, from the very heart that's smarting yet,
At human baseness, bid kind feelings flow.
'Tis thine our nature's lights and shades to show,
Redeeming these by those, till we forget
The evil in the good. Thy vigorous hand
Smites but to heal, and turns with master-ease
The mighty engine of the popular mind
To indignation, which shall purge the land
Of sanction'd sins. For such high services
I thank thee in the name of human kind!

“That light is loveliest which doth least decay,
Small though it be, and common to the sight.”
This thought came o'er me on a troublous night,
A care-toss'd wanderer, as, amidst the play
Of the red lightning and the tempest's sway,
I mark'd a glow-worm's soft confiding light,
Not blown out by the winds, nor suffering blight,
Serene amidst confusion's holiday.
Then was I gladden'd, for methought I saw,
Made visible, the lamp of some pure soul,
Fed by the oil of calm continual prayer,

Humble, yet steadfast in religious awe,
Which wavers not, though tempests round it roll,
Though earth be shaken, and the powers of air.

A Sonnet to Charles Dickens, Esq.

From: *The Examiner*, July 8, 1854 p.426

By "Double-you"

As glistening rain refresheth thirsty earth,
As dew brings sweeter life unto the flowers.
So, unto hosts of lives thy varied powers
Have given to heart and mind a better birth.
When Moses touched the rock, in the old day,
Lo! welcome streams most genially fell;
So doth thy pen delightfully compel
The hardest heart to yield unto thy sway.
Thy themes, as poet, chiefly hope and love,
Thy aim, the happy good of all thy race;
Thy power, to mirth and sorrow both can move;
Can smooth our journey to that Higher Place.
Thou master of most pleasant Humor-wit,
Thine is the largest Heart-mind ever writ!

To Charles Dickens

From: *Poems*, James Ballantine, Thomas Constable and Co.,
1856

By James Ballantine

Dear friend, whose genial mind
And graphic pen
In joy and sorrow bind
Thy fellow-men,

Whose heart hath in its core
Humanity!
This gift would it were more
I offer thee.

Edinburgh, February 1856.

Sonnet to Charles Dickens

From: *Such is Life, Sketches (and Poems)* by Doubleyou,
Dedicated by permission to Charles Dickens, Esq. Samuel
Eyre, 1857 p.5

By Doubleyou

Even the very purest earthly brain,
Nothing that thou hast taught need wish unknown
The greatest depth of nature thou hast shown —
The tenderest sympathy with want and pain.
For suffering weakness thou hast ever fought,
And battled for the helpless in the land —
The holiest work man can take in hand —
Displaying love for all that God hath wrought.
Thought of thy name is, to the spirit's ear,
Like old tunes charged with memories of the past;
Or leafy air to one nigh all the year
In the close town by circumstance held fast.
Thy bettering perception is so fine, —
To read thy books is like a draught of wine!

To Charles Dickens, Esq.

From: *Poetical Miscellanea*, by a Commander on Her Majesty's Indian Navy (William Igglesden), William Skeffington, 1858 p.128-129

By William Igglesden

Master of pathos as of mirth,
Thy pen depicts each inmost feeling,
Nor lives or moves upon this earth,
Aught which escapes thy keen revealing.

This night tears follow'd close on smiles,
Yet true to nature thus commingling,
For sympathy the heart beguiles,
E'en with the throb of sorrow tingling.

Thy "Carol" thus with love imbued,
Shews that no lot, howe'er distressing,
May not in moral rectitude,
Receive or give a Christmas blessing.

The churlish niggard will relent,
When o'er his heart thy spirit's brooding,
And spend, or willing to be spent,
For others weal, whilst least obtruding.

And like the silent gentle dew,
When o'er the grateful earth distilling,
Perfumes and treasures not a few,
So may thy "spirit" in fulfilling,

Its destiny, now haply sent

To open hands, or hearts to soften,
Shall well reward thy service lent
To night, — Oh, were it often;

Then pray forgive this feeble lay,
Which from the springs of truth is welling,
And many a happy new year's day,
Attend thee in thy present dwelling.

Chatham,
Midnight, December 22nd, 1857.

Note. — Mr. Dickens gave a gratuitous reading this evening at the Mechanics' Institute, of his "Christmas Carol," to a numerous and respectable auditory, the proceeds, somewhere between £70 and £80, being devoted in furtherance of increasing its library and other claims. — I felt impelled to embody my feelings in the above versification, ere I gave slumber to my eyelids, and it was despatched on the following morning to his residence at Gad's Hill, near Higham.

To Charles Dickens

From: *The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt*, Routledge, Warne,
& Routledge, 1860 p.241

By Leigh Hunt

As when a friend (himself in music's list)
Stands by some rare, full-handed organist,
And glorying as he sees the master roll
The surging sweets through all their depths of soul,
Cannot, encouraged by his smile, forbear
With his own hand to join them here and there;
And so, if little, yet add something more
To the sound's volume and the golden roar;
So I, dear friend, Charles Dickens, though thy hand
Needs but itself, to charm from land to land,
Make bold to join in summoning men's ears
To this thy new-found music of our spheres,
In hopes that by thy Household Words and thee
The world may haste to days of harmony.

Lines Addressed to Charles Dickens

From: *The Three Gates, in verse*, Chauncy Hare Townsend,
Chapman and Hall, 1861 p. vii-ix

By Chauncy Hare Townsend

It is not for thy worldly fame
That thou art dear to me;
It is not for thy lofty name
That I so cherish thee.

Perhaps, ere all thy worth I knew,
Thy glory charm'd my sight;
But what is glory, when the view
Beholds a spirit's light?

Shame on the maxim — hearts unwise
Draw from themselves that lore —
“A hero seen by daily eyes
A hero is no more!”

Thou art but held at higher rate
When nearer understood;
The gaze that sinks the merely great
Exalts the truly good.

I saw thee from afar compel
The crowd with magic art;
Beneath the power that wove the spell
I found the genial heart.

And, when thy inner spirit gave
Its treasures unto me,
Thy proudest act seemed but a wave

Of that rich boundless sea.

Oh, 'tis a sacred thing to gaze
On springs great minds that feed;
E'en as the sun excels its rays
The thought outshines the deed.

Yet, when thy hand in friendship's link
I grasp, how warmly run
The currents of my soul — to think
On all that hand has done!

It is no hand of warrior, stain'd
By conquest's crimson touch;
Yet hand of warrior never gain'd
From victory so much.

Down hath it struck from places high
Of Wrongs a giant horde,
And slain old Errors flashingly
As any beaming sword.

'Tis standard to the gallant host
That forward strive: where'er
Men battle most, and struggle most,
That dauntless hand is there.

Fresh banners, with a force unspent,
Of thought it has unfurl'd:
Wielding the pen — God's instrument —
It hath waved on the World!

Then, when that hand to mine its free
Warm welcome doth extend,
I thank kind Heaven who granted me
To grasp it as a friend.

Martha

(From Dickens' "David Copperfield")

From: *Poems upon Various Subjects*, James R. Withers, C.W. Naylor, 1861 V.III p.62-67

By James R. Withers

Thou sad and sullen river,
Thou art hurrying, like me,
To lose thyself for ever
In a dark and troubled sea:
In every billow throbbing,
In waves that lash the shore,
I hear thy spirit sobbing,
For peace thou'lt know no more!

I wander o'er the arches,
That span thee wide and high,
Not heed the onward marches,
Of thousands passing by!
I feel some great attraction,
A morbid sympathy;
My mind, in its distraction,
Claims kindred now with thee.

Thou cam'st from fields and flowers,
A tiny laughing spring,
And danced through willow bowers,
Where early linnets sing:
By peaceful hamlets flowing,
Through many a fairy glen,
Still wider, deeper, growing,
Thou'st reached this hive of men,

And I, of lowly station,
Why did I ever roam?
I yielded to temptation,
And left my humble home;
I saw false pleasures painted.
In colors, not their own;
And now like thee I'm tainted.
Polluted by the town!

Alone, contemn'd and slighted.
Amidst this Babel din;
I stand, a being blighted,
Beneath the blast of sin.
My soul to frenzy driven,
Would break its prison bars;
I dare not think of heaven.
Nor look upon the stars.

The stars are all too holy,
Too spotless and too chaste;
Remorse and melancholy
Are all my soul can taste;
A loathsome reptile creeping,
I shun the light of day,
And horrors never sleeping,
Upon my vitals prey.

Oh! wretched and degraded,
Corrupted and defiled!
And I — thus sullied, faded —
Was once a simple child,
And loved the whole creation —
So beautiful and fair,
And knelt in adoration,
And lisp'd an artless prayer.

Home, friends and early training,

And my first steps in crime,
Like injured ghosts complaining,
Why haunt me at this time?
Why mock my abject state thus,
With what I might have been?
A gulph now separates us,
The yawning gulph of sin!

Behold this shatter'd ruin,
This finger-mark of scorn,
This wreck is all thy doing,
Proud man! with titles born.
The flowers will all upbraid me,
And every guileless lamb,
O monster! you have made me
The wretched thing I am.

I curse thee in my trouble,
And curses in my death
Shall rise with every bubble,
As I give up my breath.
They'll mar thy hours of gladness!
They'll meet thee on thy hearth
And lash thee into madness
Amidst they wine and mirth!

I hear the wild fiend's laughter,
My guardian angel's sigh;
I shrink at the hereafter,
I wish, yet fear to die:
Why o'er the waters hover?
I can't escape my lot:
One plunge – and all is over,
And I shall be forgot.

The Death of Little Nell

From: *The Quiver*, V. II, third series, 1867 p.171

By A.W. Hume Butler

She spoke of music in the air, of music passing sweet,
Perhaps the escort spirits there moved their harmonious
feet,

Or else the golden harps of heaven beguiled her with
their

play,
That unaware the angel hands might steal her soul away.

Anon she slept; but, waking soon, would kiss us each
again,

While a whisper lingered on the lip that fashioned it in
vain;

And by the beating of our hearts, that were so still
before,

We knew the pretty weary face would light our hearth no
more.

Then the soft blue eyes were shrouded, and the sweet
white

brow grew cold,
But the sunlight faded not away from the young hairs'
rippling gold;

And the little mouth seemed ready still to draw another
breath,

Though the singing lips were silent in the pallid halls of
death.

Her gentle playmates brought in flowers, pale flowers
that

suited best —

We all remembered how in life she wore them on her
breast,

So there we placed them, and we crossed the small thin
hands above,

And wept to see them lie so quiet on the flowers they
used to
love.

But now, when trail the twilight shades athwart the
evening

sky,

And the last ray of sunset rests on the village spire to die,
We think of that glorious life of hers, in the radiant land
of

day,

And bless the Power that wisely drew her stainless soul
away.

Little Addresses to Big Names

From: *Fun*, August 17, 1867 p.244

Poet in prose,
How many a heart hath shaken off awhile
Its weight of woes;
How many a tear hath melted in a smile –
How many a selfish sigh and sorrow,
Diverted from our own distress,
Hath pow'r been given *thee* to borrow
By very force of gentleness!

Sam Weller, Pecksniff, Quilp, and Richard Swiveller,
Are all before us where to choose a favourite.
Sweet Nelly, and that grand-paternal driveller,
Whose folly has a tender touch to flavour it.
Uriah Heep, the sentimental sniveller,
Whose name requires a sea of scents to savour it; –
The dental Carker, too, our soul's abhorrence –
Dear Captain Cuttle, Paul, and little Florence.

Yes, well may one excuse us,
With such a stock-in-trade upon our shelves,
For laughing or for crying as you choose us,
And quite forgetting all about ourselves.
We picture, as we wander
On sunny days about the Temple Garden,
John Chester smiling at a window yonder,
And then we dream of Hugh and Dolly Varden.

Who could think of stopping single
For a moment of his life,
After knowing Peerybingle
And his darling of a wife?

Who can watch the coming coldly
Of the merry Christmas times,
That has followed Trotty boldly
To the belfry and the chimes?

We will not blame you if your pen is idle,
Or goes to sleep on such a reputation;
The fault is Time's if Time has put a bridle
Upon your fancy and imagination.
We leave it for the critics to complain,
And say your early novels were the greater ones;
But as you cannot give us those again,
We wish to see the *latest* of your later ones.

An Ode to Boz

From: *Fun*, March 26, 1870 p.32

Some *Canard*-hatcher, reckoning on his chickens,
Has laid an egg –
A paragraph in short
Of such a sort,
That I – although without your leave – must beg
To give it contradiction, Mr. Dickens!

He says you are to be created knight –
A degradation quite –
A fitting end for mayors and all such cattle,
No longer a distinction won in battle.
Why who – (my rage, my circulation quickens) –
Who would consent Sir Anything to be
When he
Could keep the prouder title, plain “Charles Dickens”?

Nor should he barter that to be a bart –
Why, bless my heart!
No Baron peerage – Marquis, Duke, or Viscount,
Would I count
As a distinction that could mate – that’s poz –
With Boz!

The simple dignity of such a name,
With its estates in love, regard, and fame,
For no high title – high as Salisbury’s steeple –
Will Boz, I fancy, swop –
But wisely stop
The one “Charles Dickens” of the English people.

Charles Dickens: Obit June 9th, 1870

From: *Punch and Judy*, June 18, 1870

The hand is cold, the heart is still,
The mind, but yesterday, that shed
Its ripened genius o'er the world,
Is numbered with the mighty dead.

'Tis but a month we heard his voice
Lament his friend* who'd gone before;
Now, stricken by Death's awful hand,
He, too, has found the same dark shore.

He's gone: full oft the times will come
When we shall miss his kindly face.
He's gone: in vain around we look
And search for one to fill his place.

He was the friend of all: his name
Was known and loved from zone to zone '
Where'er the English tongue is heard
There each must feel the loss his own.

His skilful pen for many a year
Has Christian love and kindness taught:
He made us laugh, he made us weep,
But never raised an impure thought.

He loved mankind: our social wrongs
He strove — and not in vain — to heal;
With stern reproach, or genial mirth,
To human hearts he made appeal.

He's dead! Yet though he's passed away,
His peer although 'twere hard to find,
He still will live in every heart,
In every English home enshrined.

*William Thackeray

In Memoriam – June 9, 1870

From: *The Graphic*, June 18, 1870 p.678

“For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.” — Tennyson.

AH! sad for England that she mourns to-day
The genial, tender heart, the master mind
That spent themselves for her! Where shall we find
One left like him whom God has called away?

