CHARLES DICKENS
(1836)

From a painting by Samuel Laurence, R.A.

THE DICKENS SOUVENIR of 1912.

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and
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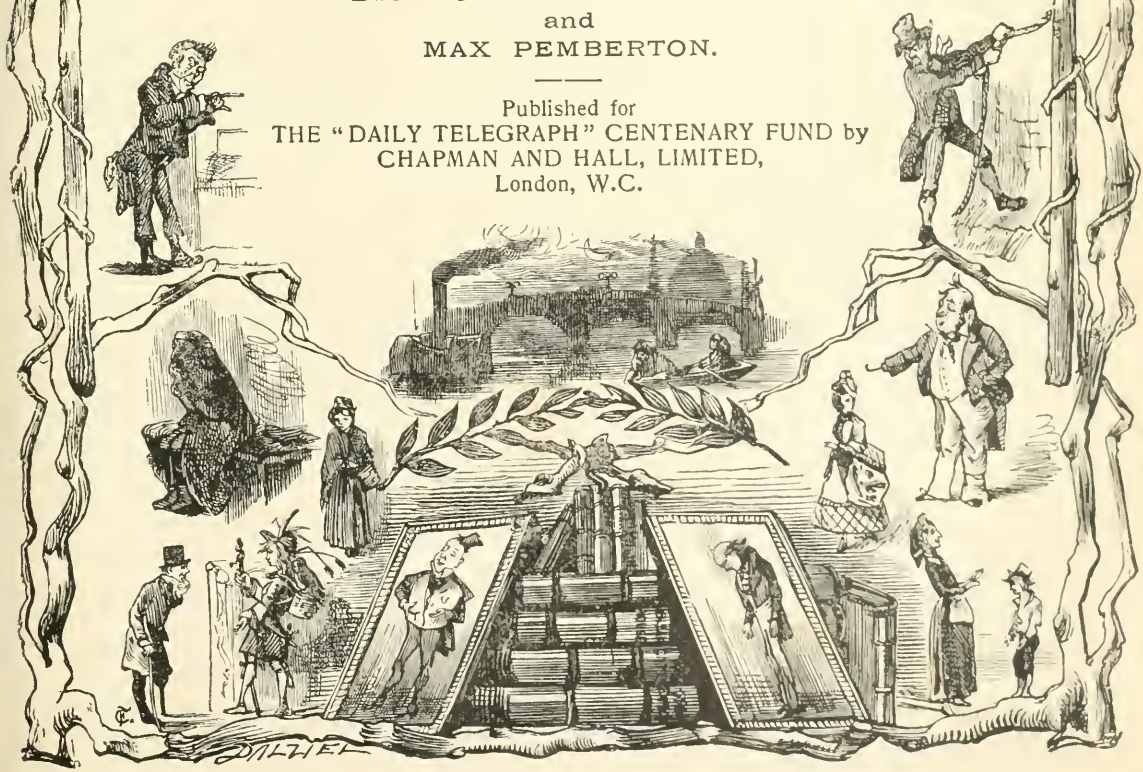

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INTRODUCTION.

May I, on behalf of the Performance Committee and Executive, gratefully thank all and everyone of the celebrated ladies and gentlemen who have taken part in the making of to-night's Dickens Centenary Entertainment. Without their generous and sympathetic response, this labour of love would have been an absolute impossibility. The undertaking has been a big one, and though the result obviously falls short of a tribute to so great a name as Charles Dickens demands, may I venture to hope that those who would have wished for perhaps greater things, will look upon to-night's most earnest and reverent endeavours with a kindly and indulgent eye. Whatever faults there be, are mine, and I readily accept the responsibility for them.

Mr. Oswald Stoll, in lending us his beautiful theatre, has placed us deeply in his debt. Artistes, actors and musicians have given us their time, their labour and their great talents, and in thanking them again, as well as Messrs. Chapman and Hall, Limited, who have most kindly produced this souvenir, and the many many others who have worked unseen, for the successful steering of a ship, which, without their aid, might easily have become a derelict, may we thank you, ladies and gentlemen of the play-going public, who, ever ready at the call of need, have again come forward to-night, for charity's sweet sake.

Seymour Hicks.

January 7th, 1912.

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CHARLES DICKENS.

AN EULOGY.

By L. Cope Cornford.

Dickens the maker, the lover of laughter, the friend of children, the comrade of the poor, the supreme and incomparable teller of stories, the great artist, passed from mortal view some forty years since, but we of this generation do not think of him as we think of the dead. For our life is rounded in a double sphere; interwoven both with the things we see and handle, which crumble into dust, and the things of the unseen, which is the immortal. From time to time the kind gods send to us a fairy man, dowered by right of birth with sovranty in the spiritual world. At his beck, behold a new realm opens, peopled with men and women, youths and maids, who, because they never lived shall never die. They tread the pavement side by side with us, and we look into their eyes and know them for the friends upon whom time and change own no dominion. It is we who change, not they; and he is most happy who, remembering the sharp, sweet ecstasy of the first discovery, in age still visits the familiar haunted avenues with a sober joy.

From that first rapturous moment, when you first opened the fresh pages (smelling sweeter than new bread), nothing is the same. Go where you will, the spirit of Dickens, in never mind what delightful avatar, goes with you. In London his people are everywhere. You can no more help greeting them than yourself can pass invisible among the moving multitude that throngs the footways. The faces of the living people go by, hundreds and hundreds of faces, and every one is the mask to a story. It peers from the windows of their eyes; mouth and hands are quick with it; the turn of a garment is eloquent; a moment, and it is gone, undeciphered, until the coming of the fairy man.

Dickens came and told the stories: he tells them still; tells them to us, the fortunate heirs of a bequest uncomputable in terms of wealth, like the kingdom of heaven, of which it is a sin even to speak in terms of the market-place. So truly did Dickens interpret, that he fixed the type; and we rather appreciate the world by comparison with his

creatures than try his creatures at the bar of the world. To which of us has it not befallen, that in the turn of an eyelid the grouping of a scene becomes Dickens manifest? Straying into some shadowy antre of the city, it is suddenly borne in upon us that in yonder gloomy counting-house Dickens talked with old Anthony Chuzzlewit. Peer through the grimy panes and you shall see old Chuffey intent upon a ledger, and Jonas slinking behind the desk. You shall hardly prowl in Austin Friars without meeting Mr. Fips; in Lincoln's Inn Fields Mr. Guppy blooms perennial; in Staple Inn the legend "P.J.T." still marks the lintel of the lonely home of Mr. Grewgious; and, lingering in that sparrow-haunted stillness, it is odds but you catch a glimpse of young Neville Landless reading at an upper window. Or if, like the little man in Toby Magsman's Caravan, you "go into society," you shall sooner or later inevitably meet Lady Tippins, and the Veneerings, and Boots and Buffer, and Mr. Twemlow, and the two life-weary barristers-at-law, even, with luck, the prosperous city man who said "other things are very well in their way, but give me Blood!" what time young David Copperfield was of the party.

Dr. Johnson, with his habitual sagacity, once observed that the worth of a book consisted in its truth. The living testimony to the works of Charles Dickens is daily pressed upon us whether we will or no. For truth consists, not in copying, but in imitation; and imitation, as the wise Greek said, consists in carrying to perfection the idea imperfectly expressed in nature. The denial of the right principle of imitation results in the essential falsehood called realism; ignorance of it dictates the dull charge that Dickens used exaggeration. But it is not only that we perceive in life a thousand evidences of the great maker's intimate alliance with nature. By means of a magic that defies analysis he peopled the substantial world from which he elicited the type, with a multitude owning a separate and an eternal existence. We of a later generation both recognise the places remaining from his time to ours, and (because human nature does not change) the persons Dickens drew.

But, in addition, we are aware of a goodly company, whom we know as we know the friends of our own household, and whose acquaintance makes the better part of life. Thackeray relates that one day as he sat in his study the door opened and in walked Captain Costigan, straight out of "Pendennis." Why not? Would you be surprised if you met Mr. Micawber, "with his eyeglass and his walking stick, and his shirt-collar, and his genteel air, and the condescending roll in his voice, all complete?" and if, after a refreshing interval of majestic conversation, he departed "making a good deal of noise on the pavement with his shoes and humming a tune as he went?" A little

bewildered, perhaps, and highly gratified, but hardly amazed. You do not agree? How is it, then, that you recognise in the late Fred Barnard's admirable portraits of the Dickens folk a verisimilitude so absolute that no other presentment is even possible? . . .

Have we not returned the salute of George, the ex-dragoon, striding towards Leicester Square, and marked Jo plying his broom at his crossing, and beheld Mr. Snagsby, "as he stands at his door in Cook's Court, in his grey shop-coat and black calico sleeves, looking up at the sky?" Go to! The writer knows one person, at least, who seldom passes through the transformed streets about Millbank, without perceiving Mr. Eugene Wrayburn negligently strolling towards the dark house where Lizzie dwelt with the Doll's Dressmaker, who, when that idle gentleman appeared, used to turn my lady Truth with her face to the wall. When the Thames tide, hasting seaward, is stained with the red of the lowering sun, going down in smoke and fire beyond the darkling bridges, the same dreamer is aware of a small boat held against the flood by a girl plying the sculls, while a bare-headed man sitting in the stern-sheets scans the troubled water like a bird of prey. The same dreamer, too, has lingered in the Cathedral close in the autumn twilight to watch the choir-boys disperse from the side door, and the Choir-master (wrapping a long black scarf about his throat) exchange a few pleasant words with the courtly Dean, ere he crosses, brooding, to his rooms in the Gate-house. Going home, the dreamer has passed that unaccountable gentleman with the shock of white hair, who also lodged in the Gate-house, and has wondered (for the hundredth time) if Mr. Datchery's real name was Drood. Mr. Datchery was talking to a bent and sinister old woman, and it seemed, as one went by, that he was giving her money. The brain that held the secret, never now to be told, failed in a moment on that summer's day at Gad's Hill, and the pen dropped from the fingers of the master. Better so than to linger as Scott lingered. You remember when they brought pen and paper to the stricken veteran . . . the story does not bear repetition. Rather let us say, as the young Dumas said of his great father, that the master builded a monument that shall endure.

It is a law of nature, as it is a law of art, that action should be inherently related to the scene in which it occurs, so that the deed or word should be, not merely appropriate to its surroundings but, a part of them. We perceive the operation of this rule most plainly in the art of the theatre; and, although it is true that the essentials of the drama are and remain four boards, two actors and a passion, the mind continues to demand as of right that the scene should be, as Dickens used to say, "in a concatenation accordingly." It was given to

Mr. Henry James, that urbane and subtle critic, to reveal to the stolid Englishman the extraordinary and far-reaching "sense of the picturesque" in the work of Dickens. In terms of another art, the quality is called atmosphere. Each of us spins his own atmosphere in this world, as a silkworm spins its cocoon. Dickens, with his fingers on the pulse of action in the hearts of men, wove the atmosphere as well. One of the most remarkable of his pictures (and perhaps one of the least regarded) is the description of the view beheld from the room of M. Todgers's boarding-house—no less.

"Gables, house tops, garret-windows, wilderness upon wilderness. Smoke and noise enough for all the world at once. After the first glance there were slight features in the midst of this crowd of objects, which sprang out from the mass without any reason, as it were, and took hold of the attention whether the spectator would or no. Thus, the revolving chimney-pots on one great stack of buildings seemed to be turning gravely to each other every now and then, and whispering the result of their separate observation of what was going on below. Others, of a crook-backed shape, appeared to be maliciously holding themselves askew, that they might shut the prospect out and baffle Todgers's. The man who was mending a pen at an upper window over the way became of paramount importance in the scene, and made a blank in it, ridiculously disproportionate in its extent, when he retired. The gambols of a piece of cloth upon the dyer's pole had far more interest for the moment than all the changing motion of the crowd. Yet even while the looker-on felt angry with himself for this, and wondered how it was, the tumult swelled into a roar; the host of objects seemed to thicken and expand a hundredfold; and after gazing round him, quite scared, he turned into Todgers's again, much more rapidly than he came out, and ten to one he told M. Todgers afterwards that if he hadn't done so he would certainly have come into the street by the shortest cut: that is to say, headforemost."

Here is a pendant to that London canvas:—

"We passed not far from the house a few minutes afterwards. Peaceful as it had looked when we first saw it, it looked even more so now, with a diamond spray glittering all about it, a light wind blowing, the birds no longer hushed but singing strongly, everything refreshed by the late rain, and the little carriage shining at the doorway like a fairy carriage made of silver. Still, very steadfastly and quietly walking towards it, a peaceful figure too in the landscape, went Mademoiselle Hortense, shoeless, through the wet grass."

It is by virtue of his alert and vivid sense of the picturesque that Dickens was the forerunner of the best of a part of modern journalism.

His "Uncommercial Traveller" shows what journalism can be: the description of what *is*, done by an artist, and therefore literature. That journalism has something of a dubious name in this respect is because it deals too often in descriptions of what is *not*, done by ignorance in a hurry. But "The Uncommercial Traveller" remains the exemplar, and the work of the late George Steevens (for instance) survives to show to what good uses that exemplar may be turned. In one of his letters, Dickens, in his character of editor, exclaims upon the relief and joy of coming upon a man who can *write*. Dickens taught himself to write, and, as the late W. E. Henley said, taught himself to such purpose that the aspirant, instead of looking to French models, might well consider such stuff as that of which "Our Mutual Friend" is made.

Yet the catchword "Art for Art's Sake" had not been invented when Dickens wrote. It would probably have conveyed as little meaning to him as (let us say) to Sir Walter Scott. How should Dickens, the great-hearted, regard a formula which would stamp a caste-mark on the forehead of the artist? Art, as Dickens knew it, signified the inspiration of love and hate and mirth, the passions and the emotions and the fun of common people. "Do you know," wrote the great and good Sir Walter, "after all, the meaning of this word *vulgar?* It is only common; nothing that is common, except wickedness, can deserve to be spoken of with contempt. When you have lived to my years, you will be disposed to agree with me in thanking God that nothing worth having or caring about in this world is *uncommon*."

And of all people, gentle or simple, the best in the world are children. To the children, because he loved them, Dickens came with both hands full of good things; and because he loved them, he was in some sort their deliverer. Whether of set purpose or no, Dickens taught an early Victorian world, rigid with barbarous theories involving suppression, whippings, dark cupboards, prunes and prism, torture with the best intentions, and Dr. Gregory's powder, something that they gradually and not ungratefully accepted as a revelation. He taught them that the child is, not a grown-up person constructed on a small scale and therefore to be bullied into full stature but, a being of a separate and a more subtle endowment, living in another and a purer world, towards whom its elders are inevitably charged with a most high and delicate responsibility. Dickens saw that in the helplessness of a child resides a paramount appeal, of which the stupid or brutal disregard aroused his burning indignation. Perhaps only those who have children of their own may apprehend the full meaning of the early chapters of "David Copperfield," and can understand how wide and beneficent a change has been wrought by that little figure, upon whom its creator looked as

his favourite. "Like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child. And his name is David Copperfield."

The influence of a great writer is not to be measured by the pleasure he confers. "I suspect," wrote Sir Leslie Stephen, "that when the poor historian of the nineteenth century begins his superhuman work he will, as a thorough philosopher, attribute more importance to two or three recent English writers than to all the English statesmen who have been strutting and fretting their little hour at Westminster." Dickens, who once earned his living as a Parliamentary reporter, marks "one joyful night" when "I noted down the music of the Parliamentary bagpipes for the last time, and I have never heard it since, though," he adds, "I still recognise the old drone in the newspapers, without any substantial variation (except, perhaps, that there is more of it) all the livelong session."

It remains true that it is better to make the ballads of a nation than to make its laws, if only for the simple reason that the ballads are the expression of the spirit which alone makes the laws possible. Does anyone suppose that my lords and gentlemen would have bestirred themselves to enact those measures which have begun to enable England, old, dirty, lazy and covetous, to reform herself, had Dickens never etched pictures of the offspring of those vices in prison and slum that were bitten into the public heart and mind? Consider the state of the Court of Chancery, of the public offices, of the gaols, of the Poor Law, of the baser sort of schools, of the factories, of the mines, of the houses of the poor, when the fairy man illumined these things as with a flame of fire, and compare them with existing conditions. These are ill enough, heaven knows: but consider what they were! The gentlemen described by Sir Leslie Stephen may well be content with a statue here and there, soot-begrimed, most melancholy in the rain, and clothed with a fine indifference to the human form: truly they have their reward. They used the by-products of energy as it served their turn: but who lit the fire and fanned it into flame? He, too, has his reward: for he lives for ever in the hearts of the common people.

Conceive the gay courage of this young man, Charles Dickens. It would seem expedient for the commencing author first of all to court popularity; and adopting the politicians' motto, "What will People Say?" sedulously to avoid offending vested interests and injuring the feelings of a bagman. But, not at all. At the age of twenty-nine, writing to a correspondent, he says:—"I will pursue cruelty and oppression, the enemies of all God's creatures of all codes and creeds, so long as I have the energy of thought and the power of giving it utterance." And he did. Wherever Dickens found oppression, cruelty, stupidity,

dirt, and greed, he fell upon them amain. Wholly undismayed by the spectacle of suffering and sin, possessed by an indomitable faith in goodness, he proved once and for all that to be in earnest it is not necessary to be either dull or sad. And so, victor in that field where many brave men have left their bones, he won popularity as well. He used, in jest, to sign himself The Inimitable: and inimitable he was.

Nor let it be supposed that his task was easy. To write books—how delightful? Yes, but for art, as Balzac said, you must give your skin. Any fool can write a book, if that were all. But Dickens gave his life-blood. When he was not writing, he was gathering in a passionate zeal that knowledge which was his raw material. He was a miner indefatigably delving into the thick of the world. What lay about him he learned by heart. What place he visited soever he dug into its recesses. He read enormously. Like Sir Walter, he talked with all whom he met, and also like Sir Walter, never without profit. Smaller men may take their work easily. Not so Dickens. An idea would so possess him, that he would walk and walk, thirty miles straight on end, wrestling with it as Jacob wrestled with the Angel. Many a time, as he relates, he has walked London all night. And when he sat down to write, the man was wholly swallowed up and submerged in his work. "Coming out of 'Copperfield' into a condition of temporary and partial consciousness" . . . thus he begins a letter to a friend.

Consider, too, the conditions under which Dickens was compelled to write. His books were published in monthly numbers; and well or ill, Dickens must achieve his instalment, month by month consecutively for two years. It is true that the necessity proved a strong incentive: nevertheless, none but an athlete could stay the course. By what heroic labours he gained the laurel, let Forster tell, and Dickens' own radiant letters.

Had Dickens applied to another calling that indomitable energy, that perennial enthusiasm, that amazing fertility of invention, he would have amassed a fortune which would have maintained his descendants in comfort, generation after generation. But here falls to be considered a monstrous injustice; an injustice which cannot be understood, so long as it is tacitly assumed that this country is civilised. Alike by our treatment of women and our treatment of artists, we stand condemned. The two are purposely linked together: for it is by its idea of womanhood and by its idea of the wealth created by the artist, that a people or a nation is finally judged. There may be innumerable respectable reasons on the one side, why this or that should not be granted; there is but one reason on the other, and its name is Justice.

Important and eminent gentlemen in Parliament, enjoying in perpetuity the estates gained for them by their fathers, still decline—alleging innumerable respectable reasons—to permit the writer to bequeath his possessions to his heirs. At the expiration of a term of years, so that the forfeiture may, and does, occur in his life-time, the writer is by law deprived of all title to his own works. A more senseless cruelty was never perpetrated in the name of the public good. For, in the face of the patent facts, it is still solemnly affirmed that the community benefits by the deliberate legalised robbery of the author.

Charles Dickens is one of the greatest writers England ever bore; he stands among the greatest writers in the world. How he has been treated, we know. The law robbed him while he lived; nor did he cease from protesting against that larceny; it robs him now that he is dead; and it is a part of the object of this book to protest on his behalf. In his memory we protest.

To his immortal memory, what shall we say, if not Hail—never farewell!

January, 1912.

"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 Vice President of the House of Commons, but
I shall have something to say to the Beak, and
so will he and so will a wery numerous and
respectable circle of acquaintance as'll make
them beaks wish they'd never been born, or
that they'd sot their footman to have
'em up to their own [illegible] afore they
let 'em come out this morning to try it on
upon me. I'll —

"There; he's fully committed" interposed the
clerk. "Take him away."

FACSIMILE OF A PORTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF "OLIVER TWIST."

CHARLES DICKENS AND THE LAW.

By The Right Hon. Sir Edward Clarke, K.C.

I am asked to write a few lines about Charles Dickens.

To do this, and, by doing it, to be able to help, in however small degree, some of the less fortunate of his grandchildren, is a pleasant task to a lawyer.

Especially so to one who has spent his life in the Temple, and has seldom passed one of its working days without being reminded of some passage in one of the works of the Master. My early years of legal work were spent on the ground floor of 3, Garden Court; whence I was driven when the old houses were pulled down; and now I look from the window of my room on the fountain where Tom Pinch used to meet his sister, and where John Westlock appeared one day when Ruth was coming up the steps. How often have I trodden those steps, and thought of Ruth turning hurriedly away, and John Westlock running after her, and bringing her back, and then going off with her and her brother to dine and spend the happy afternoon in Furnival's Inn, where Dickens lived, and which he loved so well.

If all the crowd of characters who throng the works of Dickens were marshalled into groups, the lawyers' group would be the largest; of all professions and callings, the lawyer's calling was that he knew the best.

When just 15, Charles Dickens found himself in an attorney's office, Mr. Charles Molloy, 6, Symonds Inn (not 6, New Square, as John Forster put it). Years afterwards, in "Bleak House," he described the Inn: "A little, pale, wall-eyed, woe-begone Inn, like a huge dustbin of two compartments and a sifter." Then came a year and a-half with Ellis and Blackmore, at 1, Raymond's Buildings, Gray's Inn, and there he studied the different types and classes of attorneys' clerks.

In a well-known passage in "Pickwick" he describes the four grades in this branch of the profession; there are many brief sketches of their representatives, and in Lowten, Wemmick, and especially in Mr. Guppy, "of Penton Place, Pentonville, in the County of Middlesex," we have highly-finished studies.

Dickens was only a junior clerk, and got no more than 15s. a week; and, teaching himself Gurney's shorthand, he drifted off into the casual life of Fleet Street; reporting in the Chancery Courts, and laying up in his mind the material for the vivid sketch of a pre-Victorian Lord Chancellor which opens "Bleak House."

Ellis disappeared from practice; and Blackmore moved to Mitre Court, Fleet Street, where it is likely enough that Charles Dickens kept in touch with the acquaintances he had made in Raymond's Buildings. For two or three years, beginning in 1833, he wrote some scattered pieces; but in none of these, nor in the "Sketches by Boz," now sometimes looked at because that name became so famous, was there any great sign of power. The fame of Charles Dickens began when, in August of 1836, he introduced Mr. Pickwick and the public to Sam Weller blacking boots in the yard of the White Hart Inn, High Street, Borough; and the trial of Bardell *v.* Pickwick, which came a few months later, sealed his success.

Dickens in all his best works painted direct from life, and just before he brought Sam Weller into existence a trial had taken place which commanded public interest, and might have had most important results.

It only lasted one day, the 22nd of June, 1836, and more than half the contents of the *Times* newspaper the following day consisted of the verbatim report of the evidence, and the very full report of the speeches. It is curious that the Annual Register for 1836 does not contain, even in the monthly chronicle, any mention of it. It was an action for crim. con. brought by Mr. Norton, the magistrate, against Lord Melbourne; and so high did party passion run that the *Times*, before the case was tried, spoke of the Government as the Crim. Con. Cabinet.

The Attorney-General (Sir John Campbell), Serjeant Talfourd and Mr. Thesiger (afterwards Lord Chelmsford) appeared for Lord Melbourne; Sir William Follett was for the plaintiff.

Three very short letters from Lord Melbourne were put in evidence. One was "I will call about a quarter to four.—Yours, MELBOURNE." The others were equally trivial. But Sir William was portentously solemn about them. Said he, "There is something in the style even of these trivial notes to lead at least to something of suspicion." Again, "They seem to import something more than the words convey." The witnesses broke down badly; late in the evening the verdict was given for the defendant. The cheers in Court were heard in the temporary House of Commons on the other side of Westminster Hall, and when Campbell entered he was cheered by both sides of the House.

One can understand the delight of the public when Serjeant Buzfuz, "drawing forth two very small slips of paper," said, "And now, gentlemen, but one word more. Two letters have passed between these parties; letters which are admitted to be in the handwriting of the defendant, and which speak volumes indeed. . . . They are covert,

sly, underhanded communications, but fortunately far more conclusive than if couched in the most glowing language and the most fervent imagery—letters that must be viewed with a cautious and suspicious eye. . . . Let me read the first: 'Garraway's, twelve o'clock. Dear Mrs. B.—Chops and tomato sauce.—Yours, PICKWICK.' Gentlemen, what does this mean?"

But it was not only the greatest advocate of the day who was ridiculed in this wonderful chapter. Mr. Justice Gaselee had been fourteen years on the bench of the Common Pleas, and was easily recognised under the title of Mr. Justice Stareleigh. It is possible that in his case the ridicule had a serious result, for in a month or two after the trial was published he resigned his judgeship.

It has been suggested that the original of Serjeant Buzfuz was to be found in Ralph Thomas, the curious person who used to practice at the Old Bailey, and sold violins and pictures at 16, Stratford Place, and there employed John Millais at a salary of two guineas a week. But when "Pickwick" was published Thomas had only been six years at the Bar, and it was ten years later before he received the coif. There can be little doubt that, so far as Buzfuz was sketched from life, the sitter was Serjeant Bompas, who was, in 1827 (the supposed date of the trial), the junior of the twenty-two serjeants who then enjoyed special privilege in the Court of Common Pleas. The late Judge Bompas confidently claimed the honour for his father, and there is a suggestion in the sound of the name.

I only know one other case in which a name cited by Charles Dickens quite clearly indicated the original of the portrait. When Oliver Twist was charged with stealing a book he was brought before a violent and ill-tempered magistrate, whom Dickens called Fang, "on a morning when a newspaper had commended him for the 350th time to the attention of the Home Secretary."

No one failed to see that it was Mr. Laing, the magistrate at Bow Street, who was being thus described.

But although he avoided obvious names he sometimes gave a clue by his description of their surroundings.

Sir Frank Lockwood said he never could understand why Dickens located Serjeant Snubbin in the regions of Equity; but the fact is that in 1827, when Dickens was with Mr. Blackmore, Mr. Serjeant W. O. Russel, little known as an advocate, but perhaps, like Serjeant Snubbin, a much sought-for adviser, had his chambers at 5, Old Square, Lincoln's Inn.

In "Great Expectations" there is another indication of this kind, which seems to me pretty clear. When Pip travels by coach to London

to see Mr. Jaggers, the great police-court attorney, the card bearing Mr. Jaggers' address has written on it, "just out of Smithfield and close by the coach office." The coach office was at Wood Street, Cheapside, and it cost Pip a shilling to get to the attorney's office. When Pip, not finding Mr. Jaggers in, went out for a walk, he went towards Smithfield, and not liking the look of it, turned down a street which led straight to the Old Bailey. When "Great Expectations" appeared in 1860 the name of Jas. G. Lewis was better known than that of any other attorney in this class of work, and for over twenty-five years his office had been at 10, Ely Place, Holborn.

There is another personal indication which I have never seen noticed, but which has always specially interested me.

The one great heroic character to be found in the works of Charles Dickens is Sydney Carton. In all his writings there is nothing, to my thinking, to equal in depth of pathos or strength of expression the chapter which tells of the last hour of Carton's life. I have heard it spoken of as stilted and artificial. The criticism is not true. There are sentences which, torn from their surroundings, may look strained. But let the whole chapter be read aloud, or better still, heard from the musical voice of another, and the criticism will never be repeated.

Carton—Memory Carton—was the jackal to a famous lion, a Queen's Counsel who strutted for a showy hour on the public stage. Stryver, "stout, loud, red, bluff, and free from any drawback of delicacy," shouldered himself into Parliament, and the year before "The Tale of Two Cities" was published, made his most notable forensic speech.

It was at 2, Dr. Johnson's Buildings that Stryver, Q.C., and Memory Carton had their working chambers.

Neither of them was quite as bad as he was painted. Stryver lived freely, but was not a drunkard. Carton never sank so low as in the book was pictured; nor ever rose—perhaps because the occasion never came—to the sublime self-sacrifice which Dickens so nobly described.

Stryver disappeared from England; and soon after, Carton was found at his "high chamber in a well of houses" almost starving. The generosity of his brother barristers gave four hundred pounds to equip him with books and clothing, and help him to start a new career in another land.

Edward Clarke

16th December, 1911.

SOME MEMORIES OF DICKENS AND "HOUSEHOLD WORDS."

By Percy Fitzgerald, M.A., F.S.A.

The old original "Household Words" office was a graceful, *dainty* little structure. It really seemed in keeping with the brilliant owner, and even with his genial sympathetic character. It stood half way up Wellington Street, Strand, about half a dozen houses from York Street on the right hand side, as we look from the Strand. It was a miniature sort of office, but sufficed. Exceedingly pretty was the bowed front, the bow reaching up for two stories, each giving a flood of light, quite necessary for literary work. It seemed more a residence suited, as the auctioneers say, for "a bachelor of position." As you looked from the other side you could well see through the windows that the "drawing-room floor," where the Master sat, was handsomely furnished.

I well recall the first time I stood thus gazing, in a sort of wistful admiration and awe commingled, somewhere about 1857. I had then begun to contribute, and had come to London to make myself known, as one ought to do, to my great chief. I felt nervous, and hovered about the place, going down to the Strand and returning. At last I made up my mind, and approached timidly. "Such a weary, sultry day;" I wrote in a diary: "was three times at 'Household Words' office, a pretty little place, *my* house now." And here I find a rough sketch of it. "Nice little bow window on first floor, the Editor's room. Mr. Wills was not in. 'Who shall I say called?' 'Mr. ——.' 'Is it Mr. ——, of ——?' 'Yes.' 'O, then, I have no doubt he will be very pleased to see you!'" Grateful words, like manna. "Later in the evening, about seven, came back once more. 'Mr. Wills will see you, sir.'" Now for the awful moment, for he foreshadowed the Master. But I found him friendly and good-natured, though I noted a certain *literal* or pedantic air. He became the warmest of friends.

There was but little room in the office for business purposes, but sufficient for Boz, and most convenient as a *pied-à-terre*, when he had to spend a night in town, after dining out, instead of at Gad's Hill. It was most convenient for his theatre going. He had a favourite private walk from the South Eastern Station to the office, always taking Chandos Street, perhaps a reminder of the childish "blacking days," and through Maiden Lane into Wellington Street. Local tradesmen have

told me that they noted regularly his lithe figure briskly flitting past as the clock struck, his little bag in his hand. I have been privileged to have some festive meetings in the little rooms, one special one, after the long expedition to Knebworth for the dramatic college inauguration, a long, long day, but a happy one. We arrived with his sister-in-law and his two charming daughters for a pleasant supper at the office. How many a talk I used to have with him, being allowed to come with suggestions, valuable or valueless. Sometimes I would find him at lunch. "Try some of this good *foie gras*," was the invitation. "It is from Fortnum's. And mark this! Everything you get from Fortnum's, is wine included." (The firm is welcome to this advertisement.)

It may be imagined what an interesting thing—supposing that the old office of "Household Words" in Wellington Street were to give up its secrets—would be the accounts and entries, denoting the list of contributors and their contributions, with the sums paid to them according to the scale of their merit. By a happy chance some of these entries have been preserved. They came into the possession of Wills—probably as a relic, or by gift from Dickens when the journal came to an end. From him it passed to his widow, Mrs. Wills, and from her to her sister, Lady Priestley, who, as she told me, possessed a large collection of interesting papers, correspondence, etc., mostly associated with Dickens. I should think his letters to Wills must be singularly interesting because so confidential. Unfortunately, the corresponding book or ledger for "All the Year Round" has disappeared; it was known at one time to be in the hands of a lady whose name I have forgotten, and I believe was seen and examined by the late Mr. Kitton, whose researches were used by Mr. Matz when collecting Dickens' unacknowledged papers.

It is rarely that a literary man is gifted with the power of modelling his literary friends. May I relate what I have done in this way: Carlyle, I had the extraordinary privilege of modelling only a few weeks before his death, and the bust is now appropriately placed in Chelsea Town Hall. Dickens I have modelled five times, and the busts are placed, one in Rochester Museum, a second in the Bath Pump Room, a third in the archway of the Prudential Company, raised on the site of Furnival's Inn; another at Chalk, where Boz spent his honeymoon; and a fifth in the Museum at Boulogne. These announcements may seem a little boastful; still, they may have a sort of interest for Boz-lovers.

I have many a scene and dramatic picture associated with the office of the "All the Year Round" in Wellington Street *North* (as it used to be). One comes back on me in the most vivid way on the eve of his departure for the disastrous American Reading Tour. It had

come to the last day previous to his going down to Liverpool. The good, honest, ever-sensible Forster wrote to me seriously—"You should be here, my dear friend, and wait on our friend; 'tis your duty—he will expect it," and so I hurried to town. Never shall I forget the scene at the little Wellington Street office. I went up the narrow stair and met others coming down; it was a regular *levée*. I recall his weary, harassed look. However, I was not one of those who like to make themselves important and fussy at such a crisis, but I just pressed into his hand a poorish little souvenir for the voyage—a cigar case. How kindly he took it, though he did not want such a thing at all, and he thanked me so much for the Garrick sheets—(that is *printed* proofs). (I was bringing out a Life of the Actor.) He had heard of it, and actually asked me to give him the proofs "as it would amuse him on the voyage." The sheets had not been printed, but I rushed to the Press and got a whole set struck off just in time. I told them "it was for Mr. Dickens," and everyone exerted themselves.

Now comes a strange business which I can hardly account for to this hour. The generous Dickens had arranged a special train or special carriage for a number of selected friends and his own family, but at this date I cannot recall who his friends were. We were to go down to Liverpool, spend the night in farewell festivity at the great Adelphi, go on board with him next day and "see him off." He invited me—pressed me—in the warmest, kindest way, almost as a matter of course. But I could not bring myself to go. Somehow I thought there would be a roystering party, and that "I would not fit in with it." In vain all my friends and the family pressed—the amiable Boz was surprised, and I think was a little hurt, and no wonder; but I had my oddities at the time. On reflection I really think it was a sort of timidity and that it was too almost sacred an occasion for jollity. But how absurd to be so delicate! However, on the morning of the departure I was at the station, and found the whole party in their carriage, and we parted on the most affectionate terms. I see the good amiable man with an affected jollity, surrounded by his family. And there was high *affected* jollity at the Adelphi Hotel that night. And so this amiable being set forth on what was to prove his last fateful expedition. It rescued him from all his difficulties, but—at what a cost! His life.

Most people think of Dickens as the eminent novelist—"le grand Romancier"—without recalling how many parts he played in the literary world. He had graduated in all the departments of the school, writing in "monthlies," editing a magazine, editor of a newspaper—for a short time, special correspondent—and finally, for twenty weary years, editor of a weekly paper. He was also a sparkling essayist, and the

most brilliant letter writer of his time—a dashing actor, a dramatic reader and effective speech-maker. There was scarcely anything he could not do. Art, perhaps, had but little influence on him—though he knew a good picture when he saw it; there was his limit. Neither music nor sculpture much appealed to him.

And who thinks that he was also a great publisher! He carried on a magazine of immense circulation, requiring good business habits besides much sagacity, and this—only consider it—from week's end to week's end—through all the year—never flagging a moment.

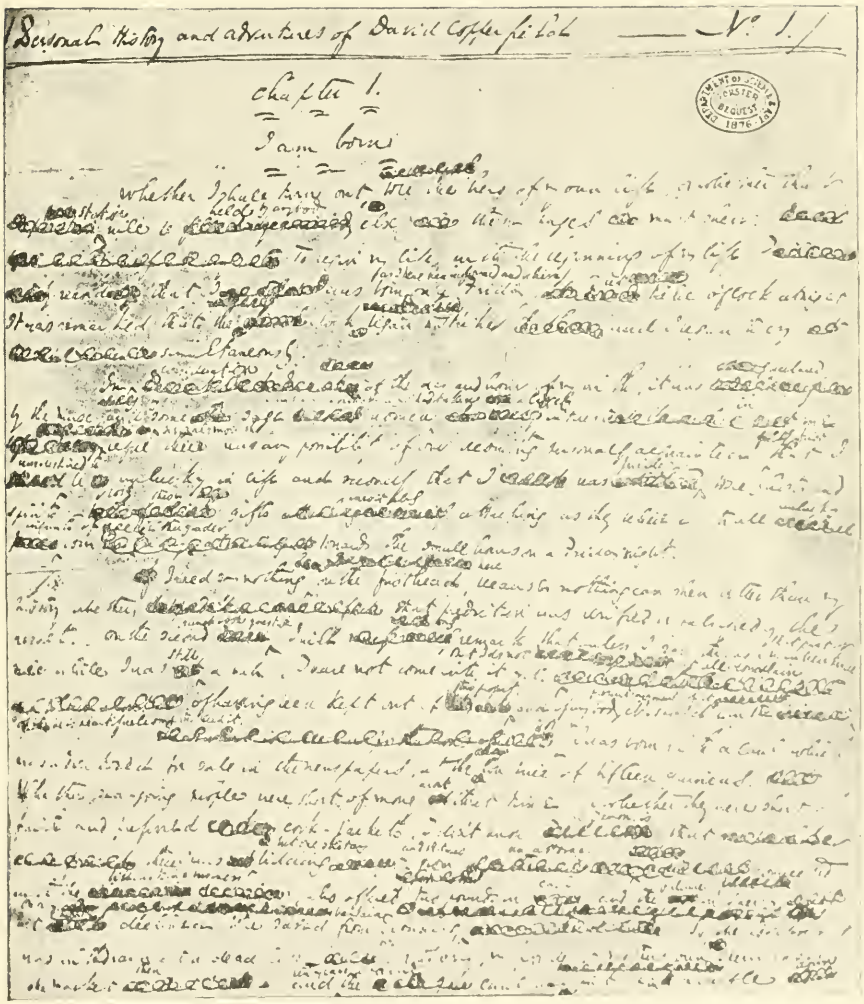
As we review the long list of writers that Boz gathered about him, we shall be astonished at their number and variety. In this place I shall just name them, and mention only those that took part in "Household Words," of which only has the official ledger remained:—W. Wilkie Collins; Charles Alston Collins; the Broughs: Fonblanque; Rev. C. H. Townshend; Speight, a novelist; Stocqueler, a military writer "of all work"; Buckland, the geologist; Peter Cunningham, Edmund Ollier; Mrs. Trollope; Miss King; Hepworth Dixon; Lang Meason; Marston, the dramatist; Horne, epic writer; Charles Kent, poet; John Hollingshead, financial writer; Edmund Yates; Moy Thomas; Leigh Hunt; G. Hogarth, Dickens' father-in-law; Allingham, poet; Charles Knight, critic and editor of Shakespeare; Justice Talfourd, author of "Ion"; Percival Leigh; Proctor, poet under the name of Barry Cornwall; Henry Chorley, musical critic; Dudley Costello; John Forster; Henry Morley; Mark Lemon; Sidney Blanchard; Bulwer Lytton; Meredith (query George?); Coventry Patmore, poet; Bayle, St. John, traveller; Heraud; W. S. Landor; Dr. Priestley; Thornbury; Spicer, a dramatist; Lang, traveller; Sala; Wraxall, later Sir Lascelles; Catermole; Dr. Russell, of Maynooth College (an unusual and unexpected appearance).

Others no doubt formed the useful "supernumeraries" of the journal, its indispensable backbone, who filled the interstices; safe, useful fellows, and always to be relied on. Any collection of facts put before them they could fashion into an interesting readable article. Many of them brought their work to the indefatigable Wills, who, with a few touches, made them assume the orthodox "Household Words" type. The sub-editor, indeed, worked with all and sundry persons, even with his great chief, and at times came actually articles of triple workmanship, in which, say, Dickens, "The Roving Englishman," and Wills united their efforts. New hands were occasionally introduced "per"—as it is set down—Mrs. Gaskell, or some other "on the staff," or, as I myself was, by John Forster, though not in his trenchant, imperious style, a thing to be done, and done at once.

The contributors might be classified according to this degree. There was the regular "staff" on the "establishment," as it were—the permanent "hands"—Wilkie Collins, Hollingshead, Sala, myself, Yates, and persons of "that" sort. The shadows of degree were rather delicately differentiated. For myself, I was on such secure ground that nothing of my writing was ever read in manuscript, but sent at once to the printer. Periodically I used to call on Wills with a list of suggested subjects, which were approved or otherwise. Agreeable as correcting is, nothing can be more painful and laborious than a daily duty of this sort; for he often found the production hopeless, and he had to try and fashion it into something respectable, or that would pass. Poor overworked Editor, this drudgery properly was not for him!

His work in the revision and correction of the proofs was really an amazing thing. When one of the long slips had been corrected it looked a blue network covering the print—so profuse and lavish were his alterations. He inserted, cut out, wrote between the lines and in the margins. This operation must have been harmful for his well-worn and over-worked eyes, correcting slips being peculiarly trying. The expense might be called terrific, and it seemed almost cheaper to re-set the whole. I can illustrate this almost princely recklessness by an instance of my own experience. When wishing much to make an experiment in novel writing, I prepared a story in one volume and put it into his hands—rather timorously, I must confess. In a week or so he had read it, and returned it to me with an unfavourable verdict, saying it was good, but wanted action. But in what shape did it reach me—the whole was atcually in print! As he said, good-naturedly, he wished to give it every advantage, and as he said truly, "'You can now get it read without difficulty." "But now," he went on, "let us go seriously into the business. I may tell you at once we shall have you presently on a regular three-decker, and when you have carefully developed a good plot and characters——" And he kept faithfully to his word.

