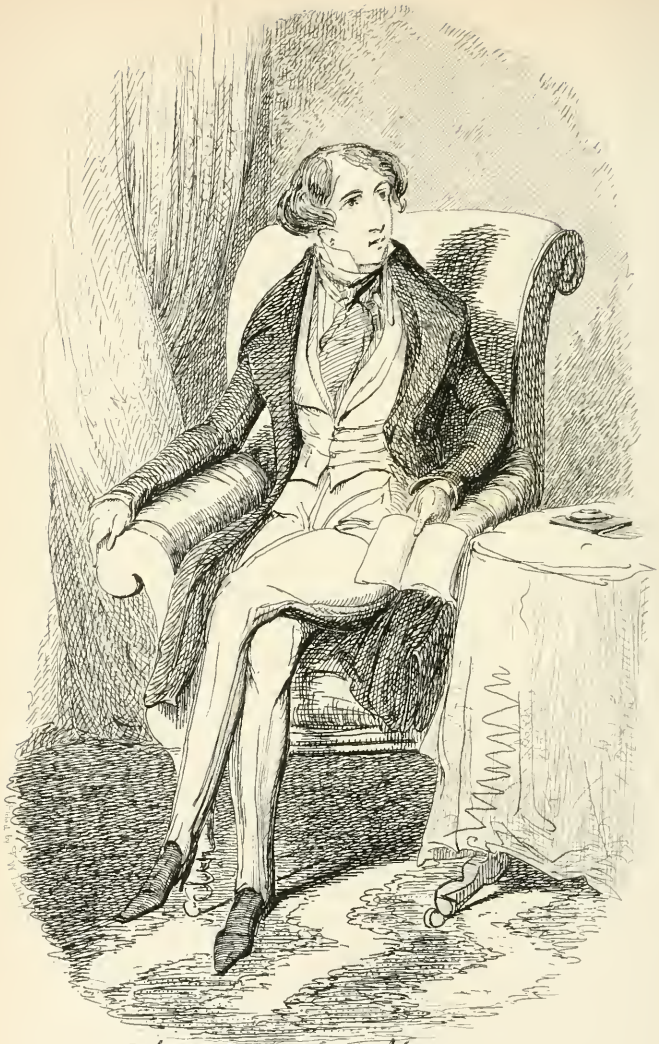

Charles Dickens —

J. & Emily Brontë

BOZLAND

DICKENS' PLACES AND PEOPLE

BY

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"BOZLAND."

THE PICKWICKIAN INNS.

I.—ROCHESTER.

THE old Pickwickian inns are delightful from the feeling of cosy enjoyment they inspire. This may be owing to the keen relish which "Boz" himself had for such haunts, and from his thorough understanding of their character. Indeed, any one who has "put up" at a Pickwickian inn—such as the Bull at Rochester, or the Great White Horse at Ipswich—will own to the mysterious old-world sense which steals over him. Happily a few of these old hostelries still remain with us to keep the Pickwick flavour fresh: the shrewd proprietors are beginning to find their account in the pilgrims who are curious as to the traditions, and who must be shown "Mr. Pickwick's room" and other

localities more or less legendary. There is no one who has presented these now almost extinct scenes with such a rich fulness of detail as "Boz." They are suited exactly to the characters, their ways and costumes, and the characters to them. There are more than two dozen inns named or pictured in "Pickwick," or, more exactly, five-and-twenty! These are the Golden Cross, at Charing Cross; the Bull, Rochester, and Wright's; the Blue Lion, Muggleton; the White Hart, Borough; the Old Leather Bottle, Cobham; the Town Arms Inn, Eatanswill, and the Peacock; the Inn at Marlborough Downs; the Angel, Bury; the Magpie and Stump, London; the Great White Horse, Ipswich; the George and Vulture, George Yard, Sun Court, Lombard Street; the Marquis of Granby, Dorking; the Black Bull, Whitechapel; the Blue Boar, Leadenhall Market; the White Horse Cellars, Piccadilly; the White Hart, Bath; the Bush, Bristol; the Spaniards, Hampstead; the Bell, Berkeley Heath; the Hop Pole, Tewkesbury; the Old Royal Hotel, Birmingham; the Saracen's Head, Towcester; Osborne's Hotel, Adelphi; and the Fox under the Hill, on the river. No story assuredly was ever fitted out with more inns. Oddly enough, most

remain, and remain pretty much as they were; and I have been in nearly all of them. A few years ago the Golden Cross had its archway through which the Pickwickians drove when setting out for Rochester. Inn yards almost invariably become depôts for railway goods; and to this commercial purpose the London and North-Western converted the Golden Cross.

Rochester, above all the Pickwickian places, has animated living associations. It is bound up altogether with them and their humours. How far off they now seem, with their costumes, coach travelling, duels! It might be in the last century, when Great George was king. Yet the bones live again. It is something to have talked with—to have taken by the hand—the creator of these remote things.

The old houses of the little town have souls breathed into them: it has been visited by the Pickwickians. It was remarkable that "Boz" should have sought here for his first humorous experiment, and have at starting taken his characters down here. The reason, of course, was that sort of inspiration and power of creation which a locality that is well known, or a favourite one, supplies.

The inn—the Bull, the military quartered there, whom his boyish eyes had followed—by its very colour, at once suggested incidents. Every one that writes fiction knows the creating influence of such surroundings.

This fruitful little city, which he knew by heart, inspired him with several distinct currents of humour and incident. It was strange that, as he had begun with it, so he should have ended with his much loved and well understood town. The humours of Pickwick were to be contrasted with the tragic forebodings of Edwin Drood—after an interval of little more than thirty years.

For "Boz" the old inn had an extraordinary attraction, and he introduced it again and again. We find it in "Pickwick," "The Great Winglebury Duel," "Great Expectations;" in one of the papers of his "Uncommercial Travellers," and in "The Mudfog Papers," but he changes his name to "The Blue Boar," "The Blue Lion and Stomach Warmer"—an extraordinarily fantastic name, not exhibiting Dickens's usual propriety of choice in such matters.

No description, however vivid and sympathetic, will convey an accurate idea of any place that we

have not seen, though it may of general tone, as well as of the impressions it leaves. Music is equally powerless, though latterly it has become the fashion to believe that it can express not merely feelings and emotions, but even narrative statements. But a writer, as well as a composer, can only interpret ; both can show what is the meaning of a scene, and how it affects the spectator ; and this may be done so faithfully, that when the scene or object is seen for the first time, the spectators will recognize the described emotions as truthful. In fact, a person who thus comes furnished with the mystery of what is before him, will have *seen* the place much more faithfully and in a much more vivid way than any ordinary observer.

A key is thus supplied to its secret meaning and mystery ; just as Ruskin has interpreted for us the significance of the weather-beaten old church tower at Calais, which many have looked at with curiosity, but never have understood until he came and explained. Poets, painters and writers furnish this sort of interpretation. I never felt its force so strongly as in this old Pickwickian town, which seemed alive with fancies.

One morning, having set off on one of my—as I call them—"lightning tours," that is to see all I could of England and the Continent within twenty-four hours, I was afoot by five o'clock, and found myself transported to the High Street of Rochester before seven. It was a pleasant and almost poetical promenade. How much does this enjoyment depend—and what a variety in that enjoyment!—on the times at which we view such places. Midnight, early dawn, the gloaming—these influences make the most striking changes, and one's own feelings are imported.

At that early hour there was a tranquil air abroad. The old Castle, as it came into view standing sentinel over the glistening river below, had its always picturesque charm, and wherever you walked seemed to dominate the town. Rochester is an old-fashioned and somnolent place enough, but at this hour, when all the shops were closed and no one was astir, it seemed more somnolent than ever.

I wandered up until I came to the Bull Inn, which is the very essence of old fashion, and was slumbering away like the rest. It was not without a pleasant sense of emotion that I stood before it. Here it was at last, the scene of so many

dearly loved humours, and of the old familiar figures.

There was what is called a "ramshackle" air over it, a sort of comfortable decay, and yet I would not have had it changed for the world. It was so completely old-fashioned. I stood a long time surveying the almost pictorial entrance, "The Crown" over the porch, the rows of windows and the shabby, grimed brick. I could fancy it seeming very imposing to the natives, who would speak of it with bated breath. As I stood in the porch and looked at the capacious yard within, I could readily call up the old posting days, when it was crowded with chaises, and the London coach, with Mr. Pickwick and his friends on the top, had just drawn up at the door. A stirring scene.

Round the yard were all sorts of little structures, recesses, openings, steep stairs. A little cavern on the right was the kitchen, like a "cabooze" in a steamer. All this irregularity was pleasing. On the left was the coffee-room, an old-fashioned chamber, into which I entered. There seemed to be no one about. A maid-servant came at last, and cheerfully undertook to get breakfast; for I was determined to have the satisfaction of breakfasting in the old town. While

it was being got ready I wandered about the streets. I saw the Guildhall, a fine bit of rubicund brick. There are some fine picturesque buildings about, of this same well-crusted brick. A noble, showy clock, too, projecting well over the roadway—"moon-faced," Boz calls it.

After breakfast, I was by special request taken up the broad, many-landinged stair, the scene of Jingle's *rencontre* with Dr. Slammer. I could see the angry doctor gesticulating at the bottom. It was a curious feeling entering into the ball-room, at one end of which was the little gallery for the music. This room, however, was no bigger than a large drawing-room, and we wonder as we read "Boz's" rather flourishing account of the crowds entering, and of their standing at the top of the room, as though it were some vast palatial apartment. A little speech "Boz" made to me when we were walking on the Rochester road explains this impression of size. "I remember," he said, speaking of Rochester, "when I was a boy here the Town Hall seemed to me perfectly overpowering from its size and splendour, and I recall my disappointment and surprise on returning to find it such a small thing." When he wrote of the ball he was thinking of his own early impressions long

before, when he was a child. Dickens had known so much hardship and even privation in his young days that no doubt the life and entertainment found at such places seemed to him all but luxury. And the Old Leather Bottle, whither the amorous Tupman fled to hide his sorrows: this little inn, wonderful to say, flourishes enormously on the tradition—crowds of tourists flocking to it — most, I believe, under some misty notion that Dickens "wrote 'Pickwick' there in the back parlour." "Boz" describes with a sort of delight the Pickwickians' walk through Cobham Wood; and a charming walk it is, not the least pleasant features being what is found at each end —the Leather Bottle at one extremity and the fair city of Rochester at the other. The inn is a welcome roadside place, with Mr. Pickwick himself hung up aloft for the sign. The rooms within, notably Mr. Tupman's, are hung round with portraits, sketches, criticisms, all referring to the inn. The proprietor "works" the association with Dickens with extraordinary spirit and success, and people who find themselves anywhere near are bound to go and see it. What a contrast to the day when it was pointed out to the writer by the genial Charles himself, on a country walk! It

was then no more than a common country "shebeen."

A little volume, indeed, might be filled with an account of the various Rochester localities and others round Rochester worked by our author into his story. One of the finest specimens of an old house in the country is assuredly Eastgate House, so picturesque and varied and generally imposing. It is in the High Street, where I found myself long lingering before. Dickens made it the young ladies' school—the Nuns' House, he called it. It is of a very large and "important"—the auctioneer's word—character, with gardens and forecourt, and dates from the sixteenth century. It was actually, up to a few years back, a boarding school for young ladies, and so it was during the author's boyhood. It has now become a working man's club.

The townsmen point out the house, No. 146, on the opposite side of the street, as the residence of Sapsea the auctioneer. It is said that this figure was drawn from two civic personages of the place one a former mayor and auctioneer.

"Over the doorway," we are told in the story, "is a wooden effigy, about half life-size, representing Mr. Sapsea's father, in a curly wig and

toga, in the act of selling. The chastity of the idea, and the natural appearance of the little figure, hammer, and pulpit, have been much admired."

Mr. Hughes was told that the officers of the garrison were fond of laying plots to carry off this pulpit. Satis House was the Restoration House of "Edwin Drood."

Cooling, where Dickens stayed after his marriage, is some six miles from Rochester, and had always for him a wonderful attraction. It is a strange, wild and abandoned looking spot, owing to the forlorn waste of "the marshes," which stretch down to the river. This he made the scene of his convict's escape. Indeed, he told his friend Forster that he meant to make it the scene of his "Great Expectation"—a further proof of what I have advanced before, that it was not the author that selected the localities, but rather they that selected him: i.e. forced themselves on him, and exercised his pen.

Mr. Pickwick's pleasant incident of finding the stone at Cobham, with the Bill Stumps inscription, was, I have always suspected, an actual incident that occurred during the years 1836 or 1837. He says, indeed, that it was submitted to "the Royal

Antiquarian Society"—rather to the Society of Antiquaries. One of the same kind was described in Scott's "Antiquary," where Edie Ochiltree explains the mystery of the letters. It is, however, a "common form" of jest, and we find an instance in the Memoirs of Bachaumont, which Dickens may have seen. There was once dug up in the quarries of Belleville, near Paris, a stone with these letters:—

I. C.
J.
L
E
C. H
E. M.
I. N.
D. E.
S. A. N. E. S.

It was taken to the Academicians, who could make nothing of it. Savants were consulted without result. At last the beadle of Montmartre chanced to see it, and at once read it off, "Ici le chemin des ânes," that is, the path for the donkeys who carried away the sacks of plaster from the quarries. Another antiquary some years ago purchased a plate, on which he found a rude inscription, "POMANS"; which, after much study, he read as P. O. Man. S., i.e.: "Publii Ovidii Manibus

Sacrum." Showing this with delight to a brother *savant*, the latter smiled and said, "I can supply you with another, or with as many as you please." Pomans was a manufacturer of china services.

There is also recorded a similar story of George Steevens—a trick which he played on Dr. Gough, a brother antiquary. He had a fragment of old glass engraved with Saxon characters by one Mr. White, and then placed in a conspicuous place in a broker's shop, where it soon attracted the doctor's eye. He bore it away in triumph and exhibited it to his friends, who had been let into the secret.

Some rather wild speculations have been offered in striving to identify Muggleton. This sort of topographical hunting may seem to be trivial enough, but it has a fascination. Some explorers, such as the author's son and Mr. Hughes, also have fixed on a small country town called Town Malling, and Mr. Dickens (the younger) urges the fact that the place has always had a sort of celebrity for cricket. This is certainly not to the point, as Muggleton was certainly not distinguished for skill in the game; and the players who performed before Mr. Pickwick and his friends were a

set of wretched amateurs, or "duffers," as they might be called. Muggleton, it will be recollected, had its mayor and corporation, who are described as "a corporate town, with a mayor, burgesses, and freemen who were constantly petitioning Parliament against the continuation of negro slavery abroad, and against any interference with the factory systems at home, for permitting the sale of benefices in the Church, and for abolishing Sunday trading in the streets"—a sarcastic antithesis which is worth noting as being the first of the numerous telling strokes dealt by "Boz" at social abuses; and it is remarkable that he should have begun thus early. Town Malling, therefore, or any place of the kind, could not have been intended. I fancy he had in view Maidstone, and though merely sketched, Maidstone is of the proper importance, and is moreover almost exactly the distance from Rochester described by the waiter at the Bull, namely fifteen miles. The Pickwickians were certainly wonderful walkers.

Many guesses too have been made at the original of Dingley Dell and Manor Farm. Mr. Hughes suggests a house about a mile or so from Aylsford, which is now, or was recently, in possession of Captain Trousdell. I confess this seems likely

enough ; for on comparing the sketch given in the sliding scene in "Pickwick," I find it almost exactly corresponds with that furnished in Mr. Hughes' book, having gables and bow-windows, etc.

Much speculation has been exercised as to the locality of Eatanswill, and in the "History of Pickwick" I could not arrive at a clear and certain solution. I have, however, been assured by Mr. Alfred Morrison, the well-known collector, that Eatanswill was Ipswich, that his father was one of the candidates, and that Dickens was there in person. The writer makes a burlesque pretence of having searched the road-books for Eatanswill, and laments his want of success; and, like Mr. Pickwick, he also seems to have "lined out" the word "Norwich." The Pickwickians arrived there "late in the evening," after a day's journey, in just about the time that would be taken to reach Ipswich by coach. Mr. Pickwick's journey from Eatanswill to Bury St. Edmunds, in chase of "Captain Marshall," also shows that Ipswich was intended.

The opposing candidate was Mr. Kelly, afterwards Sir Fitzroy Kelly, who, in his story, bears the name of Fizkin. The Ipswich contest became

famous from the violence of the struggle, the petitions, and the unscrupulous electioneering methods pursued. Mr. Morrison recalls the bright figure of the young Dickens, who had been sent down specially by Sir J. Easthope—then proprietor of *The Chronicle*—to report the speeches; he came into the committee rooms at the White Horse to consult about forwarding the speeches to town.

Canterbury was another town which had for our author an almost romantic interest, and whose very old stones he has made to live again. In "Copperfield," he brings the whole spirit of the place perfectly before us. The Wickfields' House has been identified. It is described :—

"At length we stopped before a very old house, bulging out over the road; a house with long low lattice windows bulging out still farther, and beams with carved heads on the ends, bulging out too, so that I fancied the whole house was leaning forward, trying to see who was passing on the narrow pavement below. It was quite spotless in its cleanliness. The old-fashioned brass knocker on the low arched door, ornamented with carved garlands of fruit and flowers, twinkled like a star; the two stone steps descending to the door were

as white as if they had been covered with fair linen; and all the angles and corners and carvings and mouldings, and quaint little panes of glass, and quainter little windows, though as old as the hills, were as pure as any snow that ever fell upon the hills."

We find in St. Dunstan's Street, by the old west gate, No. 71, an antique mansion. Mr. Allbut shows that it must have stood in the London Road, for David says that on his entrance into Canterbury, on his journey from London, he must have passed it without knowing it. The description answers perfectly, though there is now lacking the round tower "that formed one side of the house," where Uriah Heep pursued his labours. There is, however, on this side a vacant space, which some fifty years ago may have been filled with the tower.

There was a little house where Mr. Micawber put up with his family and lived pleasantly, discharging his account with a bill, which it is needless to say was *not* taken up. At the corner of the Roman Road, facing St. Margaret Street, we come upon such a little inn as we might expect his family to patronize, the Queen's Head. There is also that rather picturesque inn, the Fleur de Lys,

in the High Street, and which it is a surprise that the author has not utilized.

II.—Ipswich and Bury.

Ipswich has quite a suitable air of old fashion, with its narrow, comfortable-looking streets, its low, snug, often framed and overhanging houses. It is much as it was in the Pickwickian times, and retains the old tone and flavour. As we come up from Brook Street and turn into Tavern Street we see a large yellow-brick inn before us, which with pleasant surprise we recognize as the Great White Horse Inn, described in the guide books as "the scene of Mr. Pickwick's adventure with the lady of the curls," so real is the hold this humorous episode has taken on the public fancy. It has a slumbering look—a little mouldy, perhaps—and, save for fresh plastering, is almost as it was in the days of Mr. Pickwick. Here before us was the low doorway, with its two greenish pillars supporting the animal which gives the house its name. "Boz" calls it "this overgrown tavern," and it is clear that the young fellow, who had already known dire struggle, was overpowered by its spaciousness; yet its size is really smaller than the description implies.

The "insane cart-horse," too, is a pleasant exaggeration; for the poor animal is merely trotting along after the manner of his tribe. Within there was the hall leading to a courtyard, the latter very quaint. Here was the bar; a little "glass case" at one side, and all round abundance of recesses, entrances, "hutches," short stairs like companion ladders, with something like former galleries overhanging. The back of the house outside was marked with old framed work, and the whole covered in with glass. But improvements were in progress, and the house was very full; so from these ominous signs it is easy to forecast that by-and-by a large hotel will take the place of the good old Great White Horse. The inn claims antiquity, and is said to have received George II. nearly one hundred and sixty years ago, to say nothing of Nelson and Lady Hamilton.

Little steep stairs open here, there, and everywhere, one of which leads up to the "Assembly Room" on the first floor, or to the neighbouring chambers and passages described by Dickens. On the right and left are the coffee-rooms—long low chambers—and the beam running across shows clearly that in Pickwickian days one was divided into two rooms. He and his "followers"—good

word—however, were taken off to a "private room down a long dark passage"—short, it now seems to us—"into a large, badly furnished apartment," where they were to dine.

Mr. Pickwick, as we know, forgot his watch on the table of this dismal chamber when he was led off to bed by the chambermaid "through a multitude of winding tortuous passages." This shows that the double-bedded room must have been on the second floor, from the distance he had to travel when he descended to recover his watch. Precisely such winding detours had we to follow when we were led off to our room. The passages were contracted and narrow; at every few yards there was a descent of a couple of steps, or an ascent. Now a short stair of four or five steps would branch into two or three—fan-like—and lead off into as many passages. You almost brushed the walls on each side as you passed along. As I sat in my modest chamber I felt Pickwickian all over. How curious was it to find myself under this roof, of which I had read in boyhood—alas, how many years ago! With a sort of melancholy I thought of the genial author, as he was then—young, buoyant, and brilliant, full of exuberant fun, to whom the very twists and

passages of the house must have suggested the adventure. In the hall, the proprietor of the Great White Horse, eager to foster the legend as much as possible, has hung up a photograph of the actual chamber, which is inscribed "Mr. Pickwick's Room!" The arrangement, however, is a little faulty, and does not correspond with the text; for the beds are two brass ones, instead of the two four-posters with their dimity curtains, necessary for the action, which requires that one should be on each side of the door.