Who now shall wake our laughter and our tears,
And teach us honour for the good and great,
Shall bid us feel for wrong a noble hate,
Like him whose books have been our friends for years?

Who now remains Satire’s keen sword to raise
With strength like his, a righteous war to rage
Against the sins and follies of our age?
As the knights-errant of chivalrous days —

Whose swords to succour the opprest,
But smote with fiercest anger wicked men,
So he, our great knight-errant of the pen,
Wielded his weapon till God gave him rest.

Farewell, our teacher, playfellow, and friend!
Little it matters where thy grave is made,
Whether where England’s mightiest dead are laid,
Or where the vaulted heavens above thee bend; —

Thy resting-place is in the people’s heart,
Which throbbed with sorrow when the tidings came
That all now left to England is the name

Of him who nobly used a noble art.

Charles Dickens

From: *Punch, or the London Charivari*, June 18, 1870 p.244

Born February 7, 1812 Died June 9, 1870

While his life's lamp seemed clearest, most intense,
A light of wit and love to great and small,
By the dark angel he is summoned hence
To solve the mightiest mystery of all!

Hearing that he has passed beyond the veil,
Before the Judge that metes to men their dues,
Men's cheeks through English-speaking lands turn pale,
Far as the speaking wires can bear the news.

Blanched at this sudden snapping of a life,
That seemed of all our lives to hold a share,
So were our memories with his fancies rife,
So much of his thought our thoughts seemed to bear.

Charles Dickens dead! It is as if a light
In every English home were quenched to-day;
As if a face all knew had passed from sight,
A hand all loved to press were turned to clay.

Question who will his power, its range, its height,
His wisdom, insight — this, at least, we know,
All in his love's warmth and his humour's light
Rejoiced and revelled — old, young, high, low.

Learned and unlearned — from the boy at school
To the judge on the bench, none read but owned
The large heart o'er which the large brain held rule,
The fancy by whose side clear sense sat throned.

The observation that made all its own,
The shaping faculty that breathed life's breath
In types, all felt they knew and still had known,
Life-like, except that they are safe from death.

Since Shakespeare, where the pen that so hath lent
Substance to airy nothings of the brain,
His fancies seem with men's experience blent
Till to take each for other we are fain?

And who that ever wielded such a power
Used it so purely to a Christian end;
Used it to quicken the millennial hour,
When rich and poor shall be as friend to friend?

Who can say how much of that love's pure leaven
That leavens now the lump of this our world,
With influence as of a present heaven,
Like light athwart chaotic darkness hurled,

May be traced up to springs by him unsealed,
To clods by him stirred round affection's roots,
To hearts erst hard but by his fire annealed
To softness, whereof Love's works are the fruits!

Mourn, England, for another great one gone
To join the great ones who have gone before —
And put a universal mourning on
Where'er sea beats on English-speaking shore.

His works survive him and his works' works too,
Of love and kindness and good will to men,
Hate of the wrong and reverence of the true,
And war on all that shuns truth's eagle ken.

Earth's two chief nations mourners at his tomb

Their memories for his monument; their love
For his reward. Such is his glorious doom,
 Whom mortal praise or blame no more shall move.

In Memory

From: *Fun* (New Series), June 25, 1870, p.157

THERE swept a sigh of sorrow universal
From melancholy Medway's mournful strand.
Upon the nightwind's desolate dispersal,
To float along the land.

The closing eve had had no shade of sorrow;
In silver haze we saw the planets swim;
But when the sun arose upon the morrow,
We felt the dawn was dim.

With grief-drown'd eyes we read — how briefly
stated! —
That he was gone — the man of pure renown:
As if some bark, with our best treasures freighted,
Had in the dark gone down!

'Twas but a whisper, yet more widely sounding
Than the hoarse guns that for dead warriors roar,
A thrill electric circled all surrounding,
And spread from shore to shore.

And that sad circle stretching, still unbroken,
Around the world to utmost regions sped,
And tears were shed, where'er our tongue is spoken,
To know Charles Dickens — dead!

Within the Abbey let him take his slumber,
Make room, oh great ones of the Long Ago;
In your grand roll Charles Dickens thus to number,
Ye smile, blest shades, we know!

Not his the coronet, or ermine legal,
No herald-blazoned office in the state!
Without a title, to the Council Regal
But summoned when too late.

Here lay him down: the dust where he reposes
Is glorious dust of the illustrious dead:
And where he lies shall blossom God's rare roses
When sounds the summons dread!

Calm be his sleep — despite warm tears above him —
Who loved the weak, and never feared the strong,
Whose page was pure, who made all good hearts love
him,
Who felt for others' wrong.

Yet though he sleeps lamented of a nation,
The good he did for us shall ne'er decay;
They live — the beings of his fine creation —
To make us glad for aye!

Charles Dickens

From: *The Jewish Record*, August 5, 1870

By Edwin Tomlin

THOU Shakespeare of our day, farewell,
Rich fancies in thy soul did dwell,
And Nature sweet, with magic spell
Did guide thy wondrous pen.

Bless'd by the Great Omnipotent,
Forth, mighty teacher, thou wast sent;
He made thee His grand instrument
To change the hearts of men.

He mirror'd greatness in thy mind,
Thou ever gentle, good, and kind,
Physician to the mental blind,
What toil hast thou endur'd!

To Virtue shall thy works entice
The guilty from the side of Vice,
To where Truth points to Paradise,
And crowns may be secur'd.

Thy pure thoughts o'er the world are spread,
From palace to the poor man's shed,
They oft soothe Sickness on its bed,
With balm of sterling worth.

Thy part has been in this vast sphere,
To urge sweet Pity — dry Grief's tear,
And with thy matchless wit to cheer;
Thy name but breath'd caus'd mirth.

In peace are hush'd thy hopes and fears
For this our land, now bath'd in tears
For thee, whose bright name it reveres,
Proud of thy learned lore.

Unchang'd shall thy lov'd mem'ry bloom,
Till all Earth's beauties fade in gloom,
When Judgment's thunders shake thy tomb,
And "Time shall be no more."

To His Memory

From *The Argosy*, August 1, 1870, p.114

Charles Dickens! Henceforth let the name be softly, gently
spoken:

The silver cord of life is loosed — the golden bowl is
broken. Oh! who shall now, before the great, set forth the
poor man's

feelings,

And win him kindlier, sweeter thought through delicate
revealings?

Charles Dickens! Many a one has been, in the path of
classic

glory,

Beyond him far in song of war, in thrilling, ancient story;
But who, like him, the barrier high 'twixt rich and poor
removing,

Has led the differing classes all, to be together loving?

Charles Dickens! Oh, so free from pomp, from undue
exaltation:

The poor man was his brother still — while worshipped
by the

nation.

Mothers and maidens stand aghast, as by a friend
forsaken,

When they hear the sad death-news of him, whom God
has

gently taken.

Charles Dickens! Aye, our crowned Queen grew pale and
sad —

dened-hearted,

When told the worth and genius bright which had from
earth
 departed;
Oh, let us lay him down to rest where our greatest dead
are
 sleeping,
And bowing to our Father's will grow calmer in our
weeping!

Charles Dickens! He is with us yet, our lives shall
gladness
 borrow
From the cheery tale, that sparkles — o'er the dull, dark
cloud of
 sorrow;
Often our weary hearts shall be to laughter gently stirred,
And our children's children keep his name, — a happy
Household
 Word!

June 14th, 1870.

Boz

From: *Putnam's Magazine*, August 1870 p.232-233

Call him "Boz," for that is what we named him,
With tears and laughter,
Ere with our laurel wreath we proudly claimed him
For ever "after.

Call him "Boz " — that was our word for him
When he was young,
And unto us, from some far corner dim,
His accents rung.

In earlier days, when first we caught the glory
Just shimmering through,
The tenderest utterance — the rarest story
We ever knew!

As little children, by their mother seated,
Group softly round
To hear her stories o'er and o'er repeated,
With awe profound,

While memory brings back dreams of joy and sweetness,
Even as he willed,
We gathered at his feet — from his completeness
Our store he filled.

We loved the author, who so loved the true,
So hated wrong;
We loved the teacher, whose great soul we knew,
Tender and strong.

We felt the loving spirit of the master

in all his' creeds;
He touched the world's cold heart, and it beat faster
For human needs.

As, like an angel, visiting each dwelling
With kindly face,
He lit the fire of love, Heaven's watchword telling,
In every place.

Close up those earnest eyes to want and sorrow,
For evermore!
And bid him stand erect, upon the morrow,
Earth's labours o'er.

And, like the seraphs in the old-time vision,
Still, to and fro,
His thoughts, like spirits from yon world elysian,
Will come and go.

A Man of the Crowd to Charles Dickens

From: *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1870

By E.J. Milliken

I AM but one of many; never saw
Thy face, or heard the voice that now is stilled.
My spirit is but little apt to awe
Of lofty-perched mortality; and yet
My heart is heavy with a keen regret,
Mine eyes with unaccustomed tears are filled.

We of the throng lead little lives, apart
From all the genial stir and glow of art,
The comrades of genius, and the breath
Of that large life to which our low-pulsed life is death.
Slow-footed, bowed, we toil through narrow ways,
And linger put our dull and unrecorded days.
But thou! — thou hadst an eye to mark
The feeble light that burned within our dark;
A sympathy as wide as heaven's free air;
A glance as bright
As heaven's own light,
That, pure amid pollution, pierceth everywhere.
Not beggary's rags, not squalor's grime,
The crust of ignorance, the stain of crime,
Could hide from thee the naked human soul.
Thou hadst our Shakespeare's ken, and Howard's heart;
Not puppets we, God's poor, to play our part
On thy mimetic stage, mere foils grotesque,
Apt adjuncts of thine art's bright picturesque.
Our loves, our hates, our hopes and fears,
Our sins and sorrows, smiles and tears,
To thee were real as to us, who knew

That thou wouldst limn them with a hand as true
And tender in its touch, as though it drew
The finer traits and passions of thy peers.

That sense so sure, that wit so strong,
Did battle on our side against the oppressor's wrong,
Because thine honest heart did burn with scorn
Of high-perched insolence everywhere;
And knightly, though unknighthed, thou didst dare
To champion the feeble and forlorn.

Though not in fairy forest, leaguered tower,
By haunted lake, or startled Beauty's bower,
Didst thou go seeking them; but in foul lairs
Not else remembered even in good men's prayers.
In hidden haunts of cruelty, where no light,

Save of thy sympathy, pierced the night.
Thence, though the source might all unlovely seem,
Unfit for painter's touch or poet's dream;

Thou, painter-poet as thou wert, didst draw
The hidden beauty manner eyes ne'er saw;
But which, set forth upon thy living page,
Drew all the eyes and hearts of an unthinking age.
All inarticulate we; thou wert our voice;
Thou in our poor rejoicing didst rejoice,
Smile gently with our pitiful mirth, and grieve
When Pain, our chill familiar, plucked each ragged
sleeve.

Therefore we loved thee, better than we knew,
Old friend and true.
Thy silent passing to an honoured tomb
Has filled a people's heart with more than fleeting
gloom.

Moreover, thou didst bring us of thy best,
Thou, with the great an honoured guest,
And treasured by the chiefs of birth and brain,
To simple and unlearned souls wert plain.
The common heart on thine enchantment hung,

While genius, stooping from her heights,
Lent to the lowest her delights,
And spake to each in his own mother tongue.
Who now like thee shall lighten human care?
By words where mirth with pathos meets,
By most delectable conceits,
Thou gav'st us laughter that our babes might share;
And jollity, that had no touch of shame.
No satyr's brand besmirches thy fair fame.
Thy meteor fancy, by its quickening sleight,
Peopled our world with creatures of delight.
Not phantoms they, but very friends they seem,
Dear and familiar as are few
Of those around us; all too true
And quick for shadows of Romance's dream.
Most human-hearted they, or grave or gay,
But touched with that unspeakable impress
Of genius, airy wit, rare tenderness,
That marks them as thine own (e'en so a ray
Of sunset glory magnifies
Familiar beauties to our eyes) —
So touched, they in our memories live for aye,
Unaged by time and sacred from decay.
The friends we cherish pass, the foes we hate;
All living things towards Death's portal move;
Not even *thee*, a nation's pride and love
Could keep from that dark gate.
But these, thy creatures, cannot die:
Companions of all generations, they
Shall keep thy mem'ry from decay
More surely than that glorious grave where thou dost lie.
Therefore, let critic carp or bigot prate,
Sniff fault or folly here and there,
Contemn thy creed, or thee declare
Not wholly wise, or something less than great.
Thou hast the people's heart, that few may gain;
Not yielded to mere strenuous might of brain,

Prowess of arm, or force of will,
But to the strong and true and tender soul,
The human in excelsis, that can thrill
Through all humanity's pulses, till the whole
Great scattered brotherhood again is one.
No chill star-radiance thine; thou art a sun
Of central warmth; lord of our smiles and tears,
And uncrowned king of men through all the years.

Acrostic on the Late Charles Dickens

From: leaflet published by W. Saswell, circa 1870

By Charles Kent

C herished thy memory will ever be;
H ow many hearts, alas, have mourned for thee!
A h! may their loss be thy eternal gain;
R egret is useless, sorrow all in vain;
L ost is thy voice, like some departed strain.
E ngland may well be proud, and justly boast,
S uch men as thee are in themselves a host.
D ickens, thy very name's a household word,
I n distant foreign countries even heard;
C lear-sighted, honest, loving, just and true,
K ind-hearted, witty, and pathetic too;
E yes weep, hearts bleed, at thy inspired command,
N one could thy pathos ever yet withstand;
S ave Shakespeare, thou wert greatest in the land.

The Voice of Christmas Past

From: *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, January 1871 p.187

By Mrs. Zadel B. Buddington



The Festival

Bring holly leaves, of polished green;
The Christmas feast is bravely Bet,
And over all the earth, I ween,
The countless Christmas guests are met
The sunlit air is throbbing fast
With gleeful clang of Christmas bells:
One smote them In the festal past
To cheer sad hearts in prison cells.

The world demands surcease of strife,
And claims the year's last week of life.

The ruddy wine, so rare to sip
In joyous laugh, and airy jest
Is born upon the glowing lip,
And wit hath wings from guest to guest;
Yet oft o'er all is overspread
The halo of a sainted death,
And mirth's gay chords fall out of tune: —
The glossy holly overhead
Emits the sweetest phantom breath
Of roses culled in early June!