He describes to his sub-editor the painful toils he had to go through with this revision, "licking into shape" an article otherwise desirable, but shockingly put together, its grammar arrangement and stops being all astray. He seems to have dealt with every article in the same way, cutting and hewing it to make it suitable to the tone and complexion of his journal. And here was a curious illustration of his ways—the delicate fashions of this interesting man. All this trouble and drudgery he endured for the sake of carrying out one principle, viz., that the journal should be HIMSELF, and should in every direction exhibit the special spirit of CHARLES DICKENS—in every corner and every expres-



Reduced facsimile of a portion of the manuscript of "The Personal History and Adventures of David Copperfield."

sion, but personal, should prevail. Homogeneousness could only be secured by this arduous and expensive process. On second thoughts, a paper, or series of papers, "would not do"—the printing and revision was therefore all lost. This happened again and again.

It must be confessed that there was to be noticed in the last few years of his discretion that he grew somewhat indifferent in this matter, possibly because he found that the journal was "too much for him," and *would*, in spite of all his exertions, assume the common, or miscellany, type which had become so popular. No one now cared much for the "Home Circle," or reflective methods: what was wanted?

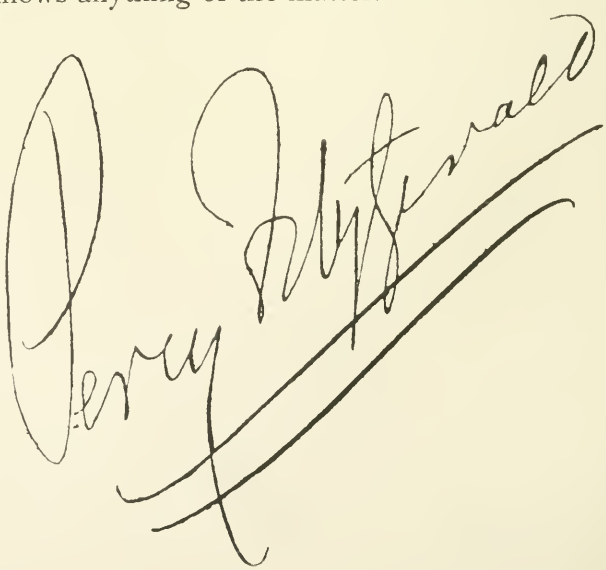
Some sort of Covent Garden business seems to be carried on there —vegetables, etc., with some shapes of produce of various kinds. Indeed, its late pleasant and ever humorous occupant would have laughed heartily—chuckled—could he have seen by anticipation the inscription that was one day to figure over his door:

SUNDRIESMAN.

And what were the "sundries" now on sale? Odds and ends of vegetables, tools for produce, etc. He would claim that he also was a "sundriesman" in his own line.

There still lingers on, an interesting survival, the old office of "All the Year Round," successor of the defunct "Household Words." This Tabernacle is at the corner of York Street, and was always a shabby tradesmanlike "shanty." It was, however, roomy and convenient. Passing through many vicissitudes, and from tenant to tenant, it has settled down into odd ways.

These may seem trivialities: but are interesting—especially as I am the only one left who knows anything of the matter.



DICKENS ON THE STAGE.

THE FIRST PERFORMANCES.

The facts given in the following Notes are gathered from Mr. S. J. Adair-Fitzgerald's "Dickens and the Drama," by permission of the publishers, Messrs. Chapman and Hall, Limited.

"BARDELL *v.* PICKWICK."

From the moment the success of "The Pickwick Papers" was assured "Pickwick" plays by the dozen constantly appeared all over the country, but these were more or less imitations of each other, and nothing new of any importance was done until January 24th, 1871, when John Hollingshead produced at the Gaiety Theatre "Bardell *versus* Pickwick," "Dramatised by Permission of the Late Charles Dickens. From his Private Copy."

The chief parts were distributed as follows:—

Serjeant Buzfuz	Mr. J. L. Toole.
Serjeant Meek	Mr. H. Vaughan.
Judge Stareleigh	Mr. J. D. Stoyle.
Mr. Pickwick	Mr. Grossmith.
Winkle	Mr. Robert Soutar.
Sam Weller	Miss E. Farren.
Usher	Mr. Fish.
Mrs. Bardell	Miss Emily Muir.
Mrs. Cluppins	Mrs. H. Leigh.
Old Weller	Mr. J. Maclean.

The "Mr. Grossmith" named was the entertainer, father of George Grossmith of Savoy fame, and Grandfather of George Grossmith, junr., of to-day.

Toole, as Serjeant Buzfuz, appeared in the proper wig and gown which were lent to him by Mr. Serjeant Ballantine; and afterwards the articles were presented to him—a gift he greatly appreciated. This work became a stock piece with Mr. Toole, and it was a feature with many Dickens's revivals at the Gaiety, the Globe, and his own little theatre in King William Street, Strand, now swallowed up by the Charing Cross Hospital.

"BARNABY RUDGE."

The first "Barnaby Rudge" play produced was by Charles Selby and Charles Melville, and was produced under the book's title at the English Opera House (the Lyceum Theatre), June 28th, 1841, with the following cast:—

Mr. Geoffry Haredale (*an English gentleman*)	Mr. Robson.
Mr. Chester (*an old man of the world*)	Mr. Selby.
Edward Chester (*his son*)	Mr. Green.
Peaker (*valet to Mr. Chester*)	Mr. Moore.
John Willet (*Landlord of "The Maypole"*)	Mr. Turnour.
Joe Willet (*his son*)	Mr. T. Green.

Solomon Daisy (*a sexton*)	Mr. Thompson.
Phil Parkes (*an exciseman*)	Mr. King.
Tom Cobb (*a postman*)	Mr. Flemming.
Gabriel Varden (*a locksmith*)	Mr. Granby.
Black Hugh (*an ostler*)	Mr. S. Smith.
Simon Tappertit (*an apprentice*)	Mr. Searle.
Barnaby Rudge	Miss Fortescue.
The Stranger	Mr. Salter.
Mrs. Varden	Mrs. Granby.
Miggs (*her maid and confidante*)	Mrs. Harris.
Dolly Varden	Miss Fitzjames.
Miss Haredale	Miss Granby.
Mrs. Rudge	Mrs. Selby.

Miss Fortescue, who later became Lady Gardner, undertook the title *rôle*, and pleased Charles Dickens very much indeed. Macready was greatly impressed by Miss Fortescue's Barnaby, and said of the performance in his Diary, under date, July 7th, 1841, "I went to the English Opera House, and saw a piece on 'Barnaby Rudge,' Miss Fortescue acting the part with great vivacity and power."

The latest version of the book on the stage was that played at the Broadway Theatre, New Cross, on December 11th, 1911, with Mr. Bransby Williams, the famous Dickens actor, as Barnaby Rudge.

"MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT."

The first "Martin Chuzzlewit" play appeared in 1844, the year of the book's publication: indeed, four versions were produced in the same year. The first, however, was by Edward Stirling, at the Lyceum Theatre, of which the following is a copy of the programme:—

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.

A Drama in Three Acts, adapted from C. Dickens, Esq., celebrated work by Edward Stirling, Esq.

First produced at the Lyceum Theatre, July 8th, 1844.

Old Martin Chuzzlewit	Mr. R. Younge.
Young Martin Chuzzlewit	Mr. F. Vining.
Mr. Jonas Chuzzlewit	Mr. Emery.
Mr. Pecksniff	Mr. F. Matthews.
Mr. Montague Tigg	Mr. A. Wigan.
Tom Pinch	Mr. Meadows.
Lewsome	Mr. Staunton.
John Westlock	Mr. Kinloch.
Mark Tapley	Mr. Sanders.
Mr. Nadget	Mr. Turner.
Mr. Jenkins	Mr. Yarnold.
Mr. Mobble	Mr. Clifton.

Mr. Gander	Mr. Freeborn.
Mr. Wilson	Mr. King.
Master Bailey	Mrs. Keeley.
Bullamy	Mr. Andrews.
Mary Graham	Miss Fortescue.
Mercy	Miss Woolgar.
Charity	Mrs. A. Wigan.
Ruth Pinch	Miss Groves.
Mrs. Lupin	Mrs. Usher.
Mrs. Todgers	Mrs. Woolidge.
Betsey Prigg (*sic*)	Mr. J. W. Collier.
Mrs. Sairey Gamp	Mr. Keeley.
Mrs. Harris (*her friend*)—*a fiction*	by Nobody.

Passengers, Bill-stickers, Newsvendors, Porters, Cabmen, Watermen—By Everybody and Everything.

Betsey Prig and Sairey Gamp were, as will be seen, acted by men. Keeley made his character very droll and amusing.

The latest play from the book was "Tom Pinch," in which Mr. E. S. Willard played the title *rôle* at the St. James's Theatre in 1903, and elsewhere.

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL."

One of the first stage versions of the "Carol" was from that adept adapter of Dickens, Edward Stirling. It was produced at the Theatre Royal, Adelphi, then under the management of Thomas Gladstane, February 4th, 1844, and the playbills announced that it was "the only dramatic version sanctioned by C. Dickens, Esqre." Here is the cast of the principal parts:

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Ebenezer Scrooge	Mr. O. Smith.
Mister Bob Cratchit	Mr. Wright.
Mr. Fezziwig	Mr. S. Smith.
Mr. Dilworth	Mr. Johnson.
Master Scrooge (*a School Boy*)	Master Lightfoot.
Young Scrooge and Dick Wilkins (*Fellow Apprentices*)	Mr. Braid and Mr. Leslie.
Post Boy...	Mr. Honey.
The Dirty Little Boy from over the Way ...	Master Mouncer.
Fiddler	Mr. Shaw.
Mrs. Fezziwig	Mrs. Woollidge.
Bella Morton (*Scrooge's first, his only love, save gold*)	Miss Woolgar.
The Ghost of Christmas	Miss E. Chaplain.
Little Fan (*Scrooge's Sister*)	Miss Mott.
Nephew Fred	Mr. Maynard.
Master Peter Cratchit	Master Brunton.
Master Tom Cratchit	Master Scott.

Tiny Tim...	Miss Maynard.
Mrs. Bob Cratchit	Mrs. F. Matthews.
Martha Cratchit	Miss Lee.
Belinda Cratchit	Miss O. Hicks.
Sally Cratchit	Miss Johnson.
The Ghost of Christmas Present	Mr. Forman.
Old Joe	Mr. Sanders.
Mr. Topper and Mr. Floss	Mr. Aldridge and Mr. Freeborn.

"A TALE OF TWO CITIES."

The most notable version of "A Tale of Two Cities" for the stage in the year of the book's publication was that by Tom Taylor at the Lyceum on January 18th, 1860, under the management of Madame Celeste. Here is the cast of that performance:

A new Drama, consisting of a Prologue and Two Acts, adapted by Tom Taylor, Esq., entitled

A TALE OF TWO CITIES!

from the story by

Charles Dickens, Esq.,

Who has in the kindest manner superintended the production of the Piece.

The Marquis de St. Evremond	Mr. Walter Lacy.
Ernest Defarge	Mr. James Johnstone.
The Three Jacques	Messrs. White, Taylor, Clifford.
Gaspard	Mr. Henry Butler.
Doctor Manette	Mr. James Vining.
Lucie Manette	Miss Kate Saville.
Therese Defarge	Madame Celeste.
Sydney Carton	Mr. Villiers.
Solomon Barsad	Mr. Morton.
The President of the Revolutionary Tribunal	Mr. Palmer.
The Public Prosecutor	Mr. Clifford.
Jailor	Mr. White.
Charles Darnay	Mr. Forrester.
The Vengeance	Mrs. H. Campbell.
La Raison	Miss Turner.
Theroigne	Miss Stuart.
Mr. Jarvis Lorry	Mr. T. Lyon.
Mr. Jeremiah Cruncher...	Mr. Rouse.

The latest version of the book is the famous play of "The Only Way," in which Mr. Martin Harvey creates Sydney Carton.

CHARLES DICKENS
(1868)

From a photograph by Ben Gurney, of New York.

DICKENS IN CAMP.

By BRET HARTE.

The following Poetical Tribute to Charles Dickens was written by Bret Harte on hearing of the death of the novelist. "It shows," says Forster, "the gentler influences which, in even those Californian wilds, can restore outlawed 'roaring camps' to silence and humanity; and there is hardly any form of posthumous tribute which I can imagine likely to have better satisfied his desire of fame, than one which should thus connect with the special favourite among all his heroines, the restraints and authority exerted by his genius over the rudest and least civilized of competitors in that far fierce race for wealth."

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 humour, 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 gather 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 drop 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 trills
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 entwine,
Deem it not all a too presumptuous folly,—
This spray of Western pine!

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THE DEATH OF LITTLE NELL.

By Charles Dickens.

The dull, red glow of a wood fire—for no lamp or candle burnt within the room—showed him a figure, seated on the hearth with its back towards him, bending over the fitful light. The attitude was that of one who sought the heat. It was, and yet was not. The stooping posture and the cowering form were there, but no hands were stretched out to meet the grateful warmth, no shrug or shiver compared its luxury with the piercing cold outside. With limbs huddled together, head bowed down, arms crossed upon the breast, and fingers tightly clenched, it rocked to and fro upon its seat without a moment's pause, accompanying the action with the morunful sound he had heard.

The heavy door had closed behind him on his entrance, with a crash that made him start. The figure neither spoke, nor turned to look, nor gave in any other way the faintest sign of having heard the noise. The form was that of an old man, his white head akin in colour to the mouldering embers upon which he gazed. He, and the failing light and dying fire, the time-worn room, the solitude, the wasted life, and gloom, were all in fellowship. Ashes, and dust, and ruin!

Kit tried to speak, and did pronounce some words, though what they were he scarcely knew. Still the same terrible low cry went on—still the same rocking in the chair—the same stricken figure was there, unchanged and heedless of his presence.

He had his hand upon the latch, when something in the form—distinctly seen as one log broke and fell, and, as it fell, blazed up—arrested it. He returned to where he had stood before—advanced a pace—another—another still. Another, and he saw the face. Yes! Changed as it was, he knew it well.

"Master!" he cried, stooping on one knee and catching at his hand. "Dear master. Speak to me!"

The old man turned slowly towards him; and muttered in a hollow voice,

"This is another!—How many of these spirits there have been to-night!"

"No spirit, master. No one but your old servant. You know me now, I am sure? Miss Nell—where is she—where is she?"

"They all say that!" cried the old man. "They all ask the same question. A spirit!"

"Where is she?" demanded Kit. "Oh tell me but that,— but that, dear master!"

"She is asleep—yonder—in there."

"Thank God!"

"Aye! Thank God!" returned the old man. "I have prayed to Him, many, and many, and many a livelong night, when she has been asleep, He knows. Hark! Did she call?"

"I heard no voice."

"You did. You hear her now. Do you tell me that you don't hear *that?*"

He started up, and listened again.

"Nor that?" he cried, with a triumphant smile, "Can any body know that voice so well as I? Hush! hush!"

Motioning to him to be silent, he stole away into another chamber. After a short absence (during which he could be heard to speak in a softened, soothing tone) he returned, bearing in his hand a lamp.

"She is still asleep," he whispered. "You were right. She did not call—unless she did so in her slumber. She has called to me in her sleep before now, sir; as I have sat by, watching, I have seen her lips move, and have known, though no sound came from them, that she spoke of me. I feared the light might dazzle her eyes and wake her, so I brought it here."

He spoke rather to himself than to the visitor, but when he had put the lamp upon the table, he took it up, as if impelled by some momentary recollection or curiosity, and held it near his face. Then, as if forgetting his motive in the very action, he turned away and put it down again.

"She is sleeping soundly," he said; "but no wonder. Angel hands

have strewn the ground deep with snow, that the lightest footstep may be lighter yet; and the very birds are dead, that they may not wake her. She used to feed them, sir. Though never so cold and hungry, the timid things would fly from us. They never flew from her!"

Again he stopped to listen, and, scarcely drawing breath, listened for a long, long time. That fancy past, he opened an old chest, took out some clothes as fondly as if they had been living things, and began to smooth and brush them with his hand.

"Why dost thou lie so idle there, dear Nell," he murmured, "when there are bright red berries out of doors waiting for thee to pluck them? Why dost thou lie so idle there, when thy little friends come creeping to the door, crying 'where is Nell—sweet Nell?'—and sob, and weep, because they do not see thee? She was always gentle with children. The wildest would do her bidding—she had a tender way with them, indeed she had!"

Kit had no power to speak. His eyes were filled with tears.

"Her little homely dress,—her favourite!" cried the old man, pressing it to his breast, and patting it with his shrivelled hand. "She will miss it when she wakes. They have hid it here in sport, but she shall have it—she shall have it. I would not vex my darling, for the wide world's riches. See here—these shoes—how worn they are—she kept them to remind her of our last long journey. You see where the little feet went bare upon the ground. They told me, afterwards, that the stones had cut and bruised them. *She* never told me that. No, no, God bless her! and, I have remembered since, she walked behind me, sir, that I might not see how lame she was—but yet she had my hand in hers, and seemed to lead me still."

He pressed them to his lips, and having carefully put them back again, went on communing with himself—looking wistfully from time to time towards the chamber he had lately visited.

"She was not wont to be a lie-abed; but she was well then. We must have patience. When she is well again, she will rise early, as she used to do, and ramble abroad in the healthy morning time. I often tried to track the way she had gone, but her small footstep left no print upon the dewy ground, to guide me. Who is that? Shut the door. Quick!—Have we not enough to do to drive away that marble cold, and keep her warm!"

The door was indeed opened, for the entrance of Mr. Garland and his friend, accompanied by two other persons. These were the schoolmaster, and the bachelor. The former held a light in his hand. He had, it seemed, but gone to his own cottage to replenish the exhausted lamp, at the moment when Kit came up and found the old man alone.

He softened again at sight of these two friends, and, laying aside the angry manner—if to anything so feeble and so sad the term can be applied—in which he had spoken when the door opened, resumed his former seat, and subsided, by little and little into the old action, and the old, dull, wandering sound.

Of the strangers, he took no heed whatever. He had seen them, but appeared quite incapable of interest or curiosity. The younger brother stood apart. The bachelor drew a chair towards the old man, and sat down close beside him. After a long silence, he ventured to speak.

"Another night, and not in bed!" he said, softly; "I hoped you would be more mindful of your promise to me. Why do you not take some rest?"

"Sleep has left me," returned the old man. "It is all with her!"

"It would pain her very much to know that you were watching thus," said the bachelor. "You would not give her pain?"

"I am not so sure of that, if it would only rouse her. She has slept so very long. And yet I am rash to say so. It is a good and happy sleep—eh?"

"Indeed it is," returned the bachelor. "Indeed, indeed, it is!"

"That's well!—and the waking"—faltered the old man.

"Happy too. Happier than tongue can tell, or heart of man conceive."

They watched him as he rose and stole on tiptoe to the other chamber where the lamp had been replaced. They listened as he spoke again within its silent walls. They looked into the faces of each other, and no man's cheek was free from tears. He came back, whispering that she was still asleep, but that he thought she had moved. It was her hand, he said—a little—a very, very little—but he was pretty sure she had moved it—perhaps in seeking his. He had known her do that, before now, though in the deepest sleep the while. And when he had said this, he dropped into his chair again, and clasping his hands above his head, uttered a cry never to be forgotten.

The poor schoolmaster motioned to the bachelor that he would come on the other side, and speak to him. They gently unlocked his fingers, which he had twisted in his grey hair, and pressed them in their own.

"He will hear me," said the schoolmaster, "I am sure. He will hear either me or you if we beseech him. She would, at all times."

"I will hear any voice she liked to hear," cried the old man. "I love all she loved!"

"I know you do," returned the schoolmaster. "I am certain of it.

Think of her; think of all the sorrows and afflictions you have shared together; of all the trials, and all the peaceful pleasures, you have jointly known."

"I do. I do. I think of nothing else."

"I would have you think of nothing else to-night—of nothing but those things which will soften your heart, dear friend, and open it to old affections and old times. It is so that she would speak to you herself, and in her name it is that I speak now."

"You do well to speak softly," said the old man. "We will not wake her. I should be glad to see her eyes again, and to see her smile. There is a smile upon her young face now, but it is fixed and changeless. I would have it come and go. That shall be in Heaven's good time. We will not wake her."

"Let us not talk of her in her sleep, but as she used to be when you were journeying together, far away—as she was at home, in th eold house from which you fled together—as she was, in the old cheerful time," said the schoolmaster.

"She was always cheerful—very cheerful," cried the old man, looking steadfastly at him. "There was ever something mild and quiet about her, I remember, from the first; but she was of a happy nature."

"We have heard you say," pursued the schoolmaster, "that in this, and in all goodness, she was like her mother. You can think of, and remember her?"

He maintained his steadfast look, but gave no answer.

"Or even one before her," said the bachelor. "It is many years ago, and affliction makes the time longer, but you have not forgotten her whose death contributed to make this child so dear to you, even before you knew her worth or could read her heart? Say, that you could carry back your thoughts to very distant days— to the time of your early life—when, unlike this fair flower, you did not pass your youth alone. Say, that you could remember, long ago, another child who loved you dearly, you being but a child yourself. Say, that you had a brother, long forgotten, long unseen, long separated from you, who now, at last, in your utmost need came back to comfort and console you"—

"To be to you what you were once to him," cried the younger, falling on his knee before him; "to repay your old affection, brother dear, by constant care, solicitude, and love; to be, at your right hand, what he has never ceased to be when oceans rolled between us; to call to witness his unchanging truth and mindfulness of bygone days, whole years of desolation. Give me but one word of recognition, brother—and never—no never, in the brightest moment of our youngest days, when, poor silly boys, we thought to pass our lives together—have we

been half as dear and precious to each other as we shall be from this time hence!"

The old man looked from face to face, and his lips moved; but no sound came from them in reply.

"If we were knit together then," pursued the younger brother, "what will be the bond between us now! Our love and fellowship began in childhood, when life was all before us, and will be resumed when we have proved it, and are but children at the last. As many restless spirits, who have hunted fortune, fame, or pleasure through the world, retire in their decline to where they first drew breath, vainly seeking to be children once again before they die, so we, less fortunate than they in early life, but happier in its closing scenes, will set up our rest again among our boyish haunts, and going home with no hope realised, that had its growth in manhood—carrying back nothing that we brought away, but our old yearnings to each other—saving no fragment from the wreck of life, but that which first endeared it—may be, indeed, but children at at first. And even," he added in an altered voice, "even if what I dread to name has come to pass—even if that be so, or is to be (which Heaven forbid and spare us!)—still, dear brother, we are not apart, and have that comfort in our great affliction."

By little and little, the old man had drawn back towards the inner chamber, while these words were spoken. He pointed there as he replied, with trembling lips,—

"You plot among you to wean my heart from her. You never will do that—never while I have life. I have no relative or friend but her—I never had—I never will have. She is all in all to me. It is too late to part us now."

Waving them off with his hand, and calling softly to her as he went, he stole into the room. They who were left behind, drew close together, and after a few whispered words—not unbroken by emotion, or easily uttered—followed him. They moved so gently, that their footsteps made no noise; but there were sobs from among the group, and sounds of grief and mourning.

For she was dead. There, upon her little bed, she lay at rest. The solemn stillness was no marvel now.

She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death.

Her couch was dressed with here and there some winter berries and green leaves, gathered in a spot she had been used to favour. "When I

die, put near me something that has loved the light, and had the sky above it always." Those were her words.

She was dead. Dear, gentle, patient, noble Nell was dead. Her little bird—a poor, slight thing the pressure of a finger would have crushed—was stirring nimbly in its cage; and the strong heart of its child mistress was mute and motionless for ever.

Where were the traces of her early cares, her sufferings, and fatigues? All gone. Sorrow was dead indeed in her, but peace and perfect happiness were born; imaged in her tranquil beauty and profound repose.

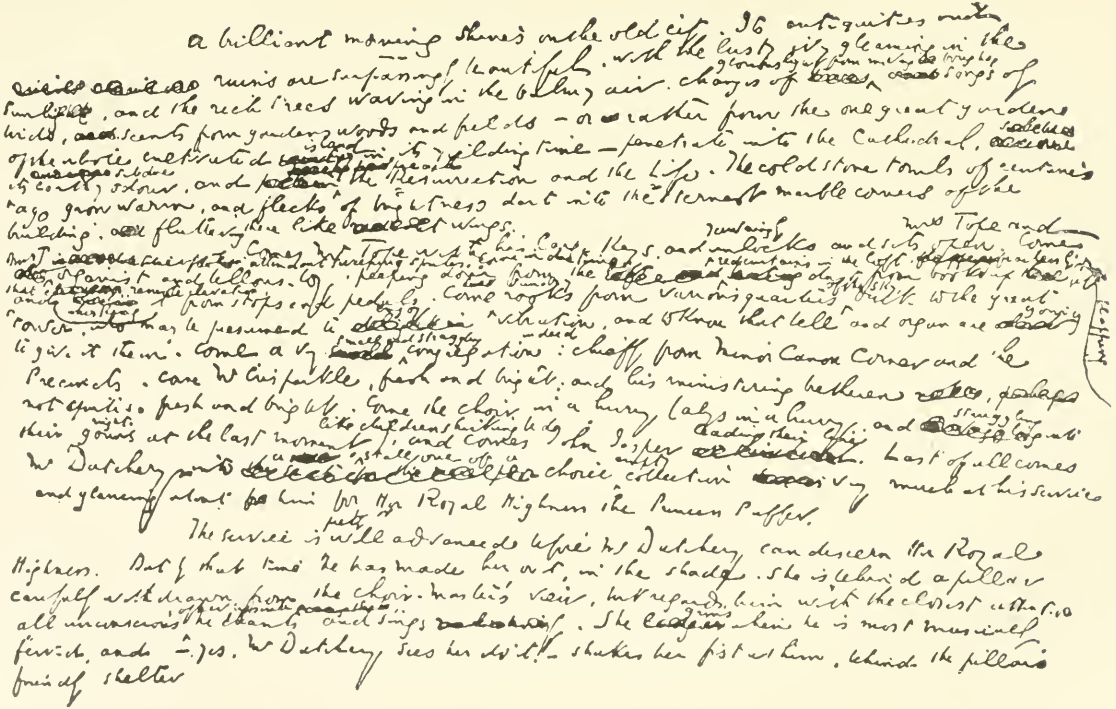
And still her former self lay there, unaltered in this change. Yes. The old fireside had smiled upon that same sweet face; it had passed like a dream, through haunts of misery and care; at the door of the poor schoolmaster on the summer evening, before the furnace fire upon the cold wet night, at the still bedside of the dying boy, there had been the same mild, lovely look. So shall we know the angels in their majesty, after death.

The old man held one languid arm in his, and had the small hand tight folded to his breast, for warmth. It was the hand she had stretched out to him with her last smile—the hand that had led him on, through all their wanderings. Ever and anon he pressed it to his lips; then hugged it to his breast again, murmuring that it was warmer now; and, as he said it, he looked, in agony, to those who stood around, as if imploring them to help her.

She was dead, and past all help, or need of it. The ancient rooms she had seemed to fill with life, even while her own was waning fast—the garden she had tended—the eyes she had gladdened—the noiseless haunts of many a thoughtful hour—the paths she had trodden as it were but yesterday—could know her never more.

"It is not," said the schoolmaster, as he bent down to kiss her on the cheek, and gave his tears free vent, "it is not on earth that Heaven's justice ends. Think what earth is, compared with the World to which her young spirit has winged its early flight; and say, if one deliberate wish expressed in solemn terms above this bed could call her back to life, which of us would utter it!"

From *The Old Curiosity Shop.*



FACSIMILE OF A PORTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF "EDWIN DROOD"—THE LAST PAGE.

Written by Charles Dickens, June 8th, 1870.

TRADDLES'S COURTSHIP.

By Charles Dickens.

It may have been in consequence of Mrs. Crupp's advice, and, perhaps, for no better reason than because there was a certain similarity in the sound of the word skittles and Traddles, that it came into my head, next day, to go and look after Traddles. The time he had mentioned was more than out, and he lived in a little street near the Veterinary College at Camden Town, which was principally tenanted, as one of our clerks who lived in that direction informed me, by gentlemen students, who bought live donkeys, and made experiments on those quadrupeds in their private apartments. Having obtained from this clerk a direction to the academic grove in question, I set out the same afternoon to visit my old schoolfellow.

I found that the street was not as desirable a one as I could have wished it to be, for the sake of Traddles. The inhabitants appeared to have a propensity to throw any little trifles they were not in want of into the road: which not only made it rank and sloppy, but untidy, too, on account of the cabbage-leaves. The refuse was not wholly vegetable either, for I myself saw a shoe, a doubled-up saucepan, a black bonnet, and an umbrella, in various stages of decomposition, as I was looking out for the number I wanted.

The general air of the place reminded me forcibly of the days when I lived with Mr. and Mrs. Micawber. An indescribable character of faded gentility that attached to the house I sought, and made it unlike all the other houses in the street—though they were all built on one monotonous pattern, and looked like the early copies of a blundering boy who was learning to make houses, and had not yet got out of his cramped brick-and-mortar pothooks—reminded me still more of Mr. and Mrs. Micawber. Happening to arrive at the door as it was opened to the afternoon milkman, I was reminded of Mr. and Mrs. Micawber more forcibly yet.

"Now," said the milkman to a very youthful servant girl. "Has that there little bill of mine been heerd on?"

"Oh, master says he'll attend to it immediate," was the reply.

"Because," said the milkman, going on as if he had received no answer, and speaking, as I judged from his tone, rather for the edification of somebody within the house than of the youthful servant—an impression which was strengthened by his manner of glaring down the passage—"because that there little bill has been running so long that I begin to believe it's run away altogether, and never won't be heerd of. Now, I'm not a going to stand it, you know!" said the milkman, still throwing his voice into the house and glaring down the passage.

As to his dealing in the mild article of milk, by-the-bye, there never was a greater anomaly. His deportment would have been fierce in a butcher or a brandy-merchant.

The voice of the youthful servant became faint, but she seemed to me, from the action of her lips, again to murmur that it would be attended to immediate.

"I tell you what," said the milkman, looking hard at her for the first time, and taking her by the chin, "are you fond of milk?"

"Yes, I likes it," she replied.

"Good," said the milkman. "Then you won't have none to-morrow. D'ye hear? Not a fragment of milk you won't have to-morrow."

I thought she seemed, upon the whole, relieved by the prospect of having any to-day. The milkman, after shaking his head at her, darkly, released her chin, and with anything rather than good-will, opened his can and deposited the usual quantity in the family jug. This done, he went away muttering, and uttered the cry of his trade next door in a vindictive shriek.

"Does Mr. Traddles live here?" I then enquired.

A mysterious voice from the end of the passage replied "Yes," Upon which the youthful servant replied "Yes."

"Is he at home?" said I.

Again the mysterious voice replied in the affirmative, and again the servant echoed it. Upon this I walked in, and in pursuance of the servant's directions, walked upstairs; conscious, as I passed the back parlour-door, that I was surveyed by a mysterious eye, probably belonging to the mysterious voice.

When I got to the top of the stairs—the house was only a storey high above the ground floor—Traddles was on the landing to meet me. He was delighted to see me, and gave me welcome with great heartiness to his little room. It was in the front of the house, and extremely neat, though sparely furnished. It was his only room, I saw: for there was a sofa-bedstead in it: and his blacking-brushes and blacking were

among his books—on the top shelf, behind a dictionary. His table was covered with papers, and he was hard at work in an old coat. I looked at nothing, that I know of, but I saw everything, even to the prospect of a church upon his china inkstand, as I sat down—and this, too, was a faculty confirmed in me in the old Micawber times. Various ingenious arrangements he had made for the disguise of his chest of drawers, and the accommodation of his boots, his shaving-glass, and so forth, particularly impressed themselves upon me, as evidences of the same Traddles who used to make models of elephants' dens in writing-paper to put flies in; and to comfort himself under ill-usage with the memorable works of art I have so often mentioned.

In a corner of the room was something neatly covered up with a large white cloth. I could not make out what that was.

"Traddles," said I, shaking hands with him again, after I had sat down, "I am delighted to see you."

"I am delighted to see *you*, Copperfield," he returned. "I am very glad indeed to see you. It was because I was thoroughly glad to see you when we met in Ely Place, and was sure were thoroughly glad to see me, that I gave you this address instead of my address at chambers."

"Oh! You have chambers?" said I.

"Why, I have the fourth of a room and a passage, and the fourth of a clerk," returned Traddles. "Three others and myself unite to have a set of chambers—to look business-like—and we quarter the clerk too. Half-a-crown a week he costs me."

His old simple character and good temper, and something of his old unlucky fortune also, I thought, smiled at me in the smile with which he made this explanation.

"It's not because I have the least pride, Copperfield, you understand," said Traddles, "that I don't usually give my address here. It's only on account of those who come to me, who might not like to come here. For myself, I am fighting my way on in the world against difficulties, and it would be ridiculous if I made a pretence of doing any thing else."

"You are reading for the bar, Mr. Waterbrook informed me?" said I.

"Why, yes," said Traddles, rubbing his hands slowly over one another, "I am reading for the bar. The fact is, I have just begun to keep my terms, after rather a long delay. It's some time since I was articled, but the payment of that hundred pounds was a great pull. A great pull!" said Traddles, with a wince, as if he had had a tooth out.

"Do you know what I can't help thinking of, Traddles, as I sit here looking at you?" I asked him.

"No," said he.

"That sky-blue suit you used to wear."

"Lord, to be sure!" cried Traddles, laughing. "Tight in the arms and legs, you know Dear me! Well! Those were happy times, weren't they?"

"I think our schoolmaster might have made them happier, without doing any harm to any of us, I acknowledge," I returned.

"Perhaps he might," said Traddles. "But, dear me, there was a good deal of fun going on. Do you remember the nights in the bedroom? When we used to have the suppers? And when you used to tell the stories? Ha, ha, ha! And do you remember when I got caned for crying about Mr. Mell? Old Creakle! I should like to see him again, too!"

"He was a brute to you, Traddles," said I, indignantly; for his good-humor made me feel as if I had seen him beaten but yesterday.

"Do you think so?" returned Traddles. "Really? Perhaps he was, rather. But it's all over, a long while. Old Creakle!"

"You were brought up by an uncle, then?" said I.

"Of course I was!" said Traddles. "The one I was always going to write to. And always didn't, eh! Ha, ha. ha! Yes, I had an uncle then. He died soon after I left school."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. He was a retired—what do you call it!—draper—cloth-merchant—and had made me his heir. But he didn't like me when I grew up."

"Do you really mean that?" said I. He was so composed, that I fancied he must have some other meaning.

"Oh dear yes, Copperfield! I mean it," replied Traddles. "It was an unfortunate thing, but he didn't like me at all. He said I wasn't at all what he expected, and so he married his housekeeper."

"And what did you do?" I asked.

"I didn't do anything in particular," said Traddles. "I lived with them, waiting to be put out in the world, until his gout unfortunately flew to his stomach—and so he died, and so she married a young man, and so I wasn't provided for."

"Did you get nothing, Traddles, after all?"

"Oh dear yes!" said Traddles. "I got fifty pounds. I had never been brought up to any profession, and at first I was at a loss what to do for myself. However, I began, with the assistance of the son of a

professional man, who had been to Salem House—Yawler, with his nose on one side. Do you recollect him?"

No. He had not been there with me; all the noses were straight in my day.

"It don't matter," said Traddles. "I began, by means of his assistance, to copy law writings. That didn't answer very well; and then I began to state cases for them, and make abstracts, and do that sort of work. For I am a plodding kind of fellow, Copperfield, and had learnt the way of doing such things pithily. Well! That put it in my head to enter myself as a law student; and that ran away with all that was left of the fifty pounds. Yawler recommended me to one or two other offices, however—Mr. Waterbrook's for one—and I got a good many jobs. I was fortunate enough, too, to become acquainted with a person in the publishing way, who was getting up an Encyclopædia, and he set me to work; and, indeed" (glancing at his table), "I am at work for him at this minute. I am not a bad compiler, Copperfield," said Traddles, preserving the same air of cheerful confidence in all he said, "but I have no invention at all; not a particle. I suppose there never was a young man with less originality than I have."

As Traddles seemed to expect that I should assent to this as a matter of course, I nodded; and he went on, with the same sprightly patience—I can find no better expression—as before.

"So, by little and little, and not living high, I managed to scrape up the hundred pounds at last," said Traddles; "and thank Heaven that's paid—though it was—though it certainly was," said Traddles, wincing again as if he had had another tooth out, "a pull. I am living by the sort of work I have mentioned, still, and I hope, one of these days, to get connected with some newspaper: which would almost be the making of my fortune. Now, Copperfield, you are so exactly what you used to be, with that agreeable face, and it's so pleasant to see you, that I sha'n't conceal anything. Therefore you must know that I am engaged."

Engaged! Oh Dora!

"She is a curate's daughter," said Traddles; "one of ten, down in Devonshire. Yes!" For he saw me glance, involuntarily, at the prospect on the inkstand. "That's the church! You come round here, to the left, out of this gate," tracing his finger along the inkstand, "and exactly where I hold this pen, there stands the house—facing, you understand, towards the church."

The delight with which he entered into these particulars did not fully present itself to me until afterwards; for my selfish thoughts were making a ground-plan of Mr. Spenlow's house and garden at the same moment.

"She is such a dear girl!" said Traddles; "a little older than me, but the dearest girl! I told you I was going out of town? I have been down there. I walked there, and I walked back, and I had the most delightful time! I dare say ours is likely to be a rather long engagement, but our motto is 'Wait and hope!' We always say that. 'Wait and hope,' we always say. And she would wait, Copperfield, till she was sixty—any age you can mention—for me!"

Traddles rose from his chair, and, with a triumphant smile, put his hand upon the white cloth I had observed.

"However," he said, "it's not that we haven't made a beginning towards housekeeping. No, no; we have begun. We must get on by degrees, but we have begun. Here," drawing the cloth off with great pride and care, "are two pieces of furniture to commence with. This flower-pot and stand, she bought herself. You put that in a parlor-window," said Traddles, falling a little back from it to survey it with the greater admiration, "with a plant in it, and—and there you are! This little round table with the marble top (it's two feet ten in circumference) *I* bought. You want to lay a book down, you know, or somebody comes to see you or your wife, and wants a place to stand a cup of tea upon, and—and there you are again!" said Traddles. "It's an admirable piece of workmanship—firm as a rock!"

I praised them both, highly, and Traddles replaced the covering as carefully as he had removed it.

"It's not a great deal towards the furnishing," said Traddles, "but it's something. The table-cloths, and pillow-cases, and articles of that kind, are what discourage me most, Copperfield. So does the ironmongery—candle-boxes, and gridirons, and that sort of necessaries—because those things tell, and mount up. However, 'wait and hope!' And I assure you she's the dearest girl!"

* * * * * *

"By-the-bye, my dear Traddles," said I, "your experience may suggest something to me. When you became engaged to the young lady whom you have just mentioned, did you make a regular proposal to her family? Was there anything like—what we are going through to-day, for instance?" I added, nervously.

"Why," replied Traddles, on whose attentive face a thoughtful shade had stolen, "it was rather a painful transaction, Copperfield, in my case. You see, Sophy being of so much use in the family, none of them could endure the thought of her ever being married. Indeed, they had quite settled among themselves that she never was to be married, and they called her the old maid. Accordingly, when I mentioned it, with the greatest precaution, to Mrs. Crewler—"

"The mamma?" said I.

"The mamma," said Traddles—"Reverend Horace Crewler—when I mentioned it with every possible precaution to Mrs. Crewler, the effect upon her was such that she gave a scream and became insensible. I couldn't approach the subject again, for months."

"You did at last" said I.

"Well, the Reverend Horace did," said Traddles. "He is an excellent man, most exemplary in every way; and he pointed out to her that she ought, as a Christian, to reconcile herself to the sacrifice (especially as it was so uncertain), and to bear no uncharitable feeling towards me. As to myself, Copperfield, I gave you my word, I felt a perfect bird of prey towards the family."

"The sisters took your part, I hope, Traddles?"

"Why, I can't say they did," he returned. "When we had comparatively reconciled Mrs. Crewler to it, we had to break it to Sarah. You recollect my mentioning Sarah, as the one that has something the matter with her spine?"

"Perfectly!"