When Dickens was on one of his reading tours in 1861, we find him sojourning at the Angel at Bury St. Edmunds, and shortly after at the Great White Horse, Ipswich. As he sat in his room at the latter house, how his eyes must have turned back to the old Pickwickian days, five-and-twenty years before, when he was in the flush of his early success! But he seems to have been quite unaffected. Of the Angel, he writes: "Fancy this: last night about six, who should walk in but Elwin. He was exactly in his usual state, only more demonstrative than ever, and had been drawn in by some neighbours who were coming to the reading." This was the amiable Vicar of Booton—

the fast friend of Forster and one of Dickens's set. The Great White Horse he passes by altogether. In March, 1894, a gentleman found himself in Winchester, at Abbeygate, talking to a shopman who told him that his father had been for some years the owner of the Great White Horse. He remembered the young author of Pickwick, and was "quite clear that for some reason 'Boz' did not like the house. He did his best to ruin it, but instead, made the fortune of the place. But I can tell you a curious thing about it," he went on. "It was Dickens's own mistake about going into the wrong room—not Mr. Pickwick's. There is a sort of triangle on the top of the stairs, and there are two doors just alike, and he went in where some people were in bed, and they roared out at him and he bolted in confusion. The room is still called Mr. Pickwick's room, and is No. 16." This seems likely enough.

The faithful Sam, it will be recollected, on the morning after their arrival strolled for a walk down town. I followed in his footsteps through Fore Street on to "the wery 'dentical spot" where he met Job Trotter bending his steps towards St. Clement's. The fine old church is surrounded by a well-filled churchyard,

alongside of which runs a lane. The guide book boldly assures us that "at the bottom of the lane runs the celebrated passage in which Sam saw Job Trotter emerge from a green gate." Pickwick antiquarians are now anxious as to the whereabouts of this green gate, and we are assured that "several green gates are still to be seen hereabouts, but *the one pointed out* as being made famous by Boz is the last garden gate in the Churchyard, a few yards from Church Street." "Pointed out" is good. The door led into Mr. Nupkins' mansion, in front of which there was a garden, but now the place has been all built over. Speaking, however, as a fellow commentator, this hypothesis does not seem to me to "hold water," and certainly does not suit the text, which speaks of a venerable courtyard and a *cul de sac*, which I find straight before me, in the shape of the curious and dilapidated old Angel Inn, with its archway and court, from which there is no issue. Moreover, the existing green gates are mere posterns, whereas Mr. Nupkins' was a great gate with two doors, one of which, when opened, admitted Mr. Pickwick's sedan. On this occasion, too, the author insists particularly on "the identical courtyard," as he calls it. Wandering along Westgate

Street, a large building confronted me on which was inscribed, in huge characters, a truly Pickwickian name, "Trundle," on the house of a harness-maker. This surely must have greeted Dickens's eye also.

About an hour's journey away we came to another Pickwickian town, Bury St. Edmunds, in whose Market Square stands a goodly Pickwickian inn, the Angel. It is a solemn, rather imposing, and stately building, of a gloomy slate-colour, and of the nature of a family hotel. "And this," said Mr. Pickwick, looking up, "is the Angel!" Here it was that the worthy man was to encounter yet another adventure—the well-known scene in the garden of the ladies' boarding-school. The hotel has its yards and stabling behind it, which must have flourished in the old posting times. In this yard it was that Sam first met Job Trotter, who unfolded to Mr. Pickwick that his master was to carry off an heiress from the school, "a large old red-brick building just outside the town." It was called Westgate House. "You turn a little to the right when you get to the end of the town; it stands by itself some little distance off the high road, with the name on a brass plate on the gate." There was a large hall, and a handsome twisted

stair beyond. It was pleasing to find the genuine Dickensian interest that pervaded the town as to this point of the whereabouts of this school. We went to a chemist, who said that there *was* an actual Westgate House—the mayor's, I think—but that its "era" was too late for the legend. Indeed, he modestly added, that *his* house had some claims, but that these were based on his own theory. A policeman spoke of a West-end House—on the road that led into the town. I noted an antique High School for girls—a fine, old, red-brick thing with leaded panes—and a garden attached—the wall whereof was of a height suited to Mr. Pickwick's climbing powers. This was my selection. It must have struck Boz's eye as he entered the place. At the Westgate side of the town there were one or two houses and gardens that seemed to answer. But on the whole I would be for the High School. For the one in the story is described as being a good way off, in the country:—

"It was a fine dry night, but it was most uncommonly dark. Paths, hedges, fields, houses, and trees, were enveloped in one deep shade. The atmosphere was hot and sultry, the summer lightning quivered faintly on the verge of the

horizon, and was the only sight that varied the dull gloom in which everything was wrapped—sound there was none, except the distant barking of some restless house-dog.[1]

Returning to the Angel, there was lunch in the coffee-room, which the proprietor, in good old fashion, was partaking of. A gnarled old waiter was in attendance ; and it occurred to my friend Eugenius to consult him on the momentous subject.

"Pickwick, sir? Why, he knew all about it. Number eleven was Mr. Dickens's room."

The gnarled waiter presently said that "the proprietor could tell us everything." And so Eugenius applied to him. Oddly enough, his companion had been at school with one of "Boz's" sons. A most odd, quaint debate arose on the boarding-house, and on Pickwick's stay at the hotel. The host pronounced *ex cathedrâ* and without hesitation about the matter. The house was the one now called Southgate House, and was well known.

The power and vitality of this Pickwickian legend are extraordinary indeed. All day long

[1] In Rochester there is Eastgate House, which it has been contended was in Dickens's mind, and which he transferred to Ipswich.

we found people bewildered, as it were, by this faith, mixing up the author and his hero.

One of the most dramatic scenes in "Pickwick" is assuredly the encounter between the rival Eatanswill editors at the inn at Towcester. It was on Mr. Pickwick's return from his well-meant and fatiguing expedition to Birmingham, and though at the close of a story of enormous length, is conceived in the most spirited and unflagging spirit. I have always thought that the author could have gone on for a volume more. The travellers had come from Birmingham, and owing to the deluge of rain had determined to stop for the night at the Saracen's Head, Towcester—which is not far from Rugby. The inn was an old posting one—though the stables have since been altered, and indeed rebuilt, to suit the requirements of hunting men. It was a snug, comfortable place, and as the Pickwickians descended and were shown into "the Sun"—these quaint names for rooms still linger in a few old houses—we feel tempted to envy the party at their cosy dinner. The name, however, has been changed, even before the date of "Boz's" description, for, as Superintendent Norman informs me, it has become the

Pomfret Arms—as is shown by entries in a constable's old account book—the inn being described in the year 1830 as the Saracen's Head, and in the next year as the Pomfret Arms. "Boz," therefore, must have been trusting to his recollections of some seven or eight years before.

It will be recollected that "some demon of discord flying over the Saracen's Head, happened to behold Slurk established comfortably by the kitchen fire," and then prompted Bob Sawyer to suggest that *his* party should also adjourn to the kitchen, where the scene that follows, farcical as it is, is of the most natural and vivacious kind. The old kitchen of those days has long since become the bar and smoking-room, though there are some old people who "mind the time" when it was the kitchen, no doubt without any regard to Pickwickian tradition.

The "Markis" of Granby at Dorking has been found difficult, if not impossible, to identify. The White Horse has been claimed, but is too important and imposing a place to have been the former Mrs. Clarke's property, which was really only a public-house. Tradition, however, seems to have settled that the King's Head, which is far up in the town, was the house in question. It

has, however, no "tall post bearing a sign, on the opposite side of the road."

III.—London and about London.

The inns in and about London, Pickwickian and others, are full of dramatic interest and colour. As we stray past them, they seem to be inhabited by his characters, and his only. We see his old-fashioned figures standing on the steps, or snugly ensconced in the bar. The one that we regarded with most affection was the Old White Hart in the Borough. Alas! that we should say the *late* White Hart, for it has long since gone. It used to be a Sunday's recreation with us to wander off into the Borough and call up the old fancies. Everything favoured. Many will recall the time, some twenty years since, when the street was full of the old galleried inns. We "mind the time" when the Tabard itself still stood. Then came a gradual decay. The White Hart was given over to tenants, and you could see the squalid occupants walking along the gallery whence the landlady called to Sam below, or hanging their clothes on lines. A stray waggon or two was laid up in ordinary. But it had still the air

of an inn. The Pickwickian flavour of the place was extraordinary, and still remained, and no play-writer could have introduced his characters with more effect than did Dickens in this scene. Its last stage was complete desertion. Then one day began the demolition and "housebreaking." With a pang I saw the galleries and well-turned balustrades pulled away, and the dust of destruction arising. The contractors offered to dispose of one of the balusters to me for a sovereign.

The George and Vulture was Mr. Pickwick's favourite house, at which he always put up when he came to town—that is, after he had given up his Goswell Street apartments. We find him arriving in "very good old-fashioned and comfortable quarters," after his visit to Eatanswill—or rather to Ipswich. It has dull coloured walls of ground brick; beside it is the new Berlin Bank. The old inn is in a corner to the left. A little door leads at once into the coffee-room, as into a ship's cabin, and a little low stair like a companion ladder, confronting you, helps this association. There are the old "boxes" and stalls, and the coats and hats hung up round, and the city clerks busy at their lunch, "forty feeding like one." A small archway leads into the street beyond.

As regards the George and Vulture, "Boz" falls into a slight mistake. At one time he speaks of it as being situated in Sun Court; but this is on the opposite side of the street. At another time he describes it correctly as being in George Yard. At the present time we can hardly understand a gentleman of independent means, as it is called, coming to stay at, say, Ridler's, in Holborn, or even at the Bell, higher up. But then there were hardly any hotels of the present style. There were, of course, houses such as the Clarendon and Mivart's for "persons of quality." But, as I said, Mr. Pickwick seemed always very snug and "cosy" at the George and Vulture; he was indeed one of those genial, free-handed gentlemen who are sure to be taken care of at such places, and who are beloved of chambermaid and boots. It is hard to describe the curious feelings of the ardent Pickwickian as he wanders through these scenes. For the moment he is one of his followers —and Mr. Pickwick is his "revered leader." Everything seems to harmonize—the City seems sufficiently old-fashioned, and, in spite of the grand stone warehouses, but little altered. I wandered off as far eastwards as the Whitechapel Road in search of that coaching inn, the Bull,

whence Mr. Pickwick set forth for Ipswich. Vain was the search. There is indeed a Bull Tavern—recently erected, probably on the site of the old Bull, which was a regular coach office with a yard and archway.

It is difficult to recognize in its present guise that familiar Pickwickian inn, the Golden Cross, and its surroundings—then a "mouldy sort of establishment in a close neighbourhood." At that time it was almost faced by Northumberland House, now swept away. Not then existed the open space in front of the South Eastern Railway with its stately hotel, in lieu of which was the tumble-down Hungerford Market and "the footbridge." Charing Cross is now a brilliant animated centre, where the tide of traffic runs strongest. David Copperfield's small bedchamber "smelt like a hackney coach, and was shut up like a family vault," so it, we may suppose, was over the stables, in the yard whence the coach started. This yard has been now made into offices, and the Golden Cross itself looks a comfortable and imposing place enough. "Boz" had clearly a fancy for it. He started his long line of fictions from this house, and the first adventure in "Pickwick" occurred at the Golden Cross. We learn, also,

that the statue of Charles I. was the centre of a hackney coach stand.

A few years ago we still had our White Horse Cellars in Piccadilly. The familiar animal himself "ramped it"—like his brother at Ipswich—well over the pavement. There were the steps up, and the sanded floor, and the crudely furnished rooms, one on each side of the door. Below there was the door leading to the subterranean regions. This was much its aspect in the old Pickwickian days; it was used as a parcel office. Then came the coach revival, and up to some four or five years ago it was a cheerful sight towards six o'clock to see the coaches driving up, and hear the horns winding out, afar off.

It has been stated by Dickens's eldest son, in a paper on Pickwickian localities, that this was not the original White Horse Cellars of Pickwickian times, which was situated on the opposite side, at the corner of Arlington Street. I am inclined to doubt this, as in the old prints the departing coach is shown drawn up at the door, the horses' heads are turned to the left towards Knightsbridge, just as they would be at present. The Pickwickians arrived at half-past seven in the morning. There is an odd picture of the hawkers, newspaper

vendors, orange-women, Jews, with "fifty-bladed penknives." Passengers were supposed to buy pocket-books, watch-guards, toasting-forks (!), pencil-cases, and sponges. There were some seven or eight porters to "fling themselves" on the luggage. The passengers waited in the "Travellers' Room." It is the right-hand parlour into which "an aspiring kitchen fireplace appears to have walked." It was at the "White Horse Cellars," not "Cellar," as it was so often styled, that the diverting and admirably drawn character Dowler was first introduced.

We enter that curious, old-fashioned, and somewhat mouldering quarter of London, the Adelphi—that once admired work of the brothers Adam—to look for Osborne's Hotel. It is the corner house at the back of the terrace. Osborne has long gone, though his name will be cherished. As we look at this unassuming, rather grimed hostelry, it strikes us how exactly suited it is to the scene "Boz" described; it is just the house which a family coming from the country would choose—comfortable, snug, retired. An excellent scene that of the joyous dinner—Wardle and his charming girls, the amiable Mr. Pickwick, the fat boy, and the sudden appearance of Snodgrass from the inner room.

When Dickens was a boy—and an unhappy boyhood his was—he used to resort to a little riverside tavern close to the Adelphi arches, which was known as the Fox under the Hill. It was an almost picturesque shanty, and you could look down on it from the Adelphi Terrace or from the "gallery" at the bottom of the next street. Its tarnished signboard could be read as you looked. It seemed a smuggling, disreputable sort of haunt enough. It lingered on, however, until a very few years ago, when it was swept away to make room for the monster buildings on the Salisbury Estate. When Mr. Roker was fondly recalling his lost friend Tom Martin, he said it seemed but yesterday that the deceased "had whipped the coal-heaver, down at the Fox under the Hill, by the wharf there."

Hampstead also has been kindled by "Boz's" touch, and is not without Pickwickian flavours. On the crest of the hill is still found the old "Jack Straw's Castle"—whither he and his trusty friend Forster rode out so often—to have that "shoemakers' holiday" in which both so delighted—an old-fashioned place, quaint enough for its name. Once I stayed a week there—wandering aimlessly among the lanes and terraces of the

inviting old suburb. It was curious to look from the windows and note the carts and "shays," and pedestrians generally.

Pursuing our interesting search, we come to the rustic-looking "The Spaniards Inn," the scene of festivity on the occasion of Mrs. Bardell and party's visit to Hampstead. The ladies had found "a stage" in Goswell Street, which, of course, started from the Angel at the top. Mr. Pickwick may be thus said to have lived at Islington and found his way out to Hampstead to "trace to their source the mighty ponds" of the place. The Spaniards is an antique wayside house of refreshment, picturesque in its irregularity, rustic to a degree, and overgrown with abundant foliage and creepers. Behind there are pleasing tea-gardens, laid out in a very informal way, with arbours and bowers. Indeed, it might be fifty miles away from town; though it can be reached in a walk of three-quarters of an hour, it seems the most far-off of any of the suburbs. We can here join cordially in Mrs. Rogers's sentiment, "How sweet the country is, to be sure!" I never pass it without calling up the scene—the hackney coach at the gate—Mrs. Bardell and her friends in one of the arbours, and Mr. Jackson, of Dodson and Fogg's, advancing. But

why did he take the trouble of driving out to such a distance? The arrest could have been contrived much more comfortably in the lady's own house at Goswell Street, which was not very far from the Fleet. But here we have Dickens's wonderful instinct for the fashions after which events are conducted in real life, and which are not always made to appear natural or logical. Jackson had secured the officer, and when he found the lady absent, followed the legal course in going after her. He no doubt felt, too, that she could be brought more readily to the prison from a public place like The Spaniards than from the sanctuary of her own house, where her suspicions would be aroused. The whole scene is perfect in its realism, and dramatic too, considering the mean and prosaic elements.

BACKGROUNDS AND SCENERY.

EPPING FOREST was one of the rural districts that fascinated Dickens, and it seemed to have furnished him with the "note" for his Barnaby. He could, of course, have selected some other locality in the suburbs. But such a selection would have made the story different from what it is. The locality clearly influenced him, and certainly suggested and inspired many of the incidents: the Maypole, the march of the insurgents, the destruction of the Warren, all seemed to need the background of the forest. Once he had chosen a spot that he liked, he could rely on it to be useful in this way.

In 1841, when he was writing the story, he wrote to his friend Forster:—

"Chigwell, my dear fellow, is the greatest place in the world. Name your day for going. Such a delicious old inn, facing the church—such a lovely

ride—such forest scenery—such an out-of-the-way rural place—such a sexton! I say again, name your day."

It has not much changed since that description was written. The village is charming with its old wooden houses and bowed windows; the old Maypole Inn remains much as it was, with its gables and signboard, but is known as the "King's Head:" "an old building, with more gable-ends than a lazy man would care to count on a sunny day; huge zig-zag chimneys, out of which it seemed as though even smoke could not choose but come in more than naturally fantastic shapes, imparted to it in its tortuous progress; and vast stables, gloomy, ruinous, and empty. The place was said to have been built in the days of King Henry VIII.; and there was a legend, not only that Queen Elizabeth had slept there one night while upon a hunting excursion, to wit in a certain oak-panelled room with a deep bay window, but that next morning, while standing on a mounting-block before the door with one foot in the stirrup, the virgin monarch had then and there boxed and cuffed an unlucky page for some neglect of duty. The 'Maypole' was really an old house—a very old house; perhaps as old as it claimed to be, and

perhaps older, which will sometimes happen with houses of an uncertain age, as with ladies of a certain age. Its windows were old diamond-pane lattices; its floors were sunken and uneven; its ceilings blackened by the hand of Time, and heavy with massive beams."

He took great pains to inspire his friend George Cattermole, the artist, with the due feeling of the story. He was particularly anxious about the locksmith's house, "which I think will make a good subject, and one you will like. If you put an apprentice in (Simon Tappertit), show nothing more than his paper cap, etc. I may as well say he is very short." Hablot Browne was the co-illustrator, and the author took pains that the two artists should not contradict each other. "Then, my boy, turn your thoughts to the outside of the Warren"—Haredale's house—a name that was suggested to Dickens by the Warrens, a thick wood which lies to the north-east of Chigwell. It is evident, however, that Mr. Haredale's house was only a walk say of ten minutes or so from the Maypole, as we can see by the short time Dolly took to trip it; whereas the Warrens is three or four miles away. There is a house called Debden close to Chigwell which suits the distances.

It is an illustration of the fashion in which our author loved to confound or "mix up" his localities, so to produce a better dramatic effect, that he should describe the Maypole as having once been honoured by Queen Elizabeth sleeping there "while upon a hunting excursion, to wit, in a certain oak-panelled room with a deep bay window." This is really a description of Queen Elizabeth's hunting lodge at Chingford—now happily in good preservation, a well-gabled, picturesque old structure. It is likely that it gave him his general idea of the Warrens itself.

The locksmith's house is described minutely and with many picturesque touches. It was "in the venerable suburb—it was a suburb once—of Clerkenwell, towards that part of its confines which is nearest the Charter House, and in one of those cool, shady streets, of which a few, widely scattered and dispersed, yet remain . . . each tenement quietly vegetating." At this time there were gardens to many of the houses, and trees by the pavement side—such as now to be seen at Islington; "fields were nigh at hand though, through which the New River took its winding course." The locksmith's house—The Golden Key—had "a conical roof going up into a peak over its

garret window of four small panes of glass, like a cocked hat on the head of an elderly gentleman with one eye. It was not built of brick or lofty stone, but of wood and plaster: no one window matched the other.

"People who went in and out didn't go up a flight of steps to it, or walk easily in upon a level with the street, but dived down three steep stairs as into a cellar. Behind this shop was a wainscoted parlour, looking first into a paved yard, and beyond that again into a little terrace garden, raised some feet above it. Any stranger would have supposed that this wainscoted parlour was cut off from all the world . . . as weighing and pondering in their minds whether the upper rooms were only approachable by ladders from without; never suspecting that two of the most unassuming and unlikely doors in existence—supposed to have been doors of closets—opened out of this room—each without the smallest preparation or so much as the smallest inch of passage—upon two dark winding flights of stairs, the one upwards, the other downwards, which were the sole means of communication between the chamber and the other portions of the house."