The shadow of a great name lies
On pensive brows, in thoughtful eyes;
The memory of a great heart swells
Each bosom where his image dwells.
The carol of the poor he sung;
The sick, imprisoned, suffering, vile
Had mighty champion in his tongue,
Nor sinned beyond his tender smile.

O faithful voice of "Little Nell,"
O holy thoughts of "Tiny Tim,"
Sound ever in the organ's swell,
Ring ever in the Christmas bell,
Inspire the universal hymn!

O purity, and truth, and worth,
One noble spirit sought you long;
In bloom of deeds array the earth,
And keep his memory green in song!

While the "rare old plant," the ivy, climbs
And wreathes the tongues of his silent chimes.

A TRIBUTE TO DICKENS.

From: *Poems*, by Will M. Carleton, Lakeside Publishing and Printing Co. 1871 p.34-38

Across the foaming sea of words and thought,
Where heavier craft were struggling with the storm,
The winds one day an unknown vessel brought)
Of flaunting streamer and fantastic form.
Old captains gazed, and Wondered at her route,
And gravely shook their grizzled heads in doubt;
And critics nursed their literary ire,
And quickly loaded up their guns to fire.

But crowding sail, she cut the dangerous waves,
Swept past old wrecks and signals of distress,
And o'er forgotten hulks and nameless graves,
Straight glided to the harbor of success!
The great World gazed on her a little while,
Its careworn face grew brighter with a smile,
Until its voice caught rapture from its gaze,
And swelled into a thunder-peal of praise!
The outstript jester, smiling, dropped his pun,
The sage looked up, with laughter in his eyes;
The critic turned his double-shotted gun,
And jubilantly fired it at the skies!
The laboring throng, when their day's toil was o'er,
Crowded along the unaccustomed shore,
And viewed, with wonder and delight oft-told,
The varied treasures of her deck and hold!

For there, upon the deck, in genial state,
Stood Pickwick, captain of the motley crew;
The sturdy Samuel Weller for his mate,
And many a passenger The People knew;

And stored among her cargo of rich mirth,
Shone forth the richest diamonds of earth;
Wit, humor, pathos — all the brighter gems,
Set in a thousand flashing diadems!

And ever as they gazed, and rushed to gaze,
Came sweeping o'er the sea another gale,
And gleamed upon their glad eyes, thro' the haze,
The snowy whiteness of another sail;
Rich loaded was one bark, and fair to see,
But aimed great guns at petty tyranny;
And as she swiftly glided safe to land,
Young Captain Nickleby was in command.

Then came a ship of stranger seeming still,
With "Curiosities" in plenty stored;
And thousands crowded round her, with one will,
To view the passengers she had on board.
And one there was — her name was "Little Nell" —
The People much admired, and loved full well;
And many wept, and lingered at her side,
When peacefully she laid her down and died.

So one by one to port the vessels came,
Laden with comfort for both rich and poor,
But hurling bolts of scorn-venomous flame
At tyrant, rogue, and snob, and titled boor.
And each new ship the multitude flocked round,
And gloated o'er the treasures that they found;
And as each sail came flashing into sight,
Broke forth a thousand plaudits of delight!

Pictures there were, that painter's brush might pine
And pray to spring from out its striving art;
The hand that drew their outlines was divine
It was the servant of a god-like heart.
The city haunts, from palace down to den,

Stood forth in glowing colors once again;
And the wide country landscape well was traced,
With river, grove, and hill, and desert waste.

And words — such fitly-spoken words as well
Were to such pictures apples of fine gold,
Upon the ears of listening millions fell,
And often by the fireside were retold.
Pity, and love, and sympathy, were there;
Sorrow, and rage, and raven-winged despair;
Denunciation, big with conscious might,
And earnest, manly pleadings for the right.

And so the millions, eager to confess
The pleasures they from his creations drew,
Hastened to praise, and glorify, and bless
The quiet man whose face they hardly knew,
Who, in his lonely room, worked for his goal,
With busy brain, and strongly-yearning soul;
And with his good pen, built, and rigged, and manned
The noble vessels which his genius planned.

But one dark day, the news flashed o'er the earth,
That he, beloved guest of many lands,
Had gone to where his regal soul had birth,
Led by the pressure of down-reaching hands.
There have been kings, reposing in the shroud,
Scorned in the laughing heart, though mourned aloud;
Here was a citizen, wept by his peers,
And deluged by a flood of heartfelt tears!

O Dickens! if in yonder star-girt land,
Thou canst but wander thro' its streets and vales,
And then before the breathless millions stand,
And tell thy merry and pathetic tales,
If thou canst yet thy daily toil prolong,
Plead for the right, and battle with the wrong,

The happiness of Heaven will o'er thee spread,
For thou thy path Heaven-given, still wilt tread!
No new laudation to thy name we raise —
 No tribute of new grief with us appears;
Through all thy life we gave thee words of praise-
 Long ere thy death we gave thee our best tears.
But wheresoever still the English tongue
In all the world is spoken, read, and sung,
Shall rise the fervent words oft-heard before —
“God bless thee, glorious Dickens, evermore!”

In Memoriam: June 10th, 1870

From: *Awful! and Other Jingles*, P.R.S. (Peter Remsen Strong), G.P. Putnam and Son, 1871 p.114-117

By P.R.S.

I.

There's a crowd of troubled faces at the corner of the street,
Where the brief and hasty bulletin is scrawled upon the sheet,
With a terrible distinctness, that arrests the busy feet,
Of thousands moving on.

II.

It came stealing o'er the wire, with a slow and sullen spark,*
Like a storm-cloud that is brooding, when the sky is grim and dark,
And the fatal bolt is lurking, to engulf the gallant bark.
Which still goes moving on.

III.

And the men, who feel the burden of a new and heavy woe,
Get them sadly to their dwellings, with reluctant step and slow,
For they're thinking of the tidings that shall

startle like a blow,
While they keep moving on.

IV.

Dead — thoughtless — senseless — silent! No, it
cannot be! the brain,
Which has wrought so long and deftly, must
be animate again
With its constant, tender sympathy for every
brother's pain.
It *must* keep moving on!

V.

Why, the man was our great teacher in the
battle-school of life!
He has shown us how to struggle, how to *con-*
quer in a strife,
Which, for every son of Adam, is with deadly
peril rife,
As Time goes moving on.

VI.

Who shall lift the fallen sceptre? Who shall
grasp the wand of might?
Who shall conjure up new phantoms, to allure
us or affright,
From the realms of joyous sunshine, from the
shades of grisly night,
And keep them moving on?

VII.

God doeth all things wisely! — and we know 'tis
for the best,

That the loving heart is pulseless and the
weary brain at rest.
They have gained an immortality in every
human breast —
They'll still keep moving on!

* Charles Dickens died on the 9th of June, 1870. The announcement of his death was delayed, for several hours, owing to a derangement of the telegraphic communication,

DICKENS IN CAMP.

From: *Poems*, by Bret Harte, J.R. Osgood, 1873 p.32-

ABOVE the pines the moon was slowly drifting,
The river sang below;
The dim Sierras, far beyond, uplifting
Their minarets of snow.

The roaring camp-fire, with rude humor, painted
The ruddy tints of health
On haggard face and form that drooped and fainted
In the fierce race for wealth;

Till one arose, and from his pack's scant treasure
A hoarded volume drew,
And cards were dropped from hands of listless
leisure
To hear the tale anew;

And then, while round them shadows gathered
faster,
And as the firelight fell,
He read aloud the book wherein the Master
Had writ of "Little Nell."

Perhaps 'twas boyish fancy, — for the reader
Was youngest of them all, —
But, as he read, from clustering pine and cedar
A silence seemed to fall;

The fir-trees, gathering closer in the shadows,
Listened in every spray,
While the whole camp, with "Nell" on English

meadows,
Wandered and lost their way.

And so in mountain solitudes — o' ertaken
As by some spell divine —
Their cares dropped from them like the needles
shaken
From out the gusty pine.

Lost is that camp, and wasted all its fire:
And he who wrought that spell? —
Ah, towering pine and stately Kentish spire,
Ye have one tale to tell!

Lost is that camp! but let its fragrant story
Blend with the breath that thrills
With hop-vines' incense all the pensive glory-
That fills the Kentish hills.
And on that grave where English oak and holly
And laurel wreaths intwine,
Deem it not all a too presumptuous folly, —
This spray of Western pine!

July, 1870.

Mystery of Edwin Drood

From: *Society*, June 29, 1881 p.15

By M. Percivale

Strangely significant the half-told history,
Uncomprehended prophecy of pain;
Life's dream within a dream, death's awful mystery,
That evermore a secret must remain.

Faith's waning surely doth its page prefigure,
The Upas-unbelief of years to come;
The magic pen, in its full strength and rigour,
Points upward, ere down-dropt for ever dumb.

A choral strain of calm breathes, underlying
All jarring sounds of sorrow, sin, or strife;
The well-known voice in trumpet tones undying,
Speaks of the resurrection and the life.

Closed is the door. O fatal premonition!
How shall the mystery be solved, and where?
By the unfinished page an angel vision
Stands; and with hand uplifted answers, "There!"

Charles Dickens

From: *Tristram of Lyonesse, and other Poems*, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Chatto and Windus, 1882 p.217

By Algernon Charles Swinburne

Chief in thy generation born of men
Whom English praise acclaimed as English-born,
With eyes that matched the worldwide eyes of morn
For gleam of tears or laughter, tenderest then
When thoughts of children warmed their light, or when
Reverence of age with love and labour worn,
Or godlike pity fired with godlike scorn,
Shot through them flame that winged thy swift live pen:
Where stars and suns that we behold not burn,
Higher even than here, though highest was here thy
place,
Love sees thy spirit laugh and speak and shine
With Shakespeare and the soft bright soul of Sterne
And Fielding's kinliest might and Goldsmith's grace;
Scarce one more loved or worthier love than thine.

A WELCOME TO DICKENS ON HIS FIRST VISIT TO THE WEST.

From: *The Gentleman Farmer*, Volume 2, 1897 p.465

By W.H. Venable

— Come as artist, come as guest.
Welcome to the expectant West,
Hero of the charmed pen,
Loved of children, loved of men.
We have felt thy spell for years;
Oft with laughter, oft with tears,
Thou hast touched the tenderest part
Of our inmost, hidden heart.
We have fixed our eager gaze
On thy pages nights and days.
Wishing, us we turned them o'er.
Like poor Oliver, for “more,”
And the creatures of thy brain
In our memory remain.
Till through them we seem to be
Old acquaintances of thee.
Much we hold it thee to greet,
Gladly sit we at thy feet;
On thy features we would look,
As upon a living book.
And thy voice would grateful hear,
Glad to feel that Boz were near,
That his veritable soul
Held us by direct control:
Therefore, author loved the best,
Welcome, welcome to the West.
In immortal Weller’s name.
By the rare Micawber’s fame,

By the flogging wreaked on Squeers,
By Job Trotter's fluent tears,
By the Beadle Bumble's fate.
At the hands of shrewish mate,
By the famous Pickwick Club,
By the dream of Gabriel Grubb,
In the name of Snodgrass muse,
Tupman's amorous interviews,
Winkle's ludicrous mishaps.
And the fat boy's countless naps;
By Ben Allen and Bob Sawyer,
By Miss Sally Brass, the lawyer.
In the name of Newman Noggs,
River Thames, and London fogs,
Richard Swiveller's excess,
Feasting with the Marchioness,
By Jack Bunsby's oracles,
By the chime of Christmas bells.
By the Cricket on the Hearth,
By the sound of childish mirth.
By spread tables and good cheer.
Wayside Inns and pots of beer,
Hostess plump, and jolly host.
Coaches for the turnpike post,
Chambermaid in love with Boots.
Toodles, Traddles, Tapley, Toots,
Betsey Trotwood, Mr. Dick,
Susan Nipper, Mistress Chick,
Snevellicci, Lilyvlck,
Mantalini's predilections
To transfer his warm affections.
By poor Barnaby, and Grip.
Flora, Dora, Di, and Gip.
Perrybingle, Pinch and Pip. —
Welcome, long-expected guest,

Welcome to the grateful West.

In the name of Gentle Nell,
Child of light, beloved well, —
Weeping, did we not behold
Roses on her bosom cold?
Better we for every tear
Shed beside her snowy bier, —
By the mournful group that played
Round the grave where Smike was laid.
By the life of Tiny Tim,
And the lesson taught by him,
Asking in his plaintive tone
God to “bless us every one,”
By the smiling waves that bore
Little Paul to Heaven’s shore.
By thy yearning for the human
Good In every man and woman.
By each noble deed and word
That thy story-books record,
And each noble sentiment
Dickens to the world hath lent,
By the effort thou hast made
Truth and true reform to aid.
By thy hope of man’s relief
Finally from want and grief.
By thy never-falling trust
That the God of love is just. —
We would meet and welcome thee.
Preacher of humanity:
Welcome fills the throbbing breast
Of the sympathetic West.

Untitled

From: *The Coming of Love and other Poems*, Theodore Watts-Dunton, John Lane, 1898 p.191-192

A ragged girl in Drury Lane was heard to exclaim: “Dickens dead? Then will Father Christmas die too?” — June 9, 1870.

“Dickens is dead!” Beneath that grievous
cry
London seemed shivering in the summer
heat;
Strangers took up the tale like friends that
meet:
Dickens is dead! said they, and hurried by; Street
children stopped their games — they
knew not why,
But some new night seemed darkening down
the street.
A girl in rags, staying her way-worn feet,
Cried, “Dickens dead? Will Father Christmas
die?”

City he loved, take courage on thy way!
He loves thee still, in all thy joys and fears.
Though he whose smile made bright thine eyes
of grey —
Though he whose voice, uttering thy bur-
thened years,
Made laughters bubble through thy sea of
tears —
Is gone, Dickens returns on Christmas Day!

Welcome to Boz

From: *Saga of the Oak, and other Poems*, William Henry Venable, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1904 p.107-108

By William Henry Venable

Impromptu.