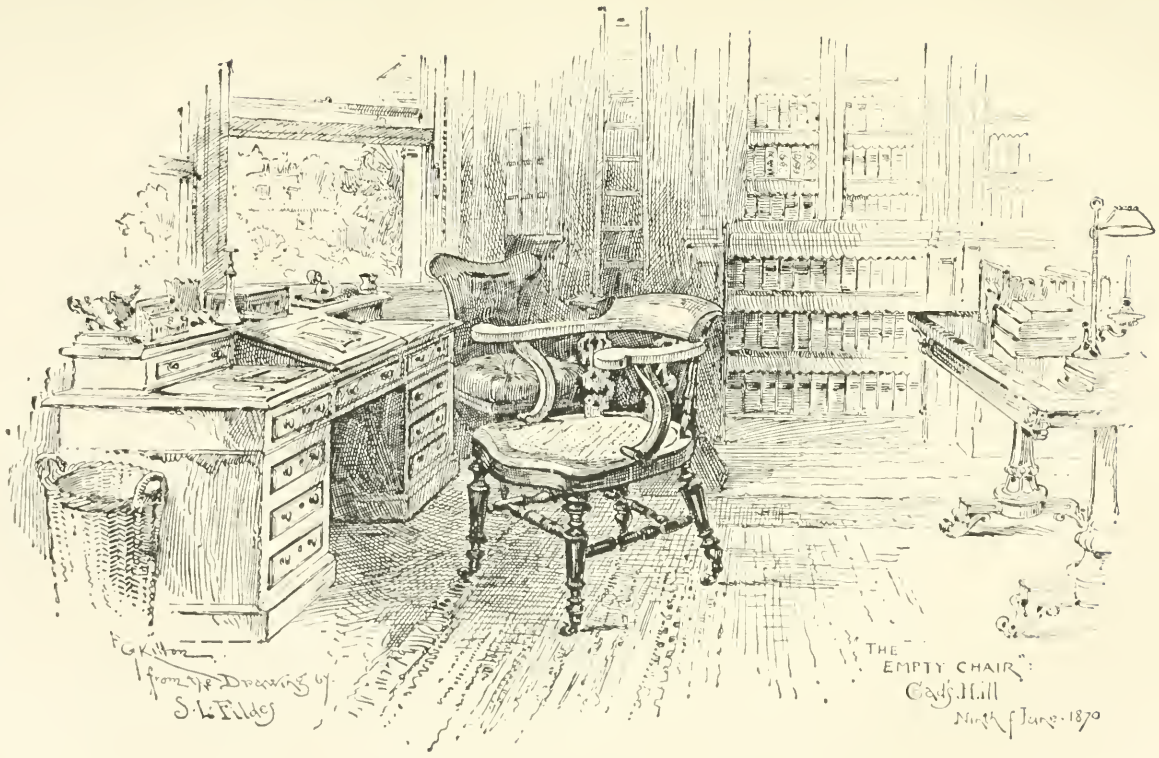
"She clenched both her hands," said Traddles, looking at me in dismay; "shut her eyes; turned lead-color; became perfectly stiff; and took nothing for two days but toast-and-water, administered with a teaspoon."

"What a very unpleasant girl, Traddles!" I remarked.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Copperfield!" said Traddles. "She is a very charming girl, but she has a great deal of feeling. In fact, they all have. Sophy told me afterwards, that the self-reproach she underwent while she was in attendance upon Sarah, no words could describe. I know it must have been severe, by my own feelings, Copperfield; which were like a criminal's. After Sarah was restored, we still had to break it to the other eight; and it produced various effects upon them of a most pathetic nature. The two little ones, whom Sophy educates, have only just left off de-testing me."

"At any rate, they are all reconciled to it now, I hope?" said I.

"Ye—yes. I should say they were, on the whole, resigned to it," said Traddles, doubtfully. "The fact is, we avoid mentioning the subject; and my unsettled prospects and indifferent circumstances are a great consolation to them. There will be a deplorable scene, whenever we are married. It will be much more like a funeral than a wedding. And they'll all hate me for taking her away!"



THE EMPTY CHAIR, GADSHILL, 9 JUNE, 1870.

Painted by Sir Luke Fildes, R.A., and copied by F. G. Kitton.

THE FLIGHT OF JONAS CHUZZLEWIT.

By Charles Dickens.

Montague took the footpath.

The glory of the departing sun was on his face. The music of the birds was in his ears. Sweet wild flowers bloomed about him. Thatched roofs of poor men's homes were in the distance; and an old grey spire, surmounted by a Cross, rose up between him and the coming night.

He had never read the lesson which these things conveyed; he had ever mocked and turned away from it; but, before going down into a hollow place, he looked round, once, upon the evening prospect, sorrowfully. Then he went down, down, down, into the dell.

It brought him to the wood; a close, thick, shadowy wood, through which the path went winding on, dwindling away into a slender sheep-track. He paused before entering; for the stillness of this spot almost daunted him.

The last rays of the sun were shining in, aslant, making a path of golden light along the stems and branches in its range, which, even as he looked, began to die away, yielding gently to the twilight that came creeping on. It was so very quiet that the soft and stealthy moss about the trunks of some old trees, seemed to have grown out of the silence, and to be its proper offspring. Those other trees which were subdued by blasts of wind in winter time, had not quite tumbled down, but being caught by others, lay all bare and scathed across their leafy arms, as if unwilling to disturb the general repose by the crash of their fall. Vistas of silence opened everywhere, into the heart and innermost recesses of the wood; beginning with the likeness of an aisle, a cloister, or a ruin open to the sky; then tangling off into a deep green rustling mystery, through which gnarled trunks, and twisted boughs, and ivy-covered stems, and trembling leaves, and bark-stripped bodies of old trees stretched out at length, were faintly seen in beautiful confusion.

As the sunlight died away, and evening fell upon the wood, he entered it. Moving, here and there, a bramble or a drooping bough which stretched across his path, he slowly disappeared. At intervals a narrow opening showed him passing on, or the sharp cracking of some tender branch denoted where he went; then, he was seen or heard no more.

Never more beheld by mortal eye or heard by mortal ear; one man

excepted. That man, parting the leaves and branchs on the other side, near where the path emerged again, came leaping out soon afterwards.

What had he left within the wood, that he sprang out of it, as if it were hell!

The body of a murdered man. In one thick solitary spot, it lay among the last year's leaves of oak and beech, just as it had fallen headlong down. Sopping and soaking in among the leaves that formed its pillow; oozing down into the boggy ground, as if to cover itself from human sight; forcing its way between and through the curling leaves, as if those senseless things rejected and foreswore it, and were coiled up in abhorrence; went a dark, dark stain that dyed the whole summer night from earth to heaven.

The doer of this deed came leaping from the wood so fiercely, that he cast into the air a shower of fragments of young boughs, torn away in his passage, and fell with violence upon the grass. But he quickly gained his feet again, and keeping underneath a hedge with his body bent, went running on towards the road. The road once reached, he fell into a rapid walk, and set on towards London.

And he was not sorry for what he had done. He was frightened when he thought of it—when did he not think of it!—but he was not sorry. He had had a terror and dread of the wood when he was in it; but being out of it, and having committed the crime, his fears were now diverted, strangely, to the darkroom he had left shut up at home. He had a greater horror, infinitely greater, of that room than of the wood. Now that he was on his return to it, it seemed beyond comparison more dismal and more dreadful than the wood. His hideous secret was shut up in the room, and all its terrors were there; to his thinking it was not in the wood at all.

He walked on for ten miles; and then stopped at an alehouse for a coach, which he knew would pass through, on its way to London, before long; and which he also knew was not the coach he had travelled down by, for it came from another place. He sat down outside the door here, on a bench, beside a man who was smoking his pipe. Having called for some beer, and drunk, he offered it to this companion, who thanked him, and took a draught. He could not help thinking that, if the man had known all, he might scarcely have relished drinking out of the same cup with him.

"A fine night, master!" said this person. "And a rare sunset."

"I didn't see it," was his hasty answer.

"Didn't see it?" returned the man.

"How the devil could I see it, if I was asleep?"

"Asleep! Ay, ay." The man appeared surprised by his unex-

pected irritability, and saying no more, smoked his pipe in silence. They had not sat very long, when there was a knocking within.

"What's that?" cried Jonas.

"Can't say, I'm sure," replied the man.

He made no further inquiry, for the last question had escaped him, in spite of himself. But he was thinking, at the moment, of the closed-up room; of the possibility of their knocking at the door on some special occasion; of their being alarmed at receiving no answer; of their bursting it open; of their finding the room empty; of their fastening the door into the court, and rendering it impossible for him to get into the house, without showing himself in the garb he wore; which would lead to rumour, rumour to detection, detection to death. At that instant, as if by some design and order of circumstances, the knocking had come.

It still continued; like a warning echo of the dread reality he had conjured up. As he could not sit and hear it, he paid for his beer and walked on again. And having slunk about, in places unknown to him, all day; and being out at night, in a lonely road, in an unusual dress, and in that wandering and unsettled frame of mind; he stopped more than once to look about him, hoping he might be in a dream.

Still he was not sorry. No. He had hated the man too much, and had been bent, too desperately and too long, on setting himself free. If the thing could have come over again, he would have done it again. His malignant and revengeful passions were not so easily laid. There was no more penitence or remorse within him now, than there had been while the deed was brewing.

Dread and fear were upon him. To an extent he had never counted on, and could not manage in the least degree. He was so horribly afraid of that infernal room at home. This made him, in a gloomy, murderous, mad way, not only fearful *for* himself but *of* himself; for being, as it were, a part of the room: a something supposed to be there, yet missing from it: he invested himself with its mysterious terrors; and when he pictured in his mind the ugly chambers, false and quiet, false and quiet, through the dark hours of two nights; and the tumbled bed, and he not in it, though believed to be; he became in a manner his own ghost and phantom, and was at once the haunting spirit and the haunted man.

When the coach came up, which it soon did, he got a place outside, and was carried briskly onward towards home. Now, in taking his seat among the people behind, who were chiefly country people, he conceived a fear that they knew of the murder, and would tell him that the body had been found; which, considering the time and place of the commission of the crime, were events almost impossible to have happened

yet, as he very well knew. But, although he did know it, and had therefore no reason to regard their ignorance as anything but the natural sequence to the facts, still this very ignorance of theirs encouraged him. So far encouraged him, that he began to believe the body never would be found, and began to speculate on that probability. Setting off from this point, and measuring time by the rapid hurry of his guilty thoughts, and what had gone before the bloodshed, and the troops of incoherent and disordered images, of which he was the constant prey; he came by daylight to regard the murder as an old murder, and to think himself comparatively safe, because it had not been discovered yet. Yet! When the sun which looked into the wood, and gilded with its rising light a dead man's face, had seen that man alive, and sought to win him to a thought of Heaven, on its going down last night!

But here were London streets again. Hush!

It was but five o'clock. He had time enough to reach his own house unobserved, and before there were many people in the streets, if nothing had happened so far, tending to his discovery. He slipped down from the coach without troubling the driver to stop his horses: and hurrying across the road, and in and out of every by-way that lay near his course, at length approached his own dwelling. He used additional caution in his immediate neighbourhood; halting first to look all down the street before him; then gliding swifty through that one, and stopping to survey the next; and so on.

The passage-way was empty when his murderer's face looked into it. He stole on, to the door, on tiptoe, as if he dreaded to disturb his own imaginary rest.

He listened. Not a sound. As he turned the key with a trembling hand, and pushed the door softly open with his knee, a monstrous fear beset his mind.

What if the murdered man were there before him!

He cast a fearful glance all round. But there was nothing there.

He went in, locked the door, drew the key through and through the dust and damp in the fire-place to sully it again, and hung it up as of old. He took off his disguise, tied it up in a bundle ready for carrying away and sinking in the river before night, and locked it up in a cupboard. These precautions taken, he undressed, and went to bed.

The raging thirst, the fire that burnt within him as he lay beneath the clothes, the augmented horror of the room, when they shut it out from his view; the agony of listening, in which he paid enforced regard to every sound, and thought the most unlikely one the prelude to that knocking which should bring the news; the starts with which he left his couch, and looking in the glass, imagined that his deed was broadly

written in his face, and lying down and burying himself once more beneath the blankets, heard his own heart beating Murder, Murder, Murder, in the bed; what words can paint tremendous truths like these!

The morning advanced. There were footsteps in the house. He heard the blinds drawn up, and shutters opened; and now and then a stealthy tread outside his own door. He tried to call out, more than once, but his mouth was dry as if it had been filled with sand. At last he sat up in his bed, and cried:

"Who's there!"

It was his wife.

He asked her what it was o'clock? Nine.

"Did—did no one knock at my door yesterday?" he faltered. "Something disturbed me; but unless you had knocked the door down, you would have got no notice from me."

"No one," she replied. That was well. He had waited, almost breathless, for her answer. It was a relief to him, if anything could be.

"Mr. Nadgett wanted to see you," she said, "but I told him you were tired, and had requested not to be disturbed. He said it was of little consequence, and went away. As I was opening my window, to let in the cool air, I saw him passing through the street this morning, very early; but he hasn't been again."

Passing through the street that morning? Very early! Jonas trembled at the thought of having had a narrow chance of seeing him himself: even him, who had no object but to avoid people, and sneak on unobserved, and keep his own secrets: and who saw nothing.

He called to her to get his breakfast ready, and prepared to go upstairs: attiring himself in the clothes he had taken off when he came into that room, which had been, ever since, outside the door. In his secret dread of meeting the household for the first time, after what he had done, he lingered at the door on slight pretexts that they might see him without looking in his face; and left it ajar while he dressed; and called out, to have the windows opened, and the pavement watered, that they might become accustomed to his voice. Even when he had put off the time, by one means or other, so that he had seen, or spoken to them all, he could not muster courage for a long while to go in among them, but stood at his own door listening to the murmur of their distant conversation.

He could not stop there for ever, and so joined them. His last glance at the glass had seen a tell-tale face, but that might have been because of his anxious looking in it. He dared not look at them to see if they observed him, but he thought them very silent.

And whatsoever guard he kept upon himself, he could not help

listening, and showing that he listened. Whether he attended to their talk, or tried to think of other things, or talked himself, or held his peace, or resolutely counted the dull tickings of a hoarse clock at his

CHARLES DICKENS IN HIS STUDY AT TAVISTOCK HOUSE.
From a painting by E. M. Ward, R.A.

back, he always lapsed, as if a spell were on him, into eager listening. For he knew it must come; and his present punishment, and torture, and distraction, were, to listen for its coming.

Hush!

From *Martin Chuzzlewit.*

THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF ALFRED JINGLE.

By Charles Dickens.

The mob had hitherto been passive spectators of the scene, but as the intelligence of the Pickwickians being informers was spread among them, they began to canvass with considerable vivacity the propriety of enforcing the heated pastry-vendor's propostion; and there is no saying what acts of personal aggression they might not have committed had not the affray been unexpectedly terminated by the interposition of a new comer.

"What's the fun?" said a rather tall, thin young man in a green coat, emerging suddenly from the coach yard.

"Informers!" shouted the crowd again.

"We are not," roared Mr. Pickwick, in a tone which, to any dispassionate listener, carried conviction with it.

"Ain't you, though,—ain't you?" said the young man, appealing to Mr. Pickwick, and making his way through the crowd by the infallible process of elbowing the countenances of its component members.

That learned man in a few hurried words explained the real state of the case.

"Come along, then," said he of the green coat, lugging Mr. Pickwick after him by main force, and talking the whole way. "Here, No. 924, take your fare, and take yourself off—respectable gentleman,—know him well—none of your nonsense—this way, sir,—where's your friends?—all a mistake, I see—never mind—accidents will happen—best regulated families—never say die—down upon your luck—pull him up—put that in his pipe—like the flavour?—damned rascals." And with a lengthened string of similar broken sentences, delivered with extraordinary volubility, the stranger led the way to the travellers' waiting-room, whither he was closely followed by Mr. Pickwick and his disciples.

"Here, waiter!" shouted the stranger, ringing the bell with tremendous violence, "glasses round,—brandy and water, hot and strong, and sweet, and plenty,—eye damaged, sir? Waiter! raw beef-steak for the gentleman's eye,—nothing like raw beef-steak for a bruise, sir; cold lamp-post very good, but lamp-post inconvenient—damned odd standing in the open street half-an-hour, with your eye against a lamp-post—eh,—very good—ha! ha!" And the stranger, without stopping to take breath, swallowed at a draught full half-a-pint of the reeking brandy and water, and flung himself into a chair with as much ease as if nothing uncommon had occurred.

While his three companions were busily engaged in proffering their thanks to their new acquaintance, Mr. Pickwick had leisure to examine his costume and appearance.

He was about the middle height, but the thinness of his body, and the length of his legs, gave him the appearance of being much taller. The green coat had been a smart dress garment in the days of swallow-tails, but had evidently in those times adorned a much shorter man than the stranger, for the soiled and faded sleeves scarcely reached to his wrists. It was buttoned closely up to his chin, at the imminent hazard of splitting the back; and an old stock, without a vestige of shirt collar, ornamented his neck. His scanty black trousers displayed here and there those shiny patches which bespeak long service, and were strapped very tightly over a pair of patched and mended shoes, as if to conceal the dirty white stockings, which were nevertheless distinctly visible. His long black hair escaped in negligent waves from beneath each side of his old pinched-up hat; and glimpses of his bare wrists might be observed between the tops of his gloves and the cuffs of his coat sleeves. His face was thin and haggard; but an indescribable air of jaunty impudence and perfect self-possession pervaded the whole man.

Such was the individual on whom Mr. Pickwick gazed through his spectacles (which he had fortunately recovered), and to whom he proceeded, when his friends had exhausted themselves, to return in chosen terms his warmest thanks for his recent assistance.

"Never mind," said the stranger, cutting the address very short, "said enough,—no more; smart chap that cabman—handled his fives well; but if I'd been your friend in the green jemmy—damn me—punch his head,—'cod I would,—pig's whisper—pieman too,—no gammon."

This coherent speech was interrupted by the entrance of the Rochester coachman, to announce that "The Commodore" was on the point of starting.

"Commodore!" said the stranger, starting up, "my coach,—place booked,—one outside—leave you to pay for the brandy and water,—want change for a five,—bad silver—Brummagem buttons—won't do—no go—eh?" and he shook his head most knowingly.

Now it so happened that Mr. Pickwick and his three companions had resolved to make Rochester their first halting place too; and having intimated to their new-found acquaintance that they were journeying to the same city, they agreed to occupy the seat at the back of the coach, where they could all sit together.

"Up with you," said the stranger, assisting Mr. Pickwick on to the roof with so much precipitation as to impair the gravity of that gentleman's deportment very materially.

"Any luggage, sir?" inquired the coachman.

"Who—I? Brown paper parcel here, that's all,—other luggage gone by water,—packing cases, nailed up—big as houses—heavy, heavy, damned heavy," replied the stranger, as he forced into his pocket as much as he could of the brown paper parcel, which presented most suspicious indications of containing one shirt and a handkerchief.

"Heads, heads—take care of your heads!" cried the loquacious stranger, as they came out under the low archway, which in those days formed the entrance to the coach-yard. "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 a family off—shocking, shocking! 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?"

"I am ruminating," said Mr. Pickwick, "on the strange mutability of human affairs."

"Ah! I see—in at the palace door one day, out at the window the next. Philosopher, sir?"

"An observer of human nature, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah, so am I. Most people are when they're little to do and less to get. Poet, sir?"

"My friend Mr. Snodgrass has a strong poetic turn," said Mr. Pickwick.

"So have I," said the stranger. "Epic poem,—ten thousand lines—revolution of July—composed it on the spot—Mars by day, Apollo by night,—bang the field-piece, twang the lyre."

"You were present at that glorious scene, sir?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"Present! think I was;* fired a musket,—fired with an idea,—rushed into wine shop—wrote it down—back again—whiz, bang—another idea—wine shop again—pen and ink—back again—cut and slash—noble time, sir. Sportsman, sir?" abruptly turning to Mr. Winkle.

"A little, sir," replied that gentleman.

"Fine pursuit, sir,—fine pursuit.—Dogs, sir?"

"Not just now," said Mr. Winkle.

"Ah! you should keep dogs—fine animals—sagacious creatures—dog of my own once—Pointer—surprising instinct—out shooting one day—entering enclosure—whistled—dog stopped—whistled again—Ponto—no go; stock still—called him—Ponto, Ponto—wouldn't move—dog transfixed—staring at a board—looked up, saw an inscription—

* A remarkable instance of the prophetic force of Mr. Jingle's imagination; this dialogue occurring in the year 1827, and the Revolution in 1830.

'Gamekeeper has orders to shoot all dogs found in this enclosure'—wouldn't pass it—wonderful dog—valuable dog that—very."

"Singular circumstance that," said Mr. Pickwick. "Will you allow me to make a note of it?"

"Certainly, sir, certainly—hundred more anecdotes of the same animal.—Fine girl, sir" (to Mr. Tracy Tupman, who had been bestowing sundry anti-Pickwickian glances on a young lady by the roadside).

"Very!" said Mr. Tupman.

"English girls not so fine as Spanish—noble creatures—jet hair—black eyes—lovely forms—sweet creatures—beautiful."

"You have been in Spain, sir?" said Mr. Tracy Tupman.

"Lived there—ages."

"Many conquests, sir?" inquired Mr. Tupman.

"Conquests! Thousands. Don Bolaro Fizzgig—Grandee—only daughter—Donna Christina—splendid creature—loved me to distraction—jealous father—high-souled daughter—handsome Englishman—Donna Christina in despair—prussic acid—stomach pump in my portmanteau—operation performed—old Bolaro in ecstasies—consent to our union—join hands and floods of tears—romantic story—very."

"Is the lady in England now, sir?" inquired Mr. Tupman, on whom the description of her charms had produced a powerful impression.

"Dead, sir—dead," said the stranger, applying to his right eye the brief remnant of a very old cambric handkerchief. "Never recovered the stomach pump—undermined constitution—fell a victim."

"And her father?" inquired the poetic Snodgrass.

"Remorse and misery," replied the stranger. "Sudden disappearance—talk of the whole city—search made everywhere—without success—public fountain in the great square suddenly ceased playing—weeks elapsed—still a stoppage—workmen employed to clean it—water drawn off—father-in-law discovered sticking head first in the main pipe, with a full confession in his right boot—took him out, and the fountain played away again, as well as ever."

"Will you allow me to note that little romance down, sir?" said Mr. Snodgrass, deeply affected.

"Certainly, sir, certainly,—fifty more if you like to hear 'em—strange life mine—rather curious history—not extraordinary, but singular."

In this strain, with an occasional glass of ale, by way of parenthesis, when the coach changed horses, did the stranger proceed, until they reached Rochester bridge, by which time the note-books, both of Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Snodgrass, were completely filled with selections from his adventures.

From *The Pickwick Papers.*

THE BIRTH OF DAVID COPPERFIELD.

By Charles Dickens.

I was born at Blunderstone, in Suffolk, or "thereby," as they say in Scotland. I was a posthumous child. My father's eyes had closed upon the light of this world six months, when mine opened on it. There is something strange to me, even now, in the reflection that he never saw me; and something stranger yet in the shadowy remembrance that I have of my first childish associations with his white grave-stone in the churchyard, and of the indefinable compassion I used to feel for it lying out alone there in the dark night, when our little parlor was warm and bright with fire and candle, and the doors of our house were—almost cruelly, it seemed to me sometimes—bolted and locked against it.

An aunt of my father's, and consequently a great-aunt of mine, of whom I shall have more to relate by and by, was the principal magnate of our family. Miss Trotwood, or Miss Betsey, as my poor mother always called her, when she sufficiently overcame her dread of this formidable personage to mention her at all (which was seldom), had been married to a husband younger than herself, who was very handsome, except in the sense of the homely adage, "handsome is, that handsome does"—for he was strongly suspected of having beaten Miss Betsey, and even of having once, on a disputed question of supplies, made some hasty but determined arrangements to throw her out of a two pair of stairs' window. These evidences of an incompatibility of temper induced Miss Betsey to pay him off, and effect a separation by mutual consent. He went to India with his capital, and there, according to a wild legend in our family, he was once seen riding on an elephant, in company with a Baboon; but I think it must have been a Baboo—or a Begum. Any how, from India tidings of his death reached home, within ten years. How they affected my aunt, nobody knew; for immediately upon the separation she took her maiden name again, bought a cottage in a hamlet on the sea-coast a long way off, established herself there as a single woman with one servant, and was understood to live secluded, ever afterwards, in an inflexible retirement.

My father had once been a favourite of hers, I believe; but she was mortally affronted by his marriage, on the ground that my mother was "a wax doll." She had never seen my mother, but she knew her to be not yet twenty. My father and Miss Betsey never met again. He was double my mother's age when he married, and of but a delicate constitution. He died a year afterwards, and, as I have said, six months before I came into the world.

This was the state of matters on the afternoon of, what *I* may be

excused for calling, that eventful and important Friday. I can make no claim, therefore, to have known, at that time, how matters stood; or to have any remembrance, founded on the evidence of my own senses, of what follows.

My mother was sitting by the fire, but poorly in health, and very low in spirits, looking at it through her tears, and desponding heavily about herself and the fatherless little stranger, who was already welcomed by some grosses of prophetic pins in a drawer upstairs, to a world not at all excited on the subject of his arrival; my mother, I say, was sitting by the fire, that bright, windy March afternoon, very timid and sad, and very doubtful of ever coming alive out of the trial that was before her, when, lifting her eyes, as she dried them, to the window opposite, she saw a strange lady coming up the garden.

My mother had a sure foreboding, at the second glance, that it was Miss Betsey. The setting sun was glowing on the strange lady, over the garden-fence, and she came walking up to the door with a fell rigidity of figure and composure of countenance that could have belonged to nobody else.

When she reached the house, she gave another proof of her identity. My father had often hinted that she seldom conducted herself like any ordinary Christian; and now, instead of ringing the bell, she came and looked in at that identical window, pressing the end of her nose against the glass to that extent that my poor dear mother used to say it became perfectly flat and white in a moment.

She gave my mother such a turn, that I have always been convinced I am indebted to Miss Betsey for having been born on a Friday.

My mother had left her chair in her agitation, and gone behind it in the corner. Miss Betsey, looking round the room, slowly and inquiringly, began on the other side, and carried her eyes on, like a Saracen's Head in a Dutch clock, until they reached my mother. Then she made a frown and a gesture to my mother, like one who was accustomed to be obeyed, to come and open the door. My mother went.

"Mrs. David Copperfield, I *think*," said Miss Betsey; the emphasis referring, perhaps, to my mother's mourning weeds, and her condition.

"Yes," said my mother, faintly.

"Miss Trotwood," said the visitor. "You have heard of her, I dare say?"

My mother answered she had had that pleasure. And she had a disagreeable consciousness of not appearing to imply that it had been an overpowering pleasure.

"Now you see her," said Miss Betsey. My mother bent her head, and begged her to walk in.

They went into the parlor my mother had come from, the fire in the best room on the other side of the passage not being lighted—not having been lighted, indeed, since my father's funeral; and when they were both seated, and Miss Betsey said nothing, my mother, after vainly trying to restrain herself, began to cry.

"Oh, tut, tut, tut!" said Miss Betsey, in a hurry. "Don't do that! Come, come!"

My mother couldn't help it notwithstanding, so she cried until she had had her cry out.

"Take off your cap, child," said Miss Betsey, "and let me see you."

My mother was too much afraid of her to refuse compliance with this odd request, if she had any disposition to do so. Therefore she did as she was told, and did it with such nervous hands that her hair (which was luxuriant and beautiful) fell all about her face.

"Why, bless my heart!" exclaimed Miss Betsey. "You are a very Baby!"

My mother was, no doubt, unusually youthful in appearance even for her years; she hung her head, as if it were her fault, poor thing, and said, sobbing, that indeed she was afraid she was but a childish widow, and would be but a childish mother if she lived. In a short pause which ensued, she had a fancy that she felt Miss Betsey touch her hair, and that with no ungentle hand; but, looking at her, in her timid hope, she found that lady sitting with the skirt of her dress tucked up, her hands folded on one knee, and her feet upon the fender, frowning at the fire.

"In the name of Heaven," said Miss Betsey, suddenly, "why Rookery?"

"Do you mean the house, ma'am?" asked my mother.

"Why Rookery?" said Miss Betsey. "Cookery would have been more to the purpose, if you had had any practical ideas of life, either of you."

"The name was Mr. Copperfield's choice," returned my mother. "When he bought the house, he liked to think that there were rooks about it."

The evening wind made such a disturbance just now, among some tall old elm-trees at the bottom of the garden, that neither my mother nor Miss Betsey could forbear glancing that way. As the elms bent to one another, like giants who were whispering secrets, and after a few seconds of such repose, fell into a violent flurry, tossing their wild arms about, as if their late confidences were really too wicked for their peace of mind, some weather-beaten ragged old rooks' nests burdening their higher branches, swung like wrecks upon a stormy sea.

"Where are the birds?" asked Miss Betsey.

"The ——" My mother had been thinking of something else.

"The rooks—what has become of them?" asked Miss Betsey.

"There have not been any since we have lived here," said my mother. "We thought—Mr. Copperfield thought—it was quite a large rookery; but the nests were very old ones, and the birds have deserted them a long while."

"David Copperfield all over!" cried Miss Betsey. "David Copperfield from head to foot! Calls a house a rookery when there is not a rook near it, and takes the birds on trust, because he sees the nests!"

"Mr. Copperfield," returned my mother, "is dead, and if you dare to speak unkindly of him to me——"

My poor dear mother, I suppose, had some momentary intention of committing an assault and battery upon my aunt, who could easily have settled her with one hand, even if my mother had been in far better training for such an encounter than she was that evening. But it passed with the action of rising from her chair; and she sat down again very meekly, and fainted.

When she came to herself, or when Miss Betsey had restored her, whichever it was, she found the latter standing at the window. The twilight was by this time shading down into darkness; and dimly as they saw each other, they could not have done that without the aid of the fire.

"Well?" said Miss Betsey, coming back to her chair, as if she had only been taking a casual look at the prospect; "and when do you expect——"

"I am all in a tremble," faltered my mother. "I don't know what's the matter. I shall die, I am sure!"

"No, no, no," said Miss Betsey. "Have some tea."

"Oh, dear me, dear me, do you think it will do me any good" cried my mother, in a helpless manner.

"Of course it will," said Miss Betsey. "It's nothing but fancy. What do you call your girl?"

"I don't know that it will be a girl, yet, ma'am," said my mother, innocently.

"Bless the Baby!" exclaimed Miss Betsey, unconsciously quoting the second sentiment of the pincushion in the drawer upstairs, but applying it to my mother instead of me. "I don't mean that. I mean your servant."

"Peggotty?" said my mother.

"Peggotty!" repeated Miss Betsey, with some indignation. "Do

you mean to say, child, that any human being has gone into a Christian church, and got herself named Peggotty?"

"It's her surname," said my mother, faintly. "Mr. Copperfield called her by it, because her Christian name was the same as mine."

"Here, Peggotty!" cried Miss Betsey, opening the parlor-door. "Tea. Your mistress is a little unwell. Don't dawdle."

Having issued this mandate with as much potentiality as if she had been a recognised authority in the house ever since it had been a house, and having looked out to confront the amazed Peggotty coming along the passage with a candle at the sound of a strange voice, Miss Betsey shut the door again, and sat down as before: with her feet on the fender, the skirt of her dress tucked up, and her hands folded on one knee.

"You were speaking about its being a girl," said Miss Betsey. "I have no doubt it will be a girl. I have a presentiment that it must be a girl. Now, child, from the moment of the birth of this girl——"

"Perhaps boy," my mother took the liberty of putting in.

"I tell you I have a presentiment that it must be a girl," returned Miss Betsey. "Don't contradict. From the moment of this girl's birth, child, I intend to be her friend. I intend to be her godmother, and I beg you'll call her Betsey Trotwood Copperfield. There must be no mistakes in life with *this* Betsey Trotwood. There must be no trifling with *her* affections, poor dear. She must be well brought up, and well guarded from reposing any foolish confidences where they are not deserved. I must make that *my* care."

There was a twitch of Miss Betsey's head, after each of these sentences, as if her own old wrongs were working within her, and she repressed any plainer reference to them by strong constraint. So my mother suspected, at least, as she observed her by the low glimmer of the fire: too much scared by Miss Betsey, too uneasy in herself, and too subdued and bewildered altogether, to observe anything very clearly, or to know what to say.

"And was David good to you, child?" asked Miss Betsey, when she had been silent for a little while, and these motions of her head had gradually ceased. "Were you comfortable together?"

"We were very happy," said my mother. "Mr. Copperfield was only too good to me."

"What! he spoilt you, I suppose?" returned Miss Betsey.

"For being quite alone and dependent on myself in this rough world again, yes, I fear he did indeed," sobbed my mother.

"Well! Don't cry!" said Miss Betsey. "You were not equally

matched, child—if any two people *can* be equally matched—and so I asked the question. You were an orphan, weren't you?"

"Yes."

"And a governess?"

"I was nursery-governess in a family where Mr. Copperfield came to visit. Mr. Copperfield was very kind to me, and took a great deal of notice of me, and paid me a good deal of attention, and at last proposed to me. And I accepted him. And so we were married," said my mother, simply.

"Ha! Poor Baby!" mused Miss Betsey, with her frown still bent upon the fire. "Do you know anything?"

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," faltered my mother.

"About keeping house, for instance," said Miss Betsey.

"Not much, I fear," returned my mother. "Not so much as I could wish. But Mr. Copperfield was teaching me—"

("Much he knew about it himself!") said Miss Betsey, in a parenthesis.

—"And I hope I should have improved, being very anxious to learn, and he very patient to teach, if the great misfortune of his death"—my mother broke down again here, and could get no farther.

"Well, well!" said Miss Betsey.

—"I kept my housekeeping-book regularly, and balanced it with Mr. Copperfield every night," cried my mother in another burst of distress, and breaking down again.

"Well, well!" said Miss Betsey. "Don't cry any more."

—"And I am sure we never had a word of difference respecting it, except when Mr. Copperfield objected to my threes and fives being too much like each other, or to my putting curly tails to my sevens and nines," resumed my mother in another burst, and breaking down again.

"You'll make yourself ill," said Miss Betsey, "and you know that will not be good eight for you or for my god-daughter. Come! You mustn't do it!"

This argument had some share in quieting my mother, though her increasing indisposition had perhaps a larger one. There was an interval of silence, only broken by Miss Betsey's occasionally ejaculating "Ha!" as she sat with her feet upon the fender.

"David had bought an annuity for himself with his money, I know," said she, by and by. "What did he do for you?"

"Mr. Copperfield," said my mother, answering with some difficulty, "was so considerate and good as to secure the reversion of a part of it to me."

"How much?" asked Miss Betsey.

"A hundred and five pounds a year," said my mother.

"He might have done worse," said my aunt.

The word was appropriate to the moment. My mother was so much worse that Peggotty, coming in with the teaboard and candles, and seeing at a glance how ill she was,—as Miss Betsey might have done sooner if there had been light enough,—conveyed her up-stairs to her own room with all speed; and immediately despatched Ham Peggotty, her nephew, who had been for some days past secreted in the house, unknown to my mother, as a special messenger in case of emergency, to fetch the nurse and doctor.

Those allied powers were considerably astonished, when they arrived within a few minutes of each other, to find an unknown lady of portentous appearance sitting before the fire, with her bonnet tied over her left arm, stopping her ears with jewellers' cotton. Peggotty knowing nothing about her, and my mother saying nothing about her, she was quite a mystery in the parlour; and the fact of her having a magazine of jewellers' cotton in her pocket, and sticking the article in her ears in

The doctor having been up-stairs and come down again, and having satisfied himself, I suppose, that there was a probability of this unknown lady and himself having to sit there, face to face, for some hours, laid himself out to be polite and social. He was the meekest of his sex, the mildest of little men. He sidled in and out of a room, to take up the less space. He walked as softly as the Ghost in Hamlet, and more slowly. He carried his head on one side, partly in modest depreciation of himself, partly in modest propitiation of everybody else. It is nothing to say that he hadn't a word to throw at a dog. He couldn't have *thrown* a word at a mad dog. He might have offered him one gently, or half a one, or a fragment of one; for he spoke as slowly as he walked; but he wouldn't have been rude to him, and he couldn't have been quick with him, for any earthly consideration.

Mr. Chillip, looking mildly at my aunt with his head on one side, and making her a little bow, said, in allusion to the jewellers' cotton, as he softly touched his left ear:

"Some local irritation," ma'am?"

"What!" replied my aunt, pulling the cotton out of one ear like a cork.

Mr. Chillip was so alarmed by her abruptness—as he told my mother afterwards—that it was a mercy he didn't lose his presence of mind. But he repeated sweetly:

"Some local irritation, ma'am?"

"Nonsense!" replied my aunt, and corked herself again, at one blow.

Mr. Chillip could do nothing after this but sit and look at her feebly, as she sat and looked at the fire, until he was called up-stairs again. After some quarter of an hour's absence he returned.

"Well?" said my aunt, taking the cotton out of the ear nearest to him.

"Well, ma'am," returned Mr. Chillip, "we are—we are progressing slowly, ma'am."

"Ba—a—ah!" said my aunt, with a perfect shake on the contemptuous interjection. And corked herself as before.

Really—really—as Mr. Chillip told my mother, he was almost shocked; speaking in a professional point of view alone he was almost shocked. But he sat and looked at her, notwithstanding, for nearly two hours, as she sat looking at the fire, until he was again called out. After another absence, he again returned.

"Well?" said my aunt, taking out the cotton on that side again.

"Well, ma'am," returned Mr. Chillip, "we are—we are progressing slowly, ma'am."

"Ya—a—ah!" said my aunt. With such a snarl at him, that Mr. Chillip absolutely could not bear it. It was really calculated to break his spirit, he said afterwards. He preferred to go and sit upon the stairs, in the dark and a strong draught, until he was again sent for.

Ham Peggotty, who went to the national school, and was a very dragon at his catechism, and who may therefore be regarded as a credible witness, reported next day, that happening to peep in at the parlor-door an hour after this, he was instantly descried by Miss Betsey, then walking to and fro in a state of agitation, and pounced upon before he could make his escape. That there were now occasional sounds of feet and voices overhead which he inferred the cotton did not exclude, from the circumstance of his evidently being clutched by the lady as a victim on whom to expend her superabundant agitation when the sounds were loudest. That, marching him constantly up and down by the collar (as if he had been taking too much laundanum), she, at those times, shook him, rumpled his hair, made light of his linen, stopped *his* ears as if she confounded them with her own, and otherwise touzled and maltreated him. This was in part confirmed by his aunt, who saw him at half-past twelve o'clock, soon after his release, and affirmed that he was then as red as I was.

The mild Mr. Chillip could not possibly bear malice at such a time, if at any time. He sidled into the parlor as soon as he was at liberty, and said to my aunt, in his meekest manner:

"Well, ma'am, I am happy to congratulate you."

"What upon?" said my aunt, sharply.

Mr. Chillip was fluttered again, by the extreme severity of my aunt's manner; so he made her a little bow, and gave her a little smile, to mollify her.

"Mercy on the man, what's he doing!" cried my aunt, impatiently. "Can't he speak?"

"Be calm, my dear ma'am," said Mr. Chillip, in his softest accents. "There is no longer any occasion for uneasiness, ma'am. Be calm."

It has since been considered almost a miracle that my aunt did'nt shake him, and shake what he had to say out of him. She only shook her own head at him, but in a way that made him quail.

"Well, ma'am," resumed Mr. Chillip, as soon as he had courage, "I am happy to congratulate you. All is now over, ma'am, and well over."

During the five minutes or so that Mr. Chillip devoted to the delivery of this oration, my aunt eyed him narrowly.

"How is she?" said my aunt, folding her arms with her bonnet still tied on one of them.

"Well, ma'am, she will soon be quite comfortable, I hope," returned Mr. Chillip. "Quite as comfortable as we can expect a young mother to be, under these melancholy domestic circumstances. There cannot be any objection to your seeing her presently, ma'am. It may do her good."

"And *she*. How is *she?*" said my aunt, sharply.

Mr. Chillip laid his head a little more on one side, and looked at my aunt like an amiable bird.

"The baby," said my aunt. "How is she?"

"Ma'am," returned Mr. Chillip, "I apprehended you had known. It's a boy."

My aunt said never a word, but took her bonnet by the strings, in the manner of a sling, aimed a blow at Mr. Chillip's head with it, put it on bent, walked out, and never came back. She vanished like a discontented fairy; or like one of those supernatural beings whom it was popularly supposed I was entitled to see; and never came back any more.

No. I lay in my basket, and my mother lay in her bed; but Betsey Trotwood Copperfield was for ever in the land of dreams and shadows, the tremendous region whence I had so lately travelled; and the light upon the window of our room shone out upon the earthly bourne of all such travellers, and the mound above the ashes and the dust that once was he, without whom I had never been.

From *David Copperfield.*

THE SIGNALMAN'S STORY.

By Charles Dickens.

"Halloa! Below there!"

When he heard a voice thus calling to him, he was standing at the door of his box, with a flag in his hand, furled round its short pole. One would have thought, considering the nature of the ground, that he could not have doubted from what quarter the voice came, but instead of looking up to where I stood on the top of the steep cutting nearly over his head, he turned himself about, and looked down the Line. There was something remarkable in his manner of doing so, though I could not have said for my life what. But I know it was remarkable enough to attract my notice, even though his figure was foreshortened and shadowed, down in the deep trench, and mine was high above him, so steeped in the glow of an angry sunset, that I had shaded my eyes with my hand before I saw him at all.

"Halloa! Below!"

From looking down the Line, he turned himself about again, and, raising his eyes, saw my figure high above him.

"Is there any path by which I can come down and speak to you?"

He looked up at me without replying, and I looked down at him without pressing him too soon with a repetition of my idle question. Just then there came a vague vibration in the earth and air, quickly changing into a violent pulsation, and an oncoming rush that caused me to start back, as though it had force to draw me down. When such vapour as rose to my height from this rapid train had passed me, and was skimming away over the landscape, I looked down again, and saw him refurling the flag he had shown while the train went by.

I repeated my inquiry. After a pause, during which he seemed to regard me with fixed attention, he motioned with his rolled-up flag towards a point on my level, some two or three hundred yards distant. I called down to him, "All right!" and made for that point. There, by dint of looking closely about me, I found a rough zigzag descending path notched out, which I followed.