This elaborate and minute description suggests an interesting speculation—viz. as to what its value

is as a contribution to the effect of the story. Does the character of the locksmith and his family gain, say, by the description of the concealed stair, and the mysterious method of communication with the rest of the house? This compactness or compression might certainly have its effect on the household: the worthy locksmith is more under his wife's eye, for "nagging" purposes, and there is a general suggestion of cosiness and comfort. It may, indeed, be said that had a house of another pattern been described, there would have been a loss of effect. To all his buildings and furniture Dickens was thus at pains to supply a sort of character and vitality. Such attract the reader—arrest his attention.

It may be added here that Sir John Chester was no doubt intended as a copy of Lord Chesterfield. Why his rooms were chosen in the Temple—Paper Buildings—is not very clear, unless it was that they had come from his wife's father, who "stood high at the bar, and had a great name and great wealth." Our author had a strange fancy for the Temple, and often describes its charm. "The drowsiness in its courts, and dreamy dulness in its trees and gardens: those who pace its lanes and squares may yet hear the echoes of their footsteps

on the sounding stones, and read upon its gates, 'Who enter here, leave none behind.' There is yet in the Temple something—a clerkly, monkish atmosphere—which public officers of law have not disturbed, and even legal firms have failed to scare away." How admirably the note of the place is here struck. It is exactly the feeling of the visitor who comes fresh from noisy Fleet Street. We wonder why Sir John took his breakfast "in the broad old-fashioned window-seat of the roomy chamber where he lounged very much at his ease." One might fancy it would be uncomfortable thus to be seated in a window, and with one's back to a window.

One of the rioters in "Barnaby Rudge" was called Stagg. It is curious that there should have been a poet of his name—one John Stagg, known as the "Blind Poet of Cumberland," who issued at Manchester in 1821 the "Cumbrian Minstrel; or, Tales Legendary, Gothic, and Romantic." This may have come under Dickens's notice. The Stagg of the fiction frequented one of Dickens's most effective inns, The Boot—described as "a low house of entertainment, and situated in the fields at the back of the Foundling Hospital—it stood at some distance from any high road, and was approachable

only by a dark and narrow lane." Not long ago, being in this very quarter, I found myself at the end of Cromer Street, where it touches Judd Street, in front of a modern public-house, with the sign of a gilded boot at the top, and "The Boot" in large letters displayed across it. I made some inquiries, and was informed that an old mouldering tavern of the name had long been in the place, which the present landlord, who knew the story and took pride in the associations of his inn, had rebuilt.

This suggests Kingsgate Street, though, perhaps, not its actual locality, which is out of Holborn, opposite Queen Street. Mention Kingsgate Street to the average "Boz" reader, and he will be ready with twinkling eye to reply, "Oh, Mrs. Gamp, of course!" It is exactly the street in which such a professional lady would reside; there is a sort of mean huckstering tone about it, with its shabby, struggling shops, and a general grimed, dirty look. The lady lived on the first floor, which was described in a truly humorous passage: "She was easily assailed at night by pebbles, walking-sticks, and fragments of tobacco pipes, all much more efficacious than the street door knocker, which was so constructed as to wake the street with ease, and

even to spread the alarm of fire in Holborn, without making the smallest impression on the premises to which it was addressed." A delightful specimen of Dickens's humorous fancy which brings the whole scene before us, and at the same time vividly touches the nurse's peculiar position. Pol Sweedlepipes also lived here, "next door but one to the celebrated mutton-pie shop, and directly opposite the original cat's-meat warehouse," evidences of the callings pursued here. Mr. Allbut has discovered that forty years since there was living at the corner of Holborn a barber and bird fancier named Patterson; and at this moment there are several barbers' poles visible.

The old Fleet Street taverns, such as "The Cock," and the "Cheshire Cheese," have somehow escaped the pen of our author. Yet they make a picturesque element in an old time story. Darnay after his trial went to dine with Sidney Carton, who, "drawing his arm through his own, took him down Ludgate Hill to Fleet Street, and so up a covered way into a tavern." This has been supposed to point to the "Cheshire Cheese," but it was surely "The Cock" that was intended. There is not strictly "a covered way" to the "Cheese," though you pass through an opening made in the

houses. But to the Cock there was literally a long covered way from Fleet Street "into the tavern." The good old "Cock" has passed away. Through how many a pleasant evening have I sat in its snug stalls, entertaining such melancholy dreams as did once the author of "Will Waterproof"!

Thirty, or even twenty years ago, Calais was a not unpicturesque place, with its gray walls, ditches, drawbridges, gates, and old houses. I have spent many a pleasant day there, wandering about: from the old church, built by the English, and whose weather-beaten tower has been described by Mr. Ruskin, to the old Hotel de Guise, where Henry VIII. lodged when on his way to the Field of the Cloth of Gold. One might lament the general levelling and sweeping away that has since taken place: above all, the destruction of the pleasant Dessin's Hotel, with its fine gardens. The arrival at midnight in these old times had something romantic: the packet then came up to the town, close to the station, whose illuminated clock glared out through the long night. Some struggled up to the friendly station, while others sought shelter at Dessin's.

Dickens, in "Little Dorrit," has happily touched "the note" of the place. "A low-lying place," he

writes, and "a low-spirited place Calais was with the tide ebbing out towards low-water mark. . . . The meagre lighthouse, all in white, haunting the sea-board . . . the long rows of gaunt black piles, slimy and wet. Every wave-dashed, storm-beaten object was so low and so little under the broad grey sky . . . that the wonder was there was any Calais left, and that its low gates, and low walls, and low ditches, and low sandhills, and low ramparts, and flat streets had not yielded long ago to the undermining and besieging sea." This is exactly what would strike a shrewd observer: though an ordinary person might be indistinctly conscious of some such impression, he would be puzzled to give it form. In this "low-lying" air and tone is really the chief significance of the place, and it induces a strange feeling of sadness. As the boat draws near, we see the copper-coloured town, the clustered houses on the flat shore, the sad-coloured roofs and steeples.

"After stepping among oozy piles and planks," the author goes on, "stumbling up wet steps, the passengers entered on their comfortless peregrinations along the pier, where all the French vagabonds and English outlaws in the town (half the population) attended. After being minutely inspected

by all the English, and claimed and reclaimed by all the French, they were at last free to enter the streets." I recall a day at Calais some forty years ago, when I was persecuted and followed by this riff-raff, seized on by a commissionaire and led off to the British Consul. The feeling oneself in this little walled town was a curious one ; it was a weary day enough. "There was a tranquil air in the town after the turbulence of the Channel, and its dulness in the comparison was agreeable. He (Clenman) met new groups of his countrymen who had all a straggling . . . air of lounging out a limited round, day after day, which strongly reminded him of the Marshalsea." Then a little solemn retired street—dignified enough, but quite deserted—the houses wherein seem sound and comfortable. These places induce an agreeable melancholy. Clenman came to "a dead sort of house, with a dead wall over the way. The door jarred open on a dead sort of spring . . . he entered a dull yard, soon brought to a close at the back by another dead wall, where an attempt had been made to train some creeping shrubs, which were dead, and to make a little fountain, which was dry." Who does not know this sort of weary French house, in the back street of a decayed town ?

PILGRIMAGES AND WANDERINGS.

THE peregrinations of the interesting "Little Nell" and her grandfather have a sort of fascination; and it is curious that in the general tastes for tracing out Boz's localities no one has yet thought of tracking the hapless travellers from place to place and of identifying the localities. Dickens has not only ennobled, as he generalized, various types of living character, but he has cast the same spell over the places where they lived and moved. Few of these ramblings offer so dramatic an interest as those of Little Nell and her companion; and yet none are more difficult to trace, as our author, deserting his usual practice, seemed to aim at a poetical indistinctness and generality. Stranger still, though he does not name a single place, yet, with surprising art, he contrives to impart an air of familiarity.

Where was the "Old Curiosity Shop"? In various works the house itself has been confidently settled on and named. In Portsmouth Street, near Clare Market, for the past ten or fifteen years, a tumble-down little shop devoted to waste paper has proclaimed itself "The Old Curiosity Shop—immortalized by Charles Dickens," in a regular inscription across the front; and numbers of American and other travellers inquire after it, come to see it, gaze on it reverentially, and interview the owner. I recall the very year when the place was first introduced to notice, when the owner of the place told his story to the reporters, describing how the author used to come there, which he might have done. Various members of the family have, however, assured me that the whole theory is imaginary, and that they had never heard of such a place. Master Humphrey described his nightly walks, in one of which he had "roamed into the city" and first met Nell. She begged to be directed to a certain street at a considerable distance away, indeed, "in *quite another quarter of the town*." This "quite another quarter of the town" was not likely to have been anything on that side of the City, or near the Tower; the words seem to point to something in the West

End. Old Humphrey, after leaving the shop, mentions his meeting "with a few stragglers from the theatres," which shows that he was not far from the Strand. It was stated by Mr. Allbut that a lady was assured by Boz himself that his Old Curiosity Shop was situated just behind the National Gallery, in Green Street, on the ground where the baths now stand. I think that on the whole this is not unlikely to be the true situation.

Next as to the course of their weary pilgrimage. They started, on a June morning at daybreak, passing church towers and steeples, of which there were plenty to note at the beginning of the journey, such as St. Martin's, St. Anne's, Soho, and the heavy structure between Oxford Street and Endell Street. "Before they had penetrated very far into the labyrinth of men's abodes which lay between them and the outskirts"—this seems to point to Tottenham Court Road—"they came to the haunts of commerce" and great traffic, thence to a "straggling neighbourhood full of mean houses," lodgings, and hucksters' shops, and poor streets. This may have been Islington, where are plenty of shabby terraces, "where faded gentility essayed to make its last stand," an impression left

to this hour by the rows of poorish houses, such as Colebrooke Row, and others—with plenty of "small dissenting chapels and new churches." Here were brickfields and gardens paled with staves of old casks, to which succeeded the few country gardens, and odd cottages, tea-gardens, and a bowling-green. On the other hand, the description may equally apply to the route along Oxford Street to Hyde Park Corner, thence along the Edgware Road on to Finchley.

By breakfast time—we may suppose about eight or nine o'clock—they were on a hill, whence they could see all London lying at their feet and make out St. Paul's. This was certainly Hampstead or Highgate, for the child said it was "too near" London for them to delay. They walked on that day through the open country, and slept at a cottage. They travelled all next day, and towards evening, about five o'clock, halted at a "cluster of labourers' huts," where they were treated kindly, and after pursuing their road a short distance obtained "a lift" in a cart, which carried them on nearly five miles to the next place. Here they were set down; and the driver, pointing to some trees at a very short distance before them,

said that the town lay there, and that they had better take the path which led through the churchyard. A pretty picture awaited them here. The sun was setting when they reached the wicket gate. The church was old and grey, with ivy clinging to the walls and around the porch. The clergyman's horse, "stumbling with a dull blunt sound among the graves," was cropping the grass. It was here they met Codlin and Short, the "Punch and Judy men." They obtained a lodging at the public-house, and next morning found that it was "a very quiet place, as such a place should be," save for the cawing of the rooks who had built their nests among the branches of some tall old trees.

I have always fancied that this was intended for Bushey—Bushey would be about two days' march from London for an old man and a child—that most tranquil and inviting of roadside villages or towns, to which Mr. Herkomer has since lent a sort of celebrity. Boz has caught its tone and placid charm. The first time I saw it, it struck me as exactly like one of Cattermole's sketches, and no description could give an idea of the old church and its spreading churchyard, and the tall trees with the rooks.

After leaving Bushey—as we take the place to be—the travellers marched for two days in company with the Punch and Judy folk. We may perhaps wonder a little how a child and a very old man could have found strength to walk for five days in succession from morning till night, covering, as we may suppose, from fifteen to twenty miles a day. At a tolerably brisk pace—for we are assured that Codlin and his friend were anxious to "push on" so as to arrive in time for the races—they must have walked at the rate of at least two miles an hour. Boz, however, himself a passionate lover of walking—and we ourselves have found it hard to keep up with him—would endow his characters with almost superhuman powers in this direction: witness that wonderful Pickwickian walk after the marriage at Dingley Dell. On the evening of the fourth day they drew near the town where the races were to be held. From the general excitement and the importance of the preparations and the vast crowds that were hurrying to the scene, it is plain that it was an important festival held at a large town. "Here all was tumult and confusion; the streets were filled with throngs of people, many strangers were there, the church bells rang out their noisy

peals, and flags streamed from windows and house-tops. In the large inns waiters flitted to and fro, horses clattered on the uneven stones, carriage-steps fell rattling down, and *sickening smells* from many dinners"—an odd touch—"came upon the sense. The public-houses were full; vagabond groups gathered round the doors." All which shows that it was a large important town, and that the races were an event of no less importance. The town was certainly Warwick—the racecourse is described as being outside, "on an open heath, situated on an eminence a full mile distant from the furthest bounds." This is certainly the situation of the course, which is now nearly two miles from the station.

After their escape from the racecourse the pair came to a road through which they took their way. Here it was arched over with trees, and there was a finger-post which announced the way to a village that was three miles farther on—as I guess—on the Coventry Road. Here was the green and the school and the schoolmaster, who entertained them next night and the following one, thus completing the seventh day of the journey. On the next morning, Nell and her charge set forth on the "main road" which took a "winding course,"

until towards evening they reached a common; there they encountered the celebrated Mrs. Jarley and her caravans, in which they pursued their march, until about midnight they approached a town and turned into a "piece of waste ground that lay just within the old town gate." We find the author later, when he was describing the beautiful church at Tong, making allusion to some martyred lady whose remains had been collected in the night from four of the city gates. Though he does not name the city, it shows that Coventry was in his thoughts, as it is stated in the old guides that four of its many gates were standing in the early part of this century.

This place, then, I believe was Coventry, about twelve miles from Warwick. Nell, wandering about the place at night, came to this old gateway, with its low archway, very black and dark. It had an empty niche, once filled by "some old statue," and here she saw Quilp pass by. The notion of the gate impressed him so picturesquely that he was determined to bring it in even by "head and shoulders." He wrote to his illustrator, Cattermole, or "Kittenmoles," that he had devised this subject "of an old gateway, which I had put in expressly with a view to your illustrious pencil."

By some accident it, however, fell into Phiz's hand, and the sketch is a very dramatic and pleasing one.

In further proof of the place being Coventry we find that when the single gentleman had discovered, through Codlin and Short, where Nelly and her grandfather were, viz. with Mrs. Jarley, he set off post with four horses at night, and calculated that they would reach the town in good time the following morning. The distance was said to be about sixty or seventy miles. Coventry, by rail, is not much farther away than this.

The town is described as a "pretty large one, with an open square, where was the Town Hall, a clock-tower, and a weathercock. There were houses of stone, houses of red brick, houses of lath-and-plaster, and houses of wood, many of them very old, with withered faces carved upon the beams, and staring down into the street. These had very little winking windows and low arched doors, and in some of the narrower ways quite overhung the pavement. The streets were very clean, very sunny, very empty, and very dull." There were the two inns, and an almshouse, and "nothing seemed going on but the clocks." They appear to have remained here for some time, that is, for perhaps a couple of weeks.

We all know the scenes that followed—the old man's craze for gambling, and his rescue by Nell. As their escape is described, we have some of the touches which help to identify the town, "the straight streets, the narrow, crooked outskirts," the steep hill crowned by the old grey castle, the town sleeping below, the far-off river, and the distant hills.

During the night they walked on, until towards break of day, when they lay down to sleep on the bank by a canal—the Warwickshire and Birmingham canal. It was here that a friendly fellow took them into his canal-boat. He asked them whence they were coming, when she gave the name of the village where their friend the schoolmaster dwelt. They were going, she said, "to a certain town in the west." He said he was going the same way. The country through which the canal passed is described as a rich one, with running streams and wooded hills, cultivated lands and sheltered farms. More than once a distant town, probably Dudley, with great church-towers looming through its smoke, and high factories or workshops, would come into view. In the canal-boat they spent the whole day, the night and the day next following. By evening they were approaching a great town.

The water had grown thick and dirty, the paths of coal-ash, and huts of staring brick, smoke from furnaces, scattered streets and houses, clustered roofs, and pile of buildings trembling with the working of engines, the clank of beating upon iron, the roar of busy streets and noisy crowds, black vapour, tall chimneys, all denoted a great manufacturing town—Birmingham surely. The boat floats into a wharf on the Birmingham Canal.

At Birmingham they got shelter for the night by a furnace-fire, and when they were about to depart were told that it would be long before they could get clear of the smoke and factories. "The road lies through miles and miles, all lighted up by fires," a strange black road. And so it proved to be "two days and a night," as she thought it had been said. On every side were chimneys and mounds of ashes, and engines. They met with bands of labourers, who were in revolt, burning and plundering. Two days and a night were thus spent, when they came to "a busy town," which was Wolverhampton.

Here they met their old friend the schoolmaster, who was trudging along to take up his new charge.

After a delay of a day or so, they set off in a waggon, which took two nights and a day to reach its destination. They came to "a large town," where they spent a night. They passed a large church, and in the streets were a number of old houses, built of a kind of earth and plaster crossed and recrossed in a great many directions with black beams, which gave them a remarkable and very ancient look. The doors, too, were arched and low, some with oaken portals and quaint benches. The windows were latticed with little diamond frames.

Bridgenorth, a quaint and delightful old town, which is about a dozen miles or so from Wolverhampton, answers this description. It is full of these old framed houses. Dickens, in November, 1838, was on his travels with "Phiz," going over the ground, and thus getting inspiration. He visited Warwick Castle, Wolverhampton, Leamington, but was prevented passing by Bridgenorth as he intended to do. But he spent a night at Shrewsbury, and his description is probably of that town, though it is rather out of Nell's course. He was evidently impressed by the terrible Black Country between Wolverhampton and Birmingham, "as he passed through miles of cinder paths and blazing

furnaces, and roaring steam-engines, and such a mass of dirt and gloom and misery as I never before witnessed." "You will recognize," wrote the author to Forster, "a description of the road we travelled between Birmingham and Wolverhampton; but I had conceived it so well in my mind that the execution does not please me so well as I expected. I shall be curious to know whether you think there's anything in the notion of the man and his furnace fire." From this he expanded his picture. From Bridgenorth to Shifnal is about ten miles—from Shrewsbury about sixteen. From Shifnal there was a short stretch to Tong, the exquisite village where Nell ended her wanderings for ever.

It will be recollected that the single gentleman, having got on the track of the fugitives, set off for Coventry. But the single gentleman made a second journey to the north-west with Mr. Garland and Kit, which was a much longer one than the first. They started in the morning, travelled the whole day, the next night and following day until night again. The roads were bad, and the weather worse, and there were delays for horses, etc. Thus, supposing they got over from sixty to seventy miles in the day, they would have covered about 180 miles.

There are many indications in Dickens's letters of the excitement and feverish sorrow with which he wrote the close of Nell's pilgrimage. He shrank, as it were, from the last offices. Nothing shows this more curiously than the sort of incoherence with which the rather trite incidents of the journey down to Tong are recorded. But he was writing with the tragic issue before him, and it pressed on him. "As it grew dark, Kit," we are told, "could descry objects enough at such times, but none correctly; now a tall church spire appeared in view which presently became a tree, a barn, a shadow. Now there were horsemen, foot-passengers, carriages going on before, or meeting them in narrow ways, which when they were close on them turned to shadows too. A wall, a ruin, a sturdy gable-end would rise up on the road, and when they were plunging headlong at it would be a road itself—strange turnings too, bridges and sheets of water appeared to start up, here and there making the way very doubtful and uncertain; yet there they were on the same bare road, and these things like the others, as they were passed, turned into dim illusions." It was the prosaic Kit who was affected in this extraordinary way. What was the meaning of it is hard to say, unless it be that the

author, who was so poignantly affected by the impending fate of "the child," was endeavouring to portray his own emotions, though Mr. Lewes would certainly have insisted that these were "hallucinations." It is, however, picturesque enough, and prepares the reader for what is to follow.

When they were nearly at the end of their journey they must have touched Shifnal, for we are told they had to take a cross-country road which brought them towards midnight to Tong, a picturesque little place, which had attracted the artist Cattermole, and whose church he sketched in his most graceful fashion. Everyone will recall these drawings of the old church and its interior.

Tong, we are told, is celebrated for its church and castle. The former is "a perfect mausoleum of the Vernon family," and a fine example of Early Perpendicular, with its central octagonal tower and golden chapel. Nothing can be more richly beautiful than its rood screen and carving. When the schoolmaster and his two companions approached the place, "they admired everything; the old grey porch, the mullioned windows, the venerable grave-stones dotting the green churchyard, the ancient tower, the very weathercock;

the brown thatched roofs of cottage, barn, and homestead peeping from among the trees, the stream that rippled by the distant water-mill, the blue Welsh mountains far away. It was a very aged, shabby place; the church had once a convent or monastery attached, for arches in ruins, remains of oriel windows and fragments of blackened walls were yet standing. Hard by these gravestones, and forming part of the ruins, were two small dwellings with sunken windows and oaken doors, hastening to decay, empty and desolate." One of these was the dwelling which the schoolmaster allotted to Nell and her father, the other was his own. They have since fallen into complete ruin, but I am told there are still some remains to be seen.