IN immortal Weller's name,
By Micawber's deathless fame,
By the flogging wreaked on Squeers,
By Job Trotter's fluent tears,
By the beadle Bumble's fate
At the hands of vixen mate,
By the famous Pickwick Club,
By the dream of Gabriel Grubb,
In the name of Snodgrass' muse,
Tupman's amorous interviews,
Winkle's ludicrous mishaps,
And the fat boy's countless naps,
By Ben Allen and Bob Sawyer,
By Miss Sally Brass, the lawyer,
In the name of Newman Noggs,
River Thames and London fogs,
Richard Swiveller's excess,
Feasting with the Marchioness,
By Jack Bunsby's oracles,
By the chime of Christmas bells,
By the cricket on the hearth,
Scrooge's frown and Crotchit's mirth,
By spread tables and good cheer,
Wayside inns and pots of beer,
Hostess plump and jolly host,
Coaches for the country post,

Chambermaid in love with Boots,
Toodles, Traddles, Tapley, Toots,
Jarley, Varden, Mister Dick,
Susan Nipper, Mistress Chick,
Snevellicci, Lilyvick,
Mantalini's predilections
To transfer his "dem" affections,
Podsnap, Pecksniff, Chuzzlewit,
Quilp and Simon Tappertit,
Weg and Boffin, Smike and Paul,
Nell and Jenny Wren and all, —
Be not Sairy Gamp forgot, —
No, nor Peggotty and Trot, —
By poor Barnaby and Grip,
Dora, Flora, Di and Gip,
Perrybingle, Pinch and Pip —
Welcome, long-expected guest,
Welcome, Dickens, to the West.

The Centenary of Dickens

From: *The Muse in Exile* by William Watson, John Lane Company, 1913 p.46-49

Lines read by the author at the Dickens Centenary celebration
at the Carnegie Hall, New York.

When Nature first designed,
In her all-procreant mind,
The man whom here to-night we are met to
honour —
When first the idea of Dickens flashed upon her —
“Where, where,” she said, “in all my populous
Earth,
Shall this prodigious child be brought to birth?
Where shall he have his earliest wondering look
Into my magic book?
Shall he be born where life runs like a brook,
Far from the sound and shock of mighty deeds,
Among soft English meads?
Or shall he first my pictured volume scan
Where London lifts its hot and fevered brow,
For cooling Night to fan?
Nay, nay,” she said; “I have a happier plan!
For where, at Portsmouth, on the embattled tides,
The ships of war step out with thundering prow,
And shake their stormy sides —
In yonder place of arms, whose gaunt sea wall
Flings to the clouds the far-heard bugle-call,
He shall be born amid the drums and guns,
He shall be born among my fighting sons,
Perhaps the greatest warrior of them all.”

So there, where frown the forts and battle-gear,
And all the proud sea babbles Nelson's name,
Into the world this later hero came,
He, too, a man that knew all moods but fear,
 He, too, a fighter! Yet not his the strife
That leaves dark scars on the fair face of life.
He did not fight to rend the world apart,
He fought to make it one in mind and heart,
Building a broad and noble bridge to span
The icy chasm that sunders man from man.
Wherever Wrong had fixed its bastions deep,
There did his fierce yet gay assault surprise
Some fortress girt with lucre or with lies;
There his light battery stormed some ponderous
 keep;
There charged he up the steep;
A knight on whom no palsying torpor fell,
Keen to the last to break a lance with Hell.
And still undimmed his conquering weapons shine;
On his bright sword no spot of rust appears;
And still, across the years,
 His soul goes forth to battle, and in the face
Of whatsoe'er is false, or cruel, or base,
He hurls his gage, and leaps among the spears,
Being armed with pity and love, and scorn divine,
Immortal laughter, and immortal tears.

Dickensia

From: *Eos and Other Poems*, Eleanor Gray, Kegan Paul,
Trench & Co., 1907 p.31

By Eleanor Gray

Oh, strong of heart to pass, a Galahad
Through life's abysses, pure, undefiled,
Evolving child,
Nell, Florence, Paul, by waters sad —
Childwife, or Ruth of spirit glad,
Or Agnes mild.

Oh, love that gave us Joe and Smike for care,
Ne'er prosper who betray thy trust,
So deep thy thrust.

Sikes, Fagin, loom from out their snare
Fate's scorn, humanity's despair,
The world's disgust.

Sublimest Pecksniff, cloaked, benevolent,
"Unfrocked" seems Tom at length aghast-
Iconoclast —

Sweep on, but leave us Tapley's bent,
Sam Weller's mirth with wisdom blent,
And Pickwick last.

Dickensiana Images



DICKENS'S CHILDREN



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LITTLE EM'LY

TINY TIM AND BOB CRATCHIT ON CHRISTMAS DAY



TINY TIM AND BOB CRATCHIT ON CHRISTMAS DAY

“A Christmas Carol,” Stave Three

In came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder.

DAVID COPPERFIELD AND PEGGOTTY BY THE PARLOUR FIRE



DAVID COPPERFIELD AND PEGGOTTY BY THE PARLOUR FIRE

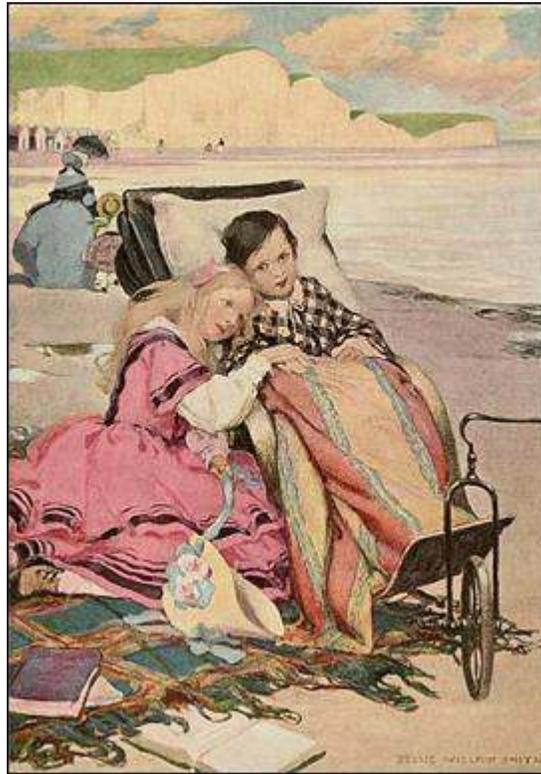
“David Copperfield,” Chapter II

“Peggotty,” says I, suddenly, “were you ever married?”

“Lord, Master Davy,” replied Peggotty, “what’s put marriage in your head?”

She answered with such a start, that it quite awoke me....
“But *were* you ever married, Peggotty?” says I. “You are a very handsome woman, an’t you?”

PAUL DOMBEY AND FLORENCE ON THE BEACH AT BRIGHTON



PAUL DOMBEY AND FLORENCE ON THE BEACH AT BRIGHTON

“Dombey and Son,” Chapter VIII

His favourite spot was quite a lonely one, far away from most loungers; and with Florence sitting by his side at work, or reading to him, or talking to him, and the wind blowing on his face, and the water coming up among the wheels of his bed, he wanted nothing more.

LITTLE NELL AND HER GRANDFATHER AT MRS. JARLEY'S



LITTLE NELL AND HER GRANDFATHER AT MRS. JARLEY'S

"The Old Curiosity Shop," Chapter XXVI

"Set 'em out near the hind wheels, child, that's the best place" — said their friend, superintending the arrangements from above. "Now hand up the teapot for a little more hot water, and a pinch of fresh tea, and then both of you eat and drink as much as you can, and don't spare anything; that's all I ask of you."

PIP AND JOE GARGERY



PIP AND JOE GARGERY

“Great Expectations,” Chapter II

“If you can cough any trifle on it up, Pip, I’d recommend you to do it,” said Joe, all aghast. “Manners is manners, but still your elth’s your elth.”

JENNY WREN, THE LITTLE DOLLS' DRESSMAKER

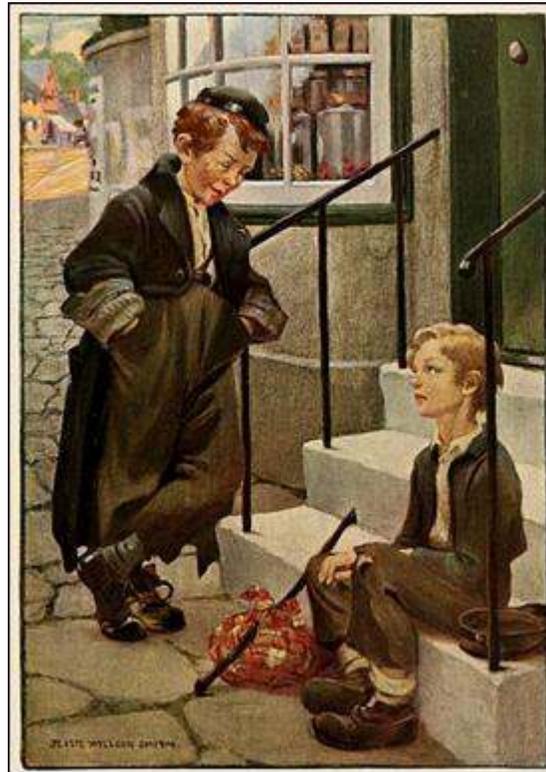


JENNY WREN, THE LITTLE DOLLS' DRESSMAKER

“Our Mutual Friend,” Chapter I, Book Second

“Oh! I know their tricks and their manners.”

OLIVER'S FIRST MEETING WITH THE ARTFUL DODGER

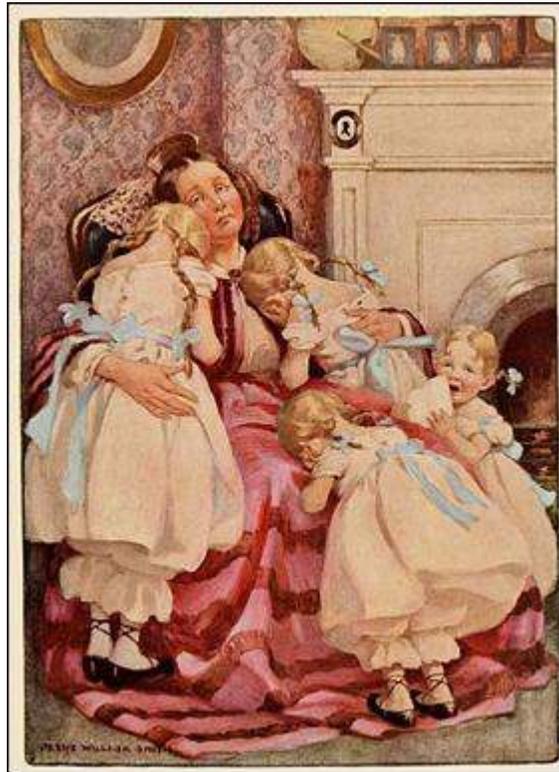


OLIVER'S FIRST MEETING WITH THE ARTFUL DODGER

“Oliver Twist,” Chapter VIII

“Hullo, my covey! What’s the row?” said this strange young gentleman to Oliver.

MRS. KENWIGS AND THE FOUR LITTLE KENWIGSES



MRS. KENWIGS AND THE FOUR LITTLE KENWIGSES

“Nicholas Nickleby,” Chapter XIV

“Oh! they’re too beautiful to live, much too beautiful!” sobbed Mrs. Kenwigs. On hearing this alarming presentiment . . . all four little girls raised a hideous cry, and burying their heads in their mother’s lap simultaneously, screamed until the eight flaxen tails vibrated again.

THE RUNAWAY COUPLE

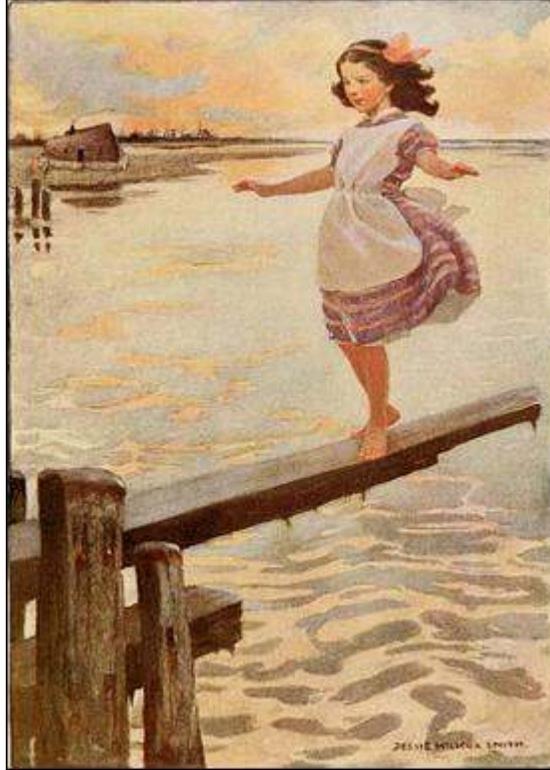


THE RUNAWAY COUPLE

“Christmas Stories” The Holly-Tree, Second Branch

So Boots goes up-stairs to the Angel, and there he finds Master Harry on a e-normous sofa, — immense at any time, but looking like the Great Bed of Ware, compared with him, a drying the eyes of Miss Norah with his pocket-hankecher. Their little legs was entirely off the ground, of course, and it really is not possible for Boots to express to me how small them children looked.

LITTLE EM'LY



LITTLE EM'LY

“David Copperfield,” Chapter III

The light, bold, fluttering little figure turned and came back safe to me, and I soon laughed at my fears, and at the cry I had uttered; fruitlessly in any case, for there was no one near.

DICKENS POSTCARDS



In this section Dickens enthusiasts can explore a range of Dickensian postcards, inspired by the great writer's life and works. The postcards have been arranged into five themed groups.