The cutting was extremely deep, and unusually precipitate. It was made through a clammy stone, that became oozier and wetter as I went down. For these reasons, I found the way long enough to give

me time to recall a singular air of reluctance or compulsion with which he had pointed out the path.

When I came down low enough upon the zigzag descent to see him again, I saw that he was standing between the rails on the way by which the train had lately passed, in an attitude as if he were waiting for me to appear. He had his left hand at his chin, and that left elbow rested on his right hand, crossed over his breast. His attitude was one of such expectation and watchfulness that I stopped a moment, wondering at it.

I resumed my downward way, and stepping out upon the level of the railroad, and drawing nearer to him, saw that he was a dark, sallow man, with a dark beard and rather heavy eyebrows. His post was in as solitary and dismal a place as ever I saw. On either side, a dripping-wet wall of jagged stone, excluding all view but a strip of sky; the perspective one way only a crooked prolongation of this great dungeon; the shorter perspective in the other direction terminating in a gloomy red light, and the gloomier entrance to a black tunnel, in whose massive architecture there was a barbarous, depressing and forbidding air. So little sunlight ever found its way to this spot that it had an earthy, deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushed through it that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world.

Before he stirred, I was near enough to him to have touched him. Not even then removing his eyes from mine, he stepped back one step and lifted his hand.

This was a lonesome post to occupy (I said), and it had riveted my attention when I looked down from up yonder. A visitor was a rarity, I should suppose; not an unwelcome rarity, I hoped? In me he merely saw a man who had been shut up within narrow limits all his life, and who, being at last set free, had a newly-awakened interest in these great works. To such purpose I spoke to him; but I am far from sure of the terms I used; for, besides that I am not happy in opening any conversation, there was something in the man that daunted me.

He directed a most curious look towards the red light near the tunnel's mouth, and looked all about it, as if something were missing from it, and then looked at me.

The light was part of his charge? Was it not?

He answered in a low voice,—"Don't you know it is?"

The monstrous thought came into my mind as I perused the fixed eyes and the saturnine face, that this was a spirit, not a man. I have speculated since whether there may have been infection in his mind.

In my turn, I stepped back. But in making the action, I detected in his eyes some latent fear of me. This put the monstrous thought to flight.

"You look at me," I said, forcing a smile, "as if you had a dread of me."

"I was doubtful," he returned, "whether I had seen you before."

"Where?"

He pointed to the red light he had looked at.

"There?" I said.

Intently watchful of me, he replied (but without sound), "Yes."

"My good fellow, what should I do there? However, be that as it may, I never was there, you may swear."

"I think I may," he rejoined. "Yes; I am sure I may."

His manner cleared, like my own. He replied to my remarks with readiness, and in well-chosen words. Had he much to do there? Yes; that was to say, he had enough responsibility to bear; but exactness and watchfulness were what was required of him, and of actual work—manual labour—he had next to none. To change that signal, to trim those lights, and to turn this iron handle now and then was all he had to do under that head. Regarding those many long and lonely hours of which I seemed to make so much, he could only say that the routine of his life had shaped itself into that form, and he had grown used to it. He had taught himself a language down here,—if only to know it by sight, and to have formed his own crude ideas of its pronunciation, could be called learning it. He had also worked at fractions and decimals, and tried a little algebra; but he was, and had been as a boy, a poor hand at figures. Was it necessary for him when on duty always to remain in that channel of damp air, and could he never rise into the sunshine from between those high stone walls? Why, that depended upon times and circumstances. Under some conditions there would be less upon the Line than under others, and the same held good as to certain hours of the day and night. In bright weather he did choose occasions for getting a little above these lower shadows; but, being at all times liable to be called by his electric bell, and at such times listening for it with redoubled anxiety, the relief was less than I would suppose.

He took me into his box, where there was a fire, a desk for an official book in which he had to make certain entries, a telegraphic instrument with its dial, face and needles, and the little bell of which he had spoken. On my trusting that he would excuse the remark that he had been well education, and (I hoped I might say without offence) perhaps educated above that station, he observed that instances of slight incongruity in such wise would rarely be found wanting among large bodies of men; that he had heard it was so in workhouses, in the police force, even in that last desparate resource, the army; and that he knew it was so, more or less, in any great railway staff. He had been, when young

(if I could believe it, sitting in that hut,—he scarcely could), a student of natural philosophy, and had attended lectures; but he had run wild, misused his opportunities, gone down, and never risen again. He had no complaint to offer about that. He had made his bed, and he lay upon it. It was far too late to make another.

All that I have here condensed he said in a quiet manner, with his grave dark regards divided between me and the fire. He threw in the word, "Sir," from time to time, and especially when he referred to his youth,—as though to request me to understand that he claimed to be nothing but what I found him. He was several times interrupted by the little bell, and had to read off messages, and send replies. Once he had to stand without the door, and display a flag as a train passed, and make some verbal communication to the driver. In the discharge of his duties I observed him to be remarkably exact and vigilant, breaking off his discourse at a syllable, and remaining silent until what he had to do was done.

In a word, I should have set this man down as one of the safest of men to be employed in that capacity, but for the circumstance that while he was speaking to me he twice broke off with a fallen colour, turned his face towards the little bell when it did NOT ring, opened the door of the hut (which was kept shut to exclude the unhealthy damp), and looked out towards the red light near the mouth of the tunnel. On both of those occasions he came back to the fire with the inexplicable air upon him which I had remarked, without being able to define, when we were so far asunder.

Said I, when I rose to leave him, "You almost make me think that I have met with a contented man."

(I am afraid I must acknowledge that I said it to lead him on.)

"I believe I used to be so," he rejoined, in the low voice in which he had first spoken; "but I am troubled, sir, I am troubled."

He would have recalled the words if he could. He had said them, however, and I took them up quickly.

"With what? What is your trouble?"

"It is very difficult to impart, sir. It is very, very difficult to speak of. If ever you make me another visit, I will try to tell you."

"But I expressly intend to make you another visit. Say, when shall it be?"

"I go off early in the morning, and I shall be on again at ten to-morrow night, sir."

"I will come at eleven."

He thanked me, and went out at the door with me. "I'll show my white light, sir," he said, in his peculiar low voice, "till you have found

the way up. When you have found it don't call out! And when you are at the top don't call out!"

His manner seemed to make the place strike colder to me, but I said no more than, "Very well."

"And when you come down to-morrow night, don't call out! Let me ask you a parting question. What made you cry, 'Halloa! Below there!' to-night?"

"Heaven knows," said I. "I cried something to that effect——"

"Not to that effect, sir. Those were the very words. I know them well."

"Admit those were the very words. I said them, no doubt, because I saw you below."

"For no other reason?"

"What other reason could I possibly have?"

"You had no feeling that they were conveyed to you in any supernatural way?"

"No."

He wished me good-night and held up his light. I walked by the side of the down Line of rails (with a very disagreeable sensation of a train coming behind me) until I found the path. It was easier to mount than to descend, and I got back to my inn without any adventure.

Punctual to my appointment, I placed my foot on the first notch of the zigzag next night as the distant clocks were striking eleven. He was waiting for me at the bottom with his white light on. "I have not called out," I said, when we came close together; "may I speak now?" "By all means, sir." "Good night, then, and here's my hand." "Good night, sir, and here's mine." With that we walked side by side to his box, entered it, closed the door, and sat down by the fire.

"I have made up my mind, sir," he began, bending forward as soon as we were seated, and speaking in a tone but a little above a whisper, "that you shall not have to ask me twice what troubles me. I took you for someone else yesterday evening. That troubles me."

"That mistake?"

"No. That some one else."

"Who is it?"

"I don't know."

"Like me?"

"I don't know. I never saw the face. The left arm is across the face, and the right arm is waved,—violently waved. This way."

I followed his action with my eyes, and it was the action of an arm gesticulating, with the utmost passion and vehemence, "For God's sake, clear the way!"

"One moonlight night," said the man, "I was sitting here, when I heard a voice cry, 'Halloa! Below there!' I started up, looked from that door, and saw this Some one else standing by the red light near the tunnel, waving as I just now showed you. The voice seemed hoarse with shouting, and it cried, 'Look out! Look out!' And then again, 'Halloa! Below there! Look out!' I caught up my lamp, turned it on red, and ran towards the figure, calling, 'What's wrong? What has happened? Where?' It stood just outside the blackness of the tunnel. I advanced so close upon it that I wondered at its keeping the sleeve across its eyes. I ran right up at it, and had my hand stretched out to pull the sleeve away, when it was gone."

"Into the tunnel?" said I.

"No. I ran on into the tunnel, five hundred yards. I stopped, and held my lamp above my head, and saw the figures of the measured distance, and saw the wet stains stealing down the walls and trickling through the arch. I ran out again faster than I had run in (for I had a mortal abhorrence of the place upon me), and I looked all round the red light with my own red light, and I went up the iron ladder to the gallery atop of it, and I came down again, and ran back here. I telegraphed both ways, 'An alarm has been given. Is anything wrong?' The answer came back, both ways, 'All well.'"

Resisting the slow touch of a frozen finger tracing out my spine, I showed him how that this figure must be a deception of his sense of sight; and how that figures, originating in disease of the delicate nerves that minister to the functions of the eye, were known to have often troubled patients, some of whom had become conscious of the nature of their affliction, and had even proved it by experiments upon themselves. "As to an imaginary cry," said I, "do but listen for a moment to the wind in this unnatural valley while we speak so low, and to the wild harp it makes of the telegraph wires."

That was all very well, he returned, after we had sat listening for a while, and he ought to know something of the wind and the wires,—he who so often passed long winter nights there, alone and watching. But he would beg to remark that he had not finished.

I asked his pardon, and he slowly added these words, touching my arm,—

"Within six hours after the Appearance, the memorable accident on this Line happened, and within ten hours the dead and wounded were brought along through the tunnel over the spot where the figure had stood."

A disagreeable shudder crept over me, but I did my best against it. It was not to be denied, I rejoined, that this was a remarkable coincidence, calculated deeply to impress his mind. But it was unquestionable that remarkable coincidences did continually occur, and they must be taken into account in dealing with such a subject. Though to be sure I must admit, I added (for I thought I saw that he was going to bring the objection to bear upon me), men of common sense did not allow much for coincidences in making the ordinary calculations of life.

He again begged to remark that he had not finished.

I again begged his pardon for being betrayed into interruptions.

"This," he said, again laying his hand upon my arm, and glancing over his shoulder with hollow eyes, "was just a year ago. Six or seven months passed, and I had recovered from the surprise and shock, when one morning, as the day was breaking, I, standing at the door, looked towards the red light, and saw the spectre again." He stopped, with a fixed look at me.

"Did it cry out?"

"No. It was silent."

"Did it wave its arm?"

"No. It leaned against the shaft of the light, with both hands before the face. Like this."

Once more I followed his action with my eyes. It was an action of mourning. I have seen such an attitude in stone figures on tombs.

"Did you go up to it?"

"I came in and sat down, partly to collect my thoughts, partly because it had turned me faint. When I went to the door again, daylight was above me, and the ghost was gone."

"But nothing followed? Nothing came of this?"

He touched me on the arm with his forefinger twice or thrice, giving a ghastly nod each time:—

"That very day, as a train came out of the tunnel, I noticed at a carriage window, on my side, what looked like a confusion of hands and heads, and something waved. I saw it just in time to signal the driver, Stop! He shut off, and put his brake on, but the train drifted past here a hundred and fifty yards or more. I ran after it, and, as I went along, heard terrible screams and cries. A beautiful young lady had died instantaneously in one of the compartments, and was brought in here and laid down on this floor between us."

Involuntarily I pushed my chair back, as I looked from the boards at which he pointed to himself.

"True, sir. True. Precisely as it happened, so I tell it you."

I could think of nothing to say, to any purpose, and my mouth was

very dry. The wind and the wires took up the story with a long lamenting wail.

He resumed. "Now, sir, mark this, and judge how my mind is troubled. The spectre came back a week ago. Ever since, it has been there, now and again, by fits and starts."

"At the light?"

"At the Danger-light."

"What does it seem to do?"

He repeated, if possible with increased passion and vehemence, that former gesticulation of, "For God's sake, clear the way!"

Then he went on. "I have no peace or rest for it. It calls to me, for many minutes together, in an agonised manner, 'Below there! Look out! Look out!' It stands waving to me. It rings my little bell——"

I caught at that "Did it ring your bell yesterday evening when I was here, and you went to the door?"

"Twice."

"Why, see," said I, "how your imagination misleads you. My eyes were on the bell, and my ears were open to the bell, and if I am a living man, it did NOT ring at those times. No, nor at any other time, except when it was rung in the natural course of physical things by the station communicating with you."

He shook his head. "I have never made a mistake as to that yet, sir. I have never confused the spectre's ring with the man's. The ghost's ring is a strange vibration in the bell that it derives from nothing else, and I have not asserted that the bell stirs to the eye. I don't wonder that you failed to hear it. But *I* heard it."

"And did the spectre seem to be there, when you looked out?"

"It WAS there."

"Both times?"

He repeated firmly: "Both times."

"Will you come to the door with me and look for it now?"

He bit his underlip as though he were somewhat unwilling, but arose. I opened the door and stood on the step, while he stood in the doorway. There was the Danger-light. There was the dismal mouth of the tunnel. There were the high, wet stone walls of the cutting. There were the stars above them.

"Do you see it?" I asked him, taking particular note of his face. His eyes were prominent and strained, but not very much more so, perhaps, than my own had been when I had directed them earnestly towards the same spot.

"No," he answered. "It is not there."

"Agreed," said I.

We went in again, shut the door, and resumed our seats. I was thinking how best to improve this advantage, if it might be called one, when he took up the conversation in such a matter-of-course way, so assuming that there could be no serious question of fact between us, that I felt myself placed in the weakest of positions.

"By this time you will fully understand, sir," he said, "that what troubles me so dreadfully is the question, What does the spectre mean?"

I was not sure, I told him, that I did fully understand.

"What is its warning against?" he said, ruminating, with his eyes on the fire, and only by times turning them on me. "What is the danger? Where is the danger? There is danger overhanging somewhere on the Line. Some dreadful calamity will happen. It is not to be doubted this third time, after what has gone before. But surely this is a cruel haunting of *me*. What can *I* do?"

He pulled out his handkerchief, and wiped the drops from his heated forehead.

"If I telegraph Danger, on either side of me, or on both, I can give no reason for it," he went on, wiping the palms of his hands. "I should get into trouble, and do no good. They would think I was mad. This is the way it would work,—Message: 'Danger! Take care!' Answer: 'What Danger? Where?' Message: 'Don't know. But, for God's sake, take care!' They would displace me. What else could they do?"

His pain of mind was most pitiable to see. It was the mental torture of a conscientious man, oppressed beyond endurance by an unintelligible responsibility involving life.

"When it first stood under the Danger-light," he went on, putting his dark hair back from his head, and drawing his hands outward across and across his temples in an extremity of feverish distress, "why not tell me where that accident was to happen,—if it must happen? Why not tell me how it could be averted,—if it could have been averted? When on its second coming it hid it's face, why not tell me, instead, 'She is going to die. Let them keep her at home'? If it came on those two occasions only to show me that its warnings were true, and so to prepare me for the third, why not warn me plainly now? And I, Lord help me! A mere poor signal-man on this solitary station! Why not go to somebody with credit to be believed, and power to act?"

When I saw him in this state, I saw that for the poor man's sake, as well as for the public safety, what I had to do for the time was to compose his mind. Therefore, setting aside all question of reality or

unreality between us, I represented to him that whoever thoroughly discharged his duty must do well, and that at least it was his comfort that he understood his duty, though he did not understand these confounding Appearances. In this effort I succeeded far better than in the attempt to reason him out of his conviction. He became calm; the occupations incidental to his post as the night advanced began to make larger demands on his attention: and I left him at two in the morning. I had offered to stay through the night, but he would not hear of it.

That I more than once looked back at the red light as I ascended the pathway, that I did not like the red light, and that I should have slept but poorly if my bed had been under it, I see no reason to conceal. Nor did I like the two sequences of the accident and the dead girl. I see no reason to conceal that either.

But what ran most in my thoughts was the consideration how ought I to act, having become the recipient of this disclosure? I had proved the man to be intelligent, vigilant, painstaking, and exact; but how long might he remain so in his state of mind? Though in a subordinate position, still he held a most important trust, and would I (for instance) like to stake my own life on the chances of his continuing to execute it with precision?

Unable to overcome a feeling that there would be something treacherous in my communicating what he had told me to his superiors in the Company, without first being plain with himself and proposing a middle course to him, I ultimately resolved to offer to accompany him (otherwise keeping his secret for the present) to the wisest medical practitioner we could hear of in those parts, and to take his opinion. A change in his time of duty would come round next night, he had apprised me, and he would be off an hour or two after sunrise, and on again after sunset. I had appointed to return accordingly.

Next evening was a lovely evening, and I walked out early to enjoy it. The sun was not yet quite down when I traversed the field-path near the top of the deep cutting. I would exend my walk for an hour, I said to myself, half-an-hour on and half-an-hour back, and it would then be time to go to my signal-man's box.

Before pursuing my stroll, I stepped to the brink, and mechanically looked down from the point from which I had first seen him. I cannot describe the thrill that seized upon me, when, close at the mouth of the tunnel, I saw the appearance of a man, with his left sleeve across his eyes, passionately waving his right arm.

The nameless horror that oppressed me passed in a moment, for in a moment I saw that this appearance of a man was a man indeed, and

that there was a little group of other men standing at a short distance, to whom he seemed to be rehearsing the gesture he made. The Danger-light was not yet lighted. Against its shaft, a little low hut, entirely new to me, had been made of some wooden supports and tarpaulin. It looked no bigger than a bed.

With an irresistible sense that something was wrong,—with a flashing, self-reproachful fear that fatal mischief had come of my leaving the man there, and causing no one to be sent to overlook or correct what he did,—I descended the notched path with all the speed I could make.

"What is the matter?" I asked the men.

"Signal-man killed this morning, sir."

"Not the man belonging to that box?"

"Yes, sir."

"Not the man I know?"

"You will recognise him, sir, if you knew him," said the man who spoke for the others, solemnly uncovering his own head, and raising an end of the tarpaulin, "for his face is quite composed."

"O! how did this happen? how did this happen?" I asked, turning from one to another as the hut closed in again.

"He was cut down by an engine, sir. No man in England knew his work better. But somehow he was not clear of the outer rail. It was just at broad day. He had struck the light, and had the lamp in his hand. As the engine came out of the tunnel his back was towards her, and she cut him down. That man drove her, and was showing how it happened. Show the gentleman, Tom."

The man, who wore a rough dark dress, stepped back to his former place at the mouth of the tunnel.

"Coming round the curve in the tunnel, sir," he said, "I saw him at the end, like as if I saw him down a perspective-glass. There was no time to check speed, and I knew him to be very careful. As he didn't seem to take heed of the whistle, I shut it off when we were running down upon him, and called to him as loud as I could call."

"What did you say?"

"I said, 'Below there! Look out! Look out! for God's sake, clear the way!'"

I started.

"Ah! it was a dreadful time, sir. I never left off calling to him. I put this arm before my eyes not to see, and I waved this arm to the last; but it was no use."

Without prolonging the narrative to dwell on any one of its curious

circumstances more than on any other, I may, in closing it, point out the coincidence that the warning of the Engine-Driver included, not only the words which the unfortunate Signal-man had repeated to me as haunting him, but also the words which I myself—not he—had attached, and that only in my own mind, to the gesticulation he had imitated.

From *Christmas Stories.*

MR. CRUMMLES PRONOUNCES ON THE STATE OF THE DRAMA.

By Charles Dickens.

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 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 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.

"Twelve miles," said Nicholas, leaning with both hands on his stick, and looking doubtfully at Smike.

"Twelve long miles," repeated the landlord.

"Is it a good road?" inquired Nicholas.

"Very bad," said the landlord. As, of course, being a landlord, he would say.

"I want to get on," observed Nicholas, hesitating. "I scarcely know what to do."

"Don't let me influence you," rejoined the landlord. "*I* wouldn't go on if it was me."

"Wouldn't you?" asked Nicholas, with the same uncertainty.

"Not if I knew when I was well off," said the landlord. And

having said it he pulled up his apron, put his hands into his pockets, and, taking a step or two outside the door, looked down the dark road with an assumption of great indifference.

A glance at the toil-worn face of Smike determined Nicholas; so, without any further consideration, he made up his mind to stay where he was.

The landlord led them into the kitchen, and as there was a good fire he remarked that it was very cold. If there had happened to be a bad one he would have observed that it was very warm.

"What can you give us for supper?" was Nicholas's natural question.

"Why—what would you like?" was the landlord's no less natural answer.

Nicholas suggested cold meat, but there was no cold meat—poached eggs, but there were no eggs—mutton chops, but there wasn't a mutton chop within three miles, though there had been more last week than they knew what to do with, and would be an extraordinary supply the day after to-morrow.

"Then," said Nicholas, "I must leave it entirely to you, as I would have done at first, if you had allowed me."

"Why, then I'll tell you what," rejoined the landlord. "There's a gentleman in the parlour that's ordered a hot beaf-steak pudding and potatoes at nine. There's more of it than he can manage, and I have very little doubt that, if I ask leave, you can sup with him. I'll do that in a minute.

"No, no," said Nicholas, detaining him. "I would rather not. I —at least—pshaw! why cannot I speak out. Here: you see that I am travelling in a very humble manner, and have made my way hither on foot. It is more than probable, I think, that the gentleman may not relish my company: and although I am the dusty figure you see, I am too proud to thrust myself into his."

"Lord love you." said the landlord, "it's only Mr. Crummles; *he* isn't particular."

"Is he not?" asked Nicholas, on whose mind, to tell the truth, the prospect of the savoury pudding was making some impression.

"Not he," replied the landlord. "He'll like your way of talking, I know. But we'll soon see all about that. Just wait a minute."

The landlord hurried into the parlour, without staying for further permission, nor did Nicholas strive to prevent him: wisely considering that supper, under the circumstances, was too serious a matter to trifle with. It was not long before the host returned, in a condition of much excitement.

"All right," he said in a low voice. "I knew he would. You'll see something rather worth seeing, in there. Ecod, how they are going of it!"

There was no time to inquire to what this exclamation, which was delivered in a very rapturous tone, referred; for he had already thrown open the door of the room, into which Nicholas, followed by Smike with the bundle on his shoulder (he carried it about with him as vigilantly as if it had been a sack of gold), straightway repaired.

Nicholas was prepared for something odd, but not for something quite so odd as the sight he encountered. At the upper end of the room were a couple of boys, one of them very tall and the other very short, both dressed as sailors—or, at least, as theatrical sailors, with belts, buckles, pigtails and pistols complete—fighting what is called in play-bills a terrific combat, with two of those short broad-swords with basket hilts which are commonly used at our minor theatres. The short boy had gained a great advantage over the tall boy, who was reduced to mortal strait, and both were overlooked by a large heavy man, perched against the corner of a table, who emphatically adjured them to strike a little more fire out of the swords, and they couldn't fail to bring the house down on the very first night.

"Mr. Vincent Crummles," said the landlord, with an air of great deference. "This is the young gentleman."

Mr. Vincent Crummles received Nicholas with an inclination of the head, something between the courtesy of a Roman emperor and the nod of a pot companion, and bade the landlord shut the door and begone.

"There's a picture," said Mr. Crummles, motioning Nicholas not to advance and spoil it. "The little 'un has him: if the big 'un doesn't knock under in three seconds he's a dead man. Do that again, boys."

The two combatants went to work afresh, and chopped away until the swords emitted a shower of sparks: to the great satisfaction of Mr. Crummles, who appeared to consider this a very great point indeed. The engagement commenced with about two hundred chops administered by the short sailor and the tall sailor alternately without producing any particular result, until the short sailor was chopped down on one knee; but this was nothing to him, for he worked himself about on the one knee with the assistance of his left hand, and fought most desperately until the tall sailor chopped his sword out of his grasp. Now, the inference was that the short sailor, reduced to this extremity, would give in at once and cry quarter, but instead of that, he all of a sudden drew a large pistol from his belt and presented it at the face of the tall sailor, who was so overcome at this (not expecting it) that he let the short sailor pick up his sword and begin again. Then the chopping recommenced,

and a variety of fancy chops were administered on both sides; such as chops dealt with the left hand, and under the leg, and over the right shoulder, and over the left; and when the short sailor made a vigorous cut at the tall sailor's legs, which would have shaved them clean off if it had taken effect, the tall sailor jumped over the short sailor's sword, wherefore, to balance the matter, and make it all fair, the tall sailor administered the same cut, and the short sailor jumped over *his* sword. After this, there was a good deal of dodging about, and hitching up of the inexpressibles in the absence of braces, and then the short sailor (who was the moral character, evidently, for he always had the best of it) made a violent demonstration and closed with the tall sailor, who, after a few unavailing struggles, went down, and expired in great torture as the short sailor put his foot upon his breast, and bored a hole in him through and through.

"That'll be a double *encore* if you take care, boys," said Mr. Crummles. "You had better get your wind now, and change your clothes."

Having addressed these words to the combatants, he saluted Nicholas, who then observed that the face of Mr. Crummles was quite proportionate in size to his body; that he had a very full under-lip, a hoarse voice, as though he were in the habit of shouting very much, and very short black hair, shaved off nearly to the crown of his head—to admit (as he afterwards learnt) of his more easily wearing character wigs of any shape or pattern.

"What do you think of that, sir?" inquired Mr. Crummles.

"Very good, indeed—capital," answered Nicholas.

"You won't see such boys as those very often, I think," said Mr. Crummles.

Nicholas assented—observing that if they were a little better match ——

"Match!" cried Mr. Crummles.

"I mean if they were a little more of a size," said Nicholas, explaining himself.

"Size!" repeated Mr. Crummles, "why its the essence of the combat that there should be a foot or two between them. How are you to get up the sympathies of the audience in a legitimate manner if there isn't a little man contending against a big one—unless there's at least five to one, and we haven't hands enough for that business in our company.

"I see," replied Nicholas. "I beg your pardon. That didn't occur to me, I confess."

"It's the main point," said Mr. Crummles. "I open at Portsmouth

the day after to-morrow. If you're going there, look into the theatre, and see how that'll tell."

Nicholas promised to do so, if he could, and drawing a chair near the fire fell into conversation with the manager at once. He was very talkative and communicative, stimulated perhaps, not only by his natural disposition, but by the spirits and water he sipped very plentifully, or the snuff he took in large quantities from a piece of whitey-brown paper in his waistcoat pocket. He laid open his affairs without the smallest reserve, and descanted at some length upon the merits of his company, and the acquirements of his family; of both of which the two broad-sword boys formed an honourable portion. There was to be a gathering, it seemed, of the different ladies and gentlemen at Portsmouth on the morrow, whither the father and sons were proceeding (not for the regular season, but in the course of a wandering speculation), after fulfilling an engagement at Guildford with the greatest applause.

"You are going that way?" asked the manager.

"Ye-yes," said Nicholas. "Yes, I am."

"Do you know the town at all?" inquired the manager, who seemed to consider himself entitled to the same degree of confidence as he had himself exhibited.

"No," replied Nicholas.

"Never there?"

"Never."

Mr. Vincent Crummles gave a short dry cough, as much as to say, "If you won't be communicative, you won't"; and took so many pinches of snuff from the piece of paper, one after another, that Nicholas quite wondered where it all went to.

While he was thus engaged Mr. Crummles looked from time to time, with great interest, at Smike, with whom he had appeared considerably struck from the first. He had now fallen asleep, and was nodding in his chair.

"Excuse my saying so," said the manager, leaning over to Nicholas, and sinking his voice, "but what a capital countenance your friend has got!"

"Poor fellow!" said Nicholas, with a half smile, "I wish it were a little more plump, and less haggard."

"Plump!" exclaimed the manager, quite horrified, "you'd spoil it for ever."

"Do you think so?"

"Think so, sir! Why, as he is now," said the manager, striking his knee emphatically: "without a pad upon his body, and hardly a touch of paint upon his face, he'd make such an actor for the starved

business as was never seen in this country. Only let him be tolerably well up in the Apothecary in Romeo and Juliet, with the slightest possible dab of red on the tip of his nose, and he'd be certain of three rounds the moment he put his head out of the practicable door in the front grooves O.P."

"You view him with a professional eye," said Nicholas, laughing.

"And well I may," rejoined the manager, "I never saw a young fellow so regularly cut out for that line since I've been in the profession. And I played the heavy children when I was eighteen months old."

The appearance of the beef-steak pudding, which came in simultaneously with the junior Vincent Crummleses, turned the conversation to other matters, and indeed, for a time, stopped it altogether. These two young gentlemen wielded their knives and forks with scarcely less address than their broad-swords, and as the whole party were quite as sharp set as either class of weapons, there was no time for talking until the supper had been disposed of.

The Master Crummleses had no sooner swallowed the last procurable morsel of food, than they evinced, by various half-suppressed yawns and stretchings of their limbs, an obvious inclination to retire for the night, which Smike had betrayed still more strongly: he having, in the course of the meal, fallen asleep several times while in the very act of eating. Nicholas therefore proposed that they should break up at once, but the manager would by no means hear of it; vowing that he had promised himself the pleasure of inviting his new acquaintance to share a bowl of punch, and that if he declined he should deem it very unhandsome behaviour.

"Let them go," said Mr. Vincent Crummles, and we'll have it snugly and cosily together by the fire."

Nicholas was not much disposed to sleep—being, in truth, too anxious—so, after a little demur, he accepted the offer, and having exchanged a shake of the hand with the young Crummleses, and the manager having, on his part, bestowed a most affectionate benediction on Smike, he sat himself down opposite to that gentleman, by the fireside, to assist in emptying the bowl, which soon afterwards appeared, steaming in a manner which was quite exhilarating to behold, and sending forth a most grateful and inviting fragrance.

But, despite the punch and the manager, who told a variety of stories, and smoked tobacco from a pipe, and inhaled it in the shape of snuff, with a most astonishing power, Nicholas was absent and dispirited. His thoughts were in his old home, and when they reverted to his present condition, the uncertainty of the morrow cast a gloom upon him, which his utmost efforts were unable to dispel. His attention wandered;

although he heard the manager's voice he was deaf to what he said; and when Mr. Vincent Crummles concluded the history of some long adventure with a loud laugh, and an inquiry what Nicholas would have done under the same circumstances, he was obliged to make the best apology in his power, and to confess his entire ignorance of all he had been talking about.

"Why, so I saw," observed Mr. Crummles. "You're uneasy in your mind. What's the matter?"

Nicholas could not refrain from smiling at the abruptness of the question; but, thinking it scarcely worth while to parry it, owned that he was under some apprehensions lest he might not succeed in the object which had brought him to that part of the country.

"And what's that?" asked the manager.

"Getting something to do which will keep me and my poor fellow-traveller in the common necessaries of life," said Nicholas. "That's the truth. You guessed it long ago, I dare say, so I may as well have the credit of telling it you with a good grace."

"What's to be got to do at Portsmouth more than anywhere else?" asked Mr. Vincent Crummles, melting the sealing-wax on the stem of his pipe in the candle, and rolling it out afresh with his little finger.

"There are many vessels leaving the port, I suppose," replied Nicholas. "I shall try for a berth in some ship or other. There is meat and drink there, at all events."

"Salt meat and new rum; pease-pudding and chaff-biscuits," said the manager, taking a whiff at his pipe to keep it alight, and returning to his work of embellishment.

"One may do worse than that," said Nicholas. "I can rough it, I believe, as well as most young men of my age and previous habits."

"You need be able to," said the manager, "if you go on board ship: but you won't."

"Why not?"

"Because there's not a skipper or mate that would think you worth your salt, when he could get a practised hand," replied the manager; "and they as plentiful there as the oysters in the streets."

"What do you mean?" asked Nicholas, alarmed by this prediction, and the confident tone in which it had been uttered. "Men are not born able seamen. They must be reared, I suppose?"

Mr. Vincent Crummles nodded his head. "They must: but not at your age, or from young gentlemen like you."

There was a pause. The countenance of Nicholas fell, and he gazed ruefully at the fire.

"Does no other profession occur to you, which a young man of

your figure and address could take up easily, and see the world to advantage in?" asked the manager.

"No," said Nicholas, shaking his head.

"Why, then, I'll tell you one," said Mr. Crummles, throwing his pipe into the fire and raising his voice. "The stage."

"The stage!" cried Nicholas, in a voice almost as loud.

"The theatrical profession," said Mr. Vincent Crummles. "I am in the theatrical profession myself, my wife is in the theatrical profession, my children are in the theatrical profession. I had a dog that lived and died in it from a puppy; and my chaise-pony goes on, in Timour the Tartar. I'll bring you out, and your friend too. Say the word. I want a novelty."

"I don't know anything about it," rejoined Nicholas, whose breath had been almost taken away by this sudden proposal. "I never acted a part in my life, except at school."

"There's genteel comedy in your walk and manner, juvenile tragedy in your eye, and touch-and-go farce in your laugh," said Mr. Vincent Crummles. "You'll do as well as if you had thought of nothing else but the lamps from your birth downwards."

Nicholas thought of the small amount of small change that would remain in his pocket after paying the tavern bill; and he hesitated.

"You can be useful to us in a hundred ways," said Mr. Crummles. "Think what capital bills a man of your education could write for the shop-windows."

"Well, I think I could manage that department," said Nicholas.

"To be sure you could," replied Mr. Crummles. "'For further particulars see small hand-bills'—we might have half a volume in every one of 'em. Pieces, too; why, you could write us a piece to bring out the whole strength of the company, whenever we wanted one."

"I am not quite so confident about that," replied Nicholas. "But I dare say I could scribble something now and then that would suit you."

"We'll have a new show-piece out directly," said the manager. Let me see—peculiar resources of this establishment—new and splendid scenery—you must manage to introduce a real pump and two washing-tubs."

"Into the piece?" said Nicholas.

"Yes," replied the manager. "I bought 'em cheap, at a sale the other day, and they'll come in admirably. That's the London plan. They look up some dresses and properties, and have a piece written to fit 'em. Most of the theatres keep an author on purpose."

"Indeed!" cried Nicholas.

"Oh, yes," replied the manager; "a common thing. It'll look very

well in the bills in separate lines—Real pump!—Splendid tubs!—Great attraction! You don't happen to be anything of an artist, do you?"

"That is not one of my accomplishments," rejoined Nicholas.

"Ah! Then it can't be helped," said the manager. "If you had been, we might have had a large woodcut of the last scene for the posters, showing the whole depth of the stage, with the pump and tubs in the middle; but, however, if you're not, it can't be helped."

"What should I get for all this?" inquired Nicholas, after a few moments' reflection. "Could I live by it?"

"Live by it!" said the manager. "Like a prince! With your own salary, and your friends, and your writings, you'd make—ah! you'd make a pound a week!"

"You don't say so!"

"I do, indeed, and if we had a run of good houses, nearly double the money."

Nicholas shrugged his shoulders; but sheer destitution was before him; and if he could summon fortitude to undergo the extremes of want and hardship, for what had he rescued his helpless charge if it were only to bear as hard a fate as that from which he had wrested him? It was easy to think of seventy miles as nothing, when he was in the same town with the man who had treated him so ill, and roused his bitterest thoughts; but now it seemed far enough. What if he went abroad, and his mother or Kate were to die the while?

Without more deliberation he hastily declared that it was a bargain, and gave Mr. Vincent Crummles his hand upon it.

From *Nicholas Nickleby*.

CHARLES DICKENS.

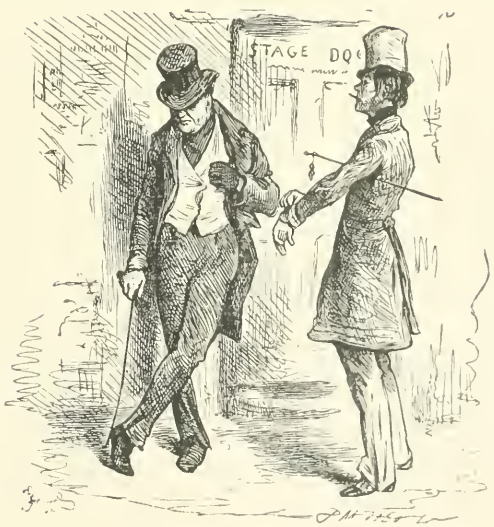
By Algernon Charles Swinburne.

Chief in thy generation born of men
  Whom English praise acclaimed as English born,
  With eyes that matched the world-wide eyes of morn
For gleams 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 kindliest might and Goldsmith's grace ;
Scarce one more loved or worthier love than thine.

SKETCHES BY BOZ.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

EVERY-DAY LIFE AND EVERY-DAY PEOPLE.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED BARNARD.

"SKETCHES BY BOZ"

comprises the various short stories and sketches which Dickens wrote for certain periodicals during the time when, quite a youth, he was a reporter in the House of Commons. They were first collected and published as a book in 1836, whilst "The Pickwick Papers" were appearing in monthly parts, and, as John Forster says, "were much more talked about than the first two or three numbers of 'Pickwick,' and I remember still with what hearty praise the book was first named to me by my dear friend Albany Fonblanque, as keen and clear a judge as ever lived either of books or men. Richly did it merit all the praise it had, and more, I will add, than he was ever disposed to give to it himself. He decidedly underrated it. He gave, in subsequent writings, so much more perfect form and fullness to everything it contained, that he did not care to credit himself with the marvel of having yet so early anticipated so much. But the first sprightly runnings of his genius are undoubtedly here. Mr. Bumble is in the parish sketches, and Mr. Dawkins the dodger in the Old Bailey scenes. There is laughter and fun to excess, never misapplied; there are the minute points and shades of character, with all the discrimination and nicety of detail, afterwards so famous; there is everywhere the most perfect ease and skill of handling. The observation shown throughout is nothing short of wonderful. Things are painted literally as they are; and, whatever the picture, whether of every-day vulgar, shabby genteel, or downright low, with neither the condescending air which is affectation, nor the too familiar one which is slang. The book altogether is a perfectly unaffected, unpretentious, honest performance."

THE HALF-PAY CAPTAIN COMPLETELY EFFACED THE OLD LADY'S NAME FROM THE BRASS DOOR-PLATE IN HIS ATTEMPTS TO POLISH IT WITH AQUA-FORTIS.
Our Parish, chap. ii.

"How delightful, how refreshing it is, to retire from the cloudy storms, the vicissitudes, and the troubles of life, even if it be but for a few fleeting moments."—*Tales*, chap. v.

DIFFERENT WOMEN OF THE HOUSE GOSSIPING ON THE STEPS . . . THE NATIVE DIALLERS—*Scenes*, chap. v.

ONE GENTLEMAN WAS OBSERVED SUDDENLY TO RUSH FROM TABLE WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST OSTENSIBLE REASON, AND DART UP THE STEPS WITH INCREDIBLE SWIFTNESS, THEREBY GREATLY DAMAGING BOTH HIMSELF AND THE STEWARD, WHO HAPPENED TO BE COMING DOWN AT THE SAME MOMENT—*Tales*, chap. vii.

HURRYING ALONG A BY-STREET, KEEPING AS CLOSE AS HE CAN TO THE AREA RAILINGS, A MAN OF ABOUT FORTY OR FIFTY, CLAD IN AN OLD RUSTY SUIT OF THREADBARE BLACK CLOTH—*Characters*, chap. x.

HIS LINE IS GENTEEL COMEDY—HIS FATHER'S COAL AND POTATO. HE DOES ALFRED HIGHFLIER IN THE LAST PIECE, AND VERY WELL HE'LL DO IT—AT THE PRICE—*Scenes*, chap. xiv.

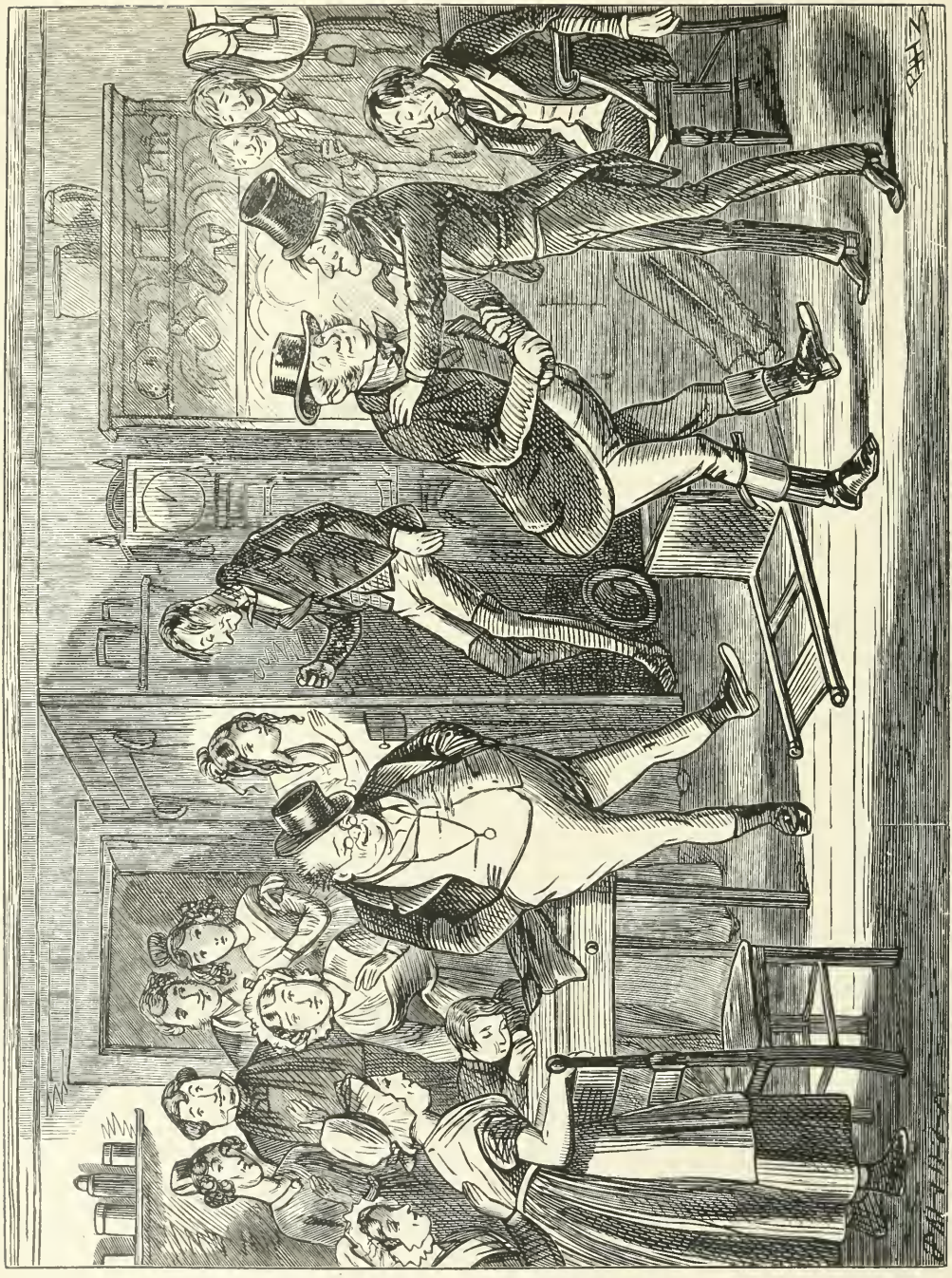
THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF THE PICKWICK CLUB.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PHIZ.