From the Vicar of Tong I received lately some interesting details as to the present conditions of the pretty village. Like all other localities which Dickens has beautified with his magic touch, the place has received substantial benefit, and is well taken care of on account of its celebrity. It is thus that he and Sir Walter Scott, besides being story-tellers, have done the most substantial service to such places, which, as it were, owe their continued existence to the writers. They are the "Old

Mortality" of fictions; and of no other writers can this be said.

Dickens was completely permeated with the flavour of the old place; and indeed it is one of the most complete and picturesque of his many happy descriptions. We seem to see every stone. Above all, he caught the sad tone of solitude and desertion which he felt was in such exact keeping with the impending fate of his little heroine. That he had visited it and been infinitely attracted by it is certain, for he told Archdeacon Lloyd that he had been staying at Shrewsbury and had come over to see the place. So the Vicar of Tong informs me. Some years ago a painstaking visitor, the novel in his hand, compared every item with the description, and his conclusion was that it was exact in every particular. Dickens assured his coadjutor that none of his artists had given him such satisfaction or caught his idea more perfectly than Cattermole had done. He, indeed, had caught the whole pathos of the closing scenes, and his delicate sketches added much to the popularity of the story. He took extraordinary pains. Some time ago Messrs. Sotheby sold at their rooms some of his trial sketches, such as "The first ideas of the 'Maypole Inn'"; "The

Four-post Bedstead in the 'Maypole'"; "Mr. Chester at the 'Maypole'" (this sketch represents Mr. Chester looking out of a bay-window, but this was afterwards altered in the published version); "Rough designs of fireplace in 'Maypole Inn'"; "Exterior of the Church"; "Interior of ditto"; "Little Nell Sleeping"; "Quilp's Wharf" (two sketches); and various designs for clocks, chairs, figures, etc., including initialed proof of the frontispiece of the "Old Curiosity Shop," and a coloured drawing of "Little Nell." The "Curiosity Shop" was printed in "raised letters" for the entertainment of the blind, and the author in 1869 forwarded two copies to the institution in St. George's Fields.

Another spirited and dramatic passage in Dickens's writings is the memorable pursuit by Bucket and Esther Summerson of the unhappy Lady Deadlock, in "Bleak House." It is easy to see that it was written in almost the living, breathless excitement of an actual chase—the author himself seemed to be in the carriage flying through the night. The late George Lewes, as we have seen, declared that Dickens "had hallucinations"; and in one sense it might be true, for no one can write in the right spirit unless he be in a sort of

"exalted" state—when the figures will move before him, act and speak, as though he were looking on at some scene in real life. In these scenes of hurried movement Dickens was admirable, but he has done nothing better than this, whch must certainly have been written at one "heat," or, at most, in a couple of "heats." He had, perhaps, before his eyes a headlong scene of the same kind —Turpin's ride to York, in his friend Ainsworth's "Rookwood." The latter sat on through the whole night, riding with the highwayman, and, with him, rode into York with the dawn of day. In his enthusiasm and haste, however, our author made his characters perform prodigies of movement that were well nigh superhuman.

It might puzzle us to identify the town residence of his Lady Dedlock, whence she took her flight. It was a "dull street," in which the two rows of houses seemed to have "stared each other into stone," rather than to have been built of that material. The doors and windows wore "black paint and dust." There was twisted ironwork at the doors, extinguishers—loops for the old oil lamps—and even an oil lamp itself. Where is there a street in London with "half a dozen stone mansions"? In Berkeley Square there were then

some three or four together, with the fine twisted ironwork and extinguishers, so it may have been that, after his favourite method, he disguised the place. But the house is likely enough to have been in Eaton Place, which has this gloomy "stony" air, and, though not of stone, has the look of stone.

Esther was roused at midnight and taken by Mr. Bucket to various places—to a police office (at Bow Street, perhaps) "at half-past one in the morning," and which was close to their lodgings in town. Then they started in a chaise for a waterside place, which, from the description, seemed to be in the St. Katherine's Dock quarter; for here were swing bridges and masts, docks and basins, and a little slimy turning; she says also that "they crossed and re-crossed the river," why it is not clear. They took the northern road out of London, past Barnet, stopping often, Bucket entering the public-houses to make inquiries, and ordering drinks and putting questions. "Between five and six o'clock," we are told, they were close to St. Albans. Yet they could hardly have left before three o'clock. All that stopping at public-houses, getting down to question, etc., must have taken nearly an hour, so that there was scarcely about an hour and a half to get over the distance

between London and St. Albans—a prodigy of good going.

But now we find a still more astonishing thing. The fugitive had left her home on the same night that they did, at about four or five o'clock, and by the time the pursuers had arrived near St. Albans they ascertained that she was on before them, "having passed through here on foot *this evening about eight o'clock*." This was a wonderful performance for a woman—a walk from Berkeley Square to St. Albans performed in two or three hours. It is odd, too, that Bucket should use the words "this evening" when he was speaking at five or six o'clock in the morning.

"The day was now breaking," and after visiting Bleak House, and making further investigations, they set off again, pursuing their journey. They seem to have travelled the whole day, for "the sleet fell all that day unceasingly." By evening they had stopped at an inn, where Esther fainted. Then Bucket announced that he had lost the track, having, as we know, followed the wrong woman. Lady Dedlock had changed clothes with another. They determined to return. It was three o'clock next morning before they began to draw near to town. This again seems confused, as the time

for the return journey hardly fits with the outgoing one. By "three or four o'clock we got to Islington." "We stopped in a High Street" of that place, of course, and, strange to say, at that hour found a hackney coach on the stand. They drove about "the narrowest and worst streets in London," and at last came to Chancery Lane as "the clocks were striking half-past five," and here, by a marvellous coincidence, they met the lover, Woodcourt. Then came the visit to Joe's "burying ground, and the discovery." Such is this spirited, brilliant account. Its slight incongruities do not interfere with its dramatic power and action, and are merely a salt of curiosity.

In "Oliver Twist," as we know, Boz held up to execration the existing workhouse system. It is hard to speculate where he could have gathered his experiences of these abuses. We find no trace of such investigations in his course. His observations of Sikes, and criminal life, were perhaps founded on what he picked up in his reporting duties. But where was the workhouse of which Mr. Bumble was Beadle, and where little Oliver "asked for more"? The writer thought it prudent not to give it even a fictitious name, and placed it a little over seventy miles from London, the

extent of Oliver's weary walk. As he came by Barnet, it must have been on the northern road; we have little difficulty in finding a town in that direction and that distance. It would appear to be either Peterboro' or Grantham.

Dickens, as I have shown, took pleasure in tracing out mysterious midnight peregrinations, which he laid out and followed with much dramatic instinct and picturesqueness. He thus roused and held the interest of his readers. There are two of these progresses in "Oliver Twist," associated with the housebreaker Sikes—not Sykes, as the name is so often spelled. The first of these is the expedition on which the little Oliver was taken to "crack a crib" in the far-off suburbs. He was taken by Nancy to Sikes's house, where they passed the night; they started before daylight, when it was raining hard. There is a vivid description of their progress, by the Bethnal Green Road,—"turning down Sun Street and Crown Street, and crossing Finsbury Square, Mr. Sikes struck, by way of Chiswell Street, into Barbican, thence into Long Lane, and so into Smithfield." Thence they made their way into Holborn, crossed the city to Hyde Park Corner, and so on into Kensington—all of which is so minutely described that

we seem to be walking with the pair. The account fills several pages, and has a curious tone of reality. They were then taken up by an empty cart, on which was written "Hounslow," and were carried on by Kingston, Hammersmith, Chiswick, Kew Bridge and Brentford, and at last pulled up at the "Coach and Horses," a house near Isleworth, where they were set down. They then resumed their walking, by the left of the public-house, "taking a right-hand road, passing many large gardens and gentlemen's houses on both sides of the way, until they reached a large town. Here, against the wall of a house, Oliver saw written up in large letters 'Hampton,'"—a dramatic fashion of showing where they were. They spent many hours wandering about the fields, and by dark obtained a cast in a cart. It was a long day's march from Bethnal Green to Hampton. They pushed on till they came to Sunbury. "As they passed the church, the clock struck seven. There was a light in the ferry-house opposite, which streamed across the road, and threw into more sombre shadow a dark yew-tree with graves beneath it. There was a dull sound of water not far off. Sunbury was passed through, *and they came again into the lonely road*,"—a good touch. "Two or three

miles more and the cart stopped. They turned into no house at Shepperton, but still kept walking on in mud and darkness, through gloomy lanes, and over cold wastes, until they came within the lights of a town at no great distance; they were coming to the foot of a bridge. They stood before a solitary house, all ruinous and decayed. There was a window on each side of the dilapidated entrance, and one storey above, but no light was visible." All this is dramatically done, and those who have gone over the ground will bear testimony to the accuracy of the description, and the way in which the exact tone of these various suburban places has been caught.

In this old house Sikes and his companion were received by Toby Crackit, and here they waited until past midnight. Years ago there was a ruined hovel standing by the bridge which was pointed out as the house in question, but it has since disappeared. The party started on their expedition about two in the morning. They crossed the bridge and kept on towards the lights which he (Oliver) had seen before. They were at no great distance off; and as they walked pretty briskly, they soon arrived at Chertsey. It is a charming, rural little town, full of attraction.

Our author pictures the market-place, with its white bank, and red brewery, and yellow town hall. And in one corner a large house with all the wood about it painted green, before which was the sign of "The George." These we cannot find in the present market-place; but in Guildford Street, close by, we come upon a picturesque sort of inn, with gables, and the sign of "The George," lately altered into "The George III."—with a portrait of the monarch swinging in the air. Beside it is the old Chertsey Brewery, red enough, and with the date 1703. There are many of these quaint old inns—such as the "Bell."

Later, when Oliver was recovered, his friends took him with them for change of air to "a cottage at some distance in the country." From a description, on the occasion of Rose Maylie's sudden and alarming illness, we are told that "it was four miles from the Market Town" (which distance Oliver ran)—and from thence on to Chertsey the distance was so far that a man and horse were necessary. The "Market Town" in question is described, but it really is a description of Chertsey, as I can certify from personal observation.

"Quickening their pace, they turned up a road

upon the left hand. After walking about a quarter of a mile they stopped before a detached house surrounded by a wall "—the "crib" that was to be "cracked." It is there to this hour, and is known as Pycroft House. It stands outside the town, just under St. Anne's Hill. It is a charming old Queen Anne structure standing in "fayre" grounds and gardens—and suggests very much the pattern of Gadshill itself.

There is an abundance of little offices and outhouses encrusted on to it, all favouring the cracksmen's object. As we know, they climbed over the wall, and attacked a little lattice window, "about five feet and a half above the ground, which belonged to a scullery, or some brewing place, at the end of the passage." The aperture was so small that it would only admit a boy of Oliver's size. There is an old-fashioned panelled hall, with arches and a clumsy old stair, which commanded the lattice, as described—and here the poor lad received the shot which led to the failure of the enterprise. The lattice is pointed out, and known as "Oliver's window." [1]

[1] Such interest is taken in these trifling details, and so "living" is their character, that I was lately asked by my friend Mr. Spielmann, the editor of Cassell's Magazine of Art, to go down and see the place. And one of the artists

There is such a feeling reality in the author's account of the illness of Rose Maylie that I am convinced the character was drawn from the Mary Hogarth whose loss he had felt so deeply and mourned so passionately. It is difficult to rouse much interest in Rose Maylie, who at best was but an Adelphi heroine, full of high-strained emotions; but the author's sympathy shown for her illness is surely of a very personal kind.

"Oh, the suspense! the fearful, acute suspense, of standing idly by while the life of one we dearly love is trembling in the balance! Oh, the racking thoughts that crowd upon the mind, and make the heart beat violently, and the breath come thick, by the force of the images they conjure up before it! the desperate anxiety *to be doing something* to relieve the pain or lessen the danger which we have no power to alleviate! The sinking of soul and spirit! What tortures can equal these? What reflections or endeavours can, in the full tide and fever of the time, allay them?" These anxieties were surely his own personal ones.

We cannot but admire the ingenious but still

at Ludgate Hill was despatched to make a series of drawings of all the points of interest.

improbable fashion in which our author disposed of the strongly suspicious case of Oliver. Here was a lad, shot by one of the servants in the house, and whom Dr. Losborne gravely represented to the Bow Street officers as being "accidentally wounded by a spring gun in Mr. What-d'ye-call-him's grounds, and comes to the house for assistance, and is immediately laid hold of and maltreated by one of the servants." This singular tale is eventually accepted by Messrs. Blathers and Duff. And, further, a neighbouring magistrate is found to accept bail for Oliver's appearance! Still Dickens has shown wonderful art in the treatment of this awkward situation, and all but persuades us that everything has been done naturally and properly.

Infinitely dramatic is the closing scene of Sikes' flight after the murder of Nancy, and the catastrophe that followed.

"When he left the house it was morning. He went away through Islington, strode up the hill at Highgate, on which stands the stone in honour of Whittington, turned down to Highgate Hill" (he means descended the hill again), "unsteady of purpose and uncertain where to go, struck off to the right again almost as soon as he began to

descend it, and taking the footpath across the fields that skirted Caen Wood, and so came out on Hampstead Heath. Traversing the hollow by the Vale of Health, he mounted the opposite bank, and crossing the road which joins the villages of Hampstead and Highgate, made along the remaining portion of the Heath to the fields at North End." Every lover of the northern heights of London knows this route by heart. He got as far as Hendon, but returned to Hampstead, and hung about the place the whole day. At last, when evening was approaching, he made up his mind, and set off for Hatfield. There he entered a public-house—it was about nine—where the pedlar, with his nostrum for erasing stains, frightened him away. He then took the road which led to St. Albans.

St. Albans seemed to have an extraordinary attraction for the author. He introduces it into many of his stories. Even in "Pickwick" he makes it the scene of the goblin story of Gabriel Grub. "An old abbey," he says, "in *this part* of the country," though the story was related in Dingley Dell, in Kent.

We are not clear where was the scene of the vividly-described fire in which the housebreaker

worked with such mad energy. It was somewhere on the road between Hatfield and St. Albans, for it is not stated that he reached the latter place. There he made his sudden resolve to go straight back to town.

The most dramatic scenes of "Our Mutual Friend" would seem to have been laid at Henley and about Henley. The painstaking Mr. Albut has, I think, shown this very clearly. The inn where the marriage took place is called "an Angler's Inn." Rescued by Lizzie Hexham, the uninteresting Eugene Wrayburn, whose talk was so pedantic, was carried by the girl up the inn lawn into the very house. It would seem a herculean, if not impossible task, for a slight girl to haul an insensible, man out of a boat, and carry him up a slope, thence round to the entrance. This inn was, certainly, the good old "Red Lion," where Johnson and Boswell put up, and Shenstone before them, who sang of it :—

> Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
> Where'er his stages may have been,
> May sigh to think he still has found
> His warmest welcome at an inn.

A cheerful, picturesque, old mansion of the brightest and mellowest brick. Here is the "Inn

lawn" running down to the river's edge, crowded on boat-race days.

Lizzie was employed at a large paper-mill a short distance from Henley, and such we find at Marsh Mill, close to the weir, with a wooden bridge that leads to the lock. We also find the tow-path where Eugene met Lizzie, and from which he was dogged by Headstone. Eugene then crossed the handsome bridge and must have been attacked immediately after.

Plashwater Weir lock and lock-house can be fixed beyond Medmenham, at Harley lock.

THE YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS.

A COUPLE of years before, he had made an expedition in search of the notorious schools he intended to "gibbet" in his "Nickleby." No one has approached Dickens in his system of adapting abuses of this kind to the purposes of fiction. Only a master could contrive to extract the more humorous elements from such unpromising material. We have an instance in the case of Charles Reade and the treatment of the prison abuses in "Never Too Late to Mend." On this excursion his companion was "Phiz," or Hablot K. Browne, whose sympathetic pencil was later to reproduce many of these scenes. He "hoped to make out the whole trip."

Part of the "actuality" which Dickens infused into his stories is owing to such little touches as the following. He wrote to his wife that at Grantham he found "the very best inn I have ever put up at."

It might seem to concern fiction but little whether one inn was better than another, yet in the story we find the party arriving at "one of the best inns in England, the 'George.'" This may have been good nature, or owing to gratitude for good treatment; but in any case it lends a reality.

On his journey down he had an odd *rencontre* at Grantham with an old lady, "who had been outside all day on the coach." It turned out that she was the mistress of a Yorkshire school, and was returning from a holiday stay in London. "She showed us a long letter she was carrying to one of the boys from his father, containing a severe lecture (enforced and aided by many texts of Scripture) on his refusing to eat boiled meat." This incident, it will be remembered, is introduced into the story in another form. Such treatment is quite legitimate and consistent; the one is the germ of the other, and a person of such a character might have spoken in the one way as well as in the other. The texts of Scripture seemed to the author too ordinary, so he expanded it by the missionaries and the knife with the corkscrew. Again: "In the mail there was a most delicious lady's maid, who implored us to keep a sharp look

out at the coach windows, as she expected the carriage was coming to meet her, and she was afraid of missing it. In the end it is scarcely necessary to say that the coach did not come, but a very dirty girl did." Out of this he made the following: "A very fastidious lady, with an infinite variety of cloaks and small parcels, who loudly lamented the non-arrival of her own carriage, and made the guard solemnly promise to stop every green chariot he saw coming."

They were making for Greta Bridge, which is vividly described. "A house standing alone in the midst of a dreary moor. It was fearfully cold, and there were no signs of anybody being up in the house." There, however, they were comfortably entertained, and here he proceeded to "finish our discoveries."

He speaks of "The George and New Inn, Greta Bridge," as though this were the compounded name of the house; but the fact is, these were two distinct inns, standing apart at a distance of several hundred yards. Dickens was partial to this sort of adaptation. Both are now farm-houses. It has been pointed out as an oversight that Squeers sent one of the lads to weed the garden, though it

was the day after a violent snow-storm, and on the very morning the pump was frozen.

He had gone down provided with some fictitious letters of introduction, which his friend Mitton had prepared—"a pious fraud" he calls it. He was supposed to be looking for a suitable school wherein to place a widow's child. He describes a visit from one of the schoolmasters who came up to the inn after dinner, and who received his inquiries in a curious, doubtful fashion, and who finally warned him not to think of sending a child to any of their schools so long as "there's a harse to hoold in a' Lunnon, or a goother to lie asleep in." This gentleman was a jolly sort of personage, who spoke in the broadest Yorkshire, and supplied the original of John Browdie.

Four miles away was Barnard Castle, which was to be his real hunting-ground. "All the schools are round about that place, and a dozen old abbeys beside." The visitors were only however to devote a day or two days, Thursday and Friday, to the investigation. They took a post-chaise—Nicholas and Squeers drove over in a pony-cart—"about three mile from here," and arrived at a long, cold-looking house one storey high, with a few straggling out-buildings behind, and a barn

and stable adjoining. At Barnard Castle was the King's Head Inn, which Boz praises in his story. Newman Noggs in his letter to Nicholas bids him go there, and he would find "good ale." It was here that the travellers may have stopped. But the school traditionally supposed to be Dotheboys Hall was at Bowes, and Mr. Cope, the Academician, who visited the place many years later, also put up at the King's Head before going on to Bowes, where he found a comfortable-looking inn. The landlady told him that she recalled two gentlemen coming over from Barnard Castle on horseback and putting up at her house, whence they went to visit the school, which was in the centre of the village, and was at that time kept by one Shaw. The artist was shown over the old school-room, which was then used as a potato-store. The school itself had long been closed.

One of the most characteristic and always-to-be-expected incidents connected with the Dickens topography, is the exaggerated traditions that have grown up round him. As we have seen, he could only have stayed a couple of days at Bowes and Castle Barnard; but it was insisted in the place that he had remained six weeks, on a later visit. A waitress who attended upon him during the whole

of this time, and was rewarded by Dickens for finding a gold pencil-case he had lost, died only two years ago. "Many trustworthy persons now living can testify that this person frequently declared that Charles Dickens stayed six weeks." This is hardly convincing. The ladies who directed the hotel were also a little uncertain in their replies as to the length of his stay. They even fancied that he wrote part of "Nicholas Nickleby" in their house. "It is thirty-one years since one of the ladies died, and twenty-eight since the survivor resigned the hotel to the daughter of one—the present landlady." The truth was, he had no time to waste, and had to commence and introduce Squeers and his school scenes almost at once.

A different question arises as to the original of Squeers. It was insisted that as the house was sketched from something existing, so also must have been the schoolmaster himself. The result was unfortunate, but Dickens was not in the least responsible. Squeers is wholly imaginative in appearance, manner, and diction, and for the purposes of fiction it was necessary that he should be so. It was enough for the author that the notorious system existed of which Squeers was a type. A wretched pedagogue exercising his sordid

cruelties, however accurately drawn from life, would be no gain to a fiction. The author, indeed, declares positively in his original preface that Squeers is "the representative of a class and not of an individual." The subject had long been in his thoughts. Even when a child at Rochester he had been vividly impressed by a lad who had come from a Yorkshire school "with a suppurated abscess" which his master had "ripped open with an inky penknife."