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[Comic](#)

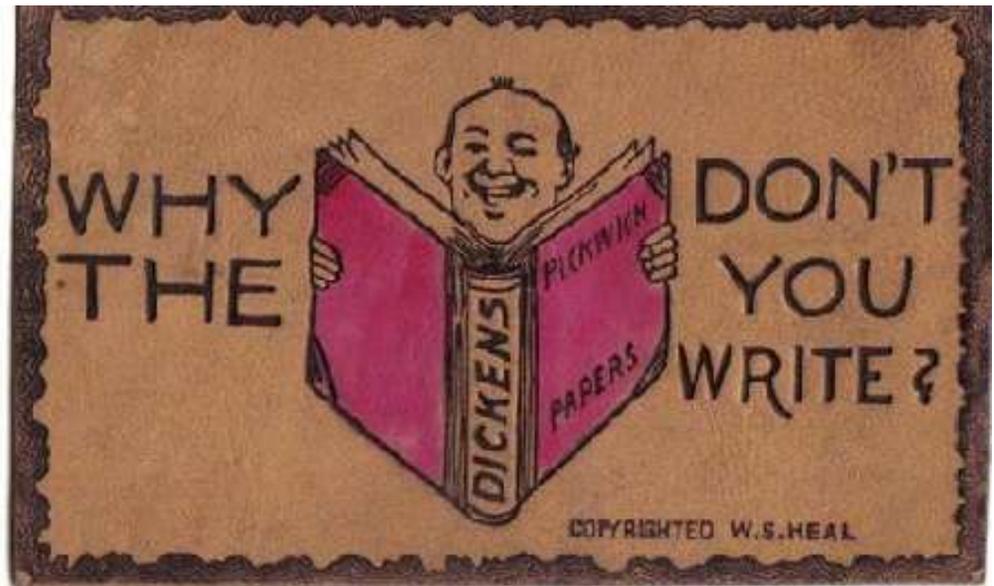
[Charles Dickens](#)

[Actors](#)

[Dickens Places](#)

[Dickens Characters](#)

Comic





Dickens-Centenary Post Card

BE WERRY
CAREFUL
ALL YOUR LIFE

M. Weller.



Copyright 1912 by A. S. Carpenter

Charles Dickens



CHARLES DICKENS, AGE 58



MR. CHARLES DICKENS'S LAST READING



1794

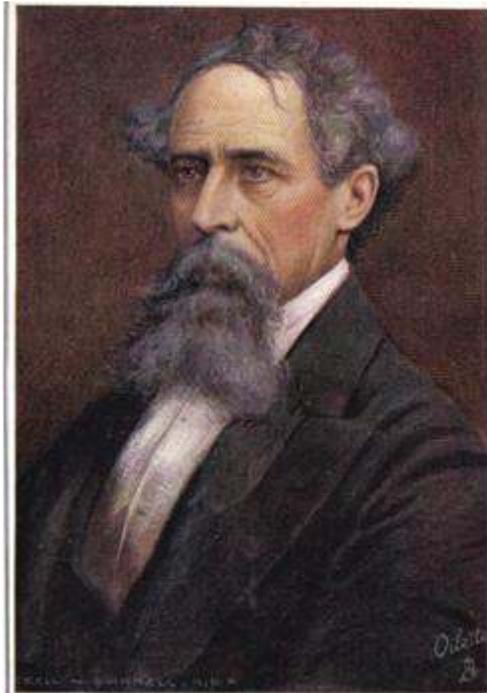
1794

CHARLES MICHOD



CHARLES DICKENS AGE 52





· DICKENS ·





Actors



LITTLE NELL'S GRANDFATHER. One old Cornish shag.
"The biggest aspect of the little old man was wonderfully called in the place.
There was nothing in the whole collection but was in keeping with himself;
making that looked older or more with than he."

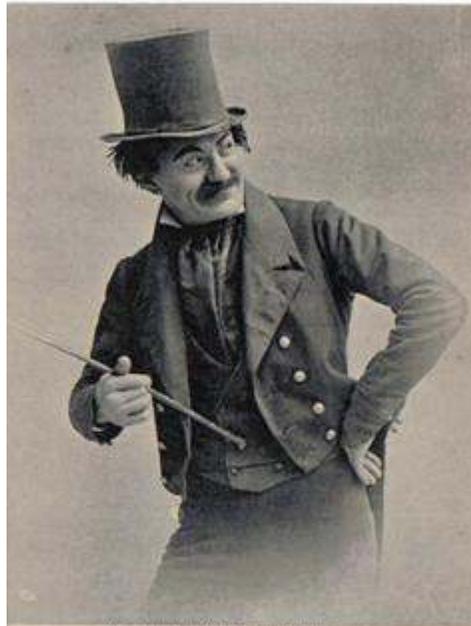


MR. WHACKFOLD SQUARE (Nicholas Nickleby).
"Mr. Square had but one eye, and the popular portion took its name
of him . . . and when he acted, his expression bordered nearly to
the stigmata."



BILL SYKES (HARRY TROTTER)

"Well, then, keep quiet", repeated Sykes, with a growl that he was accustomed to use when addressing his dog. "or I'll quiet you for a good long time to come."



MR. ALFRED JINGLE, (The Fitzwick Paper.)
"Jingle", said that versatile gentleman, "Jingle, Alfred Jingle,
Esq., of No Hall, Nowhere."

Dickens Places





DICKENS MUSEUM, PORTSMOUTH
The Hall in which Dickens lived

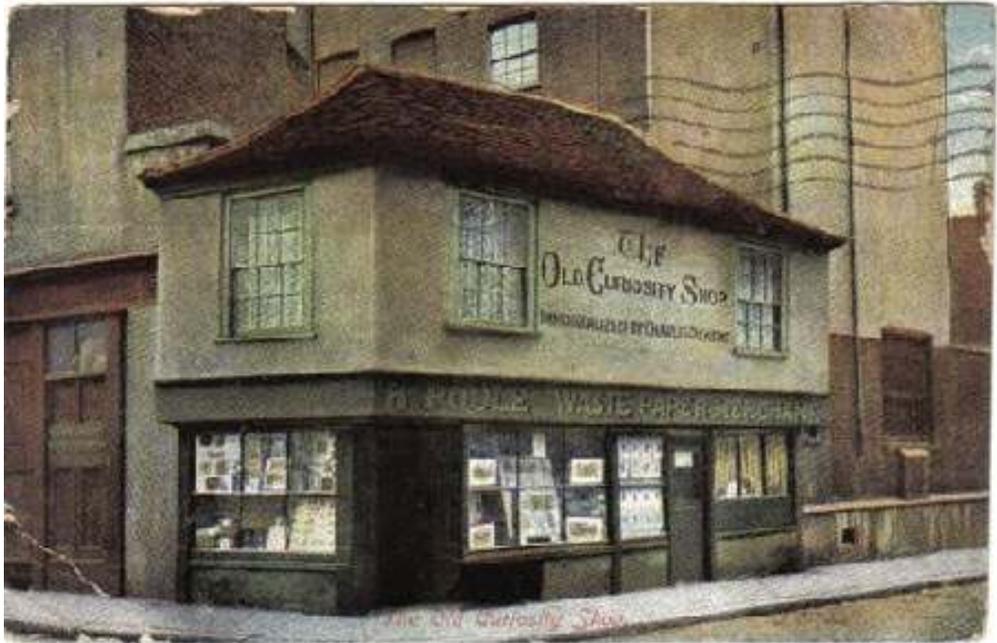






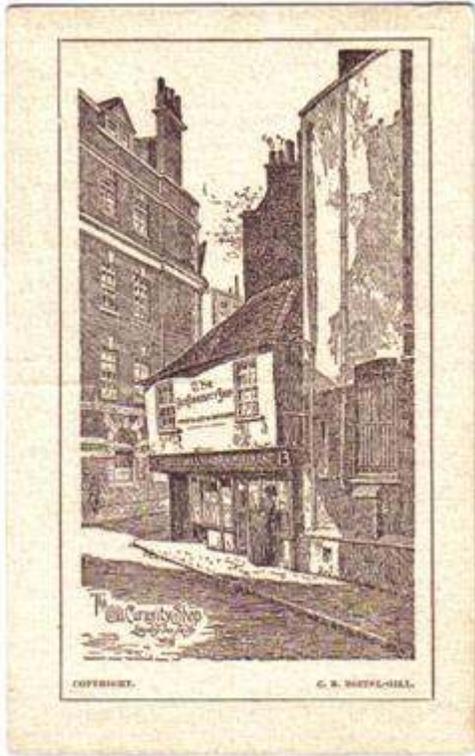


LONDON, THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP











LONDON. INTERIOR, CHARLES DICKENS' OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.





Dick Swiveller
Old Curiosity Shop

Guest hearthstones
around a crackling fire;
walls lined with fam-
ilar Dickens characters
—this is the cozy atmo-
sphere of old-world
friendliness in The
Dickens Room at Schu-
ler's in Marshall. It
couldn't be important
at each of the Four
Michigan Schuler restau-
rants; more important,
however, are the lights
and the atmosphere for
your dining enjoyment.
Customers invariably say,
"Excellent!"



Mr. Pickwick
Pickwick Papers

Win Schuler's

MARSHALL, MICHIGAN



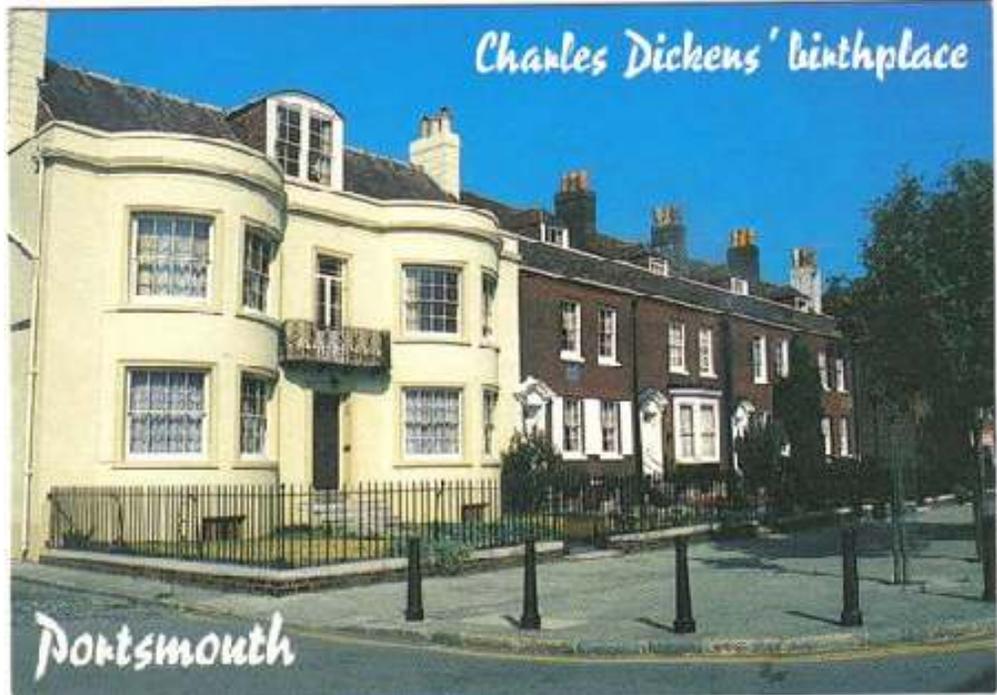
WHERE DAVID COMMERFIELD WAS BORN IN 1782

J. S. EDWARDS, GAITHERSBURG



BROADSTAIRS-DICHENS' HOUSE







THE GOLDEN LAMB
Ohio's Oldest Inn
EST. 1815
Lebanon, Ohio

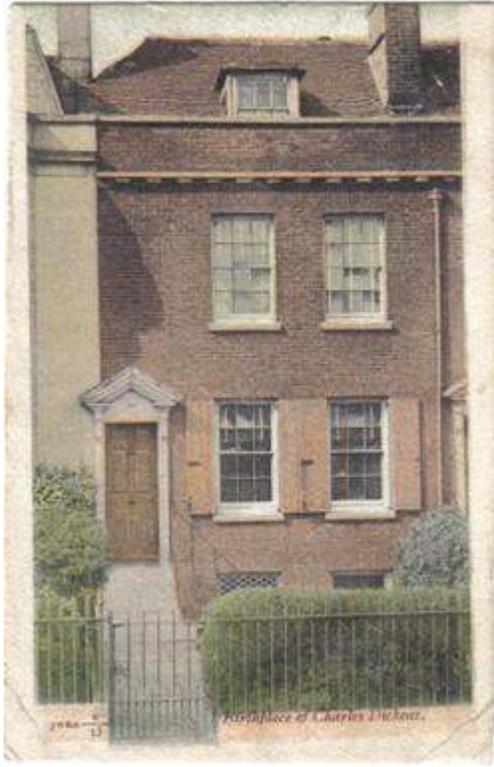




CHARLES DICKENS' BIRTHPLACE
FEBRUARY 7TH 1812

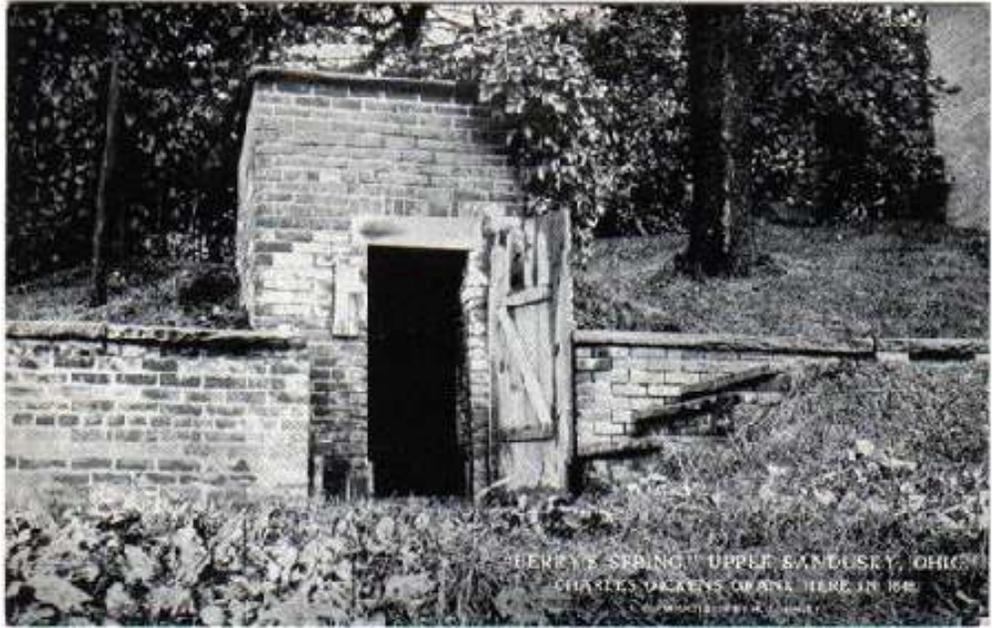
PORTSMOUTH CHARLES DICKENS' BIRTHPLACE

V5485

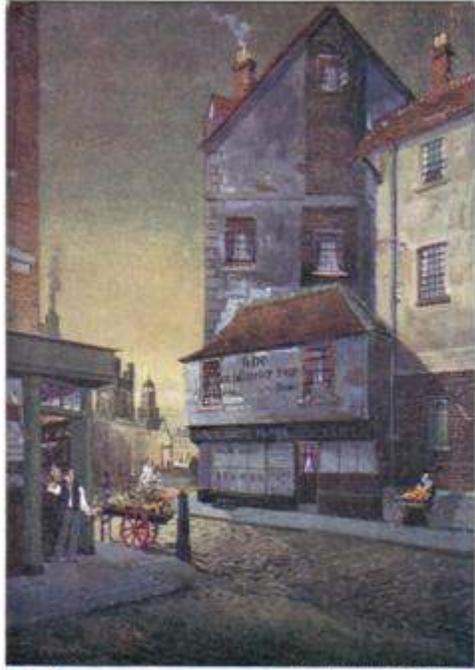


1780-1781

Residence of Charles V. Smith



HERVEY'S SPRING, UPPER SANDUSKY, OHIO
CHARLES JACKSON OWENS HERE IN 1846



*B. L.
Richard
Lamb*

The Old Cemetery Shop



Richard
Lind

THE "LITTLE INN," CANTERBURY.