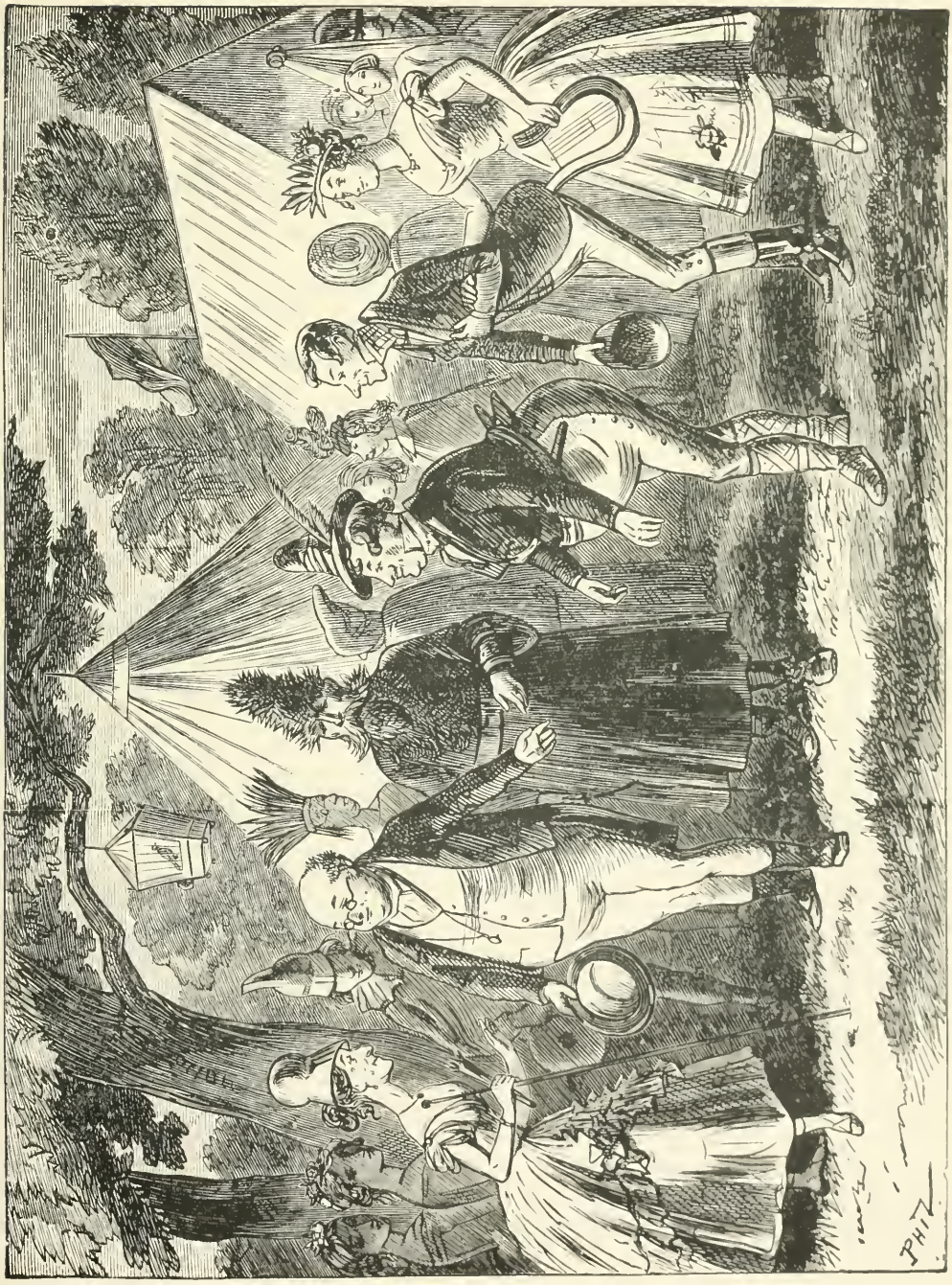
"THE PICKWICK PAPERS"

was Dickens's second published book, and in one leap made him the most-talked-of man of his time. It has always remained his most popular book, and to-day is the most famous and notable work of fiction in the language. It is all sorts of books rolled into one: a novel, a book of travel, a mirror of the time of George IV., a classic of fun and humour, and many other things besides. "For its kind," says John Forster, "its extent, and the absence of everything unreal or factitious in the causes that contributed to it, it is unexampled in literature. Here was a series of sketches, without the pretence to such interest as attends a well-constructed story; put forth in a form apparently ephemeral as its purpose: having none that seemed higher than to exhibit some studies of cockney manners with help from a comic artist; and after four or five parts had appeared, without newspaper notice or puffing, and itself not subserving in the public anything false or unworthy, it sprang into a popularity that each part carried higher and higher, until people at this time talked of nothing else, tradesmen recommended their goods by using its name, and its sale, outstripping at a bound that of all the most famous books of the century, had reached to an almost fabulous number. . . . Every class, the high equally with the low, were attracted to it. The charm of its gaiety and good humour, its inexhaustible fun, its riotous overflow of animal spirits, its brightness and keenness of observation, and above all, the incomparable ease of its many varieties of enjoyment, fascinated everybody. Judges on the bench and boys in the street, gravity and folly, the young and the old, those who were entering life and those who were quitting it, alike found it to be irresistible."

"COME ON," SAID THE CAB-DRIVER, SPARRING AWAY LIKE CLOCKWORK.
"COME ON—ALL FOUR ON YOU."—Chap. i.

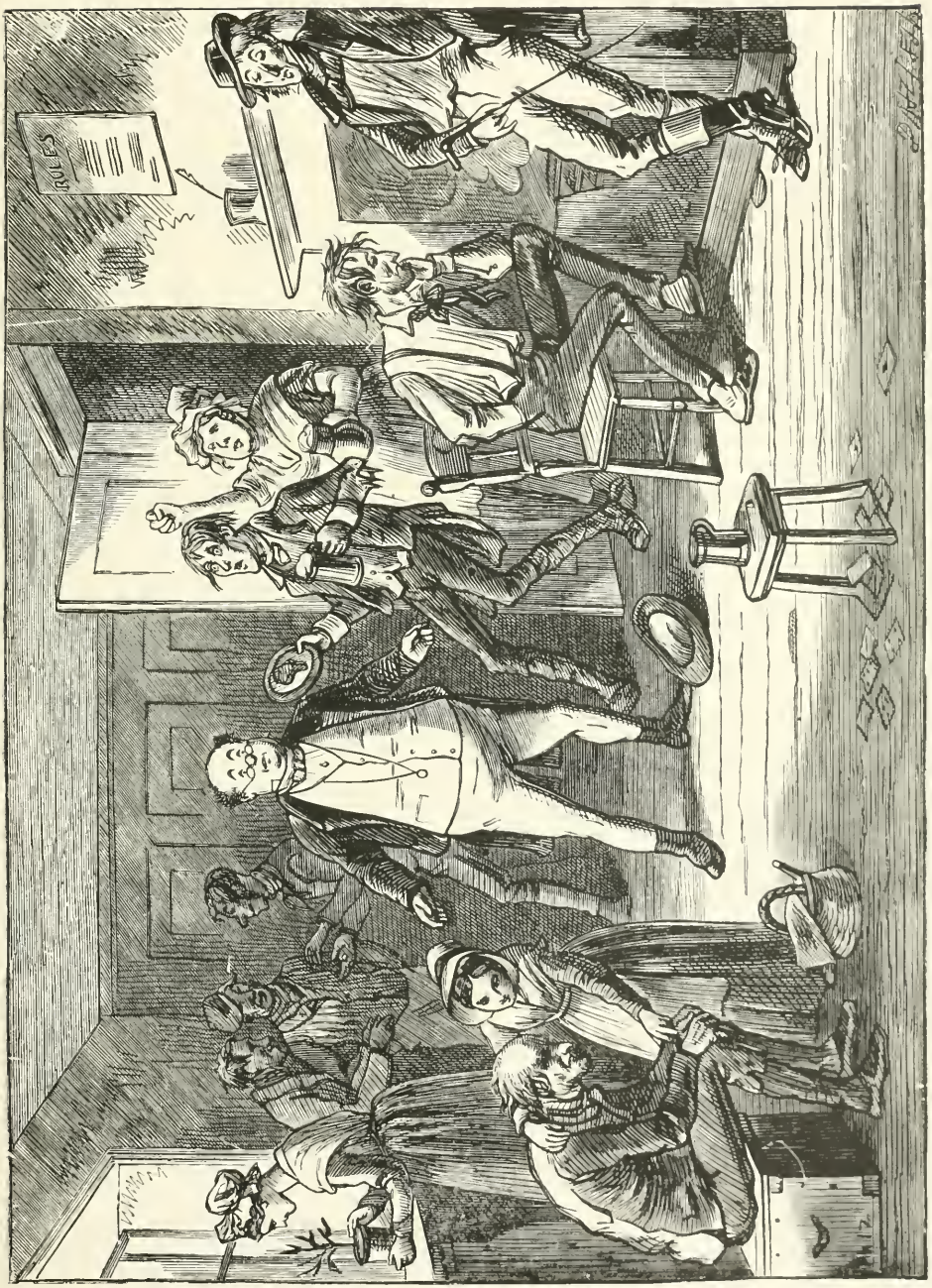


Old Mr. Wardle, with a highly-inflamed countenance, was grasping the hand of a strange gentleman—Chap. viii.



"Permit me to introduce my friends.—Mr. Tupman.—Mr. Winkle.—Mr. Snodgrass."—Chap. xv.

BEFORE MR. PICKWICK DISTINCTLY KNEW WHAT WAS THE MATTER, HE WAS SURROUNDED BY THE WHOLE BODY AND KISSED BY EVERY ONE OF THEM—Chap. XXVIII.



LETTING HIS HAT FALL ON THE FLOOR, HE STOOD PERFECTLY FIXED AND IMMOVABLE WITH ASTONISHMENT—Chap. xlii.

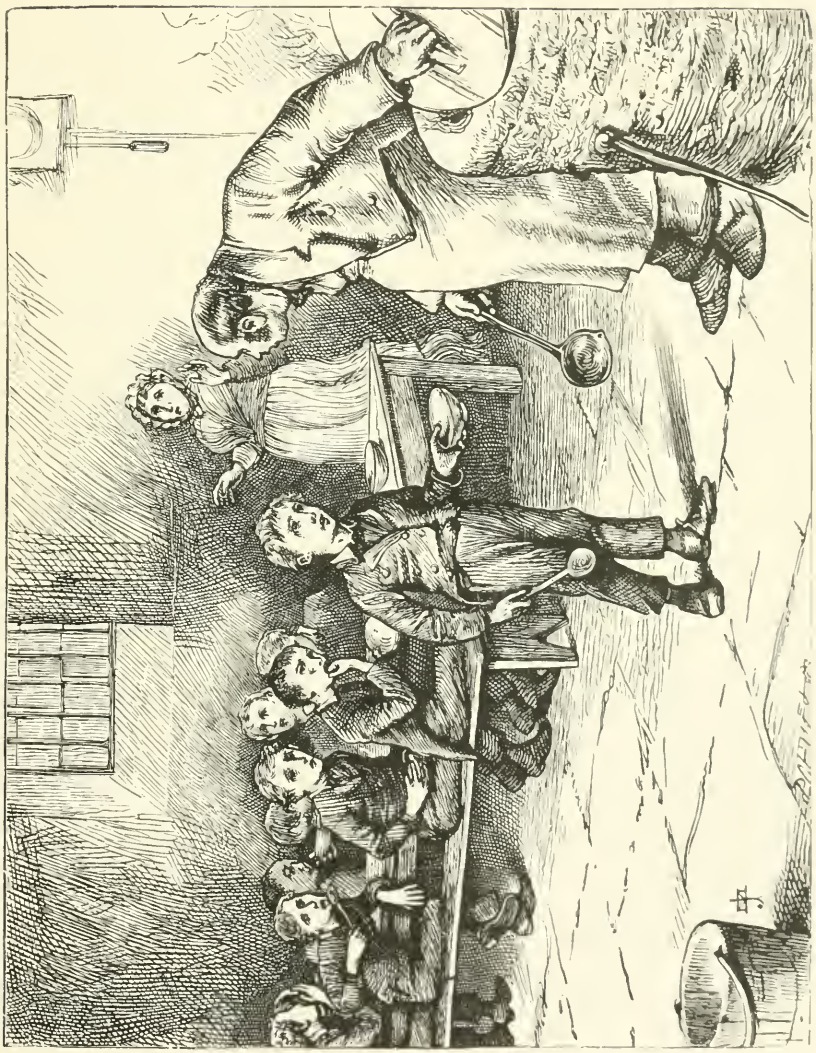
SNATCHING UP A MEAL-SACK, EFFECTUALLY STOPPED THE CONFLICT BY DRAWING IT OVER THE HEAD AND SHOULDERS OF THE MIGHTY POTT.—Chap. II.

THE ADVENTURES OF OLIVER TWIST.

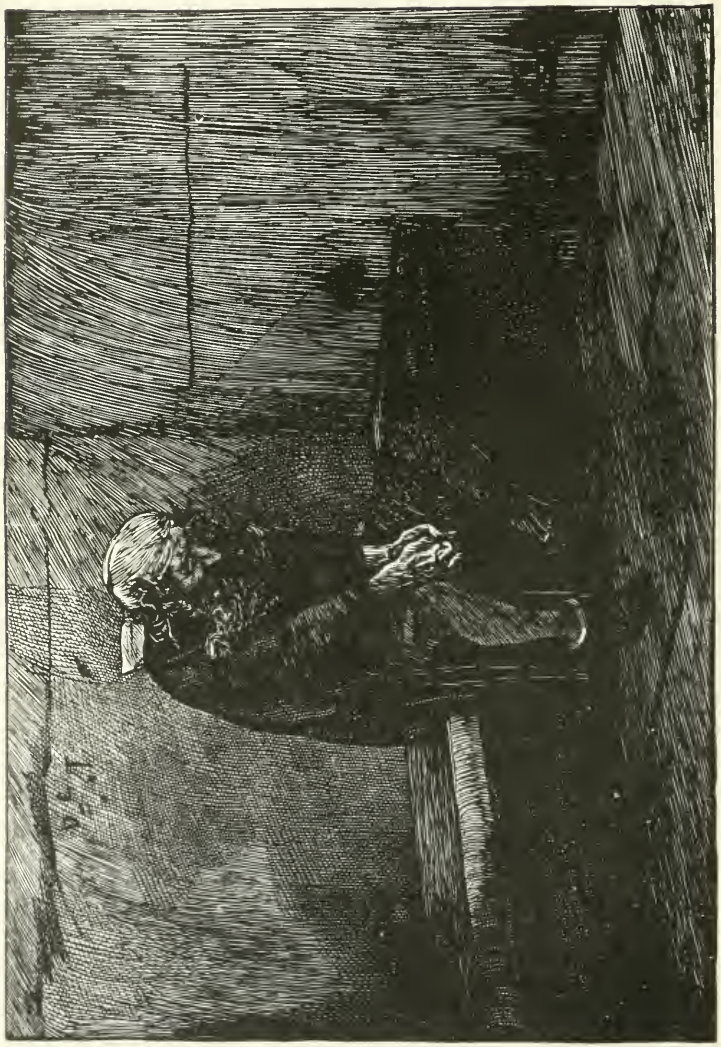
ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. MAHONEY.

"THE ADVENTURES OF OLIVER TWIST"

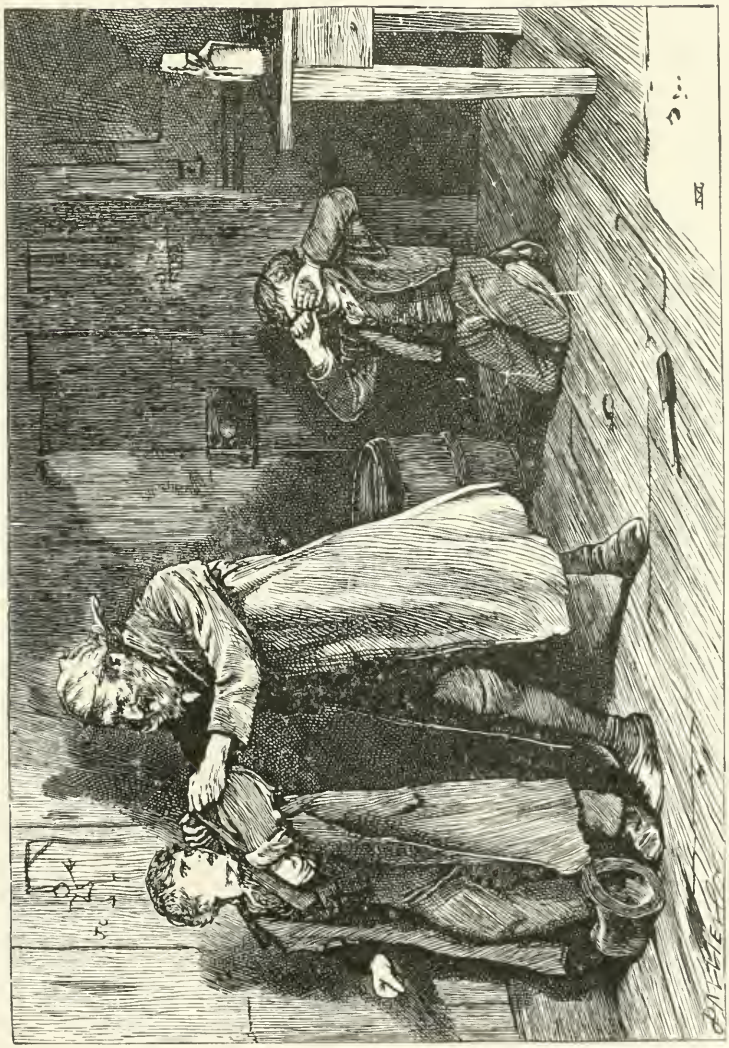
differs from the two first published books of Dickens so greatly, that it makes one wonder how a single author could be writing it at the same time that he was writing "Pickwick," editing *Bentley's Miscellany*, and contributing articles to the latter's pages. It ultimately appeared in book form in 1838. John Forster speaks of it in the following terms:—"'Oliver Twist' is the history of a child born in a workhouse and brought up by parish overseers, and there is nothing introduced that is out of keeping with the design. It is a series of pictures from the tragi-comedy of lower life worked out by perfectly natural agencies, from the dying mother and the starved wretches of the first volume, through the scenes and gradations of crime, careless or deliberate, which have a frightful consummation in the last volume, but are never without the reliefs and self-assertions of humanity even in scenes and among characters so debased. It is indeed the primary purpose of the tale to show its little hero, jostled as he is in the miserable crowd, preserved everywhere from the vice of its pollution by an exquisite delicacy of natural sentiment which clings to him under every disadvantage. There is not a more masterly touch in fiction (and it is by such that this delightful fancy is consistently worked out to the last) than Oliver's agony of childish grief on being brought away from the branch-workhouse, the wretched home associated only with suffering and starvation, and with no kind word or look, but containing still his little companions in misery. . . . For the rest of the world it will teach still the invaluable lesson of what men ought to be from what they are. We cannot learn it more than enough. We cannot too often be told that as the pride and grandeur of mere external circumstance is the falsest of earthly things, so the truth of virtue in the heart is the most lovely and lasting; and from the pages of 'Oliver Twist' this teaching is once again to be taken by all who will look for it there."



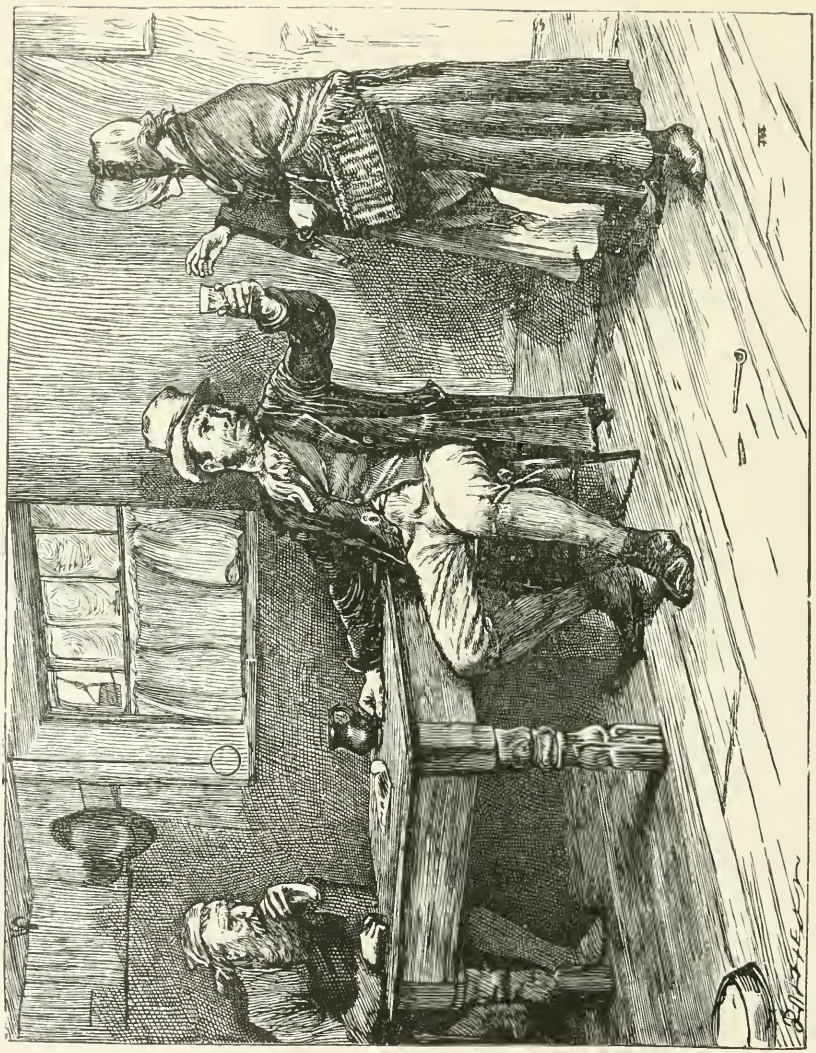
OLIVER ASKS FOR MORE.—Chap. II.



HE SAT DOWN ON THE STONE BENCH OPPOSITE THE DOOR—(Chap. iv.



"What's become of the boy?"—Chap. xiii.



"You are on the scent, are you, Nancy?"—Chap. xv.

"DON'T SIGH, MRS. CORNEY," SAID MR. BUMBLE—Chap. XXVII.

When it became quite dark, and they returned home, the young lady would sit down to the piano, and play some pleasant air—Chap. xxxii.

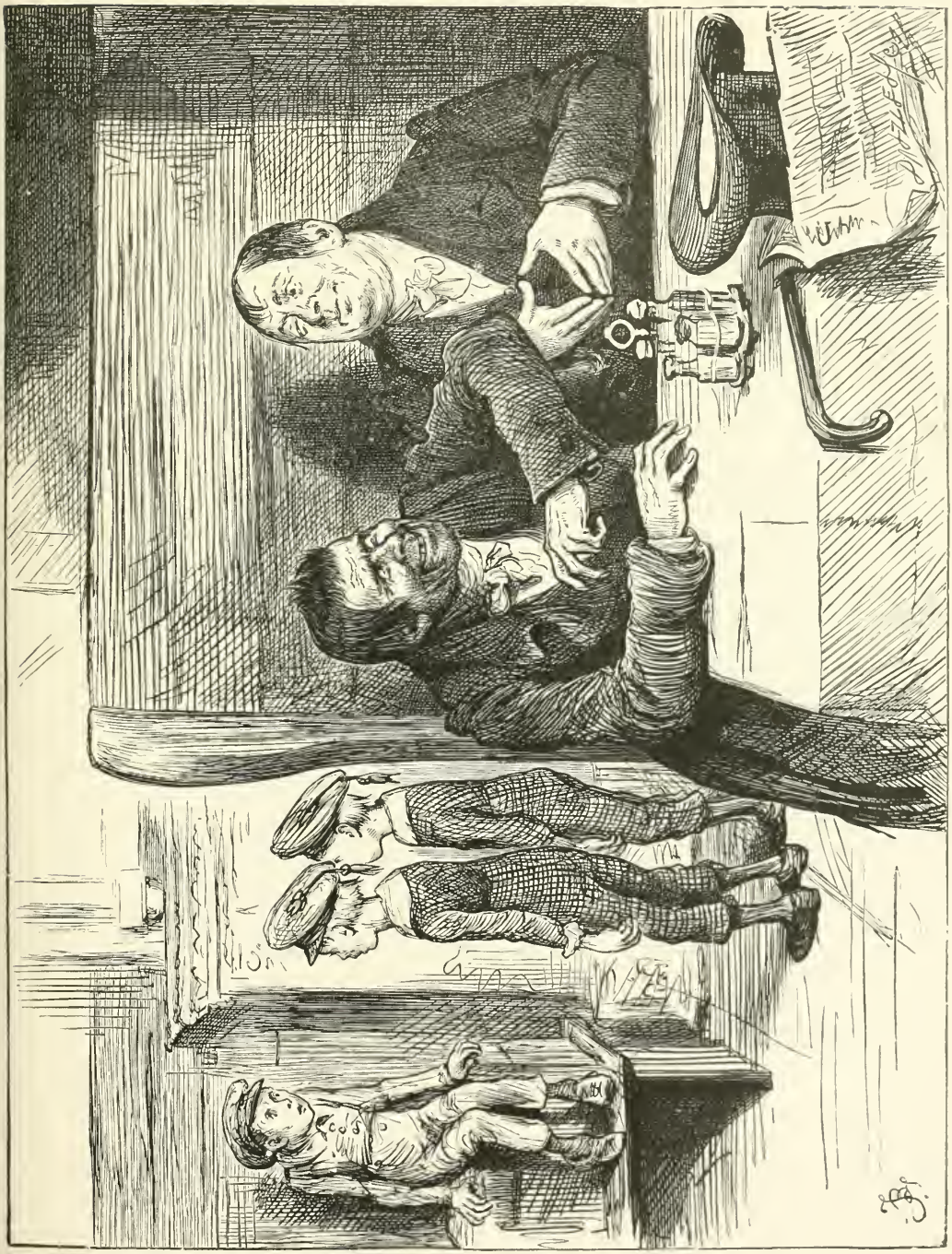
THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED BARNARD.

"THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF NICHOLAS NICKLEBY"

was commenced whilst "Oliver Twist" was still running its course in the pages of *Bentley's Miscellany*, and was published complete in 1839. No sooner did the monthly parts begin to make their appearance than the old excitement which prevailed amongst Dickens's readers at the publication of each part of "Pickwick" started again with added intensity and brought the same general enjoyment to everybody.

"All that had given 'Pickwick' its vast popularity, the overflowing mirth, hearty exuberance of humour, and genial kindliness of satire, had here," says John Forster, "the advantage of a better laid design, more connected incidents, and greater precision of character. Everybody seemed immediately to know the Nickleby family as well as his own. Dotheboys, with all that rendered it, like a piece by Hogarth, both ludicrous and terrible, became a household word. Successive groups of Mantalinis, Kenwigses, Crummleses, introduced each its little world of reality, lighted up everywhere with truth and life, with capital observation, the quaintest drollery, and quite boundless mirth and fun. The brothers Cheeryble brought with them all the charities. With Smike came the first of those pathetic pictures that filled the world with pity for what cruelty, ignorance, or neglect may inflict upon the young. And Newman Noggs ushered in that class of the creatures of his fancy in which he took himself, perhaps, the most delight; gentleman by nature, howsoever shocking bad their hats or ungenteel their dialects; philosophers of modern endurance, and needy but most respectable coats; a sort of humble angels of sympathy and self-denial, though without a particle of splendour or even good looks about them, except what an eye as fine as their own feelings might discern."



THE SCHOOLMASTER AND HIS COMPANION LOOKED STEADILY AT EACH OTHER FOR A FEW SECONDS, AND THEN EXCHANGED A VERY MEANING SMILE.—Chap. IV.

"VERY GLAD TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, MISS," SAID SQUEERS, RAISING HIS HAT AN INCH OR TWO—Chap. v.

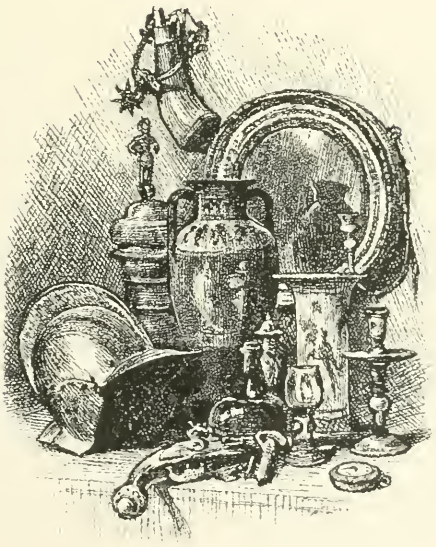
"Oh! as soft as possible, if you please"—Chap. ix.

"I SEE HOW IT IS," SAID POOR NOGGS, DRAWING FROM HIS POCKET WHAT SEEMED TO BE A VERY OLD DUSTER, AND WIPING KATE'S EYES WITH IT AS GENTLY AS IF SHE WERE AN INFANT—Chap. xxviii.

SIR MULBERRY, SHORTENING HIS WHIP, APPLIED IT FURIOUSLY TO THE HEAD AND SHOULDERS OF NICHOLAS. IT WAS BROKEN IN THE STRUGGLE: NICHOLAS GAINED THE HEAVY HANDLE, AND WITH IT LAID OPEN ONE SIDE OF HIS ANTAGONIST'S FACE FROM THE EYE TO THE LIP—Chap. XXXII.

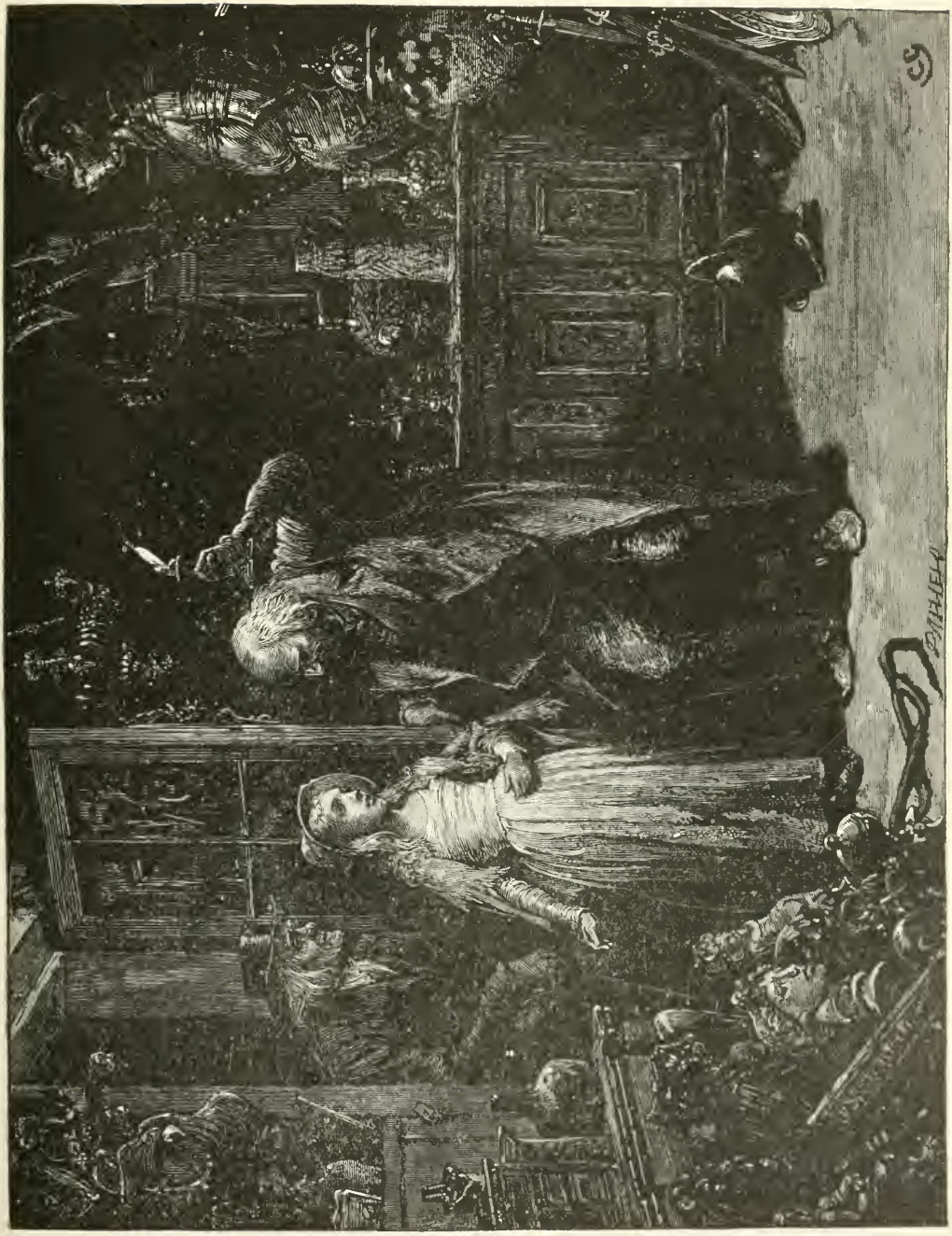
"Oh, Mr. Linkinwater, you're joking!" "No, no, I'm not. I'm not indeed," said Tim. "I will, if you will. Do, my dear!"

THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHARLES GREEN.

ran its course through the periodical known as *Master Humphreys Clock* in 1840, and during its progress appealed to and affected its author no less than it did his readers. The central figure is, of course, Little Nell, and the theme her devotion to her old grandfather. So real had Little Nell become to her creator that he writes, on one occasion:—"All night I have been pursued by the child; and this morning I am unrefreshed and miserable. I don't know what to do with myself . . . the anguish unspeakable." Little Nell had become so much the personal friend of everybody that Dickens had numerous requests not to let her die. Lord Jeffrey declared there had been "nothing so good as Nell since Cordelia." Speaking of the closing work on the story, John Forster says:—"Fast shortening as the life of Little Nell was now, the dying year might have seen it pass away; but I never knew him wind up any tale with such a sorrowful reluctance as this. He caught at any excuse to hold his hand from it, and stretched to the utmost limit the time left to complete it in. Christmas interposed its delays too, so that twelfth-night had come and gone when I wrote to him in the belief that he was nearly done. 'Done!' he wrote back to me on Friday, the 7th, 'done!!! Why, bless you, I shall not be done till Wednesday night. I only began yesterday, and this part of the story is not to be galloped over, I can tell you. I think it will come famously—but I am the wretchedest of the wretched. It casts the most horrible shadow upon me, and it is as much as I can do to keep moving at all. I tremble to approach the place a great deal more than Kit; a great deal more than Mr. Garland; a great deal more than the Single Gentleman. I shan't recover it for a long time. Nobody will miss her like I shall. It is such a very painful thing to me, that I really cannot express my sorrow. Old wounds bleed afresh when I only think of the way of doing it: what the actual doing it will be, God knows. I can't preach to myself the schoolmaster's consolation, though I try. Dear Mary died yesterday, when I think of this sad story.'"



THE DOOR BEING OPENED, THE CHILD ADDRESSED HIM AS HER GRANDFATHER.—Chap i.

"I'll beat you to pulp, you dogs"—Chap. vi.

NELLY, KNEELING DOWN BESIDE THE BOX, WAS SOON BUSILY ENGAGED IN HER TASK—Chap. xvii.

SHE HANDED DOWN TO THEM THE TEA-TRAY, THE BREAD AND BUTTER, THE KNUCKLE OF HAM, AND, IN SHORT, EVERYTHING OF WHICH SHE HAD PARTAKEN HERSELF
Chap. xxvi.

"YOU'RE THE WAXWORK CHILD, ARE YOU NOT?"—Chap. xxxi.

"Then, Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, "fire away!"—Chap. lviii.

BARNABY RUDGE.

A TALE OF THE RIOTS OF 'EIGHTY.

Illustrations by Fred Barnard.

"BARNABY RUDGE,"

which followed closely upon "The Old Curiosity Shop" in the pages of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, in 1841, was Dickens's first historical novel. "Begun during the progress of 'Oliver Twist,' it had been," says his biographer, "for some time laid aside; the form it ultimately took had been comprised only partially within its first design; and the story in its finished shape presented strongly a special purpose, the characteristic of all but his very earliest writings. Its scene is laid at the time when the incessant execution of men and women, comparatively innocent, disgraced every part of the country; demoralising thousands, whom it also prepared for the scaffold. In those days the theft of a few rags from a bleaching-ground, or the abstraction of a roll of ribbons from a counter, was visited with the penalty of blood; and such laws brutalised both their ministers and victims. It was the time, too, when a false religious outcry brought with it appalling guilt and misery. Such vices leave more behind them than the first forms assumed, and involve a lesson sufficiently required to justify a writer in dealing with them. There were also others grafted on them. In Barnaby himself it was desired to show what sources of comfort there might be, for the patient and cheerful heart, in even the worst of all human afflictions; and in the hunted life of the outcast father, whose crime had entailed not that affliction only but other more fearful wretchedness, we have as powerful a picture as any in his writings of the inevitable and unfathomable consequences of sin. It was the late Lord Lytton's opinion that Dickens had done nothing finer in point of art than this."

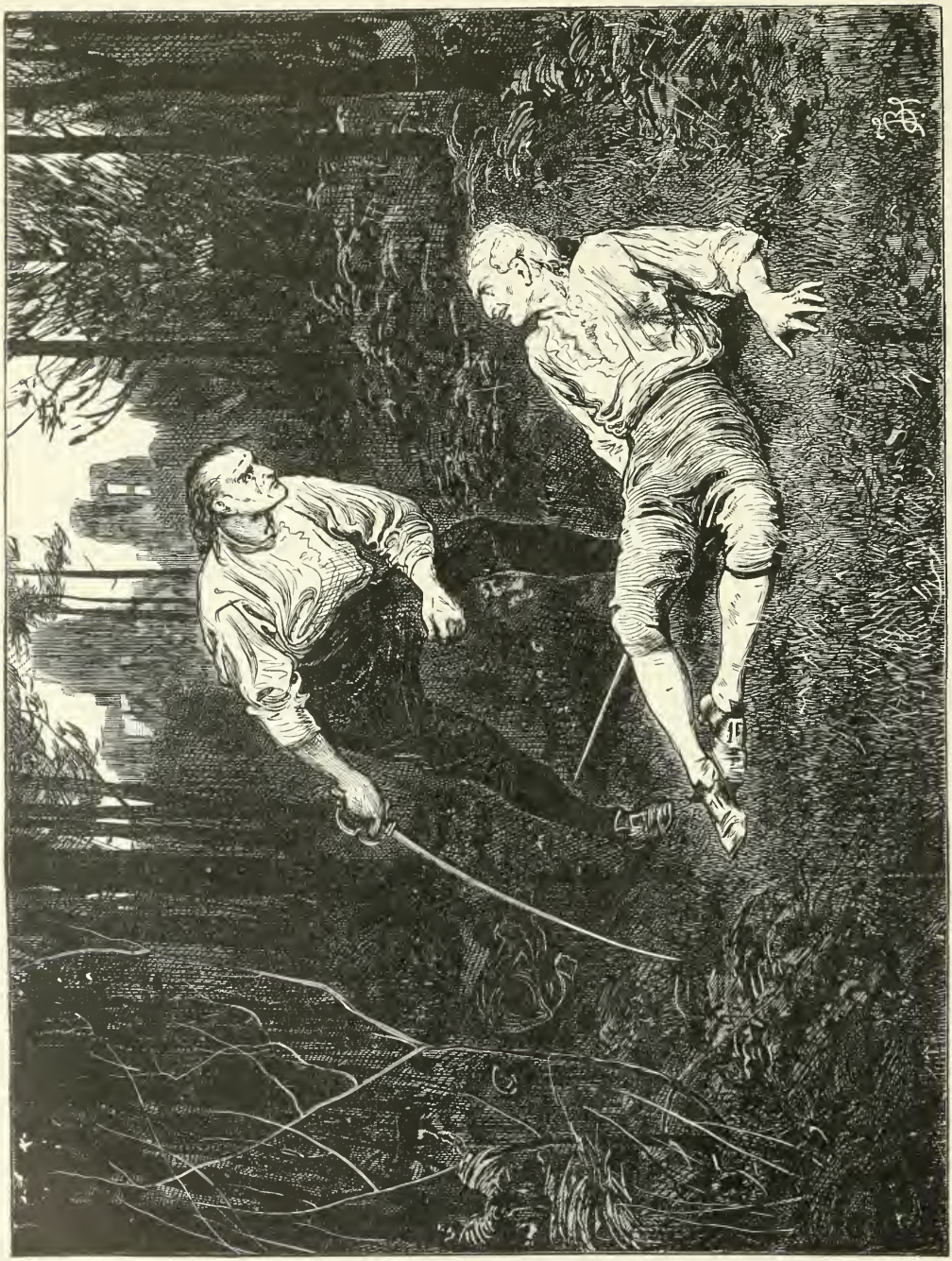
THOSE LIPS WITHIN SIM'S REACH FROM DAY TO DAY, AND YET SO FAR OFF.—Chap. iv.