Dr. Rogers, editor of "The Modern Scottish Minstrel," related in a letter to the *Daily News* how he had been travelling in the district in the year 1864, and how one Humphreys, a tradesman of the place, had informed him that *he* had been the person who had directed Dickens's inquiries, calling his special attention to this particular school and schoolmaster. The latter received his visitors very haughtily, and "did not so much as withdraw his eyes from the operations of pen-making during their interview."

Dickens, however, was not the first to attract the attention of the kingdom to these horrors. Some sixteen years before the appearance of "Nickleby" they had all been revealed in the course of some actions which were tried in London in October,

1823, before Judge Park—Jones *versus* Shaw, and Ockerby against the same. These were the parents of the ill-used boy, and during the course of the trial many of the Squeers incidents were brought out. There can be no doubt that though Dickens did not sketch Squeers from Shaw, he certainly made use of many of the incidents which Shaw's case supplied. There was once sold by auction in London one of Shaw's cards, dating from near Greta Bridge, offering to teach young gentlemen Latin, English, arithmetic, geography, and geometry, and to board and lodge them, for £20 a year, which, it will be recollected, were Mr. Squeers' terms. A MS. note states that Mr. Shaw "leaves the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill, at half-past seven o'clock, Thursday morning, July 25th." Numbers of the boys, it seems, had lost their sight through a horrible neglect. One of the Jones boys told his story, and it certainly seemed like poor "Graymarsh," or one of his fellows, telling of his treatment by Squeers.

"There were nearly three hundred boys in the schools. We had meat three times a week, and on the other days potatoes and bread and cheese. When any gentleman came to see his children, *Mr. Shaw used to order the boys who were without*

trousers or jackets to get under the desks; we were sometimes without our trousers for four or five days while they were being mended. The boys washed in a long trough similar to what the horses drink from; *the boys had but two towels*, and the great boys used to take advantage of the little boys, and get to the towels first; we had no supper; we had warm water and milk for tea and dry bread; we had hay and straw beds, and *one sheet to each bed, in which four or five boys slept;* there were about thirty beds in one room, and a large tub in the middle; there were only three or four boys in some of the beds; we had fleas every other morning (a laugh); I mean, we had quills furnished us to flea the beds every other morning, and we caught a good beating if we did not fill the quills with fleas; we had the skimmings of the pot every Sunday afternoon; the usher offered a penny for every maggot, and the boys found more than a quart full, but he did not give them the money (a laugh); we had soap every Saturday afternoon, but that was always used by the great boys, and we had no soap but what we bought; on one occasion (in October) I felt a weakness in my eyes, and could not write my copy; the defendant said he would beat me; on the next day I could not see

at all, and I told Mr. Shaw, who sent me, with three others, to the wash-house; *he always sent those boys who were ill to the wash-house*, as he had no doctor; those who were totally blind were sent into a room; I stayed in the wash-house about a month, and the number of boys there when I left was eighteen; they were all affected in their sight; I was then put into a room; there were nine boys in this room totally blind; a Mr. Benning, a doctor, was sent for; while I remained in the wash-house no doctor attended us, I was in the room two months, and the doctor then discharged me, saying I had lost one eye; in fact, I was blind with both; I went to the wash-house a second time, but no doctor attended me then."

The counsel for the defence was Sergeant Pell, a name that no doubt made an impression on the young writer, though he was then only a child. Mr. Squeers, too, was in the habit of confiscating the boys' clothes, dressing them in old, ragged garments, that were too large or too tight, as the case might be. The result was that Shaw was cast in heavy damages, £300 in each case.

The strangest part, however, was the defence, which was that Shaw was rather a humane and amiable man—"in private life," at least—and that

it was the system of his school that was responsible, "avowedly founded on the most parsimonious principles, with a view to suit certain parties." He kept five ushers, and the doctor's charge for one year, it was sworn, was £100. Mrs. Shaw was reported to be "tender-hearted." He obtained time to pay the damages—did pay them—and continued his school. Mr. Cope on his visit also heard very favourable testimonies as to Shaw's character, that he was "always a civil man, and answered any questions of visitors—worthy people, and the opposite of Squeers." *E contra*, it should be considered that this is likely to have been the testimony of villagers, to whom a school of 300 boys must have brought substantial gain and its closing proportionate loss. Dickens's description, it is stated, again revived the old odium; it was insisted, as I have shown, that the sketch of Squeers was intended for Shaw. "He became an object of ridicule to his thoughtless, or perhaps spiteful, neighbours, which, together with the ruin that soon after overtook him through loss of pupils, broke his spirit and hastened his death."[1] Dickens often found himself em-

[1] Some curious particulars as to the Yorkshire schools were published in the *Newcastle Chronicle*, which Mr. Joseph Cowen has been kind enough to collect and send to me.

barrassed, when charged with thus drawing from real life, to vindicate himself; as in the well-known case of Leigh Hunt, he was compelled to have recourse to explanations and refinements.

The author's account of "Master Humphrey's Clock," as given in his preface, is reserved enough. The quaint notion of the clock-case and old Master Humphreys, it is now claimed, was like everything else, suggested to him. The Dr. Rogers before alluded to, on his visit to Barnard, put up at the hotel in the market-place.

"At breakfast the following morning he chanced to notice, on the opposite side of the street, a large clock-face, with the name Humphreys surrounding it, most conspicuously exhibited in front of a clock and watchmaker's shop. 'How odd,' he exclaimed to a gentleman seated beside him, 'here is Master Humphrey's clock!' 'Of course,' said the gentleman, 'and don't you know that Dickens resided here for some weeks when he was collecting materials for his "Nicholas Nickleby," and that he chose his title for his next work by observing that big clock-face from the window?' After breakfast," adds the doctor, "I stepped across to the watchmaker, and asked him whether I had been correctly informed respecting Mr. Dickens

and the clock. The worthy horologist entered into particulars. 'My clock,' said he, 'suggested to Mr. Dickens the title of his book of that name. I have a letter from him stating this, and a copy of the work, inscribed with his own hand. For some years we corresponded. I got acquainted with him just by his coming across from the hotel as you have done this morning.'"

An amiable and pardonable delusion. People often talk themselves into such fictions. Humphreys was a watchmaker, and, like many of his craft, had a clock over his door. When the story appeared, people would naturally rally him, "You are 'Humphrey's clock,'" etc.—"He has brought you into his book,"—and gradually the worthy watchmaker might have come to believe it. It will be seen that there is no real similarity between a street dial and a clock-case in which papers were found concealed; nor was the first likely to suggest the second. Dickens's name was "Humphrey," not "Humphreys,"—though, of course, supposing he had borrowed the name, there would have been an awkwardness in "Humphreys's" clock.

From this northern journey, made in 1838, Dickens gathered scenic material for several

episodes in at least two of his stories. When the coach broke down close to Grantham in "Nickleby," he recalled a visit that he paid to York after leaving Castle Barnard, and made the celebrated fine window of the cathedral the subject of an introduced tale. He no doubt found that on anything that interested him and touched his feelings, he could write with most effect. The "Alice" of the tale, who was "the youngest and fairest of her sisters," was probably intended as one more sketch of the lost Mary Hogarth. In the "History of Pickwick" I have pointed several allusions to this to him painful bereavement; indeed, all through his early books will be found pictures of young creatures full of life and beauty, such as Rose Maylie, wasting away under sickness and suffering. The "five sisters of York" not unnaturally suggested to him the three sisters whom he regarded with such affection; and the lost Alice, like the lost Mary Hogarth, was treated by all as the cherished treasure of the family. When on this trip we find him writing to his wife that "the same dreams which have constantly visited me since poor Mary died, follow me everywhere. After all the change of scene and fatigue I have dreamt of her ever since I left home. I should be sorry to lose

such visions, for they are very happy ones. I would fain believe, too, sometimes, that her spirit may have some influence over them." And that curious high-strung picture of what Kit felt upon the road near Tong was, as I have suggested, likely to have been a picture of his own feelings.

It has scarcely been sufficiently pointed out how Dickens associated his own private feelings with localities—investing them with a sort of living original interest. Thus, in David Copperfield's piteous journey down to Canterbury, Dickens reveals to us his own thoughts and feeling of association with special places—tenderly wrapped up in lavender, as it were, and suggestive of by-gone delightful memories. Here is found the true magic of such topography—not in mere accurate description of details. There are places which have charm and appropriate suggestions in this way. If my own experience be of any interest, I may say these two places—Canterbury and Dover—are most potent in this way. These tranquil, old-fashioned places are charged with romantic thoughts of midnight journeys, sultry summer days, the packet sleeping tranquilly, the waiting for the night voyage, the queer old twisted streets, dramatic landings and embarkings. There is the

glimpse of Canterbury as it flits by—the solemn cathedral seen a moment in all its grace—the quiet town at its feet. Then there have been long, restless days at Dover—spent half in the station, waiting to meet fellow travellers, or a visit to Canterbury when something tragic was about to take place at home. Hence such places become a curious, mysterious background to which the eye turns back. Numbers, I have no doubt, feel this sort of thing. Dickens makes the boy Copperfield thus recall his mother. "It always kept me company" (her image, that is), he says. "I have associated it with the sunny street of Canterbury, dozing, as it were, in the hot light; and with the sight of its old houses and gateways, and the stately gray cathedral with the rooks sailing round the towers. When I came at last upon the bare wide downs near Dover it relieved the solitary aspect of the scene with hope." He is speaking, it is true, by the mouth of little Copperfield; but so genuine and earnest is he, that we have the conviction that these are his own personal experiences.

Dickens, as we have seen, excelled in describing long weary journeys, and in suggesting the idea of painful protraction—of towns and roads passing by—of long nights. These journeys seem to stimu-

late all his dramatic art. We appear to have travelled all the way with him. In the walk to Portsmouth the road seems to have been quite familiar to the author. But here, too, he again showed his faith in the miraculous walking powers of the human race; and it seems incredible that Nicholas and the feeble half-starved Smike could have travelled, on the first day, "thirty miles and more," to Godalming. More wonderful still, on the following day, quite unfatigued, they pushed on, examined the Devil's Punch Bowl, and reached to within twelve miles of Portsmouth, where they encountered Mr. Crummles at the public-house. Dickens was born, as most people know, at Landport, close to Portsmouth, so he knew well the flavour of the place. The manager and he left their pony at the drawbridge, and, walking up the High Street, soon reached the theatre. There is a coloured picture of this building now before me as it appeared about thirty years before Dickens wrote; a long, windowless house of flaming brick, with a large-tiled roof, a Doric portico with steps, and a very green door. In a sort of annexe at one end there is a little low door, to which there is a descent of some steps; and here is the stage-door by which Nicholas and his manager entered.

Nothing is more vivid, more real and Pickwickian than these theatricals ; the characters are drawn in the most brilliant fashion ; the dialogues are vivacious, humorous, and natural. They are better, perhaps, than anything in "Pickwick." As we all know, Mr. Crummles had lodgings in St. Thomas' Street, with one Bulph, a pilot ; Nicholas at a tobacconist's shop on the Common Hard ; and Miss Snevellecci in Lombard Street. The old theatre has, of course, been swept away long since. [1]

[1] The picture is given in that interesting book "The Theatrical Tourist," the work of the industrious Winston, who collected everything conceivable for the stage, and seems to have spent his days making "cuttings" from old newspapers and transcribing. These pictures of the provincial theatres are coloured by hand, and have singular interest from the air of old fashion and quaintness. The work is exceedingly scarce. Not many years ago there was still to be seen on Richmond Green the old theatre and manager's house, which had, for me at least, the entire and perfect Crummles flavour. A very picturesque edifice it was.

LONDON HOUSES, SCENES, &c.

In considering these localities—to which Dickens has lent so vital an interest—we are apt to think that he selected them because they were suited to his purpose. The truth, I suspect, is that they selected *him;* that his vivid fancy, as he passed by the places, was kindled, and that it suggested to him some episode which became, as it were, its meaning, and its only meaning. Thus his description belongs to the place, not from any arbitrary or capricious selection, but from inevitable law.

In all his London localities I doubt if there be one more adjusted to the story than that dismal burial ground, with the gate, that is found in "Bleak House." The gate alone is wonderfully dramatic, the graveyard being seen through its bars. Our author had, no doubt, passed it again and again, and it may have supplied him by way of suggestions with the whole chain of events that

linked "Joe," and "Nemo," and Lady Deadlock. It furnished him with pictures of the successive episodes. Anyone who is much accustomed to writing knows how, on the mere sight of an object of this kind, a vision of stirring episodes will rise before the mind. The tragic gloom of that enclosure would have substance for many a tale.

It is wonderful how Dickens has caught the flavour of the little streets and courts that branch out of Chancery Lane. As we wander through them now in their altered state, we feel the breath of the Bleak House associations, and see perfectly all the Snagsbys, Brooks, "Nemos," and the rest. The essence of this feeling is that it is a sort of fringe of the great Inns of Court, the characters being dependent on it, just as round Drury Lane we feel that all is dependent on the great theatre and coloured by it. The scene is laid particularly in "Cook's Court, Cursitor Street," which is, of course, Tooke's Court. Here it was that the wretched Nemo died and the inquest was held. After which dismal incidents were disposed of, there was the gloomy burial ground surrounded by squalid houses.

The burial ground has long been known and recognized as a little enclosure, somewhat hard to

find, at the end of a passage which leads out of a flagged court or lane that winds or twists out of Drury Lane, and is called Russell Court. As you look up the passage from Russell Court you see the railed gate at the end, and the small graveyard surrounded by houses, just as Joe and Lady Deadlock saw it. Recently the London County Council have made a sort of playground of it, and, for some mysterious reason, have actually spared the old gate, possibly with some view to Dickens's associations. For this mercy we may be thankful. Even as it is now, nothing can better answer to Dickens's description; it is, in fact, the only place in the district, or in London indeed, which so answers. But visit it in the gloaming or at the close of some November day, when the lamps are lighted, and the delusion is perfect. There is a strange ghastly solemnity; we seem to see the shadowy figures looking through the bars. Dickens several times alludes to the "little tunnel of a court" which leads up to the gate, and which supplies such an effective view of the place. It seems to have affected him with a sort of horror, for he speaks often of "that hideous archway," with its "deadly stains." Tunnel is quite the fitting word. The exactness of the description too, even after forty

years and more, is extraordinary. There is the tunnel aforesaid, the iron gate, its lower portion, however, strengthened with wood. In the enclosure itself you can see the windows close to the ground, the very "kitchen window" pointed out by Joe. Here are the steps on which Lady Deadlock died, still some half a dozen in number. Hablot K. Browne's two pictures are wonderfully correct, even to the number of rails in the gate. The two had been well inspired by the mystery of the place.

In Lincoln's Inn Fields, close by, close to Inigo Jones' houses, we find an interesting mansion that also figures in "Bleak House." This is a stately stone-fronted structure, with a large "fore court" and a semicircular porch. This was chosen as Mr. Tulkinghorn's residence, and is exactly the sort of one an old-fashioned family solicitor would choose. It was really Mr. John Forster's house, No. 58, where he resided for some years, up to his marriage. There is a stone stair, and the rooms are finely proportioned. The ceiling of the front room was floridly painted, and everyone will recall the flourishing Roman who is shown so mysteriously pointing down to the body of the murdered solicitor. For some strange reason, this decoration

has since been painted out. Hablot Browne, the illustrator, fell into a curious mistake in dealing with this "Roman." It will be remembered that Dickens makes much of his mysterious pointing in the direction of the Frenchwoman who was outside, watching for Tulkinghorn. In a second plate, representing the scene of the murder, the Roman is shown pointing in the other direction, towards the wall.

A portly volume of some 400 pages has been written on the subject of the Cheeryble Brothers—whose real name was Grant—most of which is devoted to an account of a Dissenting chapel with which they were connected, the Dundee Chapel it was called. The brothers were Daniel, William, John, and I think Charles. In their early days they kept a shop at Bury St. Edmunds, but migrated to Manchester, where they became leading merchants. The novelist's father always held them out to him as a pattern to imitate. They were well known for their philanthropic, generous character. A Liverpool merchant, who came to ask assistance at a crisis, was given 10,000*l.*, without any security. One of the brothers was alive in 1855. In the years 1838-9 Dickens visited the brothers at Morley Street, and brought away the

likeness of the apoplectic butler who so deftly uncorked the "Double diamond" port. His name was Alfred Boot—a short-necked personage with a very rubicund face—and his master would call to him, "Alfred! some of the Ruby Lightning."

There have been attempts, not so successful, to identify their house of business, which is so picturesquely described. Indeed, no one has done so much as Dickens to lend poetry to City localities, and he has really preserved for us their old flavour. Fortunately this is likely to endure; as, however, buildings may change or be destroyed, the original arrangement of streets, alleys, and courts is likely to remain. Now, we are told, they reached the Bank, the old gentleman hurrying Nicholas along Threadneedle Street, and through some lanes and passages on the right, until at last they emerged in a quiet, shady little square. Into the oldest and cleanest-looking house of business he led the way. "It was, indeed," as he described it further on, "a desirable nook, and one which occupied a high place in the affectionate remembrances of several grave persons domiciled in the neighbourhood, whose recollections, however, dated from a much more recent period, and whose attachment to the spot was far less absorbing than

were the recollections and attachment of the enthusiastic Tim." There seems something enigmatical in this allusion; and I have often been puzzled to know why these "several grave persons" were thus introduced, and what their being "domiciled in the neighbourhood" had to do with the matter. There was probably some private or personal allusion intended, otherwise the fact that persons who did not live in the square should care for it less than one did was scarcely worth while recording.

If we follow the author's directions, we shall certainly find no square of the kind between Threadneedle Street and Cornhill. But explorers always forget that, while the author would be thus minute in his directions, he did not, as it were, hold himself bound by them. His account of Dodson and Fogg's office, in the same quarter, is similarly misleading. He would seem to have described the route minutely, but selected for the place itself whatever seemed most effective—provided it were near at hand. I have little doubt that Dickens had in his eye one of the most effective and picturesque of City squares—St. Lawrence Pountney Hill—which strikes out of Cannon Street, and is no more than a few hundred yards

away from the place he had just described. This enclosure, apart from Nickleby associations, is interesting and picturesque. There is a small burial ground at one side, which, I think, is alluded to somewhere in the text, though I cannot point out the place. "The City square," we are told, has no enclosure save "the lamp-post in the middle, and no grass but the weeds which spring up round its base. It is a quiet, little frequented, retired spot, favourable to melancholy and contemplation." People "make appointments under the shadow of the tall, silent houses." There is a distant hum—of coaches, not of insects—but no other sound disturbs the silence of the square. The old tall Queen Anne or Georgian houses on the right as we enter from Cannon Street, are fine substantial specimens, and are striking from their stately and elaborately carved doorways. It is not too fanciful to identify one of these as the Cheeryble residence, as they are the most important in the enclosure; and, indeed, when Tim Linkinwater's sister was looking out eagerly, expecting her cap to arrive, we are told that this "coming" might be considered as equivalent to come, "for the distance to the corner was not quite five yards"; and this, odd to say, and a little

more, is about the present distance of the houses from Cannon Street corner. Facing these mansions are some rather mouldering houses—in one of whose windows we might readily place the poor crippled boy who fostered hyacinths in the blacking bottles. Not, however, so much from these details, which are too often fanciful, as from the very striking character of the place, would we be inclined to fix on it as the residence of the immortal Cheeryble Brothers.

In Dickens's tragical childhood he was closely associated with those blighting, disastrous places, the prisons for debtors, the Marshalsea and the King's Bench Prison—the former in Southwark. His father was never in the Fleet; so that Mr. Pickwick's experiences must have been transferred and adapted from the other prisons. Yet it is impossible not to be struck with the contrast between the description of the Fleet in "Pickwick" and that of the Marshalsea in "Little Dorrit:" the characters and the treatment of the characters are so totally different. In the former the strokes are bold, general, and almost Hogarthian in their vividness; in the latter there is more detail and a less power of abstraction. When he was completing his story of "Little

Dorrit," the author went to see if the Marshalsea was still standing. "I found," he writes in the preface, "the outer courtyard metamorphosed into a butter-shop ; and then I almost gave up every brick of the jail for lost. Wandering, however, down a certain adjacent 'Angel Court, leading to Bermondsey,' I came to Marshalsea Place : the houses in which I recognized not only as the great block of the former prison, but as preserving the rooms that rose in my mind's eye when I came to be Little Dorrit's biographer. . . . A little further on I found the older and smaller wall which used to enclose the pent-up inner prison where nobody was put except for ceremony. But whoever goes into Marshalsea Place will find his feet on the very paving-stones of the jail ; will see its narrow yard to the right and to the left, very little altered, if at all, except that the walls were lowered when the place got free ; will look upon the rooms in which the debtors lived."