J.
Richardson
1853

DOTHINGYS
MALL

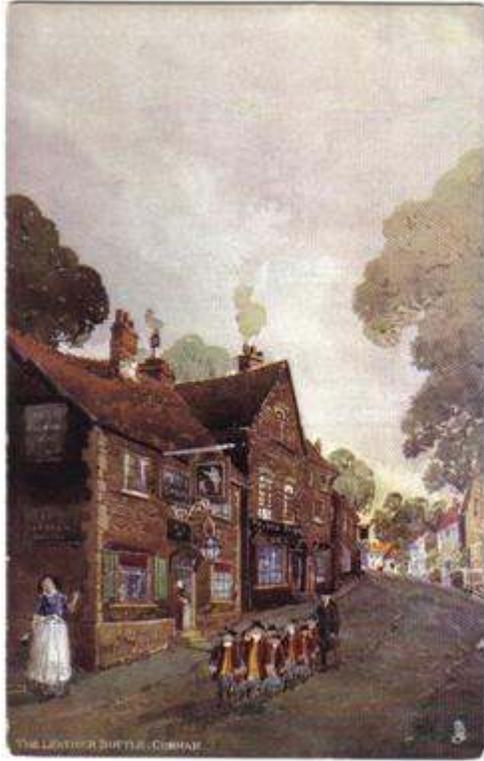
5



COURTYARD, "BLUE" INN, ROCHESTER.

*L. Richard
Lunt*

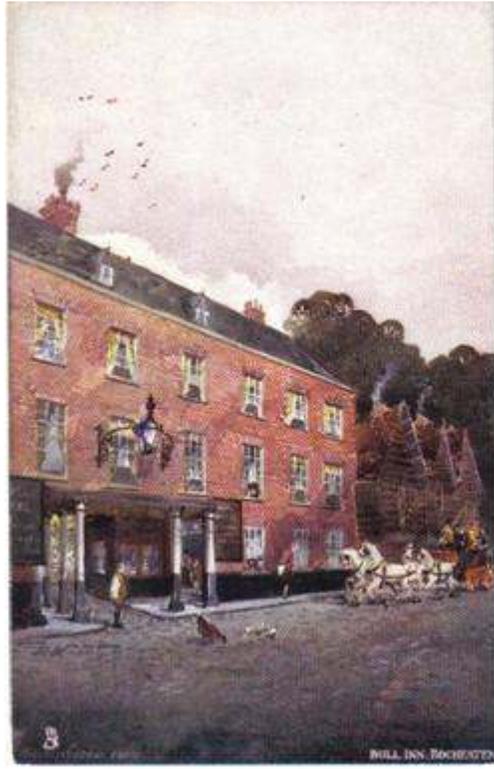




THE LECTURE IN SUFFOLK - CONSTABLE



GATEWAY, LINCOLN 190





STAIRCASE
DELLA INN, ROCHESTER.



In
Dickens
Land

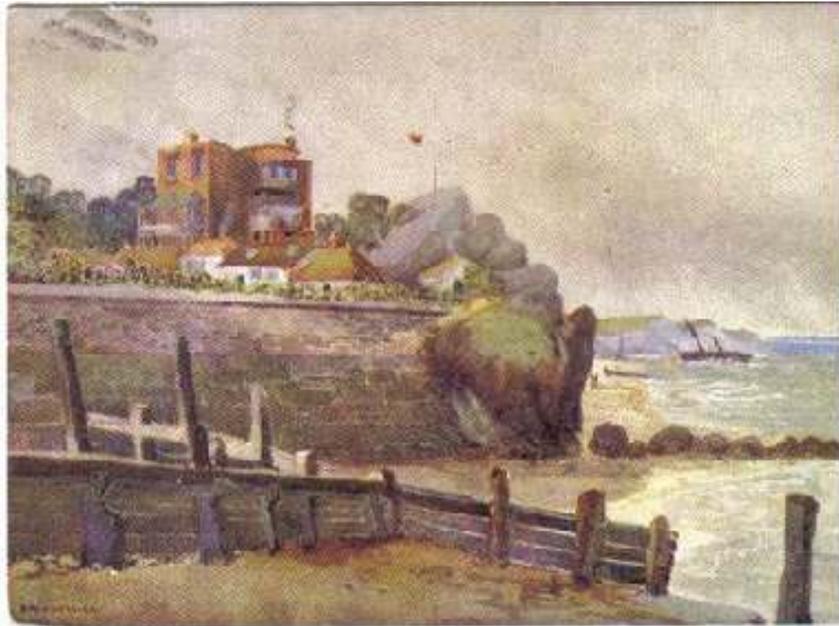
ROCHESTER
FROM
STROOD
PIER.

Dec 2

1904

E. A. E.





*In
Dublin
Land*

BLEAK
HOUSE,
BROADSTAIRS.





L.
Dickson
Lond.

THE
WHITE HART,
HOOK,
SURREY.





*The
Dobson
Lodges*

MARSH
LITTLE
HOLEY.





*In
Dorset
Land*

ROCHESTER
CASTLE,
THE KINGS.





*J.
Dickens
Land*

"THE
RESTORATION
HOUSE,"

ECCEBETHE.

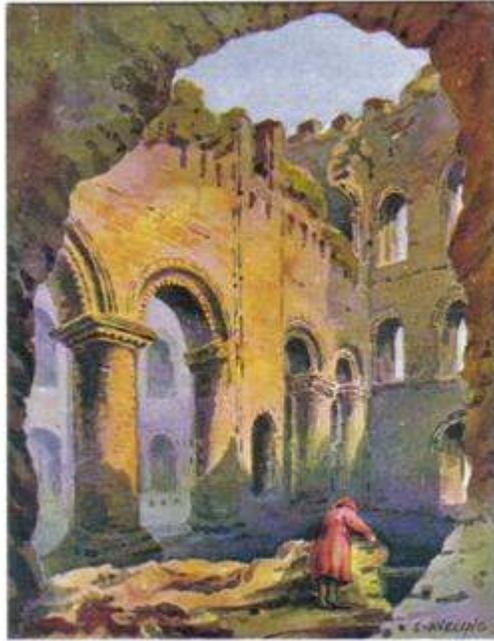
The Residence of

Miss Dowdell

in

"Great Expectations."





L.
Dunbar
Land

ROCHESTER CASTLE. THE INTERIOR.



Dickens Miscellanea

A
Benediction



By
Charles Dickens

May the blessings of our God rest upon thee, and the Son of Glory shine around thy head; may the gates of plenty, honor and happiness be always open to thee and thine.

May no strife disturb thy days, nor sorrow distress thy nights, and may the pillow of Peace kiss thy cheek, and pleasures of imagination attend thy dreams; when length of years makes thee tired of earthly joys and the curtains of death gently close around the scene of thy existence, may the angels of God attend thy bed, and take care that the expiring lamp of life shall not receive one rude blast to hasten its extinction; and, finally, may the Saviour's blood wash thee from all impurities and prepare thee to enter into the land of everlasting felicity.

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A Tribute to Charles Dickens



Dickens
Aged 27.



BY
H.M. THE
QUEEN OF
ROMANIA.
(Carmen
Sylva.)



I love him so for all the good
His soul was wont to see
In wretched, torn, misunderstood,
Unknown humanity.

In darkness he found light : in pain
And error love divine.
He taught sad hearts to laugh again,
And hidden gold to shine.

He heard the Christmas Carols ring,
He pitied moth and snake ;
And had a song for ev'ry wing,
And balm for ev'ry ache !

CARMEN SYLVA.



DICKENS AGED 37

CHARLES DICKENS

Born at
MILE END TERRACE,
PORTSMOUTH,
FEBRUARY 7th. 1812.
Died at GADSHILL,
JUNE 9th. 1870.

A Curious Catalogue.

OLIVER TWIST who had some
very
HARD TIMES in
THE BATTLE OF LIFE, and
having been saved from
THE WRACK OF THE GOLDEN
MARY by
OUR MUTUAL FRIEND
NICHOLAS NICKLEBY, had just
finished reading
A TALE OF TWO CITIES to
MARTIN CHuzzlewit, during
which time
THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH
had been chirping right
merrily, while
THE CHIMES from the adjacent
church were heard, when
SEVEN POOR TRAVELLERS com-
menced singing
A CHRISTMAS CAROL.
BARNABY RUDGE then arrived
from
THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP with
some
PICTURES FROM ITALY and
SKETCHES BY BOZ, to show

LITTLE DORRIST, who was busy
with the
PICNIC PAPERS, when
DAVID COPPERFIELD (who had
been taking
AMERICAN NOTES) entered and
informed the company that the
GREAT EXPECTATIONS of
DOMBEY & SON regarding
MRS. LIRKIPER'S LEGACY had
not been realised and that
he had seen
BOOTS OF THE HOLLYTREE INN
taking
SOMEBODY'S LODGAGE to
MRS. LIRKIPER'S LODGINGS, in
a street that has
NO THROUGHFARE, opposite
BLEAK HOUSE, where
THE HAUNTED MAN had just
given one of
DR. MARSHALL'S PRESCRIPTIONS
to an
UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER,
who was brooding over
THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN
DROOD.



XMAS WISHES



GOD
BLESS YOU

In the CHRISTMAS time-
And in all Times,
Seasons and Places.

Miss Henty Dickens.

Dickens Characters



BOB CRATCHIT AND TINY TIM.

FROM THE DRAWING BY F. BURNARD.

"In comes little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of crumplee
and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. 'A Merry Christmas to us all,
my dears. God bless us!' which all the family re-echoed. 'God bless
us every one!' said Tiny Tim, the last of all."—CHRISTMAS CAROL.



DICK SWIVELLER AND THE MARCHIONESS.

FROM THE DRAWING BY F. BARROW.

"There never was such an old-fashioned chick in her looks and manners. She must have been at work from her cradle . . ."

—THE OLD COMBITY SONG.



SYDNEY CARTON.

FROM THE DRAWING BY F. BARRAGEL.

"They said of him, about the city that night, that it was the gentlest heart man's eyes ever beheld there. Many added that he looked sublime and prophetic."—A TALE OF TWO CITIES.



BETSY TROTWOOD,
FROM THE DRAWING BY F. BARBER.
"JIMMY DONKEYS"—DAVID COPPERFIELD.



ALFRED JUNGLE, ESQ.

FROM THE DRAWING BY F. BARRETT.

"His face was thin and haggard; but an indomitable eye of steady independence and perfect self-possession pervaded the whole man."
—FRANCIS DARWIN.



MR. PECKSNIFF.

FROM THE DRAWING BY F. BARBARD.

"His very throat was neural. It seemed to me on the part of Mr. Pecksniff: 'There is no dissipation, holiness and gentleness; all is power; & holy make pervades me.'"—HARVARD CATALOGUE.



MR. PICKWICK.

FROM THE DRAWING BY F. BARRON.

"'Come, gentlemen,' cried Mr. Pickwick, still retaining his hold upon the log, 'a toast: Our friends at Dingley Dell.'"—PICKWICK PAPERS.



URIAH HEEP.

From the Dickens by F. Barnard.

"My, Master Copperfield!" said Uriah. "No, no! For a very noble person."
—DAVID COPPERFIELD.



EGGIE RIDERHOOD.

FROM THE DRAWING BY F. BARBARD.

"Name—Eggie Riderhood. Dwelling Place—Linn's Hole. Calling
or Occupation—Waterman's Character."—OUR MUTUAL FRIEND.



BILL NIKES.

FROM THE DRAWING BY F. BIRCHALL.

"'Keep quiet, you warmist! Keep quiet!' said Mr. Nikes, suddenly breaking silence."—GUY DE MAUPASSANT.

CHARACTERS from CHARLES DICKENS.

"MRS. SARAH GAMP,"
(Martin Chuzzlewit.)

"Snap her up at any price,
for Mrs. Gamp is worth
her weight and more,
in goldian guineas."



CHARACTERS from CHARLES DICKENS.

MR. WHACKFORD
SQUEERS.

(Adapted from *Notable - Chap. IV*)

Mr. Squeers had but one eye,
and the popular prejudice runs
in favour of two, and when he smiled,
his expression bordered closely
on the villainous.



CHARACTERS from CHARLES DICKENS.

MRS. BARDELL.
(Pickwick Papers - Chap. vi.)

Mrs. Bardell could only reply by a look.
She had long worshipped
Mr. Pickwick at a distance, but
here she was, all at once,
raised to a pinnacle to which
her wildest and most extravagant
hopes had never dared
to aspire.



CHARACTERS from CHARLES DICKENS.

"QUILP"

(The Old Curiosity Shop.)

"Water for lawyers!
Metred lead er brimstone, you mean,
Nice hot blistering pitch er tar."



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CHARACTERS from CHARLES DICKENS.

MR. WELLER.

(The Pickwick papers.)

"Widders, Sammy,
Widders are 'ceptions to ev'ry rule
I have heard how many ob'rary
widders are equal to,
in pick'comin' over you,
I think it's five-and-twenty."



CHARACTERS from CHARLES DICKENS.

"MR. STIGGINS."
(The Pickwick Papers.)

All tops is vanities
If there is one of them less obvious
than another, it is the
liquor called rum-warm,
my dear young friends,
with three lumps of
sugar to the fumbler.