"He melts, I think. He goes like a drop of froth. You look at him, and there he is. You look at him again, and—there he isn't"—Chap. x.

EMMA HAREDALE AND DOLLY VARDEN—Chap. XX.

"HUFF OR NO HUFF," SAID MR. TAPPERTIT, DETAINING HER BY THE WRIST. WHAT DO YOU MEAN JEZEBEL! WHAT WERE YOU GOING TO SAY! ANSWER ME!"
Chap. xxii.

THE POLE SWEPT THE AIR ABOVE THE PEOPLE'S HEADS, AND THE MAN'S SADDLE WAS EMPTY IN AN INSTANT—Chap. xlix.



RAISING HIMSELF UPON HIS HANDS, HE GAZED AT HIM FOR AN INSTANT WITH SCORN AND HATRED IN HIS LOOK—Chap. lxxxi.

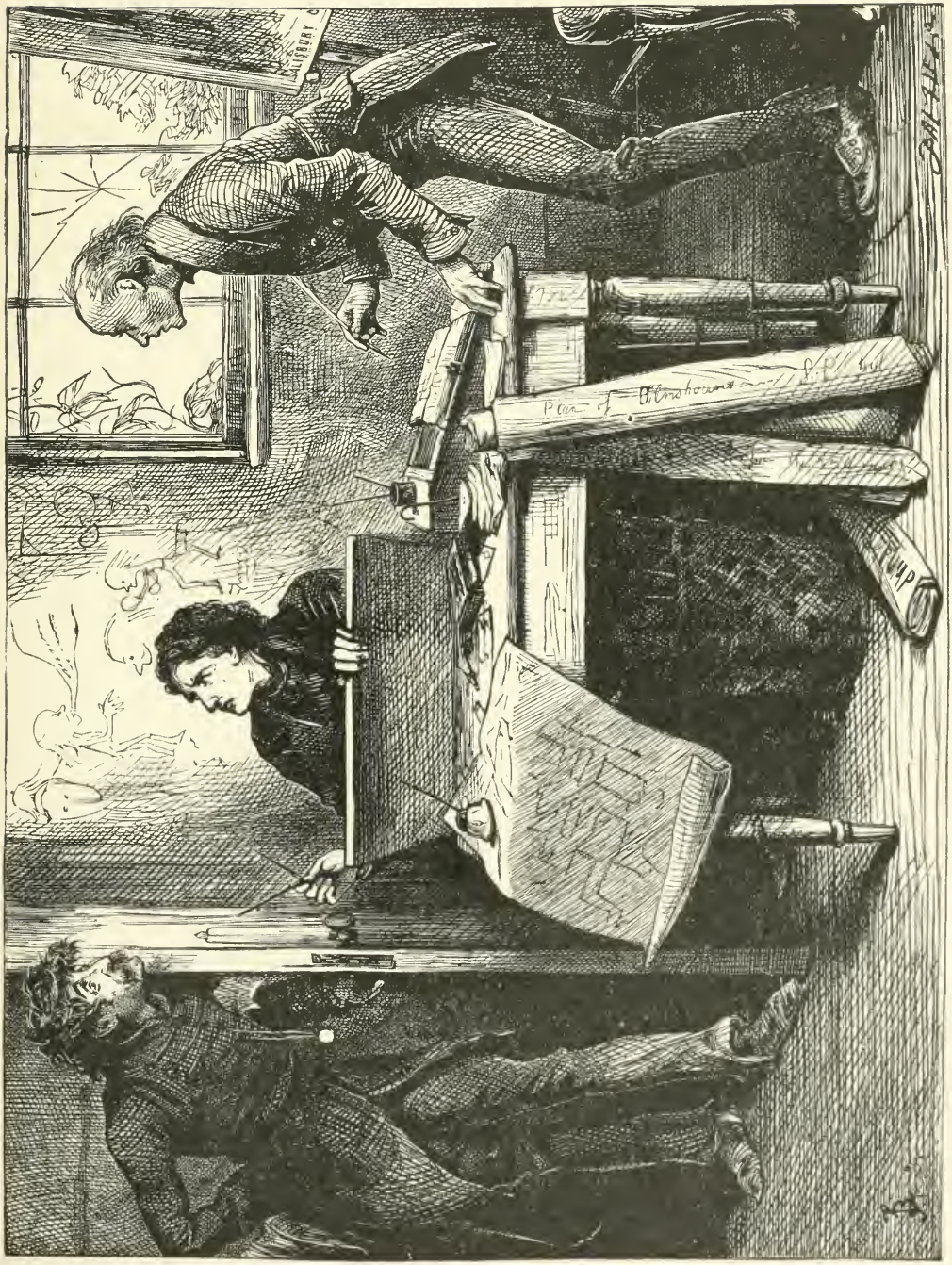
THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED BARNARD.

"THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT"

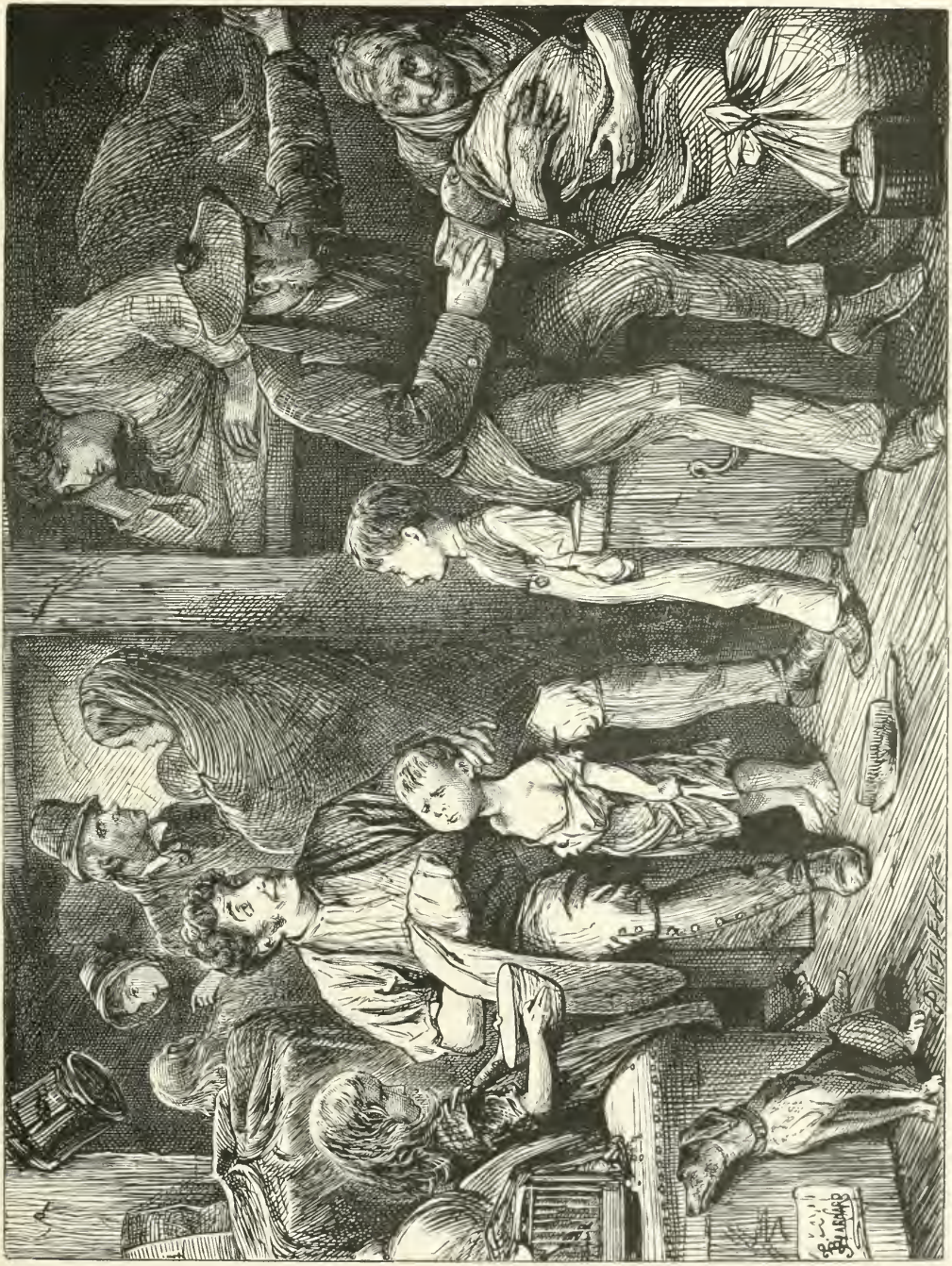
followed on Dickens's "American Notes" after his visit to the United States, which had enlarged his mental vision to such an extent as to make it noticeable that never had his handling of character been so masterly as in this book. It was published in 1844, and in it his portrayal of real raw life throughout certain portions of the story were as masterly as the passionate vividness of descriptions such as Forster refers to in the following paragraph:—

"The windy autumn night, with the mad desperation of the hunted leaves and the roaring mirth of the blazing village forge; the market-day at Salisbury; the winter walk, and the coach journey to London by night; the ship voyage over the Atlantic; the stormy midnight travel before the murder, the stealthy enterprise and cowardly return of the murderer; these are instances of first-rate description, original in the design, imaginative in all the detail, and very complete in the execution. But the higher power to which I direct attention is even better discerned in the persons and dialogue. With nothing absent or abated in its sharp impressions of reality, there are more of the subtle requisites which satisfy reflection and thought. We have in this book for the most part, not only observation but the outcome of it, the knowledge as well as the fact. While we witness as vividly the life immediately passing, we are more conscious of the permanent life above and beyond it. Nothing nearly so effective therefore had yet been achieved by him."

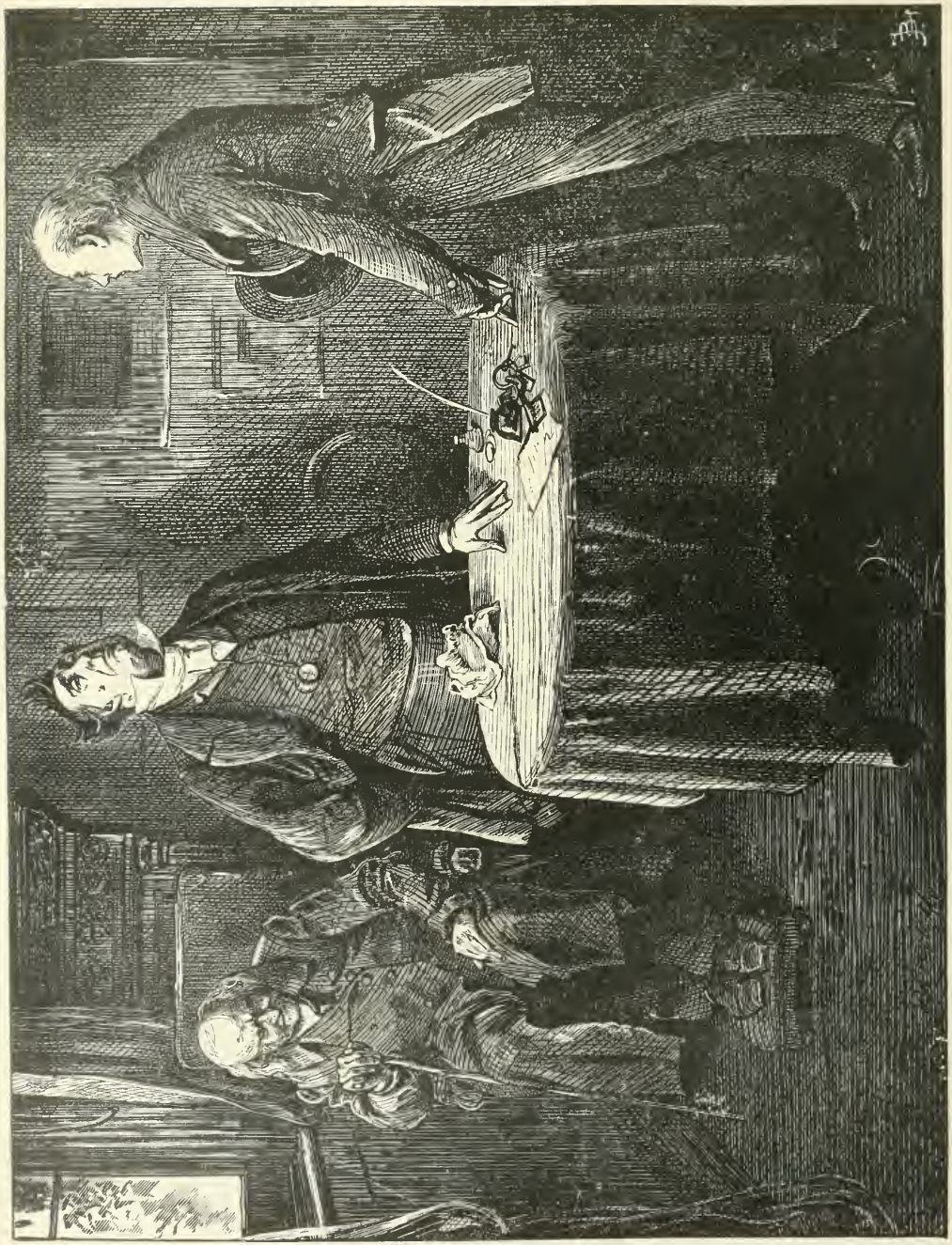


"You're a pair of Whittingtons, gents, without the cat; . . . My name is Tigg; how do you do?"—Chap. vii.

"I SAY—THERE'S FOWLS TO-MORROW—NOT SKINNY ONES. OH NO!"—Chap. IX.



On board the "Screw."—Chap. xv.



"Mr. Pinch," said Mr. Pecksniff, shaking his head, "Oh, Mr. Pinch! I wonder how you can look me in the face!"—Chap. xxxi.

"I AM GOING TO BEGIN, TOM. DON'T YOU WONDER WHY I BUTTER THE INSIDE OF THE BASIN?" SAID HIS BUSY LITTLE SISTER, "EH, TOM?"—Chap. xxxix.

THEN MRS. GAMP ROSE—MORALLY AND PHYSICALLY ROSE—AND DENOUNCED HER—Chap. xlix.

CHRISTMAS BOOKS.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED BARNARD.

comprises those five masterly Christmas vignettes of which "A Christmas Carol" remains the novelist's inspired masterpiece. This was published for Christmas, 1843, and was followed in succeeding years by "The Chimes," "The Cricket on the Hearth," "The Battle of Life," and "The Haunted Man," earning for their creator the epithet of "The Apostle of Christmas." So inseparable is Dickens's name from the spirit of Christmas that the two words Dickens and Christmas have become almost synonymous terms.

The object which prompts the Fund in aid of which this souvenir is published is inspired by the same kindly feelings, the same desires, as inspired the master mind who conceived "A Christmas Carol" and its companion books.

In Lord Jeffrey's tribute to the book he utters the sentiments of every one who has read it, and it is as true, if not more potently true, to-day, than it was when he uttered it:—

"Blessings on your kind heart! You should be happy yourself, for you may be sure you have done more good by this little publication, fostered more kindly feelings, and prompted more positive acts of beneficence, than can be traced to all the pulpits and confessionals in Christendom since Christmas, 1842."

Thackeray added also his tribute amongst shoals of others from all classes. "Who," he said, "can listen to objections regarding such a book as this? It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness."

MARLEY'S GHOST—*A Christmas Carol*, Stave i.

HE HAD BEEN TIM'S BLOOD-HORSE ALL THE WAY FROM CHURCH, AND HAD COME HOME RAMPANT—*A Christmas Carol*, Stave iii.

"No," said Toby, after another sniff. "It's—it's mellower than polonies. It's very nice. It improves every moment. It's too decided for trotters. An't it!"—*The Chimes*, First Quarter.

JOHN PEERYBINGLE'S FIRESIDE—*The Cricket on the Hearth,* Chirp the first.

"BY THE BYE," AND HE LOOKED INTO THE PRETTY FACE, STILL CLOSE TO HIS, "I SUPPOSE IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY"—*The Battle of Life*, Part the first.

"MR. REDLAW!" HE EXCLAIMED, AND STARTED UP—*The Haunted Man*, Chap. ii.

DEALINGS WITH THE FIRM OF

DOMBEY AND SON,

WHOLESALE, RETAIL AND FOR EXPORTATION.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED BARNARD.

"DOMBEY AND SON"

was begun by the Lake of Geneva and continued in Paris. It was published in 1848. About two years had elapsed since a serial by Dickens had appeared, and the fact inspired the following epigram:—

"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 wing or a look,
If he's not, what the Dickens on earth has become of him?"

But he actually was working hard on his new novel, and when it got into print the success was prodigious.

The real anguish that Dickens underwent when he killed Little Nell was repeated as he told the story of the death of Paul Dombey. In writing to Forster he told him that during the greater part of the night and day after it was written he wandered about the streets of Paris desolate and sad. The pathetic chapter created a profound impression. "Paul's death has amazed Paris," he wrote. "All sorts of people are open-mouthed with admiration." Lord Jeffrey, his "critic Laureate," considered it "the best thing past, present or to come." "Oh, my dear, dear Dickens!" he went on, "what a No. 5 you have given us! I have so cried and sobbed over it last night, and again this morning: and felt my heart purified by those tears, and blessed and loved you for making me shed them: and I never can bless and love you enough." Thackeray advised all his friends on the staff of *Punch* to "read that chapter describing young Paul's death: it is unsurpassed—it is stupendous!"

"I MAY BE FOND OF PENNYWINKLES, MRS. RICHARDS, BUT IT DON'T FOLLOW THAT I'M TO HAVE 'EM FOR TEA"—Chap. iii.

LISTENING TO THE SEA—Chap. viii.

AND WHEN HE GOT THERE, SAT DOWN IN A CHAIR, AND FELL INTO A SILENT FIT OF LAUGHTER WITH WHICH HE WAS SOMETIMES SEIZED, AND WHICH WAS ALWAYS PARTICULARLY AWFUL—Chap. x.

"LET YOU ALONE!" SAID MR. CARKER. "WHAT! I HAVE GOT YOU, HAVE I!" THERE WAS NO DOUBT OF THAT, AND TIGHTLY TOO. "YOU DOG," SAID MR. CARKER, THROUGH HIS SET JAWS, "I'LL STRANGLE YOU!"—Chap. xxii.

"MISS DOMBEY," RETURNED MR. TOOTS, "IF YOU'LL ONLY NAME ONE, YOU'LL—YOU'LL GIVE ME AN APPETITE. TO WHICH," SAID MR. TOOTS, WITH SOME SENTIMENT, "I HAVE LONG BEEN A STRANGER"—Chap. xliv.

When he had filled his pipe in an absolute reverie of satisfaction Florence lighted it for him—Chap. xlix.

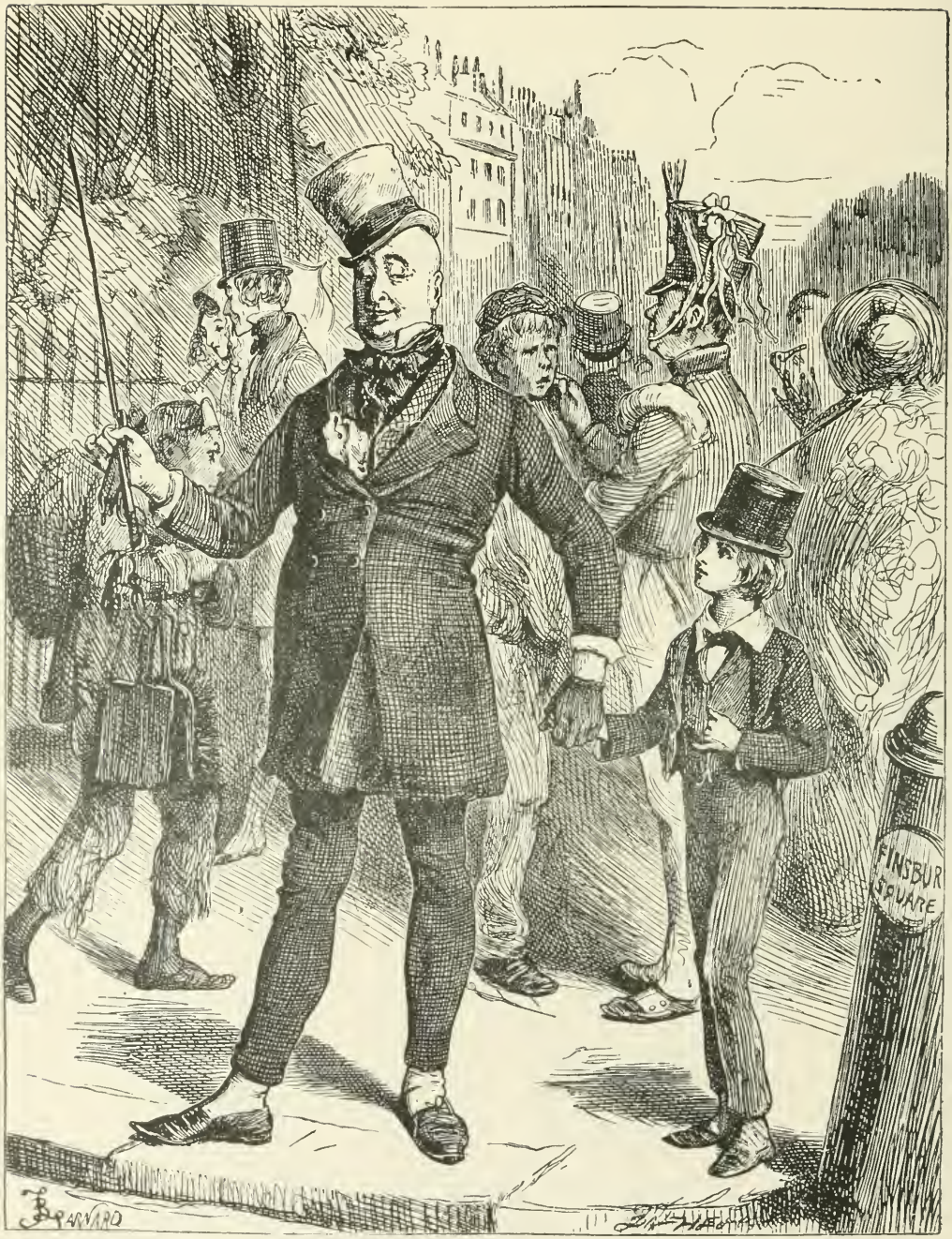
THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED BARNARD.

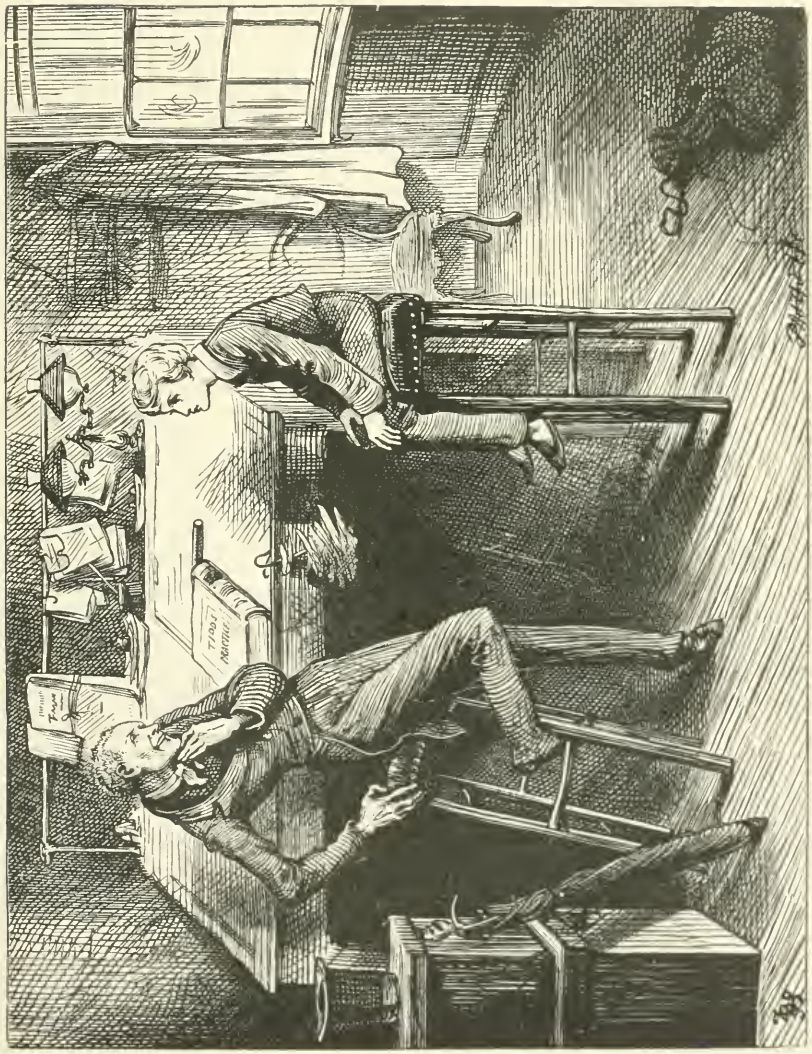
"THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD"

was published in 1850 and proved in many respects to be its author's greatest achievement. Indeed, as his biographer says, "Dickens never stood as high in reputation as at the completion" of the book. In it is revealed a part of his own early life and trials. There is no question that David Copperfield is to a large extent Charles Dickens, but the book can hardly have a reader, man or lad, who does not discover that he was something of a Copperfield himself. Childhood and youth live again for all of us in its marvellous boy-experiences. The story, says John Forster, from the first "had surpassed in popularity, though not in sale, all his previous books excepting 'Pickwick.' 'You gratify me more than I can tell you,' Dickens wrote to Lytton, 'by what you say about "Copperfield," because I hope myself that some heretofore deficient qualities are there.' If the power was not greater than in 'Chuzzlewit,' the subject had more attractiveness; there was more variety of incident, with a freer play of character; and there was withal a suspicion, which though general and vague had sharpened interest not a little, that underneath the fiction lay something of the author's life. How much was not known by the world until he had passed away. When engaged upon its close he had written thus (21st October, 1850): 'I am within three pages of the shore; and am strangely divided, as usual in such cases, between sorrow and joy. Oh, my dear Forster, if I were to say half of what "Copperfield" makes me feel to-night, how strangely, even to you, I should be turned inside out! I seem to be sending some part of myself into the Shadowy World.'"

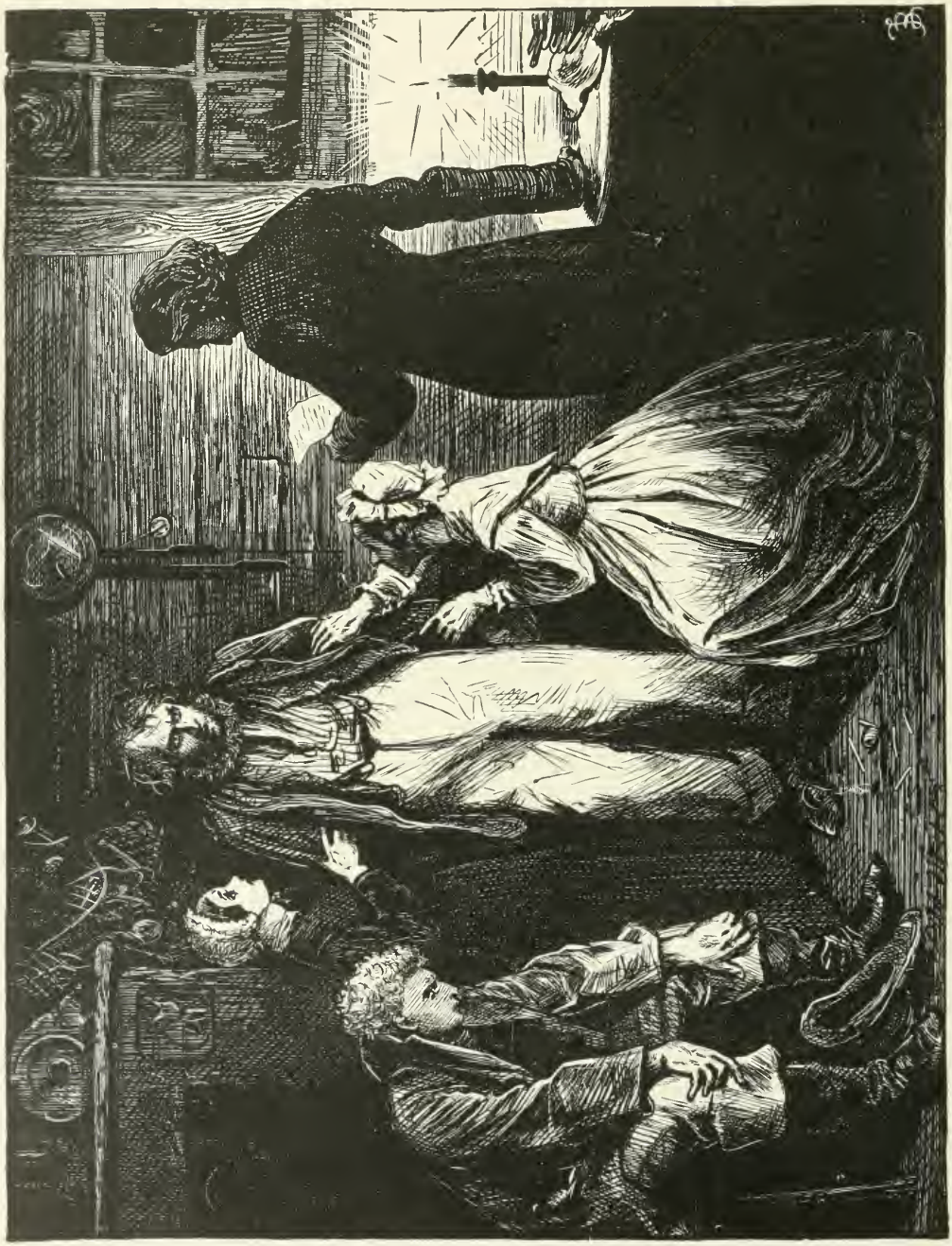
"That's not it!" said I, "that ship-looking thing!" "That's it, Mas'r Davy," returned Ham—Chap. iii.



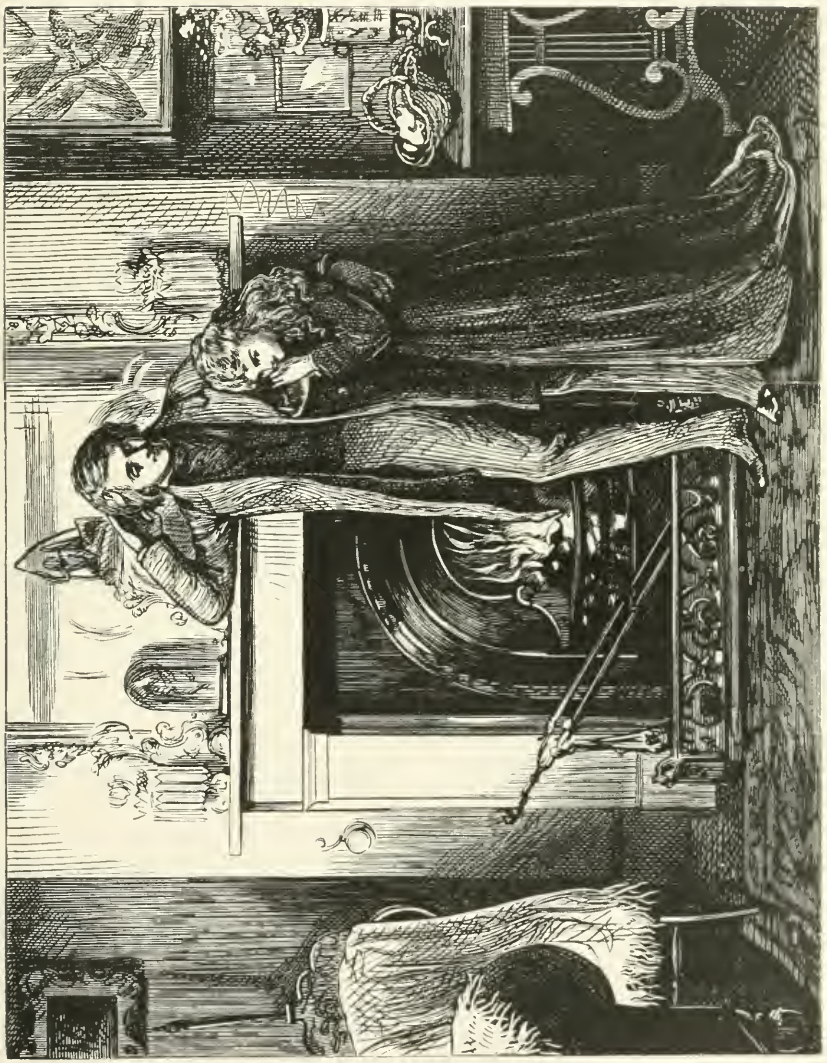
MR. MICAWBER, IMPRESSING THE NAMES OF THE STREETS AND THE SHAPES OF CORNER HOUSES UPON ME AS WE WENT ALONG, THAT I MIGHT FIND MY WAY BACK EASILY IN THE MORNING—Chap. xi.



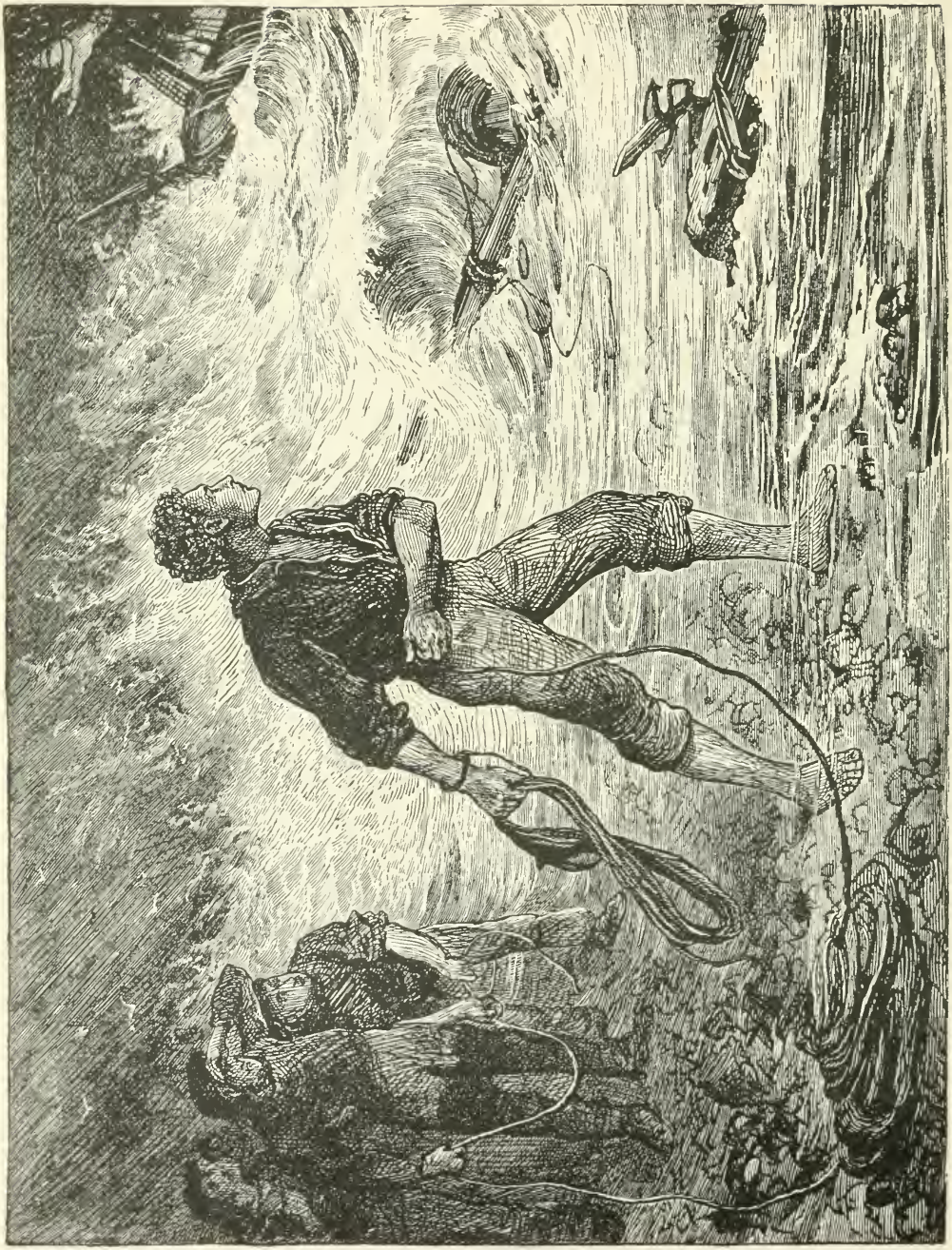
"Oh, thank you, Master Copperfield," said Uriah Heep, "for that remark! It is so true! 'umble as I am, I know it is so true! Oh, thank you, Master Copperfield!"—Chap. xvi.



"READ IT, SIR," HE SAID, IN A LOW SHIVERING VOICE. "SLOW, PLEASE. I DOEN'T KNOW AS I CAN UNDERSTAND"—Chap. XXXI.



"I WONDER WHY YOU EVER FELL IN LOVE WITH ME," SAID DORA, BEGINNING ON ANOTHER BUTTON OF MY COAT—Chap. xli.



THE STORM—Chap. lv.

BLEAK HOUSE.

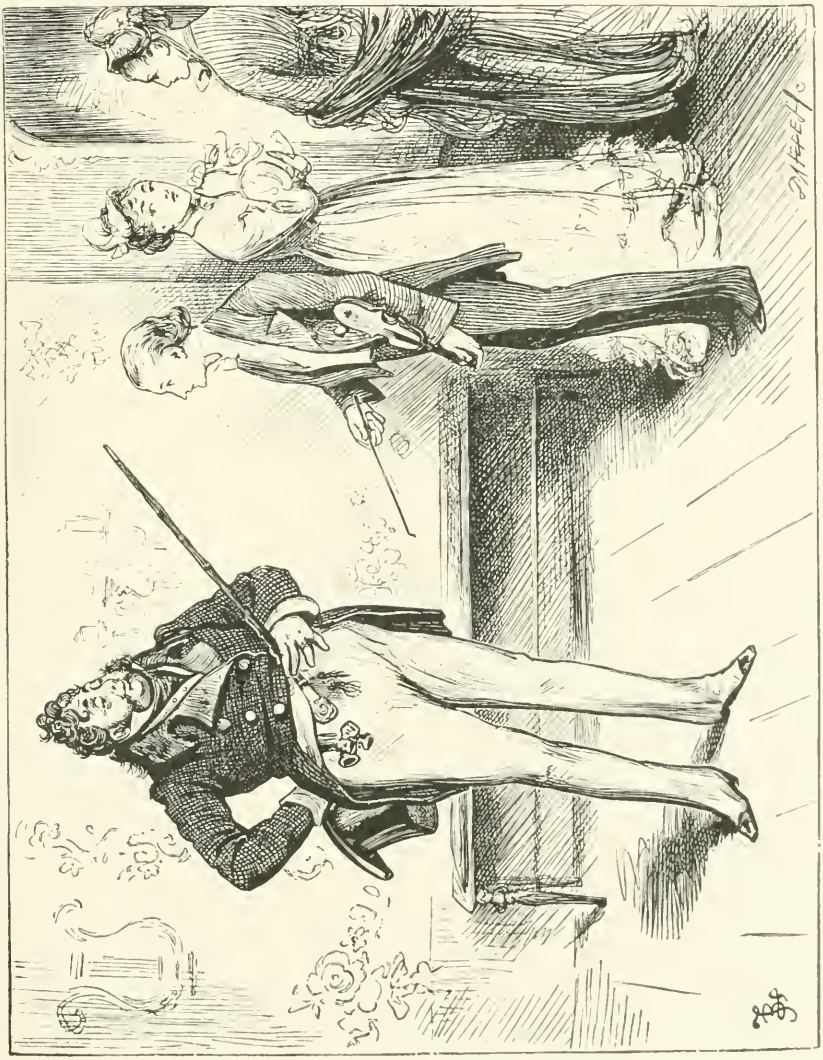
ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED BARNARD.