This was written some forty years ago. Not long since I also found my way to the old interesting Borough to see whether, after this interval, the whole had not been swept away. Though separated only by London Bridge from the City, the Borough has quite the air and tone

of a different world; it seems to suggest an old-fashioned country town. The portion of the High Street near St. George's Church might be a bit of Birmingham. Here are wooden houses overhanging the street, and many curious alleys, passages, and courtyards. There is at least a score of old galleried inn-yards of the White Hart pattern; but these have nearly all been converted into goods stations. A fragment of "The Queen's" and a side of the old "George Inn" still hold out, but will presently be gone. Hard by the church, as described by Dickens, I find Angel Passage—a narrow paved alley pierced in the houses. Following it, I find myself flanked by a stretch of gloomy wall—high and prison-like—built of old squalid brick, and marked at intervals by pilasters of the same material. The bricks are caked into dingy masses, and have a strangely solemn and forlorn look. This was the Marshalsea wall, within which seemed to ring out *Voi ch' intrate*, &c. At another portion one could see the tall old houses behind—the very essence of squalor peering above the wall—the sad, lack-lustre windows of the upper storey being just visible. On the other side, at the left hand, was the lower wall spoken of by Dickens, which has

since been raised to give support to modern houses. Winding passages lead round and round about this straggling block, all permeated with gloom and desolation—a portion is labelled "Mortuary"—until we come to the churchyard adjoining; where, no doubt, many a collegian sleeps, while bailiff nor turnkey shall trouble him no more. The remnant seemed a large enclosure, and, given over to certain "works" carried on by Messrs. Harding, still retained its mysterious prison air and that strange look of being abandoned and forgotten. On various portions of the wall are repeated large enamelled placards announcing that this is "the site of the old Marshalsea Prison, made famous by Charles Dickens in his well-known work 'Little Dorrit.'"

The old eighteenth-century church, St. George's, seems to close this end of the High Street. There is a ponderous dignity about it, such as would be seen in an important provincial town. Round it is the open churchyard, now laid out in gardens. From the upper windows of the Marshalsea a good view could be obtained of this graveyard. In the vestry, it will be recollected, little Dorrit slept on the cushions—and here she and Clenham were married. But Clenham was, like most of our

author's gentlemanly and highly proper heroes—Nicholas, Eugene Wrayburn, Copperfield, Chuzzlewit were—"prigs" of the first water. Boz always seem to wish these personages well, and tried to do his best with them; but they were impracticable.[1]

Close by, we find a second passage, leading out into the street, and marked "Layton's Buildings;" and here we stand before an old-fashioned but important mansion straggling in outline and of many "bows" and irregularities, dingy all over. It was something like the old hotel at Cremorne Gardens; a tall dilapidated gate and railing ran in front of it. It was, no doubt, the governor's or

[1] Of all the pedantic far-fetched proposals ever made by a debtor to his creditors, that made by Clenham, and meant to be nobly heroic, was certainly the most singular. It behoved him, as his partner was away in another country, publicly to accept the whole blame of the failure. He would "print a declaration to this effect, and advertise it in the papers." Concurrently with this measure he would "address a letter to all the creditors exonerating his partner, in a solemn manner informing them of the stoppage of the house, till their pleasure should be known, and humbly submitting himself to their directions." If things were ever got right, then his own share should revert to his partner, and he himself would ask to be allowed to serve the business as a faithful clerk on the smallest salary—all which was utterly uninteresting to the creditors, who would simply look to the firm. If Mr. Clenham had speculated with his partner's assets, he did a dishonest thing, for which he was really amenable to the law, and all his flourishing declarations did not mend the matter in the least.

chief turnkey's mansion. But over everything was spread the forlorn prison desolation, the air of shabby old-fashion, such as we find in the "Back of God-speed" street of some Back of God-speed country town. That old mansion in its decay, with its portico and knockers—it must have been comfortable enough in the old times—had an attraction. The gloomy old church, with its heavy steeple, contributed to the general depressing effect.

On the opposite side of the High Street, a little way past, opened out Lant Street. Every one knows Lant Street, Borough, as Mr. Sawyer's residence; just as, I have noted, most people know that in Kingsgate Street lived Mrs. Gamp. One might fancy that rooms were found here for the cheerful Bob, because Guy's Hospital was not far off. But there was the more dismal reason that for the child Dickens had been found a miserable lodging here, so that he might be near the prison where his erratic parent was immured. Lant Street has been much changed within the past sixty years. A huge School Board school may have devoured Mrs. Raddle's house; but there are some rows of curiously mean tenements —one storey or two storys high—of the pattern

we find in the "Rents" or in the Westminster slums. Such have shutters to the "parlour" windows, folded back to the wall, with holes pierced in them. The two-storeyed houses, the hall doors crowned with a pretentious architrave, must have furnished rooms for Mr. Sawyer. It may be noted that Boz's standard of comfort and gentility was at this time—Heaven help him!—meagre enough. A couple of mean alleys, scanty streets, have changed their names in compliment to "the inimitable," and we have "Dorrit Street" and "Quilp Street." One returns from this special exploring somewhat depressed and rueful. Under the shadow, as it were, of that prison wall, I know nothing more potent than that waste of grimed brick, and its "fluffy" solitude. Nor shall I forget the dead and deadening windows that peer over it. You see the whole picture of the poor lad's miseries, and wonder how he ever reached to the buoyant obstreperousness of Pickwick.

In Boz's day the now prevailing and popular club had not yet been developed. In all his earlier works issued during "the thirties and forties," we find gentlemen frequenting taverns, and even taking up their residence at what were literally

inns—as Mr. Pickwick did at the "George and Vulture." But for persons of fashion this would hardly do, and in most of the great hotels there was a regular "coffee-room" where dinners were ordered by the general public, exactly as at a tavern. This seems to have been the general resort, as a dining club is now exactly as it was in the days of Moore and Byron, when we hear of dinners at "Fladong's" and such places.

It has often been said that Dickens's earlier works will be invaluable as a record of the manners and customs of London in the early part of the century. Even this little sketch shows us a fashion that thus obtained, and which has passed away. The tavern in the thirties was a marked and dramatic feature of social life, and a great deal of the business of his stories was transacted there. Witness one curious scene in "Nicholas Nickleby."

When Nicholas Nickleby hurried up to London from the Crummles' Theatre to protect his sister, he found himself, we are told, standing before a handsome hotel, which is described as being in one of the thoroughfares between Park Lane and Bond Street. "An expensive place, I daresay," he said, "but a pint of wine and a biscuit are no

great debauch." This was probably the old Mivart's—later Claridge's—which was levelled to the ground only the other day. A new and vast hotel on modern principles is now being erected. "It was very handsomely furnished, the walls were ornamented with the choicest specimens of French paper enriched with a gilded cornice of elegant design. The floor was covered with a rich carpet, and two superb mirrors, one over the chimney-piece, the other reaching from floor to ceiling, multiplied the other beauties and added new ones of their own to enhance the general effect." These cheap glories would now attract little attention, and certainly not excite the admiration of a novelist. Our author was, however, emphasizing their effect on the humble Nicholas. "There was a rather noisy party of four gentlemen *in a box by the fireplace*." He sat himself down in a box next the noisy party, and, "postponing his order for a pint of claret until such time as the waiter and one of the elderly gentlemen should have settled a disputed question relative to the price of an item in the bill of fare, took up a newspaper and began to read." A characteristic picture. It reads oddly to find "a pint of claret" ordered on such an occasion, and a dispute with the

waiter going on in so grand an establishment. Later two of the party had risen and were standing before the fire, as if in a club. Then followed the altercation with Sir Mulberry—dramatically and most naturally described—the waiter admirable—with the encounter at the door, where "the private cabriolet" was waiting.

As we wander through the interesting old quarter of Westminster just beyond the Victoria Tower, we can recall one of Dickens's admirable descriptions. "Within half a quarter of a mile of the ancient sanctuary is a narrow and dirty region, the sanctuary of the smaller members of Parliament in modern days. It is all comprised in one street of gloomy lodging-houses, from whose windows in vacation time there frown long melancholy rows of bills which say, 'To let,' 'To let.' In busier periods of the year these bills disappear, and the houses swarm with legislators. This is Manchester Buildings. . . . Manchester Buildings is an eel-pot which has no outlet but its awkward mouth —a case bottle which has no thoroughfare, and a short and narrow neck—it leads to nothing beyond itself." The place has long since been swept away, but it offers a curious picture of the "legislators" thus herded together in lodgings.

When Mr. Pickwick could not find his solicitor, Perker, at Gray's Inn, he was referred to the solicitor's clerk, who, it seems, was joyously spending the evening at a sort of free-and-easy club, held at a tavern. Here Mr. Pickwick sought him, and Boz describes the locality with an accuracy sufficient to help us to find it. It was "situated in a court, happy in the double advantage of being in the vicinity of Clare Market and closely approximating to the back of New Inn." It bore the name of "The Magpie and Stump," and was in part a sort of public house. In front there was a sort of hutch, which was occupied by a cobbler, who shared his premises with a pie-man, or, in Dickens's graphic phrase, "a small bulkhead beneath the tap-room window, in size and shape not unlike a sedan chair." In the windows were cards announcing that Devonshire cider was to be had, while a black board proclaimed that "there were 500,000 barrels of double stout in the cellars of the establishment," leaving the mind in a state of doubt "as to the precise direction in the bowels of the earth in which this mighty cavern might be supposed to exist." Such are some of Boz's favourite touches in these days which could create an interest and a smile, too, in connection with so

homely a thing as a "pub." It is worth noting that our taverns now disdain such vaunts as this, perhaps because they are so flourishing.

Thus guided we can easily find our way to the court behind Danes Inn; and there, now all ruined and squalid, and really waiting destruction, we find two taverns side by side—the "George IV." and the "Old Black Jack," a most ancient house now closed. In the "History of Pickwick" I was inclined to think—but I had not thoroughly investigated the point—that the "George IV.," a crazy picturesque old thing a couple of centuries old, and supported on *wooden* columns, was the tavern; but I have since discovered that beyond a doubt Boz intended to describe its neighbour, the 'Black Jack." The chief difficulty is, was it likely that such a "public-house"—so it must have been—could have been used by respectable clerks as a club or place of convivial meeting? A garrulous and rather entertaining "reminiscent," Mr. Jay, son of a well-known Dissenting clergyman, has written his recollections, and he supplies exactly the information that we want. "I belonged to a club," he says, "held every Saturday at the 'Old Black Jack Tavern,' in Portsmouth Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. It consisted for the

most part of barristers and attorneys." He described how he met there Curran, the Irish orator, whose health was proposed; Pearson, one of the proctors; with common councilmen, and others. Curran, who was a guest like Mr. Pickwick, merely thanked them, instead of making the expected speech. "The room was a large one," he adds, "and a number of pictures of old actors were hung on the walls. The dinners were plain and the wine good." This must have been about the year 1840. He visited the place again some five-and-twenty years ago, in 1868, and found the room, as might be expected, quite altered—the pictures gone, the tavern become a public house—"there was then a notable distinction between a tavern and a public house"; lines were hanging from one end of the room to the other, on which clothes were drying. At this moment, as I said, the "Black Jack" is closed, and only awaits destruction—a sombre, desolate-looking place, the name almost faded out; the walls caked and grimed with the dirt of centuries; the old windows obscured. True, it does not bear the name of the "Magpie and Stump," which is, however, to be found close by in Fetter Lane. This was part of Boz's system; he supplied the *thing* accurately

enough and the locality, but shifted or transposed the name—generally by design, often by accident.

I have always had a conviction that Mrs. Mantalini's place of business was in Wigmore Street. "I know her," said Ralph, "she lives near Cavendish Square." Almost at the time Dickens wrote, our family had dealings with a mantua-maker whose establishment was close to the square—in Wigmore Street. Few perhaps recall that Mr. Mantalini's real name was Müntle. He is certainly the most delightfully original of Dickens's characters, *O si sic omnes!* and it was unfortunate that he abandoned this vein of pure farcical comedy and took up the highly-strained pathetic "line."

As a curious illustration of Boz's fancy of embodying his own experiences in his stories, thus supplying a sort of vitality or realism, we find Mrs. Wittiterly at the theatre telling Lord Frederick Verisoft that she takes so much more interest in Shakepeare's plays "after having been to the dear little dull house he was born in. . . I don't know how it is, but after you have seen the place, and written your name in the little book, somehow or other you seem to be inspired." Then Mrs. Nickleby strikes in: "I think there must be something in the place, for soon after I was married I went

to Stratford with my poor dear Mr. Nickleby in a post-chaise from Birmingham. We went back to the inn there, where we slept the night," etc. When Dickens was writing this, which was at the end of 1838, he had just come back from his tour with Hablot Browne. They had gone from Warwick to Stratford-on-Avon, where " we sat down in the room where Shakespeare was born, and left our autographs, and read those of other people, and so forth. We remained at Stratford all night, and were compelled to come here (Shrewsbury) by way of Birmingham," etc. This importing of his own experiences he seemed to enjoy, and it supplied, as I have said, a sort of living interest.

Few localities have been described so accurately and with such vividness as Golden Square, where was Ralph Nickleby's mansion. To this hour these touchings help us to recognize it, so little changed is it. Close to Regent Street and the great tide of traffic, it might be far away in Bloomsbury, or be taken for Red Lion Square, whose tone and complexion of that fashion it almost exactly suggests. Private persons, however, do not now seem to dwell there, and the various houses are given up to offices, agencies, and places of business. Not long

after Ralph Nickleby's time, the late Cardinal Wiseman was living here in a substantial old mansion. We cannot go so far as an eager American, who declares that "Ralph Nickleby's dwelling can be identified *without question*, since it is the only double house in the square." And a picture of a fine windowed mansion at one corner is supplied.

Close to Golden Square are some dismal streets, in one of which the Kenwigs resided. We are all interested in the Kenwigs and their friends. They lived in a "bygone, faded, tumble-down street, with two irregular rows of tall, meagre houses, which seem to have stared each other out of countenance years ago." The houses were let off—there were fowls pecking about the kennels, the chimneys were battered and broken. One of the houses "was a thought dirtier" than its fellows, and "caught in all its freshness the first gust of the thick black smoke that poured forth from a large brewery hard by," and in this house the Kenwigs lived. The street is called Silver Street, but the houses have all been rebuilt. It might be a subject of speculation why Boz suppressed the names of some of his localities, and supplied others with the most perfect candour. Whatever was his reason

the result was a certain dramatic piquancy which increases the interest.

Just beyond the churchyard of St. George's-in-the-East, at Stepney, there is a court where Dickens placed the scene of Jasper's opium-smokings. The Rev. Harry Jones, rector from 1873-82, mentions that the old crone was known as Lascar Sal, and was living at the time he wrote, 1875. Mr. Jones also knew the John Chinaman of whom she was so jealous in her trade. The house was later pulled down to make room for a board-school. Mr. Platt often visited this opium den, and recalled the old pair that kept it. After their ejectment they wandered about, and then the old man died. "A friend of mine," goes on Mr. Platt, "purchased all his stock, his scales, opium lamp, and the rest; he refused to part with his pipe, but I succeeded in getting it after his death. It was made of an old flageolet."

After his first five novels, "Pickwick," "Oliver Twist," "Nickleby," "Curiosity Shop," "Barnaby Rudge," Dickens seem to have lost his taste for idealizing scenes and places. In his later stories, though he attempts this sort of description, the result is quite a different thing; he is far more minute and laborious in his touches, but he does

not convey the *tone* of the place. His last description of Rochester, in "Edwin Drood," has not the vividness and reality of the few strokes in "Pickwick."

BOZ'S LAWYERS.—DODSON AND FOGG, PERKER, &C.

DICKENS, in his pleasant way, always looked on Gray's Inn generally "as one of the most depressing institutions in brick and mortar known." He speaks of "its arid square, with the ugly old tiled tenements, the dusty windows, the bills 'To Let,' 'To Let,' the doorposts inscribed like gravestones, the crazy gateway swinging upon the filthy lane, the scowling, iron-barred, prison-like passages in Verulam Buildings, the mouldy, red-nosed ticket-porters with letter coffin plates (and why with aprons?)—the dry, hard, attorney-like appearance of the whole dust-heap"—a very vivid pictorial sketch, and expressing the scene with touches of wonderful vivacity.

Our author describes the residence of Dodson & Fogg, but under an artful disguise, which we can penetrate. He puts it in Freeman's Court, Corn-

hill, where it is not to be found. There is indeed a Newman's Court in Cornhill, where Mr. Allbut identifies the very house, at the farthest end, No. 4; which is still, he says, "associated with the legal business, being in possession of Messrs. Witterby and Co., law stationers." This, however, is not in accordance with Boz's system. We find a Freeman's Court close by, in Cheapside, on the Guildhall side of the street, and here, either by mistake or intention, he placed his solicitors' offices.

After his exciting interview, Mr. Pickwick desired to find a place where he could have a restoring glass of brandy and water, and consulted Sam. The latter promptly described an adjacent house of entertainment. He led the way from the Mansion House into Cheapside, taking the second court on the right, on going down which there would be found the last house but one on the same side of the way, i.e. the right, which was what was required. This alley is known as Grocers' Hall Court, and is closed at the bottom by an iron gate and railing, which opens on the yard of Grocers' Court. "Take the box," added Sam, "as stands in the first fireplace, 'cos there ain't no leg in the middle of the table." Mr. Allbut says the house was lately in the occupation

of one "Mr. Shepherd, gasfitter, but it is recollected that it was aforetime a restaurant of the old-fashioned sort." Canon Benham, who has bestowed a great deal of attention on this matter of Dickens's localities, believes that the house was further on, in Honey Lane, and where there is actually to be seen a table without this inconvenient leg; which is hardly probable after nigh sixty years interval.

One of the most perplexing things is why Mr. Pickwick should not have been at once compelled to pay the damages for which he was "cast." It surely did not rest with him, nor could it have been left to his choice. His property could have been "got at" somehow: his ample funds or snugly invested securities seized. In default of these, imprisonment was the *dernier ressort.*

When Mr. Pickwick was paying Dodson and Fogg their costs he broke out into very outrageous language, and called them "robbers" and conspirators—"mean, rascally, pettifogging *robbers.*" These words he repeated several times at the top of the stairs, and in the hearing of Perker and his clerk. This was surely actionable, and it is surprising that the firm did not take proceedings—in which they must have recovered damages. For

what was the "robbery," and where was the "rascality"? That they had acted for a client whose claims had been supported by the verdict of a jury? True, Perker threw out some rather enigmatical hints that "the working of the cognovit, the nature of the ostensible consideration, and the proof we can get together about the conduct of the firm" might be sufficient "to justify an indictment for conspiracy." This refers to the engagement entered into by Mrs. Bardell with the solicitors to satisfy their costs, an ordinary proceeding enough. Had they even prompted, or "got up" the action, this would not have amounted to "conspiracy."

But the firm would really have grounds for a second action. For even before they were assumed to have revealed their supposed villainy, and on the mere service of the writ, Mr. Pickwick in a fury declared that of all the "disgraceful and rascally proceedings," etc. He further called them "swindlers," and this simply because they had performed their duty to their client, and taken the purely mechanical step of serving a writ.

It must be said, too, that the plaintiff's taxed costs, £133 6*s.* 4*d.*, seem exceedingly moderate, considering it included all the stages and processes

of a rather heavy case. The damages £750 were moderate, considering Mr. Pickwick's position in life.

The partners are sketched in a few touches, but in masterly fashion. Dodson, "a plump, portly, stern-looking man with a loud voice." Fogg, "an elderly, pimply-faced, vegetable-diet sort of man, in a black coat and mixture trousers and small black gaiters." But their *signalement* is much more forcibly conveyed by their style of speech and manner. The simple Mr. Pickwick mildly asked what grounds of action they had against him. Dodson answered, sensibly enough, "We are guided entirely by the statement of our client. That statement, sir, may be true, or it may be false, it may be credible, or it may be incredible; but if it be true, and if it be credible, I don't hesitate to say our grounds of action are strong and cannot be shaken."

Though this is meant to convey a notion of professional villainy, it was really a most correct and judicious reply to Mr. Pickwick's "pumping" the solicitors.

This "cognovit" indeed seems to have been thought the most nefarious part of their proceedings. When Job Trotter rushed off to tell Perker

of Mrs. Bardell's arrest, he said, "it seems they got a cognovit out of her for the amount of 'em, directly after the trial." "By Jove," said Perker, "those are the cleverest scamps I ever had anything to do with." Lowten added, "the sharpest practitioners I ever knew." "Sharp," said Perker, "there's no knowing where to have them." But they may have fancied that it would have been highly disagreeable and inconvenient for Mr. Pickwick to have the lady under the same roof with him.