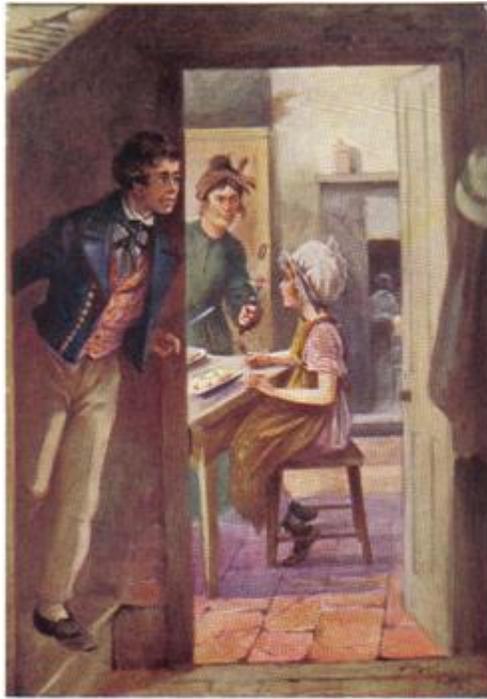




SPIKE AND NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.
Spike: "Let me, oh, do let me! You are my home; my kind friend, take me with you—pray."



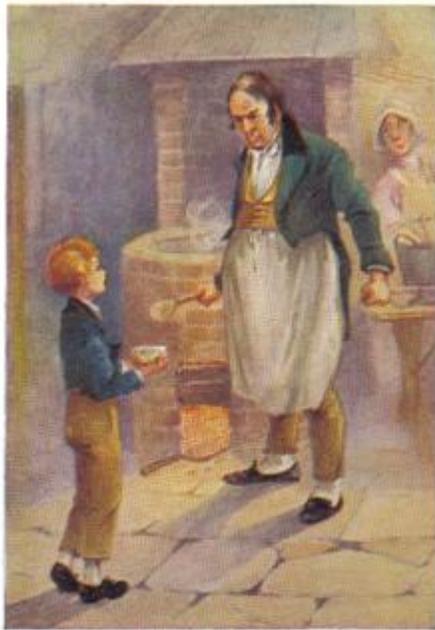
Mr AND Mrs MICAWBER AND DAVID COPPERFIELD
"Emma, my angel!" cried Mr Micawber
running into the room. "What is the matter?"



DICK SWIVELLER, SALLY BRASS AND THE MARCHIONESS.
"Then, don't you ever go and say," retorted Miss Sally,
"that you had'n't meat here; there, eat it up."

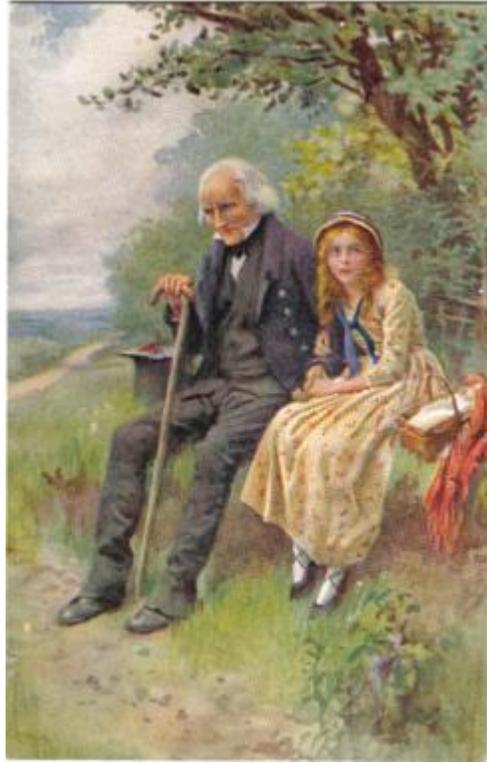


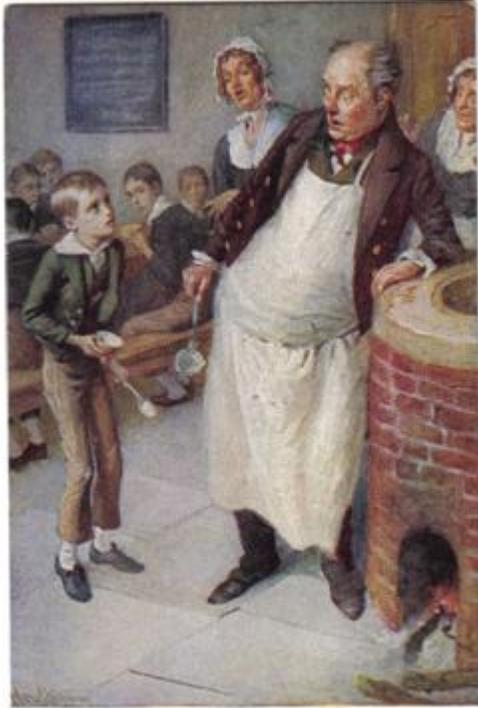
JOE WILLET AND DOLLY VARDEN.
He tried to console her, who agreed to him—
some say—kissed her.



OLIVER TWIST

Oliver: "Please sir, I want some more"
"What" said the master in a faint voice.





OLIVER TRUSTS ASK FOR MORE.

"Please, sir, I want some more."
The master . . . gazed in stupefied amazement on the
young wretch—OLIVER TOWNS.



TWOFFY VICK AND HIS DAUGHTER MARY.
"Why, what am I a-thinking of! . . . I shall forget my own name
soon. It's tops!"—THE CATMITE.



MR. MICAENEK MAKES PUNCH.
"Punch, my dear Copperfield . . . like thee and thee, waits for no man."
DAVID COPPERFIELD.



BOB CRATCHIT'S CHRISTMAS DINNER.
Mrs. Cratchit enters—flushed, but smiling proudly—with the pudding
... beset with Christmas holly stuck into the top.—A CHRISTMAS CAROL.



Mr. MICAWBER



Mr. Pickwick and Old Mrs. Winkle.

Mr. Pickwick took the old lady
by the hand and saluted her
in all courtesy and decorum.

The Pickwick Papers.



David Copperfield finds his Aunt, Miss Betsey Trotwood.
"I was on the point of slinking off when there came out of the house a lady with her handkerchief tied over her cap, and a pair of gardening gloves on her hands. I knew her immediately to be Miss Betsey." *David Copperfield, Chap. 10*



David Copperfield's first meeting with Mr. Micawber

"Mr. Micawber said Mr. Quinion has been written to by Mr. Murdstone on the subject of your lodgings and he will receive you as a lodger." "My address?" said Mr. Micawber. "My address," said Mr. Micawber, "is Windsor Terrace, City Road. I—in short—I love there!"

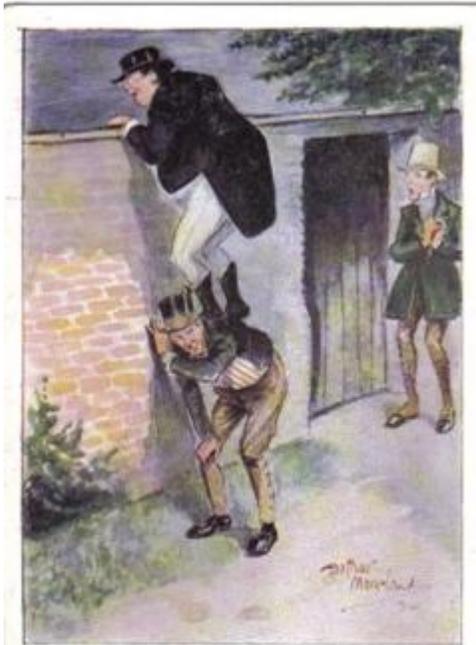
David Copperfield Chapter II



Old Martin Chuzzlewit and Mr Pecksniff

Mr Pecksniff passed his hand "We understand each other, my dear sir, I see! — I can wind him he thought with exultation, round my little finger."

— Mr Pecksniff, Chapter



Mr. Pickwick's interview with Arabella Allen.
"My dear" said Mr. Pickwick, looking over the wall and catching sight of Arabella on the other side, "don't be frightened my dear... it's only me."

Pickwick Series, Chap. XXIV



Sam writes Valentine.

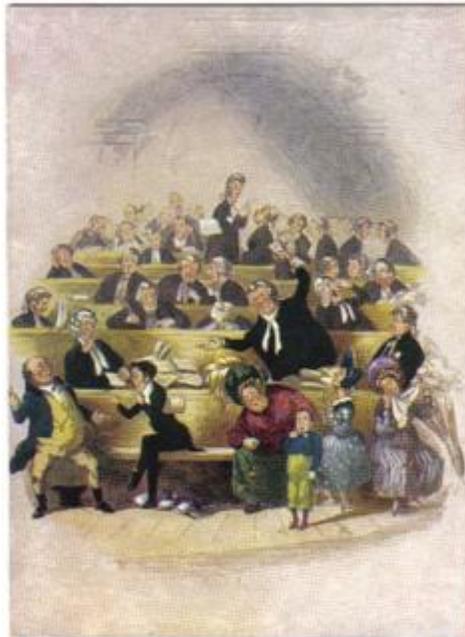
"I don't know what to sign it."
"Sign it 'Veller' said the oldest surviving proprietor
of that name. 'Wont do' said Sam. 'Never sign a
valentine with your own name!' *Richard Henry Clay 1850*



Oliver Twist & Fagin.

"The Jew stepped quietly to the door, which he fastened. He then drew forth, as it seemed to Oliver from some trap in the floor, a small boy."

Oliver Twist, Chap. 2.



John
Dickens
1837

THE PICKWICK PAPERS.

" Damages, gentlemen—berry damages—is the only parishment with which you can visit her; the only recompence you can award to my client. And for those damages she now appeals to an enlightened, a high-minded, a right-facing, a conscientious, a dispassionate, a sympathising, a contemplative jury of her civilised countrymen."—(Chapter xxxiv.)



*In
Dickens
Land* THE PICKWICK PAPERS
Mr. Pickwick was struck motionless and speechless. He stood with his lovely burden in his arms, gazing vacantly on the countenances of his friends, without the slightest attempt at recognition or explanation.—Chapter xii.



*John
Dickens
Lamb*

THE PICKWICK PAPERS.

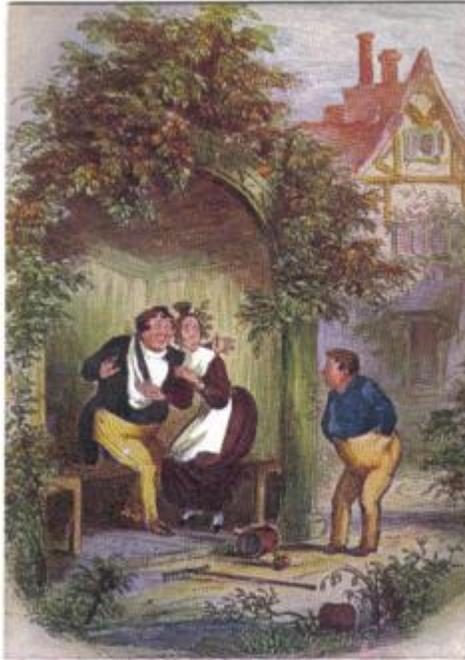
"He would not deny that he was influenced by human passions, and human feelings (cheers)—possibly by human weaknesses—(loud cry of "No"); but that he would say, that if ever the fire of self-importance broke out in his bosom, the desire to benefit the human race in preference effectually quenched it."—Chapter 1.



Mr. Weller
Mr. Snodgrass

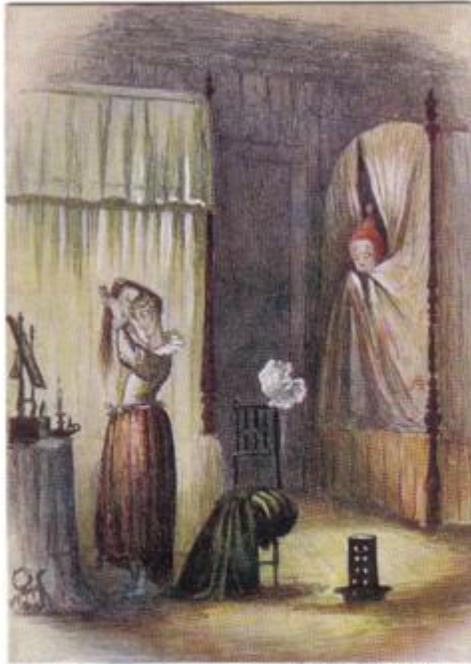
THE PICKWICK PAPERS.

"Wot I like is that 'ere style of writin'," said the elder Mr. Weller, "is, that there ain't no callin' names in it—no Wenuses, nor nothin' of that kind. Wot's the good o' callin' a young woman a Wenus or a angel, Sammy? —Chapter XXXII.



In
Dickens
Lovers

THE FRODOX PAPERS
"Mr. Tapman, we are observed!—we are discovered!"
Mr. Tapman looked round. There was the fat boy, perfectly motionless, with his large circular eyes staring into the distance.—*Chapter viii.*



25
J.
Richard
Lamb

THE PICKWICK PAPERS.

"I never met with anything so awful as this," thought poor Mr. Pickwick, the cold perspiration starting in drops upon his night-cap. "Never. This is fearful!"—Chapter xxii.



THE PICKWICK PAPERS.

*In
Dickens
Land*

At this point of his discourse, the reverend and red-nosed gentleman became singularly incoherent, and staggering to and fro in the excitement of his eloquence, was fain to catch at the back of a chair to preserve his perpendicular.—Chapter xlv.



DAVID COPPERFIELD.

After the picture by "Piaz."

"There was another thing I could have wished; namely, that Jip had never been encouraged to walk about the table-cloth during dinner."—Chapter xlv.

In
Dickens
Lands



DAVID COPPERFIELD.
"The best wish I could give you, Mr. Copperfield, and give all of you gentlemen, is, that you could be took up and brought here. When I think of my past follies, and my present state, I am sure it would be best for you. I pity all who ain't brought here."—URAH HERR, *Carpenter*.

In
Dickens
Land



DAVID COPPERFIELD.

I could speak no more, at that time, but I wrung his hand ;
and if ever I have loved and honoured any man, I loved and
honoured that man in my soul.—*Chapter lvi.*

In
David
Copperfield



After the picture by "John."

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

*J. Dickens
Lond.*

All was over in a moment. I had fulfilled my destiny. I was a captive and a slave. I loved Dora Spenslow as
Illustration 1.—Chapter XXVI.



J.
Dickens
Lamb

after the picture by "John"

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

Walking so proudly and lovingly down the aisle with my sweet wife upon my arm, through a mist of beaming people, pulpits, monuments, pews, fonts, organs and church windows.

—Chapter XIII.