"BLEAK HOUSE"

has been characterised as Dickens's great Law Novel. It was begun at Tavistock House and finished in Boulogne in 1853, and is "in the very important particular of construction, perhaps the best thing done by Dickens."

"In his later writings he had been assiduously cultivating this essential of his art, and here he brought it very nearly to perfection," is his biographer's opinion. "Nothing is introduced at random, everything tends to the catastrophe, the various lines of the plot converge and fit to its centre, and to the larger interest all the rest is irresistibly drawn. The heart of the story is a Chancery suit. On this the plot hinges; and on incidents connected with it, trivial or important, the passion and suffering turn exclusively. Chance words, or the deeds of chance people, to appearance irrelevant, are found everywhere influencing the course taken by a train of incidents of which the issue is life or death, happiness or misery, to men and women perfectly unknown to them, and to whom they are unknown. Attorneys of all possible grades, law clerks of every conceivable kind, the copyist, the law stationer, the usurer, all sorts of money-lenders, suitors of every description, haunters of the Chancery court and their victims, are for ever moving round about the lives of the chief persons in the tale, and drawing them on insensibly, but very certainly, to the issues that await them."

Concerning the story, Dean Ramsey wrote to Forster, "We have been reading 'Bleak House' aloud. Surely it is one of the most powerful and successful! What a triumph is Jo! Uncultured nature is there indeed: the intimations of true heart feeling, the glimmerings of higher feeling, all are there: but everything still consistent and in harmony. . . . To my mind nothing in the field of fiction is to be found in English literature surpassing the death of Jo!"



Deportment—Chap. xiv.

"Jo"—Chap. xvi.

"I AM GROWN UP NOW, GUPPY. I HAVE ARRIVED AT MATURITY."—Chap. XX.

GRANDFATHER SMALLWEED ASTONISHES MR. GEORGE—Chap. xxi.

THE CART IS SHAKEN ALL TO PIECES, AND THE RUGGED ROAD IS VERY NEAR ITS END—(Chap. xlvii.

"GET OUT WITH YOU. IF WE AIN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU, GO AND PROCURE SOMEBODY THAT IS GOOD ENOUGH. GO ALONG AND FIND 'EM."—Chap. lxiv.

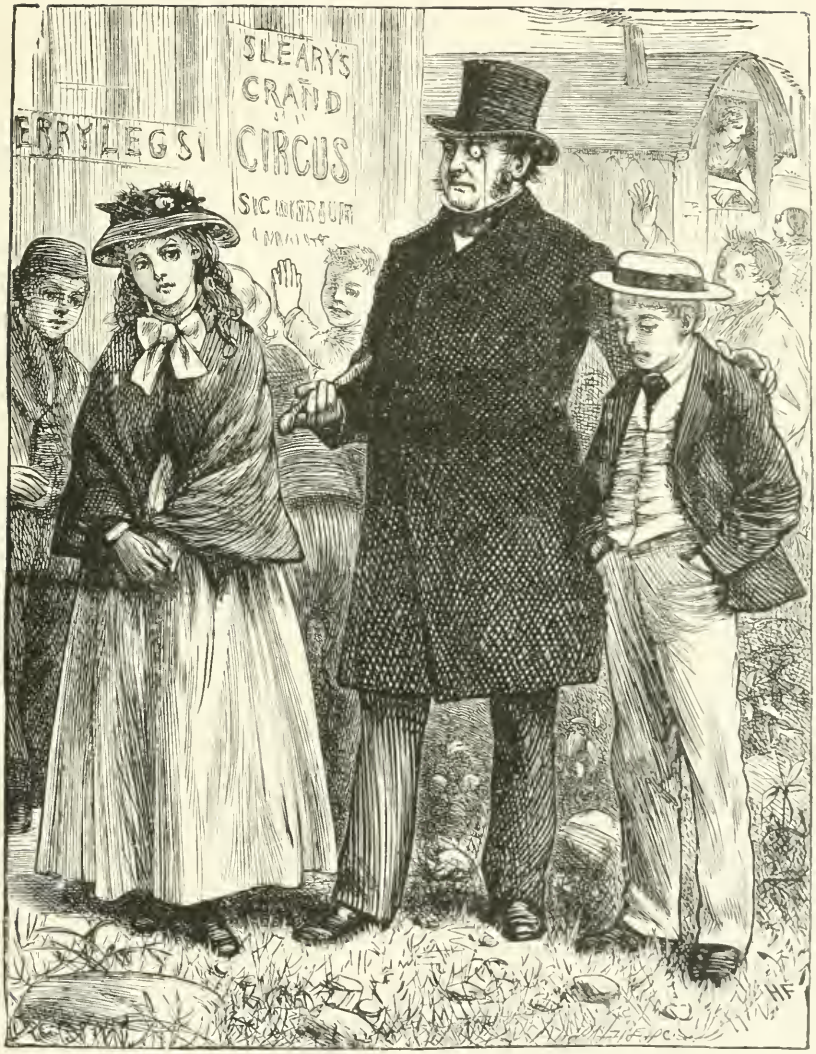
HARD TIMES.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. FRENCH.

"HARD TIMES,"

which has been termed Dickens's Socialistic romance, was the first novel of his to run through his paper, *Household Words*, as a serial, and appeared in book form in 1854, dedicated to Thomas Carlyle. He explained that his satire was directed against those "who see figures and averages and nothing else—the representatives of the wickedest and most enormous vice of this time—the men who, through long years to come, will do more to damage the real useful truths of political economy than I could do (if I tried) in my whole life."

John Ruskin wrote the following criticism of the book—"The essential value and truth of Dickens's writings," he says, "have been unwisely lost sight of by many thoughtful persons, merely because he presents his truth with some colour of caricature. Unwisely, because Dickens's caricature, though often gross, is never mistaken. Allowing for his manner of telling them, the things he tells us are always true. The usefulness of that work (to my mind, in several respects, the greatest he has written) is with many persons seriously diminished, because Mr. Bounderby is a dramatic monster instead of a characteristic example of a worldly master; and Stephen Blackpool a dramatic perfection, instead of a characteristic example of an honest workman. But let us not lose the use of Dickens's wit and insight, because he chooses to speak in a circle of stage fire. He is entirely right in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written; and all of them, but especially 'Hard Times,' should be studied with close and earnest care by persons interested in social questions. They will find much that is partial, and, because partial, apparently unjust; but if they examine all the evidence on the other side, which Dickens seems to overlook, it will appear, after all their trouble, that his view was the finally right one, grossly and sharply told."



"Louisa! ! Thomas!"—Book 1, chap. iii.

He felt a touch upon his arm—Book 2, chap. xii.

"LOUISA, MY DEAR, YOU ARE THE SUBJECT OF A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE THAT HAS BEEN MADE TO ME—Book 1, Chap. XV.

"Heaven help us all in this world!"—Book 2, chap. v.

SHE STOOPED DOWN ON THE GRASS AT HIS SIDE, AND BENT OVER HIM — Book 3, chap. vi.

HERE WAS LOUISA, ON THE NIGHT OF THE SAME DAY, WATCHING THE FIRE AS IN THE DAYS OF YORE—Book 3, chap. IX.

CHRISTMAS STORIES.

FROM "HOUSEHOLD WORDS" AND "ALL THE YEAR ROUND"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY E. G. DALZIEL.

"CHRISTMAS STORIES"

first appeared as the Christmas numbers of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. These Christmas numbers, as is well known, were designed as a whole by Charles Dickens, who wrote the first, and in some cases, other chapters himself, whilst the remaining ones were allocated to various famous writers. The Stories, however, appeared anonymously when issued in conjunction with the two famous journals, and consequently readers were not aware to whom they were indebted for the delightful and charming series of Christmas Stories.

Only those chapters which Dickens actually wrote himself appear in the volume with the above title in the collected edition of his works.

The stories, as originally published in the two journals, have been issued by Messrs. Chapman and Hall complete, with the names of the writers of each chapter.

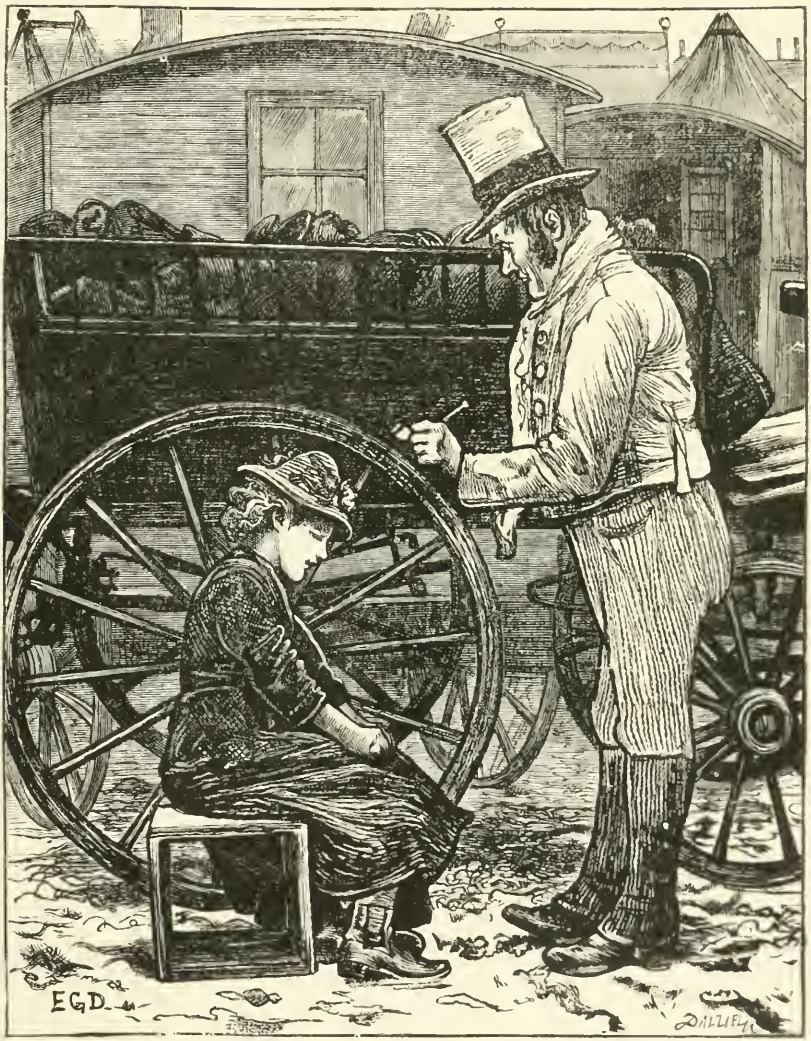
"I'M ONLY A COMMON SOLDIER, SIR," SAID HE. "IT SIGNIFIES VERY LITTLE WHAT SUCH A POOR BRUTE COMES TO"—*Seven Poor Travellers*, chap. ii.

"My dear Captain Ravender," says he. "Of all the men on earth, I wanted to see you most. I was on my way to you"

The Wreck of the Golden Mary—The Wreck.

"I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU EMPLOYED," SAID MR. TRAVELLER. . . . "I AM GLAD TO BE EMPLOYED," RETURNED THE TINKER—*Tom Tiddler's Ground*, chap. VII.

WILLING SOPHY DOWN UPON HER KNEES SCRUBBING EARLY AND LATE AND EVER CHEERFUL, BUT ALWAYS SMILING WITH A BLACK FACE—
Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings, chap. i.



AND AT LAST SITTING DOZING AGAINST A MUDDY CART WHEEL, I COME UPON THE POOR GIRL WHO WAS DEAF AND DUMB—*Dr. Marigold*

COTCHED THE DECANTER OUT OF HIS HAND, AND SAID, "PUT IT DOWN. I WON'T ALLOW THAT!"—*Mugby Junction*, chap. iii.

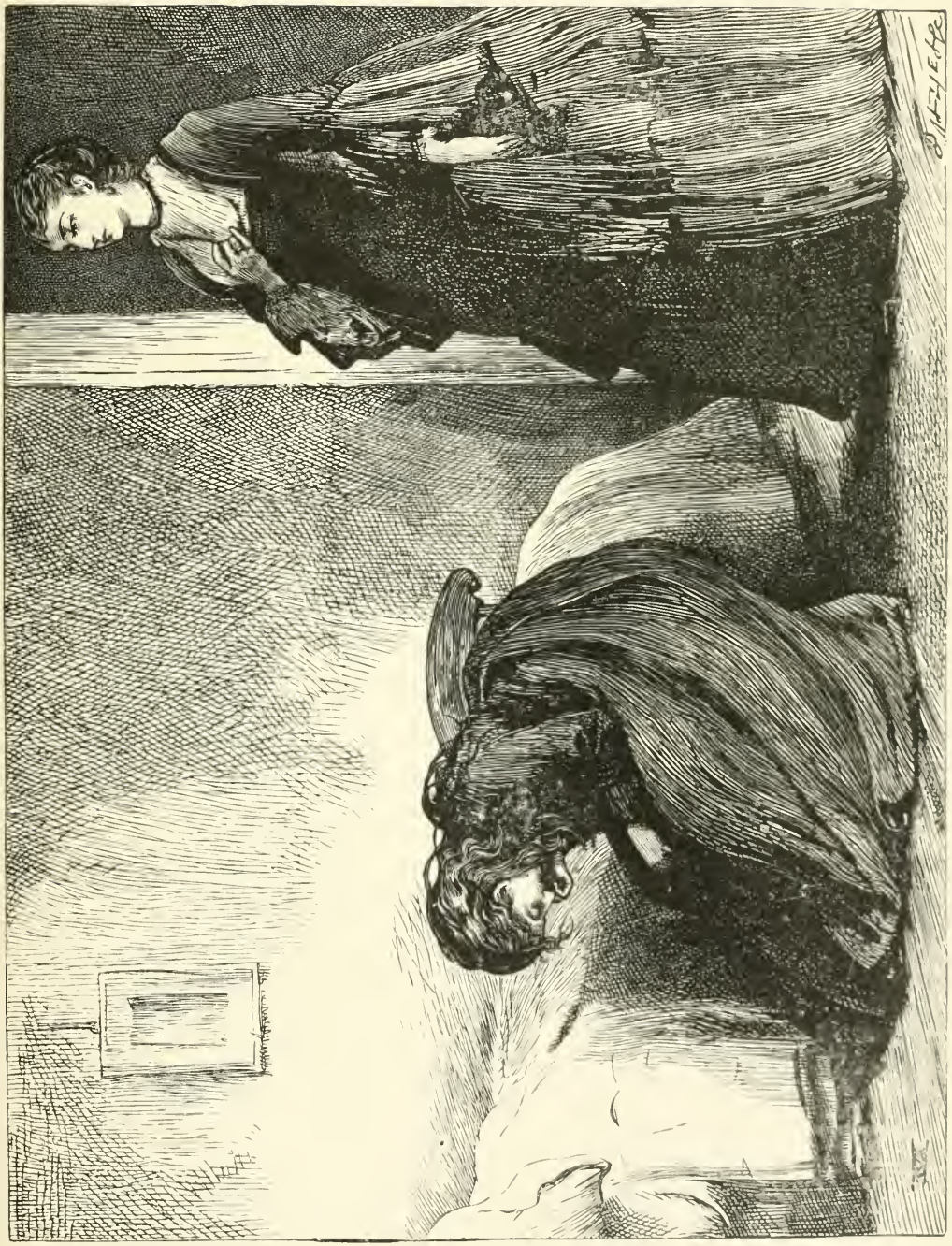
LITTLE DORRIT.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. MAHONEY.

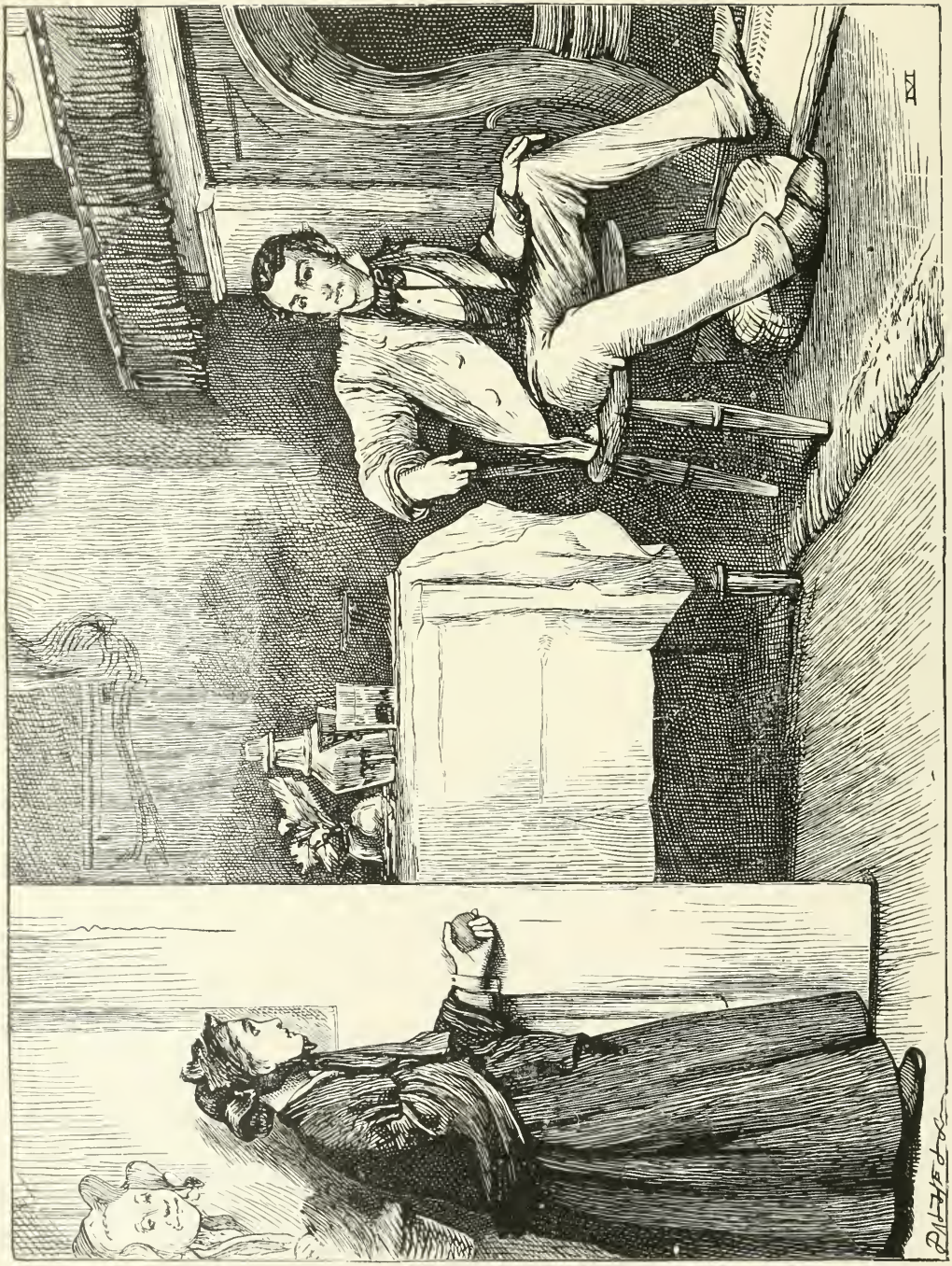
"LITTLE DORRIT,"

published in 1857, is the one novel of Dickens's as to whose merit there is much difference of opinion. Immediately after its publication *Blackwood's Magazine* summarised it as "Twaddle," which greatly annoyed Dickens but did not kill the book. A modern view of the book's worth is that voiced by Mr. George Bernard Shaw a year or two back, when he said, "One of the greatest books ever written in the English language was called 'Little Dorrit.'" To go further back for the effect the book had upon a great mind, the following story may be quoted:—

It was the meeting of Bismarck and Jules Favre under the walls of Paris. The Prussian was waiting to open fire on the city; the Frenchman was engaged in the arduous task of showing the wisdom of not doing it; and "we learn," say the papers of the day, "that while the two eminent statesmen were trying to find a basis of negotiation, Von Moltke was seated in a corner reading 'Little Dorrit.' Who will doubt that the chapter on How Not to do it was then absorbing the old soldier's attention?"



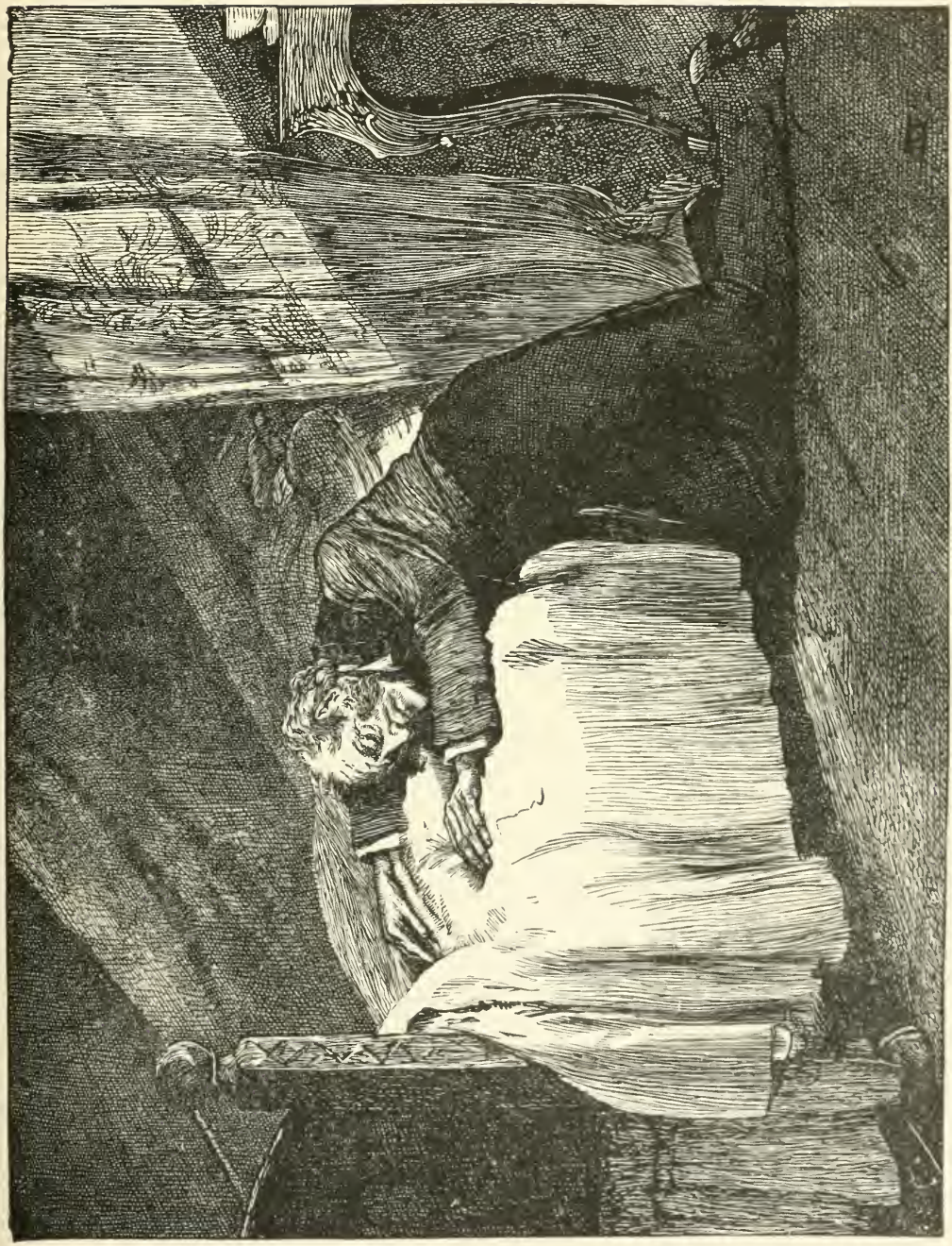
THE OBSERVER STOOD WITH HER HAND UPON HER OWN BOSOM, LOOKING AT THE GIRL.—Book 1, chap. ii.



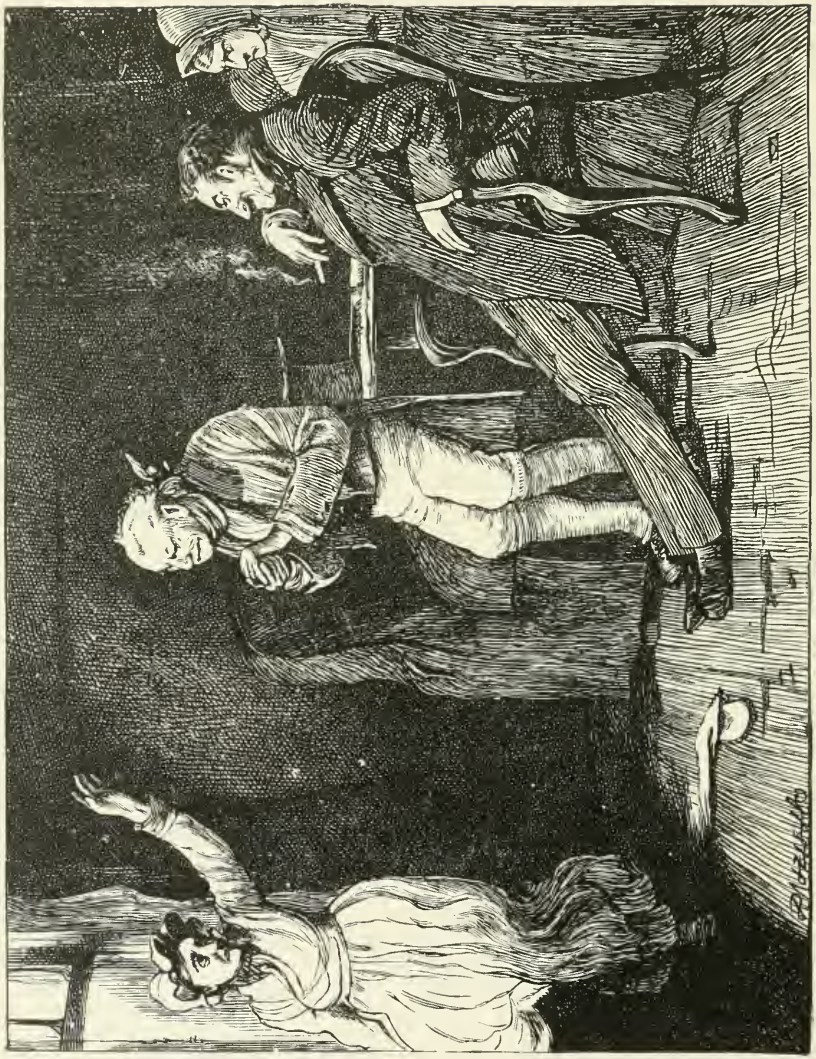
HIS DOOR WAS SOFTLY OPENED, AND THESE SPOKEN WORDS STARTLED HIM, AND CAME AS IF THEY WERE AN ANSWER. "LITTLE DORRIT" Book 1, chap. xiii.

THEY WENT TO THE CLOSED GATE, AND PEEPED THROUGH INTO THE COURTYARD. "I HOPE HE IS SOUND ASLEEP," SAID LITTLE DORRIT, KISSING ONE OF THE BARS, "AND DOES NOT MISS ME." THE GATE WAS SO FAMILIAR, AND SO LIKE A COMPANION, THAT THEY PUT DOWN MAGGY'S BASKET IN A CORNER TO SERVE FOR A SEAT, AND KEEPING CLOSE TOGETHER, RESTED THERE FOR SOME TIME—Book 1, chap. XIV.

ARTHUR CLENNAM, WITH THE CARD IN HIS HAND, BETOOK HIMSELF TO THE ADDRESS SET FORTH ON IT, AND SPEEDILY ARRIVED THERE. IT WAS A VERY SMALL ESTABLISHMENT, WHEREIN A DECENT WOMAN SAT BEHIND THE COUNTER WORKING AT HER NEEDLE.—Book 1, chap. xxii.



ONE FIGURE REPOSED UPON THE BED, THE OTHER KNEELING ON THE FLOOR, DROOPED OVER IT, THE ARMS EASILY AND PEACEFULLY RESTING ON THE COVERLET; . . . THE TWO BROTHERS WERE BEFORE THEIR FATHER: FAR BEYOND THE TWILIGHT JUDGMENTS OF THIS WORLD; HIGH ABOVE ITS MYSTERIES AND OBSTRUCTIONS.—Book 2, chap. XIX.



IN A MOMENT, AFFERY HAD THROWN THE STOCKING DOWN, STARTED UP, CAUGHT HOLD OF THE WINDOW-SILL WITH HER RIGHT HAND, LODGED HERSELF UPON THE WINDOW SEAT WITH HER RIGHT KNEE, AND WAS FLOURISHING HER LEFT HAND, BEATING EXPECTING ASSAILANTS OFF—Book 2, chap. XXX.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED BARNARD.

"A TALE OF TWO CITIES"

was published in 1859, and was Dickens's last historical tale. In his preface to the book he says:

"When I was acting, with my children and friends, in Mr. Wilkie Collins's drama of "The Frozen Deep," I first conceived the main idea of this story. A strong desire was upon me then, to embody it in my own person; and I traced out in my fancy the state of mind of which it would necessitate the presentation to an observant spectator, with particular care and interest.

"As the idea became familiar to me, it gradually shaped itself into its present form. Throughout its execution, it has had complete possession of me; I have so far verified what is done and suffered in these pages, as that I have certainly done and suffered it all myself.

"Whenever any reference (however slight) is made here to the condition of the French people before or during the Revolution, it is truly made, on the faith of trustworthy witnesses. It has been one of my hopes to add something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding that terrible time, though no one can hope to add anything to the philosophy of Mr. Carlyle's wonderful book."

And time has proved that Dickens's book is also a wonderful one. An eminent American critic has said of it:

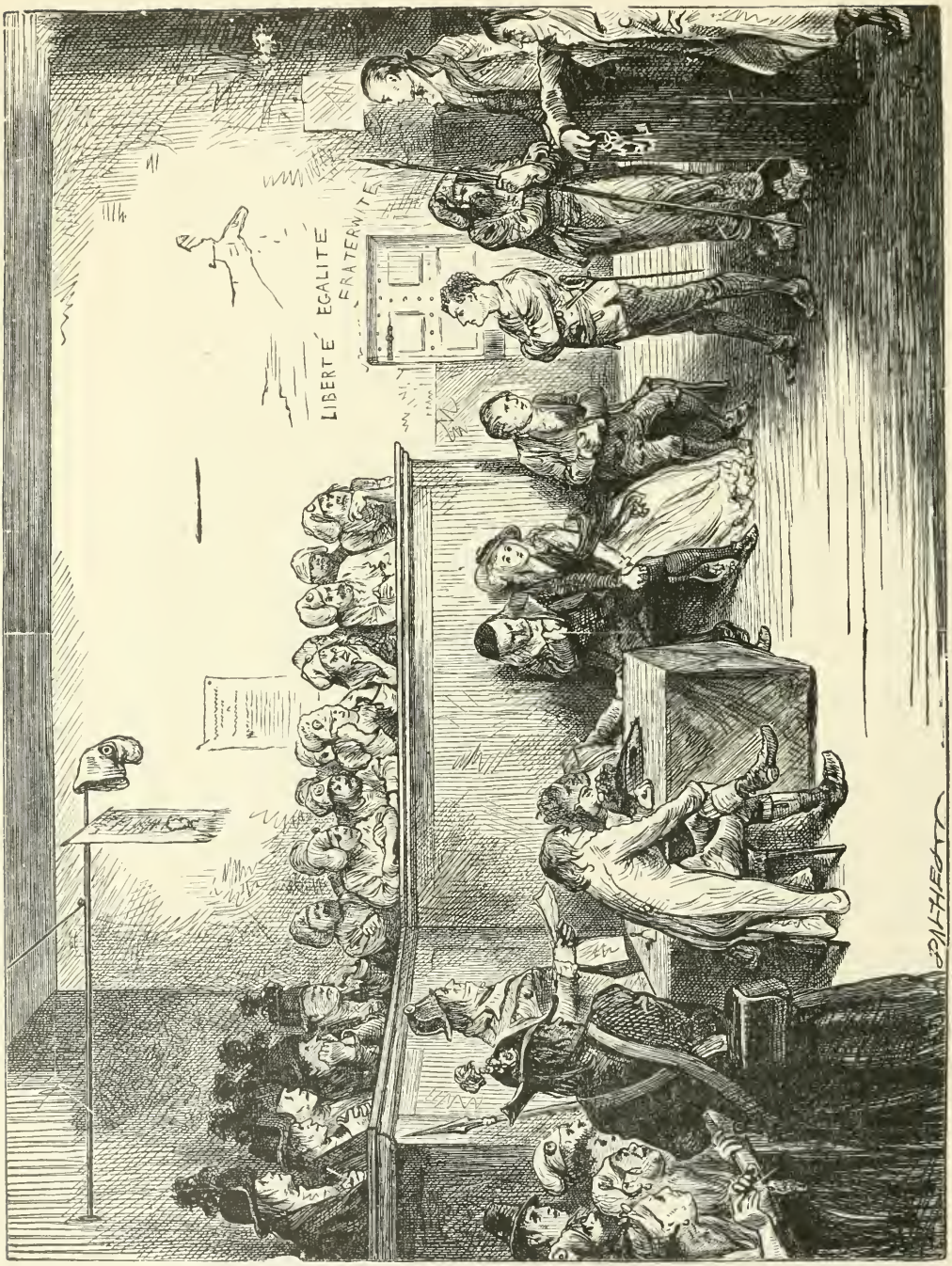
"Its pourtrayal of the noble-natured castaway makes it almost a peerless book in modern literature, and gives it a place among the highest examples of literary art. . . . The conception of this character shows in its author an ideal of magnanimity and of charity unsurpassed. There is not a grander, lovelier figure than the self-wrecked, self-devoted Sydney Carton, in literature or history; and the story itself is so noble in its spirit, so grand and graphic in its style, and filled with a pathos so profound and simple, that it deserves and will surely take a place among the great serious works of imagination."

And that will always be the verdict of posterity.

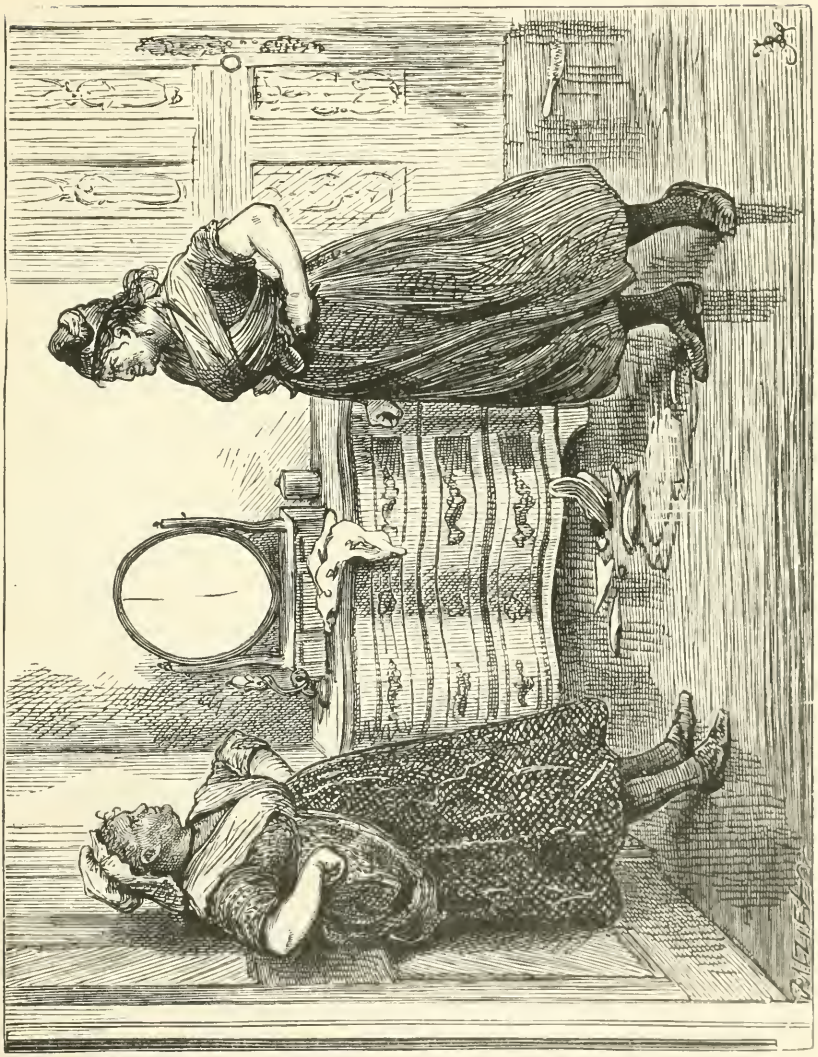
THE SHOEMAKER—Book 1, chap. vi.

MESSRS. CRUNCHER AND SON—Book 2, chap. i.

SOME REGISTERS WERE LYING OPEN ON A DESK AND AN OFFICER OF A COARSE DARK ASPECT PRESIDED OVER THESE.—Book 3, chap. 1.



THE TRIAL OF EVREMONDE—Book 3, chap. ix.



"YOU MIGHT, FROM YOUR APPEARANCE, BE THE WIFE OF LUCIFER," SAID MISS PROSS IN HER BREATHING.
"NEVERTHELESS YOU SHALL NOT GET THE BETTER OF ME. I AM AN ENGLISHWOMAN."
Book 3, chap. xiv.

The third tumbrel—Book 3, chap. xv.

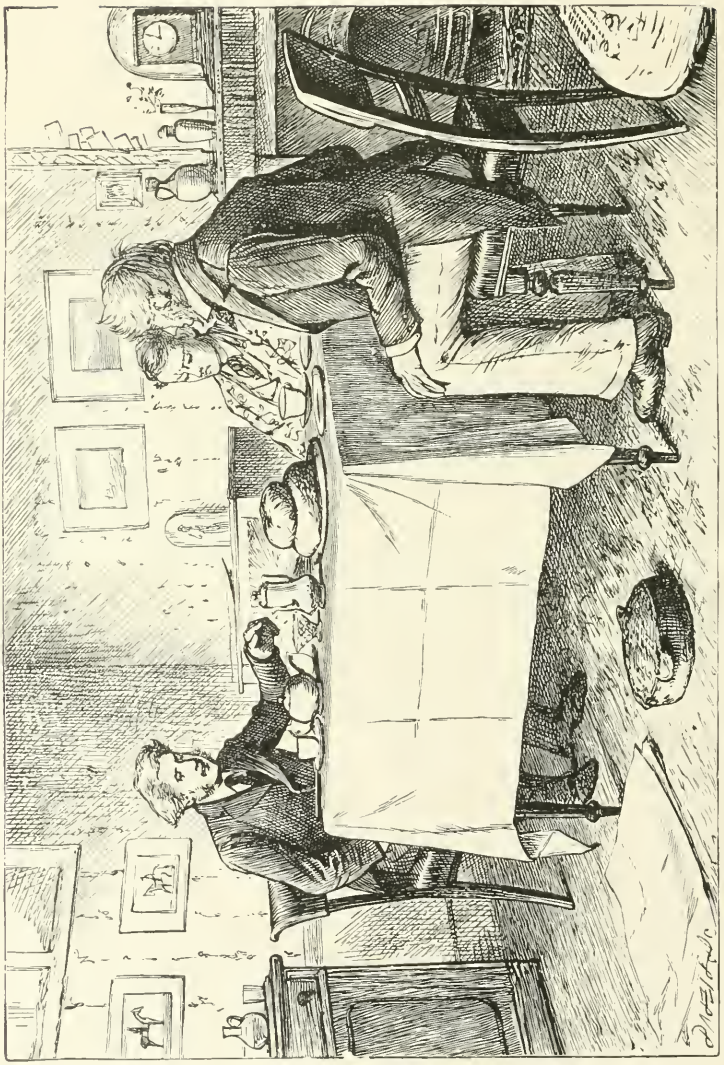
GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. A. FRASER.