Mr. Dodson then "affectionately pressed" a paper copy of the writ on Mr. Pickwick—thus adroitly seizing the opportunity to "serve him." For this little "sharp" stroke there was some justification, for Mr. Pickwick had received notice of the action on the 28th August, with a request that he would furnish by return of post the name of his solicitor, who would accept service. Mr. Pickwick took no notice, but went out shooting, etc., when he got very intoxicated, and was put into the pound—and the date of his interview was September 3rd. Indeed, Mr. Pickwick from the beginning behaved in a most contemptuous and hostile fashion, and thus disentitled himself to any indulgence from the attorneys. When their clerk called

to serve the subpœna, he greeted him with "Show this gentleman out." "I suppose, sir," he said, his indignation rising as he spoke, "it is the intention of your employers to seek to criminate me on the testimony of my own friends." The astute clerk was not to be drawn. "For what other reason," pressed Mr. Pickwick, "are the subpœnas served upon them if not for this." The clerk good-humouredly replied, "Very good plant, Mr. Pickwick, but it won't do—no harm in trying, but there's little to be got out of me." Later, Sam was despatched to "pump" Mrs. Bardell, "for," as he rather cunningly impressed on Sam, "I have no objection to your endeavouring to ascertain how Mrs. Bardell herself seems disposed towards me; and whether it is really probable that this vile and groundless action is to be carried to extremity. I say, I do not object to you doing this, Sam, if you wish it."

No wonder Perker shook his head over this injudicious mission, and declared that it would have the look of an attempt at compromise—which it certainly had.

That, by the way, seems a mysterious sort of writ wherewith to commence an action for breach: we usually associate a *Capias* with seizure of the person—*Capias ad satisfaciendum.*

The truth is, Boz was rather at sea in these matters, and confused the various processes in an odd way. Almost bewildering to a lawyer are the proceedings that took place on Mr. Pickwick's arrest. When he insisted on going to the Fleet Prison, his solicitor declared, "we *must have a habeas corpus*," which writ, it seems, had to be obtained from a judge sitting at Sergeants' Inn. No counsel was instructed—indeed it appeared that only attorneys' clerks were engaged in the business before these functionaries. It seems extraordinary that a person should apply for this writ as part of the formalities on going to prison—instead of with a view to obtaining release—which was not thought of. It would seem, however, to have been some fiction for transferring the custody of Mr. Pickwick from the sheriff's officer to the custody of the tipstaff—who conveyed him to the Fleet. As we have seen, they had obtained "a cognovit" for the arrest from Mrs. Bardell, after the trial—not a very nefarious proceeding, though Perker affected to hint that it would help in the indictment for conspiracy. Another point, Mrs. Bardell was a "woman of straw" whose support was derived from letting lodgings. It was clear they had not even applied to her for the amount:

her furniture would not have paid a quarter of the £130 or so.

Why, then, was she arrested? Could it be that the astute practitioners anticipated what actually took place? Hardly. Much, too, is made of Mrs. Bardell's arrest by her solicitors. But after all, to whom were they to look for their costs, save to their client? No doubt they had said something of "taking up the case on spec"—but everyone knows the "common forms" of solicitors on such occasions. "Don't trouble yourself about the costs, we'll get them out of the defendant." No reputable solicitor ever would be bound by such loose talk. It is odd, by the way, that Perker should talk of Mr. Pickwick "paying the costs of the suit, both of plaintiff *and defendant*, into the hands of these Freeman's Court sharks!"—why not the defendant?

Not long since Mr. Frank Lockwood, Q.C., one of our leading forensic humorists, published a lecture on the legal humours of "Pickwick," which was delivered both at York and at Hackney. There is, however, more of Dickens than of Lockwood in the book, no less than sixty out of one hundred pages being filled with extracts from the immortal work. Mr. Lockwood hardly pierces

below the surface, to the rich vein of Pickwickianism. We should, indeed, scarcely consider him a true Pickwickian. He somewhat suggests Serjeant Buzfuz's junior, Mr. Simpkin, that "promising young man of two or three-and-forty," whose happy method he has often had occasion to reproduce on the public stage. He considers that the low practitioner Pell is the most "interesting, as he certainly is the most humorous," of the legal group; that Dodson and Fogg were not nearly so black as Boz meant to paint them; that Perker, "if he had lived to-day, would undoubtedly have been tried for the part he took in the Eatanswill election." He oddly introduces us to a member of the Bar—Mr. Prosee—of whom all that Dickens literally says is, "Mr. Prosee, the eminent counsel." Mr. Lockwood, however, evolves a vast deal out of this meagre description. Mr. Prosee is "a person seldom alluded to, but of whom I wish to say something." And this is the "something":—"Ladies and gentlemen, I do not know how it is, but I have always associated Mr. Prosee with the Equity Bar. It may be that his name suggests it."

Mr. Lockwood's gloss on this barren allusion suggests an amusing passage in "Nickleby," where

Mr. Curdle, the patron of the stage at Portsmouth, is described as "having written a pamphlet of sixty-four pages, post octavo, on the character of the nurse's deceased husband in 'Romeo and Juliet,' with an inquiry whether he really had been 'a merry man' in his lifetime, or whether it was merely his widow's affectionate partiality that induced her so to report him. He had likewise proved that by altering the punctuation any one of Shakespeare's plays could be made quite different, etc." This pleasant bit of persiflage might stand by itself, and applies to fantastic Shakespearian criticism in general. But I find that in the very years during which "Nickleby" was being published, viz. 1838-9, Mr. R. Horne, the author of "Orion," was issuing in the *Chronicle* a series of papers called "Studies of Undeveloped Characters in Shakespeare," such, for instance, as the curious people Justice Shallow talks of—Portia's father, Caliban's mother, etc.

Nothing is more happy than Dickens's light touchings in dealing with the coarse enormities of a contested election. The specimens of corruption given are in a happy satirical vein; they are rather hinted at than described; any realism would have disturbed the effect. Perker's giving away seven-

and-sixpenny parasols, and making his candidate kiss all the babies, suggests to Mr. Lockwood this solemn reflection :—"Ladies and gentlemen, according to our modern ideas, this account does not do much to raise Mr. Perker in our estimation." Nor would Perker, if living now, be tried for his practices. At that time bribery and treating were accepted elements at elections. The law has since been changed, and Perker would have taken good care to conform to it.

Still it must be said that, contrasted with the pushing firm in Freeman's Court, Perker showed himself but an inefficient legal adviser. He was feeble and old-fashioned in his operations. In his first dealing with Jingle after the elopement he was clumsy, and his asking the adventurer how much he would take to give up the lady, was tantamount to an announcement that he was in that gentleman's power. The line taken ought to have been what is called "the high hand." That worthy, indeed, must have been "astonished at his own moderation" when he could accept such a trifling sum as a hundred pounds or so. For this meagre sum he resigned the hand of a lady of good connections, with a "few hundreds" in hand and the prospect of inheriting moneys on

the death of her mother. Perker, it will be remembered, remonstrated with Mr. Pickwick for offering Sam half a sovereign to show the room. An ordinary solicitor would have said, "Better leave the thing to me, my dear sir; I'll manage it"; instead of which this odd adviser rambles on in this style: "Now, my dear sir, the very first principle in these cases—if you place a matter in the hands of a professional man, you must in no way interfere in the progress of the business—*you must repose implicit confidence in him*. . . . My dear sir, excuse me. I shall be happy to receive any private suggestions of yours as *amicus curiæ*, but you must see the impropriety of your interfering with my conduct in the case with such an *ad capitandum*"—and all this about the number of a room.

Mr. Lockwood declines to accept the ugly story of the filing the declaration in the case of "Bullman *v.* Ramsey." This incident is a specimen of Boz's art; for, cruel and touching as it is, it is lightened and redeemed by the vivid way in which it is put before us. After all, says Mr. Lockwood, "it is only a story told by the clerk Wicks, *upon whom I do not think we can place much reliance*." But could better testimony be found for the living

realism of "Pickwick," which alone of all books actually fools us into believing that these were persons who had lived and moved? Wicks was telling his fellow-clerks of what had occurred only that very morning. Dickens, of course, intended that the story should be accepted as true; the novel itself suggests that it was true; but here we have our Mr. Lockwood dreaming that he is in Court, and not inclined "to place much reliance" on the statement of a character that is pure fiction! It is the same everywhere: the very hotel-keepers declare in advertisements, that "it was at this house Mr. Pickwick *stayed*"!

A masterly touch of smooth hypocritical vindication—which appeals to something and yet signifies nothing—is Dodson's calling for "the *precipe* book," to prove that all has been done fairly and "above board." "Here is the entry," he says: "'Middlesex, *capias*, Martha Bardell, Widow, *v.* Samuel Pickwick damages, £1500, Dodson and Fogg for the Plaintiff, August 27, 1827.' All regular, sir, perfectly." Comic as this is, it was really all that the solicitor *could* appeal to, for it was all that had been done. A solicitor, once remonstrated with for having sent us a too heavy bill of costs, answered in this strain: "To satisfy

your scruples and my own, I put the bill of costs into the hands of *my partner*, who himself went carefully through every item, and finds it all perfectly correct." This appeal—from Dodson to Fogg—was a practice at Freeman's Court.

We have had, by the way, in our hands, Boz's little memorandum-book of fees, service of papers, etc., when he was in Messrs. Blackmore's office.

Mr. Lockwood says of the famous trial, that it was intended for "broad fun, amounting to burlesque, and nothing more. Had the description been intended as a serious picture of the proceedings in a court of justice it would have been open to much serious dissection and examination." This is rather a narrow view. Allowing for some looseness of detail—which is of an ephemeral sort—it may be said that every touch in the picture is of the best satirical kind, and suggested by profound observation of human character. The intention to provoke a laugh is only secondary. The treatment is so large and faithful that we find the various traits—witnesses under examination, the devices of counsel, etc.—reproduced in our own day.

Tupman's was not a high-souled nature. There was a something a little *ungentlemanly* in taking

his friend's dress-coat surreptitiously and lending it to a vulgar stranger and play-actor. Making it one's own case, we should not like to wear it after such use. We have always wondered, by the way, how the adventurer managed to secure a dress, or at least, a clean shirt, for it is hinted almost in plain words that he was trying to conceal the absence of such an article.

The same lack of nice instinct is shown in Tupman's entrance into a perfect stranger's house, when he lingered behind to snatch "a kiss from Emma," one of the maid-servants. This seems coarse, and prepares us for worse. It will be remembered, too, that on the first news of Miss Wardle's elopement, his exclamation was, "He's got ten pounds of mine—stop him!" Not a word of the loss of his mistress. He was clearly miserly.

Who can forget the dispute over the brigand dress, when Mr. Pickwick called him old and fat, and declared that his "appearance in a two-inch tail" in his presence would be disrespectful! The violence that followed, all but culminating in an assault, led to a most painful scene, which we would well forget. But it spoke volumes for the relations of the two men, and showed that Tupman resented his so-called leader's assumption of

authority. There was not a single instance of such rebellion on the part of the two others. It was thus a nice accurate touch to show the elderly Tupman rebelling against Mr. Pickwick's despotisms.

But a singular incident is his almost complete disappearance. After Mr. Leo Hunter's fête he is altogether lost to view, though his name is mentioned for decency's sake. Snodgrass and Winkle figure in new and pleasant adventures, but Tupman might as well have retired from the party altogether for anything that is heard of him. Even at the last pleasant dinner at Osborne's Hotel, Adelphi, when all the friends are gathered together, the arrival is mentioned of Snodgrass, Pickwick, and Winkle, but never a word of Tupman! It was ungracious to leave him out. What was he about? We could have spared a better man. At the end our author recollects him, and tells us that he went to live at Richmond.

What could have been the reason of this? I fancy it was owing to the working of certain epic laws which Boz felt himself powerless to resist. Winkle and Snodgrass had a certain interest attaching to them. They were human enough; they both had their love affairs, to which readers and

authors were drawn. Tupman, with his susceptibilities and his bulk, it was impossible to take seriously. After his exhibitions he seemed "played out." None of the followers, it will be noted, applied to him for assistance in any of their little adventures. He gradually became a mere cypher. At Bath we might have expected that he would have taken a new departure. Among the antiquated spinsters and dowagers he would have revelled. Winkle and Snodgrass were each furnished with nice wives. Tupman was not thought of at all. Why, however, could not he and the spinster aunt have been brought together again? It would have ended the book excellently.

THE TESTIMONY OF EVENTS.

TESTIMONY to the depth of Boz's observation in "The Pickwick Papers" is not merely the almost daily allusions or quotations, but the recurrence in real life of passages almost exactly similar. Not long since, in a breach of promise case in Mr. Justice Lawrence's Court, the late Sergeant Buzfuz re-appeared in the flesh, and began his speech by declaring that "not merely in 'the whole course of his professional experience, but never at any time, had facts more painful been brought before a jury. The plaintiff, gentlemen, the plaintiff was a young lady, the daughter of a gentleman deceased, who was at one time in the War Office. She lived with her mother and her two sisters, Kate and Jessie, in the peaceful and innocent atmosphere of a small preparatory school at Thornton Heath. Gentlemen," Mr. —— went on, in tender accents, "she was a young girl; she knew nothing of London

life ; she had been delicately and tenderly nurtured by a loving mother, and had lived a quiet country life at home, beloved of her two young sisters. Virtuous, poor—but, gentlemen, though poor, happy —knowing nothing and suspecting nothing of evil and deceit. Gentlemen, she got in the train for London Bridge, not knowing that in the same carriage was a person whom, for brevity, *I will call a man*." We have seen in country papers passages that almost seemed burlesque when put beside the leader in the *Eatanswill Gazette.* A Dublin paper once likened some of Boz's statements to " venomous reptiles *disporting themselves in a vessel of most disgusting filth*."

Lately, in Berlin, there came before " The Industrial Court," a case in which a hairdresser figured, who had in his employment a young man who, like the Fat Boy in " Pickwick," had an irresistible tendency to fall asleep at inconvenient times. Customers coming in to be shaved or to have their hair cut not only had to wake him up as a preliminary to the operation, but they were prepared to prove that at times it was not without considerable difficulty that they succeeded in doing so. The Court has decided in effect that while the hairdresser would have been perfectly justified in

getting rid of his assistant owing to the peculiarity complained of, he had no right to send him about his business without the usual notice.

Not long ago, a foreign lady in Soho, who was charged with keeping a disorderly house, disappeared, leaving her "bail" liable for 100*l.* The recognizances of her surety were consequently estreated, and it was stated by the police that the gentleman who had stood her friend was a "professional bail" who had given sureties in sums ranging between fifty and a hundred pounds in at least five cases. This revives the curious incident of the professional "bail" who offered his services to Mr. Pickwick.

The allusions and phrases in Pickwick have acquired a sort of archaic flavour, and their meaning is sought and hotly debated. I confess these Pickwickian debates have a great charm. The distance is so enlarging—it is nigh seventy years since—that the book has become almost a classic. Last year the well-known schoolmaster, Mr. Walter Wren, started a little controversy in one of the evening papers, on the meaning of one of Jingle's odd phrases. Mr. Wren wrote with due gravity, "that Jingle had said, 'Bottle stands; pass it round; way of the sun; *through the button-hole;* no

heel-taps.' We all of us know well 'way of the sun; no heel-taps,' but I can find no evidence of through the button-hole' having ever been current slang; it is not in Murray, not in Richardson, not in Halliwell, Nares, or Wedgwood. It is not in any slang dictionary I have access to. The button-holes of our coats are *always made on the left side*, which seems to show the origin of the phrase." I can fancy the shade of the genial Dickens laughing loudly at this speculation—though, as Elia asks, "Does a ghost laugh?" "Nares, Richardson," etc., is good, as well as the theory drawn—and fine-drawn too—from tailorship. Some wise folk joined in the discussion, one urging that: "With reference to Mr. Wren's 'Pickwick Puzzle,' an explanation which seems to lie on the face of it (so to speak) is that the word 'button-hole' is a metaphor, coined by Mr. Jingle on the spur of the moment, signifying the well-known fissure, or gap, in the human countenance commonly called 'the mouth.' The meaning would thus be 'Pass it round—way of the sun—toss the liquor—and leave no heel-taps.' Forty years ago it was common enough—it may be so still; alas! I know not why—for children to allude to anything swallowed as having gone down 'the red-lane'; a metaphor for

the throat not more far-fetched than 'button-hole' for the mouth. Mr. Jingle had all the fine imagination, no less than all the fine carelessness, of a child.—W. H."

But Mr. Wren gravely argued against this theory: "I am afraid the words of the whole sentence are against 'W. H.' '"Beg your pardon, sir," said the stranger (Jingle), "bottle stands—pass it round —way of the sun—through the button-hole—no heel-taps "—and he emptied his glass, which he had filled about two minutes before, and poured out another, with the air of a man who was used to it.' Tupman was to pass the bottle, not to drink its contents. The words 'no heel-taps' seem to refer to the five words which follow."

But presently a man who appeared to know his subject, possibly a professor of the folk-lore, appeared on the scene. His show of learning was prodigious:—"Mr Walter Wren's professed solution is too literal. 'Through the button-hole' is a figure, and has nothing to do with the course taken by the bottle. 'The button-holes of our coats are always made on the left side, which seems to show the origin of the phrase.' Indeed it does not. This literalness is quite Caledonian. It is connected with 'no heel-taps,' not with the 'way

of the sun.' It seems to mean genuine, fair drinking, and is probably slang for the mouth of the drinker or the mouth of the bottle.

"Mr. Wren tells us that he has turned to his Murrays, Richardsons, Nares, etc., without result. He teaches young ideas their shooting, yet he cannot recall in his 'Tom Jones' Thwackum's speech, 'Put your liquor down *through the button-hole*.' Has he read, in his Smollett, Trunnion's boast, 'I can put a bottle through my button-hole with any man'? As for his Murray, Nares, and Co., I would remind Mr. Wren of a curious little work which he may not have seen, 'Proverbial Phrases,' by one Jones, a Welsh parson, *circa* 1780, and who quotes this very form, 'Through the "button-hole"—*i.e.* through the mouth. Toper's phrase.' Did he think, too, of consulting his Professor Skeat—best of all modern authorities? In a thoughtful paper contributed to the 'Etymological Journal' (July, 1867) we find "Through the button-hole: a popular phrase for drinking fairly—*i.e.* taking in the wine through the mouth.' This is conclusive. It is curious that the French should be familiar with the same form of expression. Dumoulin (*Dict. des Proverbes*) has '*Mettre bouteille sur boutonnière, i.e. boire. Moi*

d'ivrogne': an explanation which I note Littré quotes with approbation. Dumoulin, I may add, was the most learned philologist of his day, and a professor at the Collège De France.

"Is Mr. Walter Wren now answered? *Gare* Pickwick in future, I would advise him, and attend to his ferulas. Above all, let him not fancy that because he cannot find something in 'Nares, Murray, Haliwell, etc.,' it is not to be found elsewhere. Boz knew well what he was about.—Yours,

"J. DOWLER.

"*The Crescent, Bath.*"

This seemed convincing, all save the signature, "*J. Dowler, The Crescent, Bath,*" and the appearance of this travelling companion of Mr. Pickwick ought to have awakened suspicion. But Mr. Wren accepted the "authorities" quoted, and repelled, with much heat, the insinuation that he was ignorant of his Dickens. It does look, however, as if the whole was a "flam," as it is called. Indeed, the slightest investigation shows that most of the books quoted were about as imaginary as the farcical names on Dickens's "dummy" shelves at Gadshill. Professor Skeat wrote no "thoughtful paper" on the phrase; there is no "Dumoulin"

with his "*Dict. des Proverbes*"—in short, Mr. Walter Wren was royally "hoaxed."

The extraordinary way in which Dickens' allusions and characters have become mixed with our social life could not be better illustrated than by the following illustrations taken from an evening paper, the *Pall Mall Gazette* :—

"We have every sympathy with Samuel Weller, driver of an omnibus, whether he spells them with a 'wee' or not. Having a bad cold, and being wet through, he was tempted at the end of a journey to 'take a drop of ginger-brandy.' It was suggested to him by a gentleman 'as was riding outside till it got too much.' Why an unfortunate driver who sits on his box for twelve, fourteen, and fifteen hours a day in all weathers should be harshly treated if he leave his coach for two minutes, is more than we or a friendly public can understand, and we are glad to see the magistrate took the same view, and dismissed Samuel. So all's well that ends well; but as his father might have said, 'whether it was worth while going through so much to get so little, as the little boy said ven he got to the end of the alphabet, we don't know, but we rayther doubt it.'"

It will be noted how dramatic and effective the

illustration is, and how pointed ; and also what a pleasant tone of comedy is infused into the description. We are glad to meet our old friend again in such a situation, and our sympathies are, in consequence, enlisted on the side of his successor. It is this large fashion of treatment, which suits every era and generation (just as Scott's did), that produces this happy effect.

When the wretched Southend murderer, James Canham Read, was waiting his trial, he wrote a strange "hectoring" letter to a friend in which, speaking of his prospects, and the reports that were current about him, he said that some incidents "should teach people to suspend their judgment till after the trial. I daresay for the most part they derived their information from a certain electioneering programme *of the good old Buzfuz pattern, with the indispensable accompaniment of chops and tomato sauce, ad lib.*" Thus even in this critical moment, in tragedy as well as in comedy, did the irresistible Pickwickian influence make itself felt.