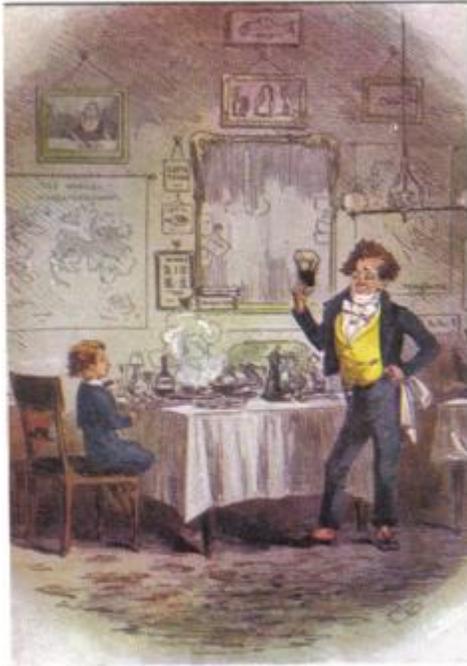


*J. Dickson
London*

After the picture by "Pina."

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

"What a world of gammon and espionage it is, though, ain't it?"—Miss Mowcher, Chapter xxx.

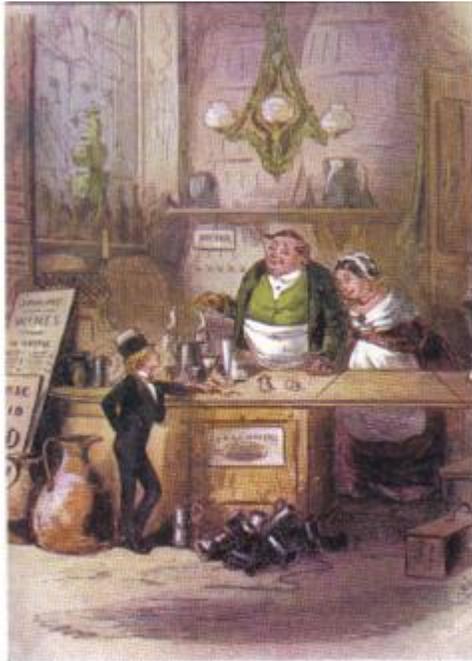


J. D. ...

After the party by "Pete"

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

"I'll drink it, if you like. I'm used to it, and use it every-
thing. I don't think it'll hurt me, if I throw my head back, and
take it off quick. Shall I?" - Tom Warren, *Chaplin's*.



*J. Dickens
Loves*

After the picture by "Pina."

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

"Just draw me a glass of the Genuine Stoning, if you please, with a good head on it."—DAVID, Chapter 21.



J.
R.
L.

After the picture by "Phiz."

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

"You are the Mr. Murdstone who married the widow of my late uncle, David Copperfield, of Humbledon-Rookery? Though why Rookery, I don't know!"—BETSY TRITHEM, Chapter six.



LITTLE DORRIT.
"None of your eyes at me," said Mr. F.'s aunt, shivering with hostility. "Take that."—*Chapter ix., Book II.*

In
Dickens
Lent



LITTLE DOBBIT.
Mrs. Flornish's father was handsomely regaled. Clemens
had never seen anything like his magnanimous protection by that
other father, he of the Marshobos, and was lost in the con-
templation of its many wonders.—*Chapter XXXI, Book I.*

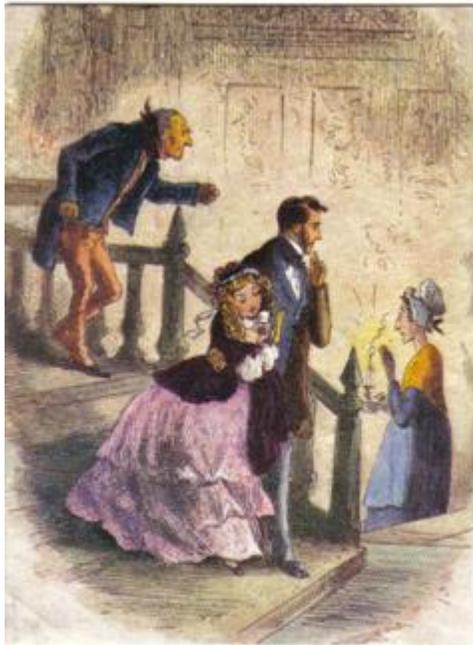
L.
D.
L.



Mr. Flintwick
Mrs. Dorrit
Leant

LITTLE DORRIT.

"Affery, my woman," said Mr. Flintwick, grimly. "if you don't get tea pretty quick, old woman, you'll become sensible of a rattles and a tush that'll send you flying to the other end of the kitchen."—*Chapter xv., Book 1.*



LITTLE DORRIT.

*L
Dickens
Lent*

"You are very obedient indeed really, and it's extremely honorable and gentlemanly in you I am sure but still at the same time if you would like to be a little tighter than that I shouldn't consider it intrusive."—FRANK, Chapter xxiii. End II.



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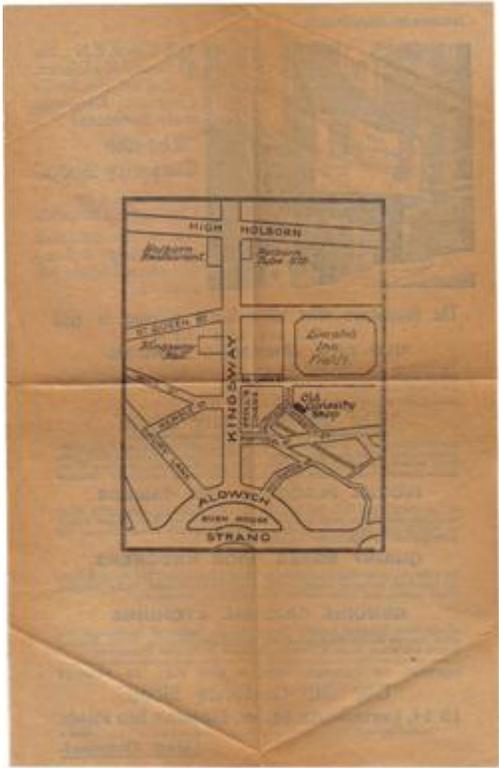
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[Map Overleaf.]





BREAK HOUSE.

Prince Turvydrop, never rested for an instant. His distinguished father did nothing whatever, but stand before the fire, a model of Deportment.—*Chapter xiv.*

*For
Dickens
London*



BLEAK HOUSE.
"My son!" said Mr. Turveydrop. "My children! I cannot resist your prayer. Be happy!"—*Chapter xxii.*

J. R. Dickson
London



HEAR HOUSE.

*The
Dickens
Comic*

"I've always been coming and a-moving on, ever since I was born. Where can I possibly move to more nor I do move?"
—Jo, Chapter six.



*Richard
Linn*

BLEAK HOUSE.

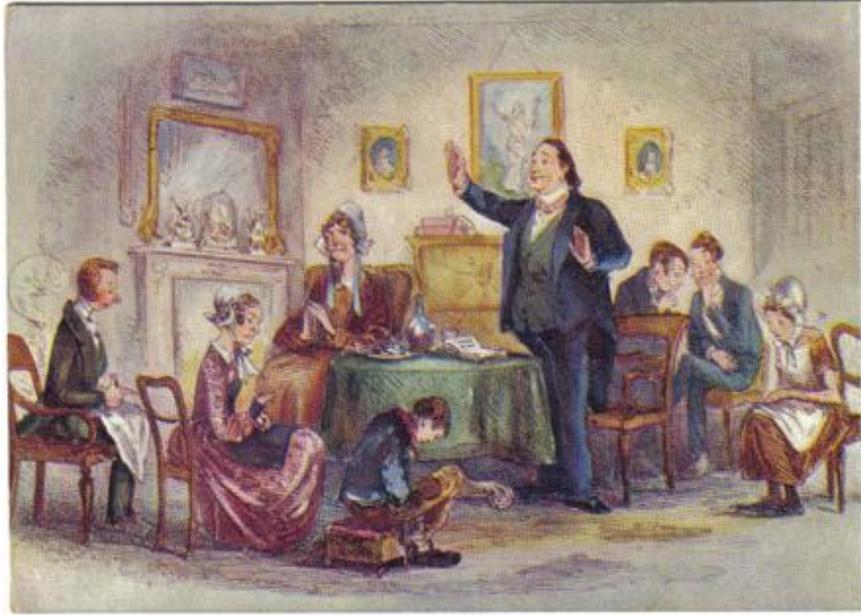
"Here you see me utterly incapable of helping myself, and entirely in your hands. I only ask to be free. The trustees are free. Maskell will surely not deny to Harold Skewton what it concedes to the butterflies?"—HAROLD SKEWTON, CHAPTER VI.



BREAK HOUSE.

The young man of the name of Guppy, much discomfited, and not presenting a very impressive letter of introduction in his manner and appearance.—*Chapter xix.*

J. Leighton
Paint



BLEAK HOUSE.
"We have here among us, my friends, ... a brother and a
boy: David of parents devoid of relations, devoid of friends and
heir, devoid of gold and silver, and of precious stones."
—MR. CHADWICK, *Chapter XXV.*

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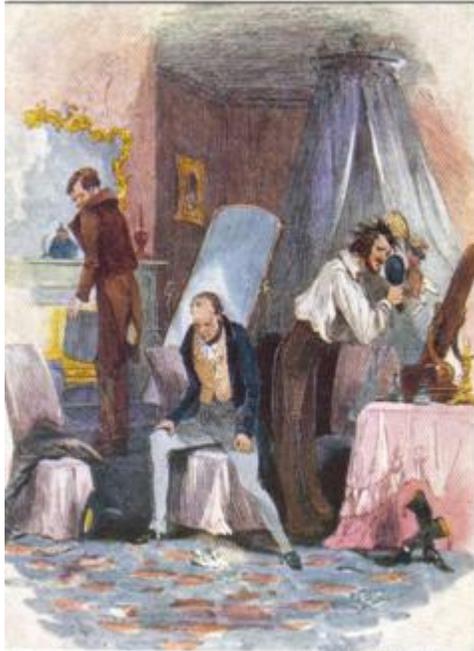
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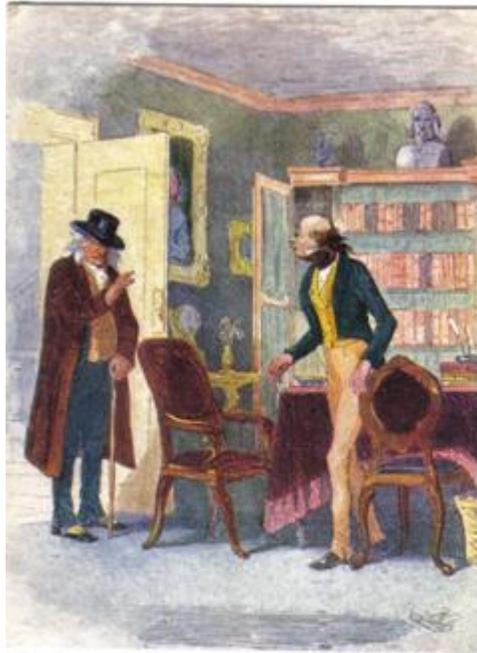
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MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.
"Oh! confused your honour," interrupted Jonas. . . . "I want a little more control over the money. You may have all the honour, if you like: I'll never bring you to book for that." — CHAP. XXV.



*Le
Dickens
Lond*

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.

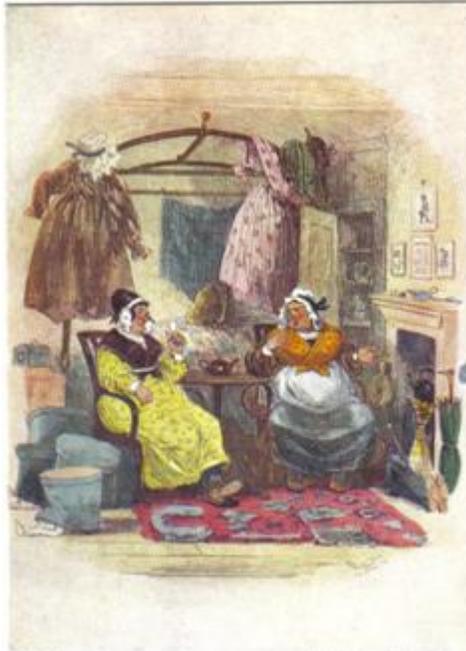
One glance at the resolute face, the watchful eye, the vigorous hand upon the staff, the triumphant purpose in the figure, and such a light broke in on Yate as blinding sun.

—Chapter I.



Le
Dickens
Louis

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.
"You may bestride my senseless horse, sir. That is very likely. I can imagine a mind like yours deriving great satisfaction from any measure of that kind. But while I continue to be called upon to assist, sir, you must stifle or blow through me."—MR. PECKSNIFF, *Chapter VIII.*

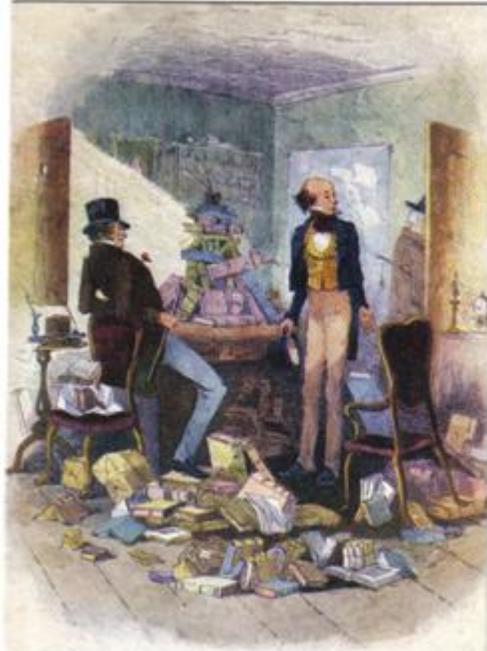


Richard Lane
MARTIN CHALZEDWITZ.
"Betsy," said Mrs. Gamp, filling her own glass, and passing the teapot, "I will now propose a toast. My frequent partner, Betsy Prig!"
"Which, altering the name to Sarah Gamp; I drink," said Mrs. Prig, "with love and tenderness."—Chapter xlv.



Richard Lane
Such a busy little woman as she was! So full of self-importance, and trying so hard not to smile, or seem uncertain about anything.—*Chapter XXXIX.*

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.



L.
Dickens
Tom

MARTIN CHuzzleWY.

"Why, he's gone," cried Tom.
"And what's more, Tom," said John Westlock, "... he is evidently not coming back again, so here you are installed, under rather singular circumstances, Tom!"—(Chapter xxiv.)