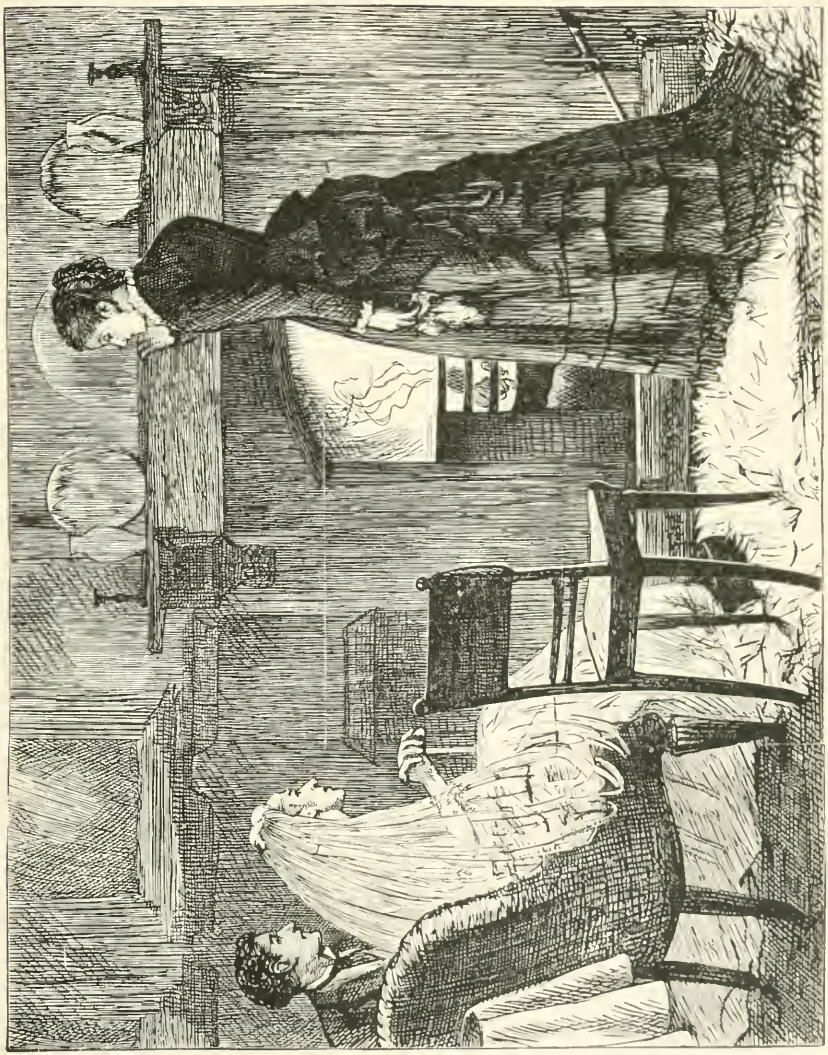
"GREAT EXPECTATIONS

was published in 1861, and 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. A subtle penetration into character marks the unlikeness in the likeness; there is enough at once of resemblance and of difference in the position and surroundings of each to account for the divergences of character that arise; both children are good-hearted, and both have the advantage of association with models of tender simplicity and oddity, perfect in their truth, and quite distinct from each other; but a sudden tumble into distress steadies Peggotty's little friend, and as unexpected a stroke of good fortune turns the head of the small portégé of Joe Gargery. But over and above its popular acceptance, the book had interested some whose opinions Dickens specially valued (Carlyle among them, I remember); and upon Bulwer Lytton objecting to a close that should leave Pip a solitary man, Dickens substituted what now stands. 'You will be surprised,' he wrote, 'to hear that I have changed the end of 'Great Expectations' from and after Pip's return to Joe's and finding his little likeness there. Bulwer, who has been, as I think you know, extraordinarily taken by the book, so strongly urged it upon me, after reading the proofs, and supported his view with such good reasons, that I resolved to make the change. You shall have it when you come back to town. I have put in as pretty a little piece of writing as I could, and I have no doubt the story will be more acceptable through the alteration.'"

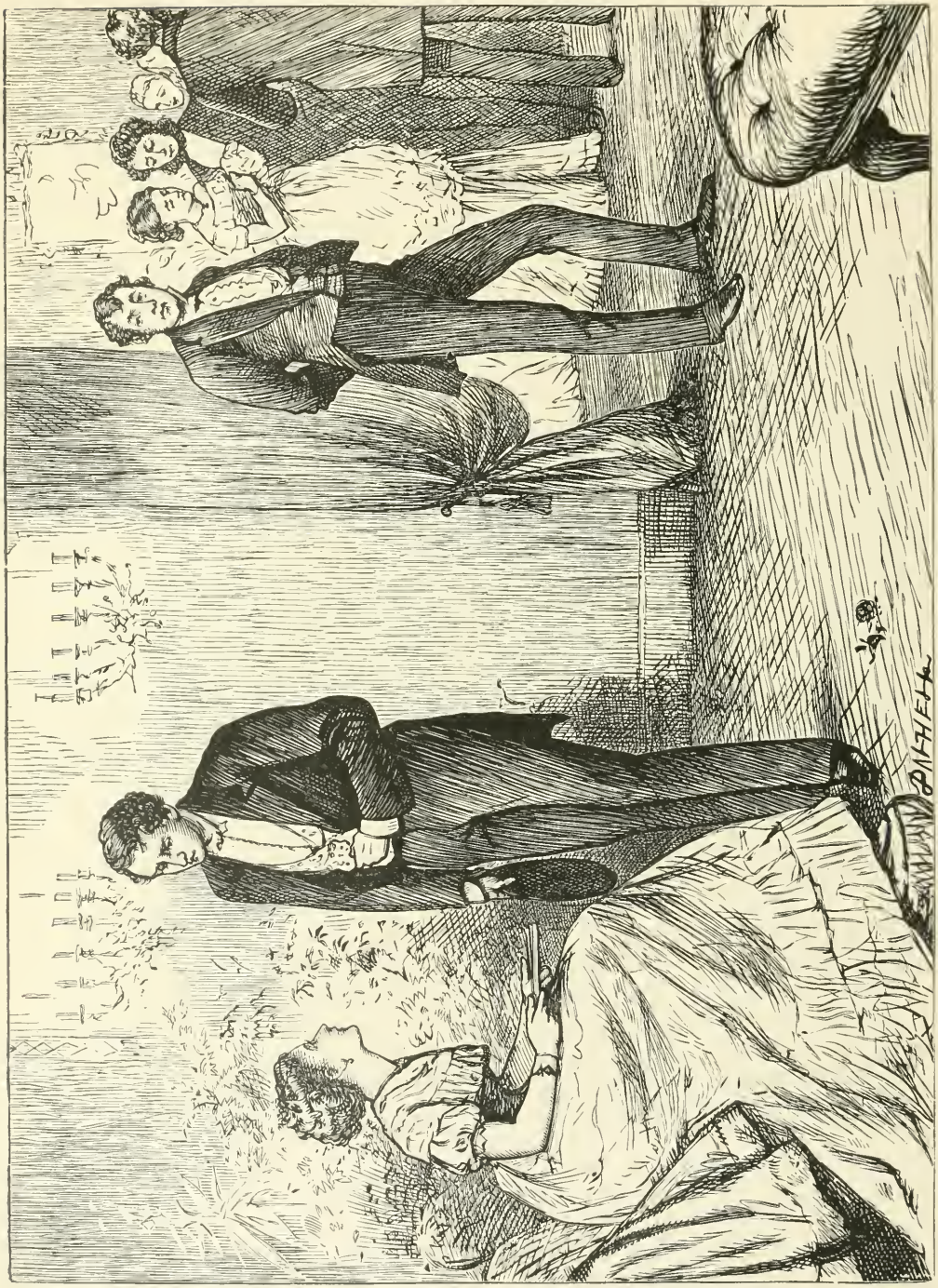
"HOLD YOUR NOISE!" CRIED A HORRIBLE VOICE . . . "KEEP STILL, YOU LITTLE DEVIL, OR I'LL CUT YOUR THROAT."—Chap. i.



"Do you take tea, or coffee, Mr. Gargery!"—Chap. xxvii.

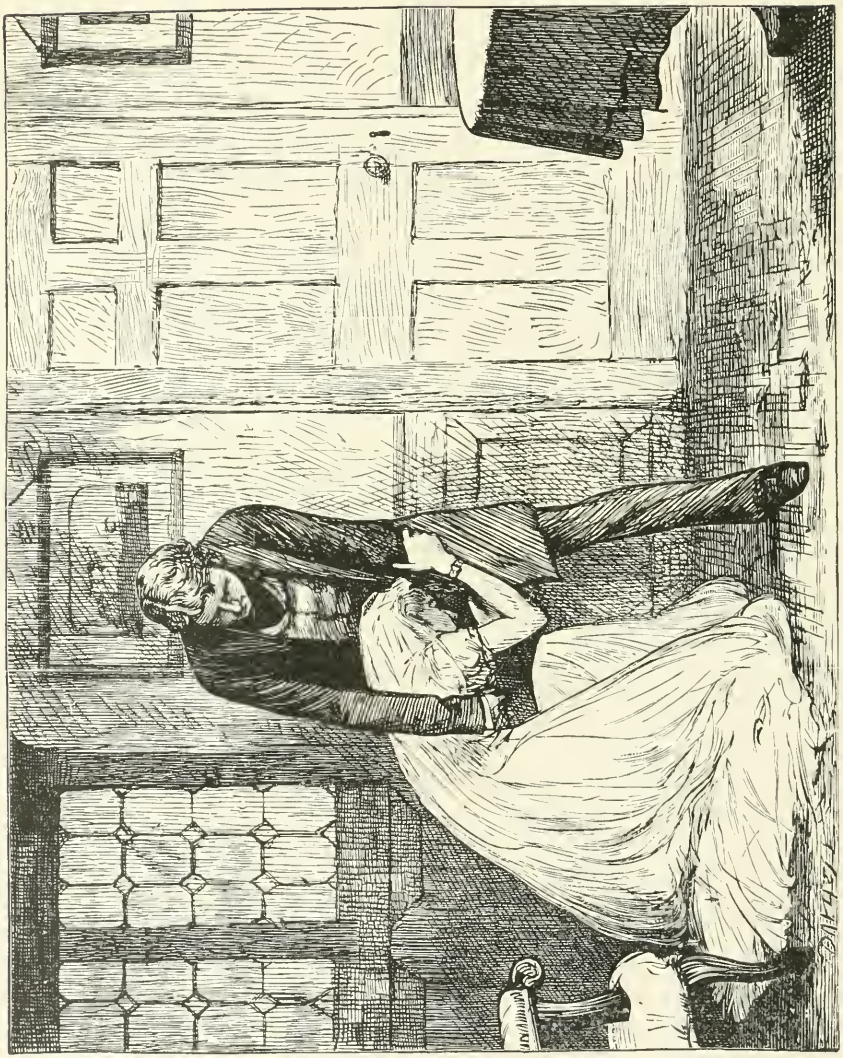


"WHAT!" SAID ESTELLA, PRESERVING HER ATTITUDE OF INDIFFERENCE AS SHE LEANED AGAINST THE GREAT CHIMNEY-PIECE, AND ONLY MOVING HER EYES. "DO YOU REPROACH ME FOR BEING COLD? YOU!"—Chap. XXXVIII.



"WHY SHOULD I LOOK AT HIM?" RETURNED ESTELLA—Chap. XXXVIII.

I ROSE OUT OF MY CHAIR, AND STOOD WITH MY HAND UPON THE BACK OF IT, LOOKING WILDLY AT HIM
Chap. XXXIX.



I ENTREATED HER TO RISE—Chap. xlix.

OUR MUTUAL FRIEND.

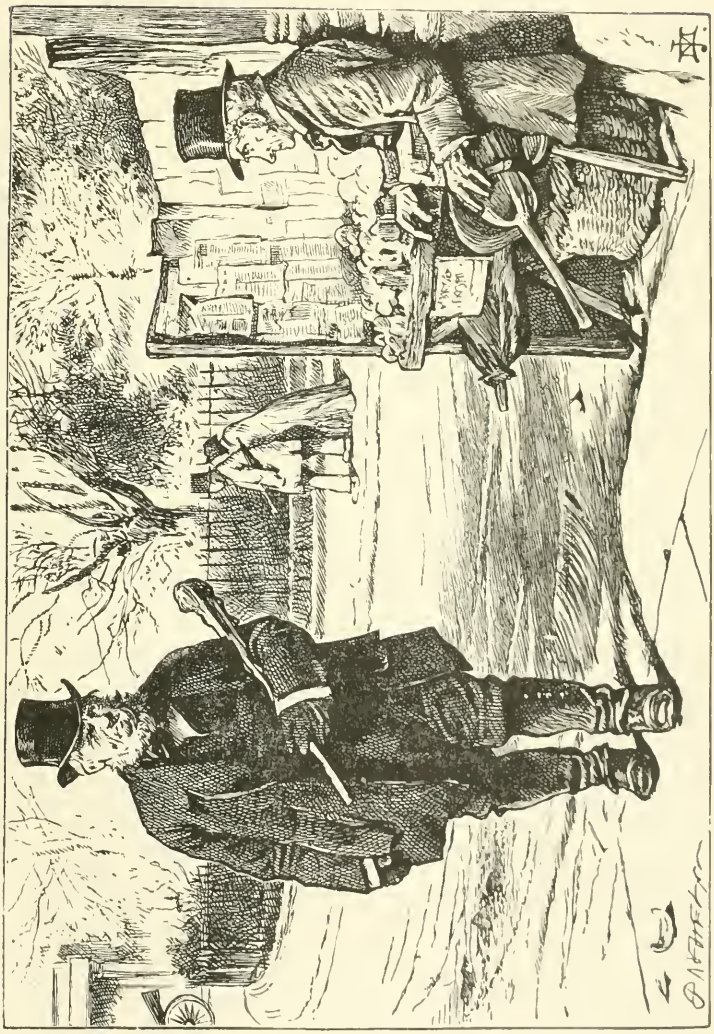
ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. MAHONEY.

"OUR MUTUAL FRIEND"

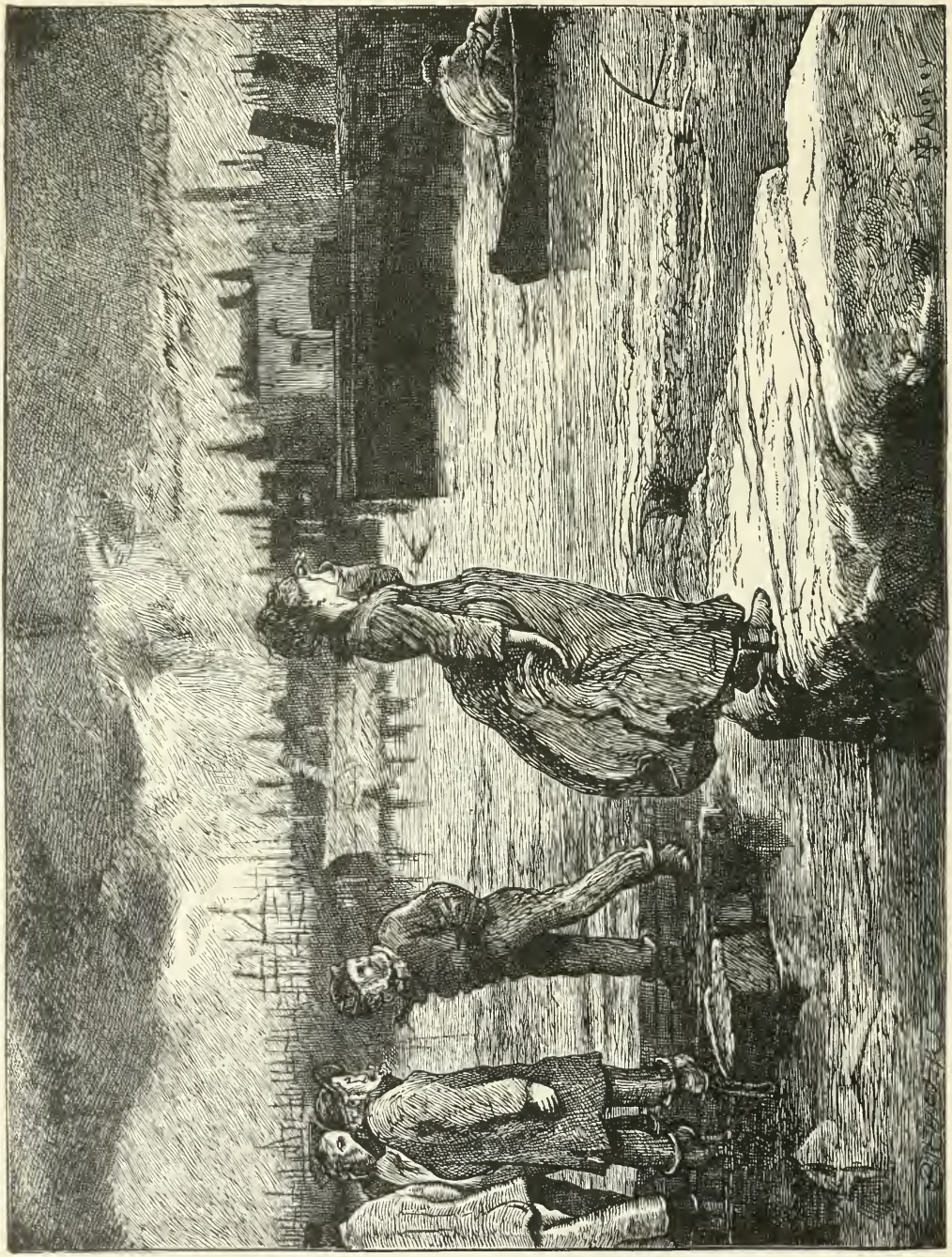
was the last completed long story that Dickens wrote, a portion of the manuscript of which was with him on the occasion of the railway accident at Staplehurst on the fateful 9th June, 1865. He describes the incident in a postscript to the book:

"On Friday the ninth of June in the present year Mr. and Mrs. Boffin (in their manuscript dress of receiving Mr. and Mrs. Lammle at breakfast) were on 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 for ever, than I was then, until there shall be written against my life the two words with which I have this day closed this book—THE END."

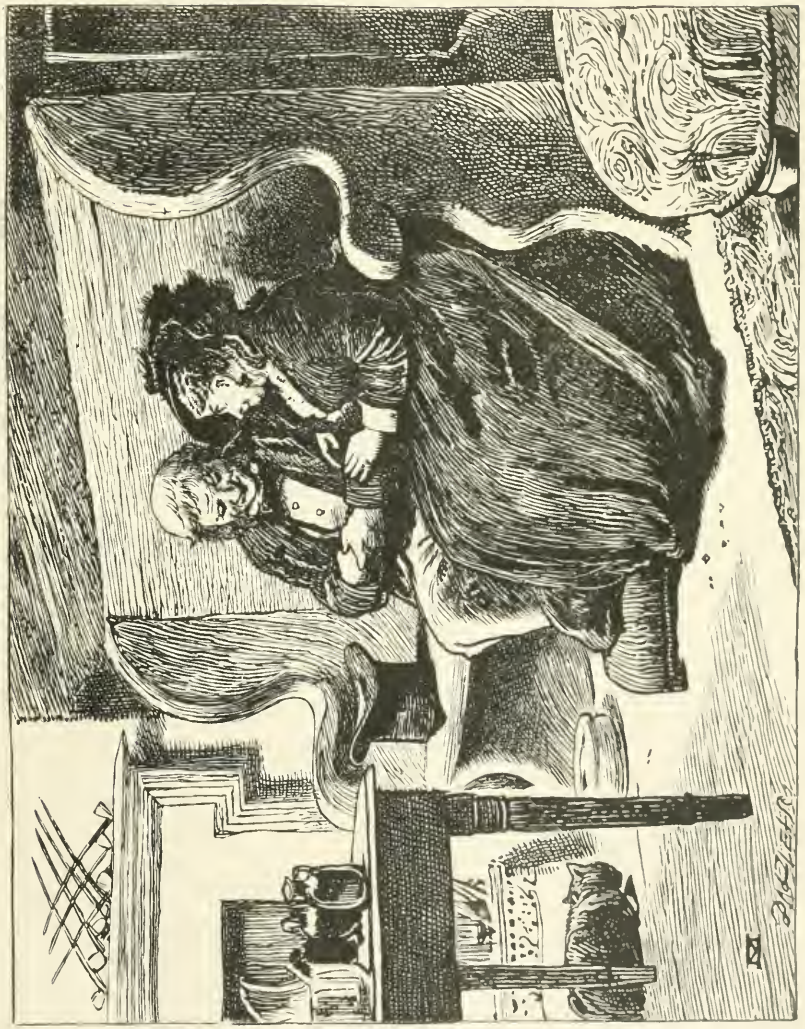
"The observation and humour he excelled in are not wanting to it," says Forster, "nor had there been, in his first completed work, more eloquent or generous pleading for the poor and neglected than this last completed work contains. Betty Higden finishes what Oliver Twist began."



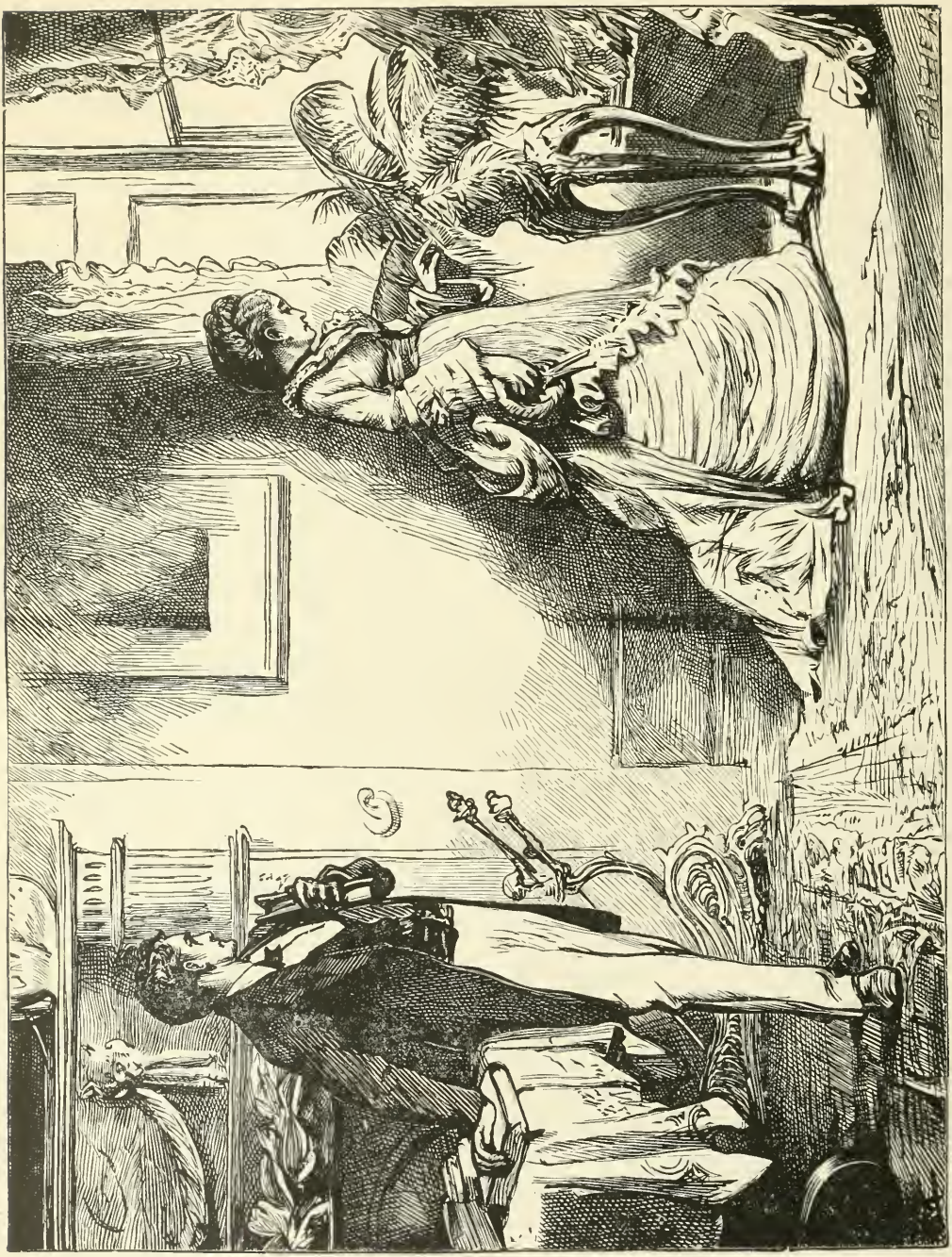
"HERE YOU ARE AGAIN," REPEATED MR. WEGG, MUSING. "AND WHAT ARE YOU NOW?"
Book 1, chap. v.



LIZZIE, LOOKING FOR HER FATHER, SAW HIM COMING, AND STOOD UPON THE CAUSEWAY THAT HE MIGHT SEE HER—Book 1, chap. vi.

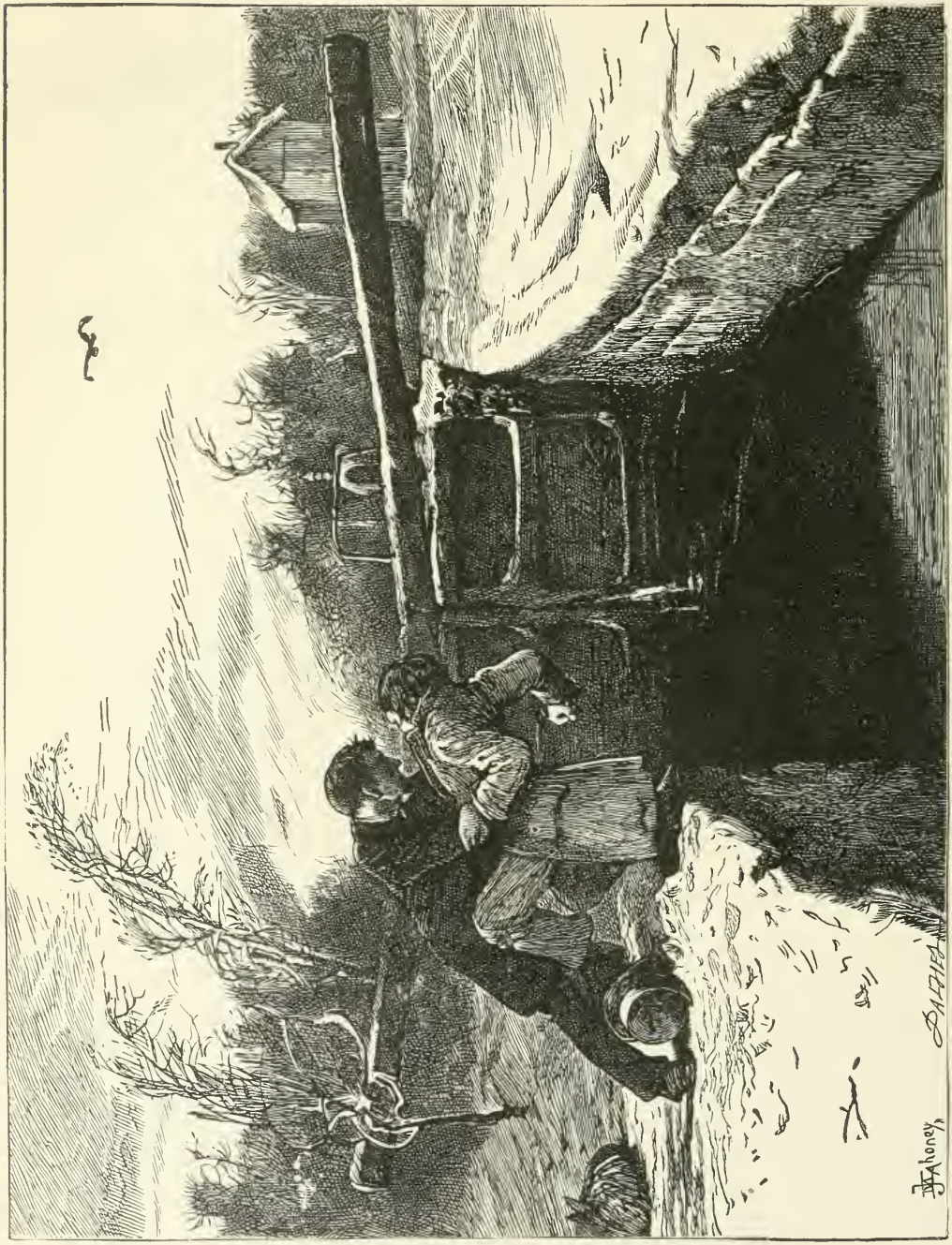


"NOODY!" SAID MRS. BOFFIN, COMING FROM HER FASHIONABLE SOFA TO HIS SIDE ON THE PLAIN SETTLE AND HOOKING HER COMFORTABLE ARM THROUGH HIS.—Book 1, chap. ix.



"You never charge me, Miss Wilfer," said the secretary, encountering her by chance alone in the great drawing-room, "with commissions for home. I shall always be happy to execute any commands you may have in that direction."—Book 2, chap. viii.

JENNY TWISTED HER VENERABLE FRIEND ASIDE, TO A BRILLIANTLY LIGHTED TOY-SHOP WINDOW, AND SAID, "NOW LOOK AT 'EM! ALL MY WORK!"—Book 3, chap. ii.



RIDERHOOD WENT OVER INTO THE SMOOTH PIT BACKWARDS, AND BRADLEY HEADSTONE UPON HIM—Book 4, chap. XV.

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SIR LUKE FILDES, R.A.

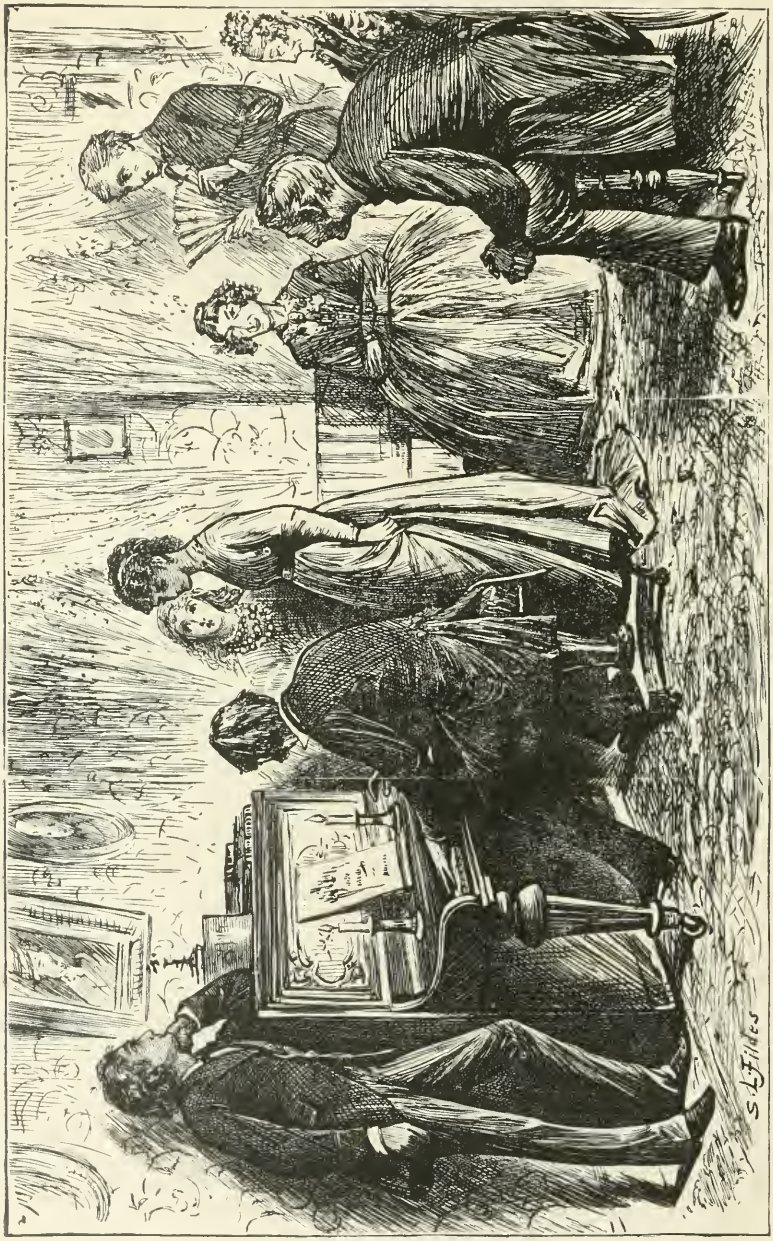
"THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD"

is the incomplete story left by Dickens at his death, which has baffled all the solvers of mysteries and literary detectives since its publication, and still causes perturbation in each new reader who in turn discovers a new way out of its mystery. His biographer speaks of the book thus:

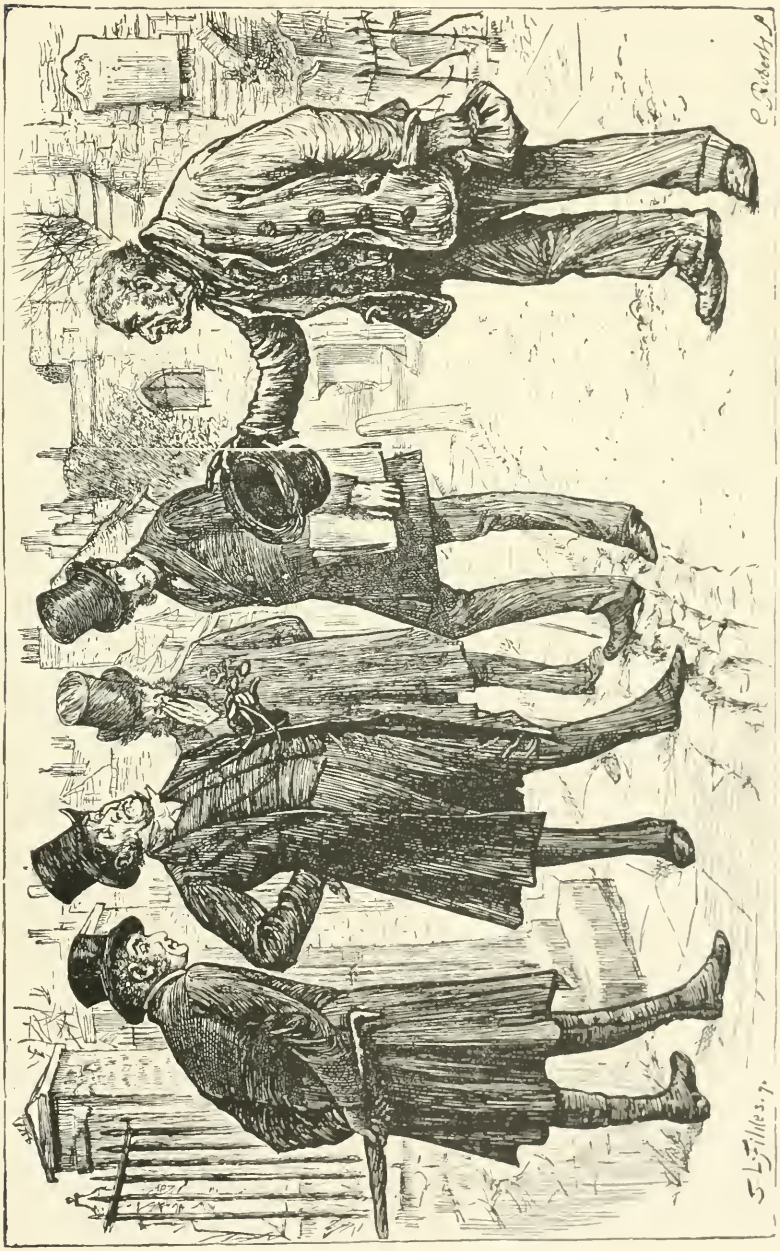
"Nothing had been written, however, of the main parts of the design excepting what is found in the published numbers; there was no hint or preparation for the sequel in any notes of chapters in advance; and there remained not even what he had himself so sadly written of the book by Thackeray, also interrupted 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."

No secret was better kept than this one of Dickens's regarding the plot of his unfinished tale, and however convincing one's own idea seems, time regularly brings another, and so "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" remains a mystery still.

UNDER THE TREES—Chap. iii.

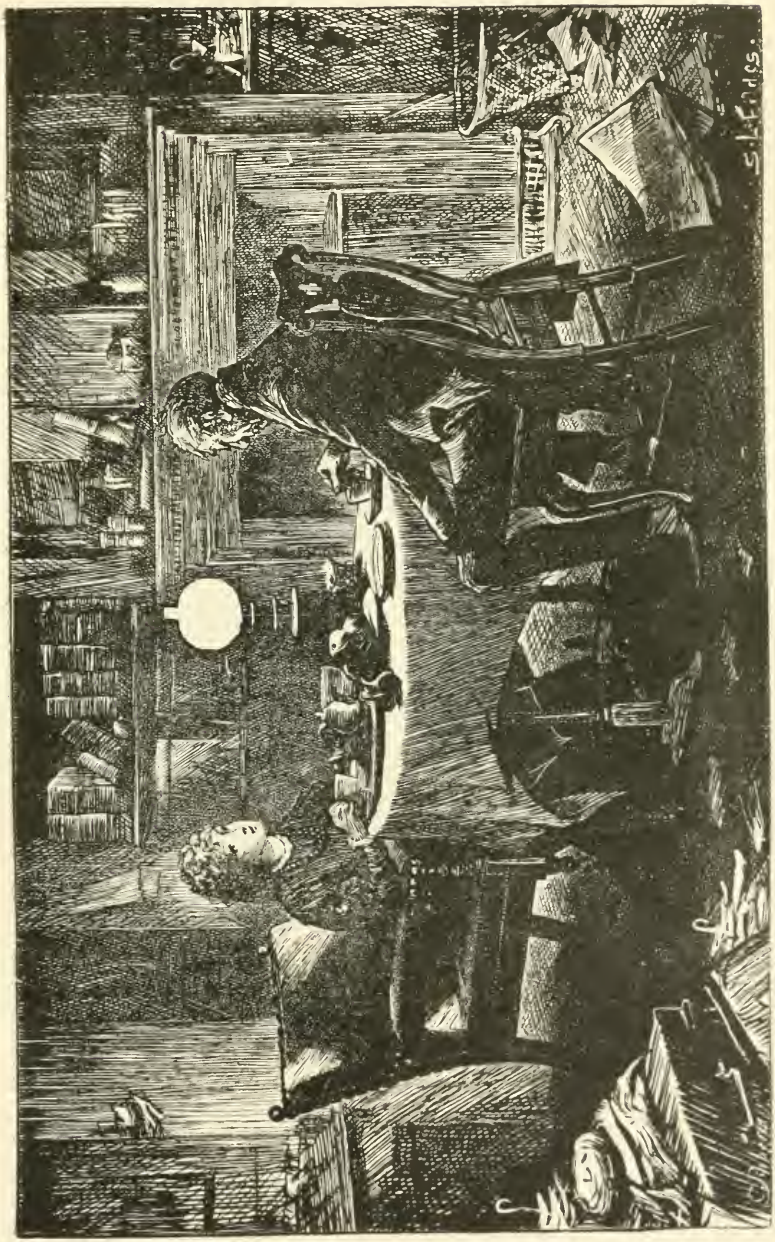


At the piano—Chap. vii.

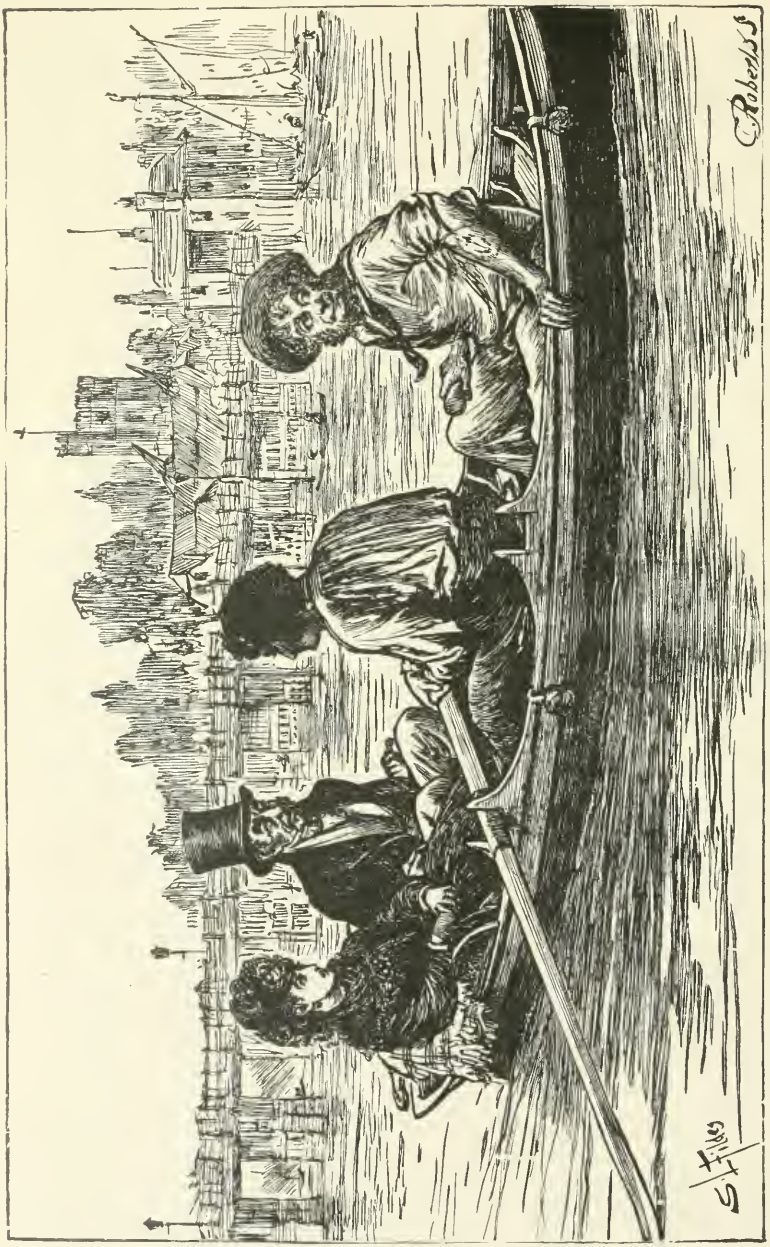


DURDLES CAUTIONS MR. SAPSEA AGAINST BOASTING.—Chap. xii.

"Good-bye, Rosebud, darling!"—Chap. xiii.



MR. CREWGIOUS EXPERIENCES A NEW SENSATION—Chap. XX.



UP THE RIVER—Chap. xxii.