A few years ago it was mentioned casually in the papers, that a boy near Peterboro' had swallowed twenty-eight plum-stones. His mother administered an emetic, and he recovered. Jack Hopkins'

extravagant, farcical story about the "necklas'" —who will forget Boz's comic recitation of the story !—is thus supported. But, it will be said plum-stones are improbable, and in nature not as the stones of a "necklas'." We read in the superintendent's annual report of the Chailey Industrial Schools, this entry: "An addle-headed lad swallowed fifteen marbles, fortunately without serious consequences." Who shall call the incidents in Pickwick "fanciful out of nature" after this ?

A truly extraordinary coincidence is recorded in "Notes and Queries." Some one found in the parish register of Shelford, Northamptonshire, this entry, "1563 ; 5th January. Dorothie Twiste, daughter of Oliver Twiste."

It was rather bold of our author to select as the title of his book "Dombey and Son," considering that there was in Fenchurch Street "Dombey and Son, high class tailors, American and Colonial outfitters." No doubt the "high class firm" in question may have seized on the chance for bold advertisement, and perhaps emphasized the "and Son" to make it fit the title of the novel.

In a case before Mr. Justice Mathew, tried in March, 1895—and in which oddly enough the author's son was engaged—this firm was indirectly

concerned. When Mr. Dickens remarked "and a very well-known name—in the city": "Dear, dear," exclaimed the judge. "What, going on still!" Did he mean the firm or the story?

Another curious illustration of the interest taken in "Pickwick" is afforded by the fact that some years ago the *Sporting Times* made a serious inquiry into the amount and character of the liquors imbibed in the course of this story. Brandy and water seemed to be the favourite beverage. A return of the number of kisses given, would be as curious, and it has been ironically suggested that a dissertation on the clothes of Pickwick would lead to some odd results. It is easy, however, to be funny on small topics; but such inquiries would certainly be interesting as a contribution to the study of our social life and manners fifty years ago. Lately an ingenious person, with time on his hands, made an elaborate comparison between "Vanity Fair" and "Pickwick" as to the frequency of meals, drinks, etc., and discovered that in the former there were one hundred and twenty such occasions and scenes; in the latter, only one hundred!

LONDON LOCALITIES.

THERE is a tendency nowadays to accept the truth of statements made by certain critics that Dickens is scarcely read now, that his humour is unintelligible to the rising generation—that it is forced—not "up-to-date"—in short, that Boz is "gone out." I have always myself been curious to ascertain the truth of one of these assertions, that young people are indifferent, and make it a point to ask any boys and girls I meet what they think of him and whether they read him. I invariably find that they always confess to huge enjoyment and relish of the author. Some discount must, of course, be allowed for the change in manners and taste. The humour of the day is much thinner and milder, and there is the old-fashioned garb of phrase allusion, &c., to be got over. Pickwick, Nickleby, and others of the early works must be

laughed at, save where the sense of humour is totally deficient. The situations and characters belong to all eras.[1]

The publishing offices where Dickens's stories were issued always seem to have a curious interest.

[1] My friend Mr. Lilly lately delivered a lecture at the Royal Institute, in which he gave Dickens but a low place in the rank of humorists. The truth is, there are two Dickens: Dickens at his best and at his worst His later manner, that of "Our Mutual Friend," for instance, lacks spontaneousness, and, being nearer our own day, is more likely to come under the ken of the modern reader. But to relish old sprightly runnings, you must have been brought up on "Pickwick" and "Nickleby." But for those who talk of "buttressing a waning reputation," a few figures will suffice. The editor of *The Westminster Gazette* lately obtained from Messrs. Chapman and Hall returns of their sales in the case of "Pickwick" alone. Of the

	Sold.
Original edition, from July, 1862, to March, 1891...	7,250
Library edition (16*s.*), December, 1857, to January, 1884	14,500
Popular Library edition, June, 1879, to May, 1890	7,750
Charles Dickens' edition (4*s.*), May, 1867, to November, 1891	219,750
Illustrated Library edition, 2 vols. (20*s.*), July, 1873, to March, 1891	7,000
Crown edition (5*s.*), March, 1890, to June, 1892 ...	12,000
Cabinet edition (3*s.*), December, 1879, to December, 1888	32,000
2*s.* edition, June, 1866, to 1891	250,250
Household edition (5*s.*), 1873 to 1891	118,000
Pictorial edition (3*s.* 6*d.*), March, 1891, to June, 1892	5,000
Édition De Luxe (1000 copies, 42*s.*)	1,000

In short, the sale is now *three times* what it was twenty years ago, and there were four times as many copies sold in 1892 as in 1869, the year before his death. So much for Boz "going out!"

"Chapman and Hall" are names that seem popularly associated with his work. Before 1850 they were at 186, Strand, now the site of Messrs. W. W. Smith's offices. Later they came to 193 Piccadilly, now held by a tea warehouse. With what reverence I used to enter this august establishment, and what a bustle there was in those days! I remember "little Hall," as Dickens used to call him, a brisk personage; with the energetic Frederick Chapman[1] then—circa, 1857—at the head of affairs. That was the beginning of a long friendship and connection—social as well as professional—spreading over some forty years. He was a pleasant being, very sanguine and fond of enjoyment, very hospitable—as I have reason to know.

Nothing could be more dramatically appropriate as a scene for exciting events—or was such a short time since—than the group of

[1] Many and many a book of mine has he brought into the world, and I think with pleasure of our many talks in his sanctum, when some new scheme was debated, or settled upon. He died on March 1, 1895. I had not met him for some time, but about a fortnight before his death, being in the neighbourhood, I fortunately went in to see him. He was latterly a constant invalid and imprisoned at his house, so I sat with him for an hour or more. One of those chance meetings which one remembers with mixed feelings of gladness and sorrow.

courts and alleys at the side of Lincoln's Inn. Would we call up Krook and his "rag and bone shop," Miss Flite above the wretched "mews," also the "Sol's Arms" adjacent, Snagsby close by, and we have only to walk out from the Inn by that curious narrow passage, and there they are alive before us—so suitable are the localities. This flagged passage strays about and about in a straggling picturesque way. As we come from the Inn we see old high-roofed, shaggy eye-browed buildings looking down on us. The passage then breaks into two—joined together by an intervening one—namely, Chichester Rents and Bishop's Court. At the corner of Bishop's Court, and next the Inn wall ("blinded by the wall of Lincoln's Inn" he tells us), we find Krook's shop, now Whitechurch's, a carpenter's, a gloomy mouldering old house with a stair opening on the street like a cabin stair.

At the next corner, that of Chichester Rents, we find the "Old Ship" tavern, to which Dickens has given the name of "The Sol's Arms." Here the inquest was held, and the harmonic meetings, where little Swills sang. Our author had no doubt noted, as we have often done, in the Hampstead Road, a tavern with this name. When I last wan-

dered through these narrow and uncomfortable courts and alleys—not very much to be envied—the workmen were hard at work in the dust of levelling and rebuilding. The "Breakers" had quite cleared away a rare old tavern in the Rents, with framed overhanging windows, which Mr. Herbert Railton was just in time to sketch. This, however, had not the importance or size of the "Old Ship," which was well suited to "Inquiches."

I remember the absurd incidents of misplaced enthusiasm when a discovery was made, or was supposed to be made. It was announced that Dickens's actual "Curiosity Shop" was to be levelled, the outside boarded up, etc. There was a regular rush to see it for the last time. "All day long the narrow pavements of Portsmouth Street were besieged by a crowd of visitors, who had journeyed from all parts of London to have a last look at the house of Little Nell. They stood four deep in front of the 'Crooked Billet,' staring curiously over the way at the rickety old timber house with a projecting story, on whose plaster face was inscribed its name, and how it was immortalized by Charles Dickens. Here and there was an artist, with numbers of Americans. It had

been always one of the 'sights' for these eager strangers. They were seen to take off their hats with reverence as they entered, and asked all sorts of questions about Quilp, and the old grandfather, as though they had been living persons who resided in the house. Some of the ladies shed tears as they wandered over the rooms and talked of little Nell. Miss Mary Anderson was conspicuous in her excited interest, and conferred the freedom of her theatre on the occupant of the house." A singular tribute—unreal and far-fetched as it is—to the spell that Dickens has always exercised. That scene took place many years ago, but the old house has been spared, and has contrived to linger on ever since.

There is in Parliament Street, just at the corner of Derby Street, that which always seems to be one of the most striking and touching localities which are associated with the name of Dickens. Here is an old public-house, vamped up and modernized, and in good condition generally—"The Red Lion"—and a very animated image of that animal, modelled with some spirit, ramps forward over the entrance. I pass this often, usually once a day, and feel towards him much as I do to the great white horse over the door

of the Ipswich inn. It is associated with that sad story of hardship during the evil "blacking-bottle" days, as they might be called, piteous and tragic indeed—just as Dickens supplied.

Dickens, in his sad journal of the old childish days, describes how one evening, when he had been on some errand for his father, he entered his public house, "still there, though altered, at the corner of a short street leading into Cannon Row, and said to the landlord behind the bar, 'What is your ale—the *very best* ale—a glass?' The occasion was a festive one for some reason; I forget why. 'Twopence,' says he. 'Then,' says I, 'just draw me a glass of that, if you please, with a good head to it.' The landlord looked at me in return, over the bar from head to foot with a strange smile on his face, and instead of drawing the beer, looked round the screen and said something to his wife, who came out from behind it, with her work in her hand, and joined him in surveying me. Here we stand, all three before me now, in the study in Devonshire Terrace. The landlord in his shirt-sleeves leaning against the bar window frame, his wife looking over the little half door, and I, in some confusion, looking up at them from outside the partition. . . . They served me with the ale;

and the landlord's wife, opening the little half door and bending down, gave me a kiss that was half admiring, half compassionate, but all womanly and good, I am sure." A charming, touching sketch, indeed, and in his best manner.

Uncle Sol's "Wooden Midshipman" is an almost living character in "Dombey and Son," and shows the author's art in vivifying inanimate things for the purposes of his story. Every one has a sort of affection for this little figure. Up to the year 1881, he was flourishing, and taking his observations at a house in Leadenhall Street, nearly opposite the old India House. Mr. Ashby Sterry found him out. The figure was at the door of Messrs. Norie and Wilson, an old-established firm of nautical instrument makers. "A more popular little officer," says Mr. Sterry, in his pleasant style, "it would be impossible to imagine. At one time the little man used to get his knuckles severely abraded by passing porters carrying loads, and was continually sent to have a fresh set of knuckles provided. Americans offered to buy him, to carry him away to New York. However, his house was demolished, and the firm removed to No. 156, Minories, where he is now to be seen as fresh and lively as ever, though his surroundings are

not as appropriate as they used to be. The visitor was taken over the old premises, its panelled stairs with massive well-carved hand-rail, and, with kindled imagination, fancied he was in the very room "where Rob the Grinder kept his pigeons."

For Furnival's Inn Boz had naturally an affection, for here was the scene of his earliest triumph, his taking the town by storm; here, in No. 15, was written the middle portion of "Pickwick." He was glad to place John Westlock's rooms here, when he was writing "Chuzzlewit." In the middle is Wood's Hotel, where Rosa Budd, in "Edwin Drood," lodged on coming to town—but, as I write, Wood's Hotel is "coming down."

If we be lovers of Dickens—and most of us surely are—we shall like to see him at the interesting period of his life when, just married, he was finishing his "Pickwick," and was in the opening glory of his reputation. Then he fixed himself in a compact little street, in that rather dingy quarter of Gower Street (No. 48), the tone of which is imparted to its surroundings. It is a small mansion, indeed, but compact and snug to a degree. I have gone over it with curious feelings,[1] and not without awe and interest have I stood

[1] As we walk through this prosaic Gower Street region, it is

in the parlours, where the great book was written. It is curious what a thoroughly old-fashioned tone pervades the place. It is now "let off" in "apartments."

Barnard's Inn, just opposite, which touches Staple Inn, he thought poorly of. "It was," he says comically, "the dingiest collection of shabby buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner, as a club for Tom Cats."

"We entered this haven," says his Pip, "through a wicket-gate, and were disgorged by an introductory passage into a melancholy little square that looked to me like a flat burying ground. I thought it had the most dismal trees in it, and the most dismal sparrows, and the most dismal cats, and the most dismal houses (in number half-a-dozen or so), that I had ever seen. . . . A frowsy mourning of soot and smoke attired this forlorn creation of Barnard, and it had strewed ashes on its head, and was undergoing penance and humiliation as a mere dust-hole. Thus for my sense of sight."

This was rather a jaundiced view. The truth is, it is a most picturesque little enclosure. "Boz"

curious to recall that when Lord Eldon was living there, at the beginning of the century, he had the most beautiful view from his windows, that stretched as far as Hampstead and Islington. The inhabitants grew, and were proud of, their grapes, nectarines, and peaches.

must have seen it on some dismal day, when it would have looked decayed and forlorn enough. The appearance of such old-world relics depends on the mood of the visitor.

When Dickens was writing "Oliver Twist," he chose for one of the last, most dramatic scenes —that of Bill Sikes' catastrophe—a very wild locality, Jacob's Island, close to Bermondsey, "near that part of the Thames on which the church at Rotherhithe abuts. To reach this place the visitor has to penetrate through a maze of close, narrow and muddy steeets." Further on he comes to "tottering houses, fronts projecting over the pavement, dismantled walls that seem to totter as he passes, windows guarded by iron bars. . . . Beyond Dockhead, in the borough of Southwark, stands Jacob's Island, surrounded by a muddy ditch six or eight feet deep, and fifteen or twenty wide when the tide is in, once called Mill Pond, but known in these days as Folly Ditch. It is a creek or inlet from the Thames, and can always be filled at high water by opening the sluices of the lead mills. At such a time, a stranger looking from one of the wooden bridges thrown across it at Mill Lane will see the inhabitants of the houses on either side lowering, from their back

doors and windows, bucket, pails, etc., in which to haul the water up; crazy wooden galleries, common to the backs of half-a-dozen wooden houses; poles thrust out on which to dry the linen, that is never there; wooden chambers thrusting themselves out above the mud, and threatening to fall into it, as some have done; dirt-besmeared walls and decaying foundations; all these ornament the banks of the Folly Ditch."

A graphic, vivid sketch, suggesting the island on the Seine in the days of the old Hotel-Dieu. The novelist knew it well, and was often in his childish days one of the strangers who surveyed it with astonishment. For it was not far from the Marshalsea Prison. It was then in a strange state of dilapidation—the houses unroofed, the doors falling into the street. The place was in Chancery; the houses had no owners; anyone came and took possession as he liked. The ditch was filled up in 1851.

"In the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty it was publicly declared in London by *an amazing Alderman* that Jacob's Island did not exist, and never had existed. Jacob's Island continues to exist, like an ill-bred place as it is, in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven, though improved, and much changed." This

amazing Alderman was old Sir Peter Laurie, whose fantastic proceedings on the bench long furnished amusement to the town. It was to this appropriate scene that our author made Sikes fly for escape, and it was from the roof of one of the houses over the ditch that he attempted the daring scheme which ended in his destruction.

By-and-by the figures of Dickens and Thackeray will fade into the distance, and become like those of Fielding, Goldsmith, Johnson and others. One of the pleasures of London exploring is that we can visit the houses of these eminent writers, and call up their ghosts as it were. We enter the Athenæum Club—"Minerva's Own" as it might be called—where many a pleasant tradition is preserved. At the table in the window, facing the United Service Club, Dickens was fond of having his lunch. In the hall "by the coats" (after their Garrick Club quarrel) he and Thackeray met, shortly before the latter's death. A moment's hesitation, and Thackeray put out his hand, which was grasped warmly, and they were reconciled.[1] My friend, the Rev. Francis Waugh,

[1] Thackeray built for himself a cheerful mansion in Kensington Palace Gardens. It is at the bottom, close to the entrance; a very pleasing specimen of the Queen Anne style, with its cheerful red brick and simple but effective

in his pleasing monograph on the club, has collected all these interesting traditions.

"George's Shooting Gallery," which was a great brick building, composed of bare walls, floors, roof, rafters and skylights, "was situated" up a court, and a long whitewashed passage "in that curious region lying about the Haymarket and Leicester Square" — which I should be inclined to locate as somewhere in Panton Street.

Just by the new Bow Street Police Office is a little paved court. I never pass it without giving it a look of interest and curiosity, owing to an allusion to the place in "Nickleby." And yet this is but an allusion, a mere mention of the name. That delightful character, Mr. Snevellicci, when at the supper at Portsmouth, said, "I am not ashamed of myself; Snevellicci is my name. I am to be found in Broad Court, Bow Street, when I am in town. If I'm not at home let any man ask for me at the stage door." Is not this a large sketch in little of the rambling old actor, and his style? The introduction of Broad Court is an artistic stroke meant to convey an intimate connection with the great playhouse over the way,

lines. It is surrounded by luxuriant trees, which have grown up since his time. Here he lived, and here he died.

which, however, did not exist, Mr. Snevellicci not enjoying an engagement there.

We know from the account given by Mr. Forster the miseries of those early days when Boz was put to the "blacking business." All the localities and characters reappear in his later books, notably in "Copperfield." The boy recalls the owners of a lodging in Lant Street, Borough—the man "a fat, good-natured, kind old gentleman, with a quiet old wife, and an innocent, grown-up son." Lant Street was also Bob Sawyer's residence; and we feel he could not with propriety have lived anywhere else.

Bob Fagin, one of his companions, supplied a name for the Jew in "Oliver Twist." The strange old-clothes man in "Copperfield" to whom David sold his "veskit" under such painful circumstances was a drunken second-hand bookseller in the Hampstead Road—serving out the price in the same tantalizing way.

The mysterious mansion in which the mysterious Mrs. Clennan lived is described as mysteriously. Her son, when he went to seek it, "crossed by St. Paul's, and went down at a long angle, almost to the water's edge, through some of the crooked and descending streets which lie (and lay more

crookedly and closely then) between the river and Cheapside . . . passing silent warehouses and wharves, and here and there a narrow alley leading to the river, where a wretched letter bill 'Found Drowned' was weeping on the wet wall—he came at last to the house he sought. An old brick house, so dingy as to be all but black, standing by itself within a gateway." This story is really the story of a house, conducted with great art, and gathering gloom to the close. I have often seen the old house, which exactly answers this description; there could be no mistaking it. A very striking old structure it was, very forlorn and abandoned, and long in a state of ruin. Not long before its demolition I was taken over it, and was struck with its spacious gloomy chambers. It stood within an enclosure, as described. But the ground was coveted, and it was presently pulled down.

One of his happiest sketches is that of "Mews Street, Grosvenor Square," Mr. Tite Barnacle's residence:—

"It was a hideous little street of dead wall, stables, and dung-hills, with lofts over coach-houses inhabited by coachmen's families, who had a passion for drying clothes, and decorating their

window-sills with miniature turnpike-gates. The principal chimney-sweep of that fashionable quarter lived at the blind end of Mews Street. . . . Yet there were two or three small, airless houses at the entrance end of Mews Street, which went at enormous rents, on account of their being abject hangers-on to a fashionable situation ; and whenever one of these fearful little coops was to be let (which seldom happened, for they were in great request) the house-agent advertised it as a ' gentlemanly residence in the most aristocratic part of the town, inhabited solely by the élite of the beau monde.' "

This was a generic description : and there are places of the same pattern to be found in Mayfair, and almost more suitable specimens. The author did not mean that " Mews Street " itself led out of Grosvenor Square, but that it was in the district or neighbourhood. I have no doubt that he had in his eye Farm Street, Grosvenor Square—that curious compound, a street, and yet a stable lane—where is the well-known Jesuits' Church. It exactly answers to the description, even to the " miniature turnpike gates." Here are the lofts over the coach-houses, and the small airless houses where genteel people live.

Our author is also very caustic on that curious street, Harley Street, whose "note" he touches in the happiest way :—

"Like unexceptionable society, the opposing rows of houses in Harley Street were very grim with one another. Indeed, the mansions and their inhabitants were so much alike in that respect that the people were often to be found drawn up on opposite sides of dinner-tables, in the shade of their own loftiness, staring at the other side of the way with the dulness of the houses. Everybody knows how like the street the two dinner-rows of people who take their stand by the street will be. The expressionless uniform twenty houses, all to be knocked at and rung at in the same form, all approachable by the same dull steps, all fended off by the same pattern of railing ; all with the same impracticable fire-escapes, the same inconvenient fixtures in their heads ; and everything, without exception, to be taken at a high valuation—who has not dined with these ?"

Who too, as he passes through the street—seeking some physician it may be—has not felt something of this kind, difficult to define, but which Dickens has put into exact language ?[1]

[1] That painstaking explorer, Mr. Albutt, tells us with due

Merdle, as is well known, was intended as a portrait of the notorious John Sadleir. "If I might make so bold as to defend the extravagant conception Mr. Merdle," he says in his preface to the story, "I would hint that it originated after the Railroad Share epoch, in the time of a certain Irish bank, etc." There is a slight confusion here, as the Railroad Share epoch was long before the days of the Tipperary bank. Sadleir's suicide took place in the descending ground just behind Dickens's favourite "Jack Straw's Castle."

In "Little Dorrit," we find described a curiously named place "with old rustic road towards a suburb of note, where there were royal hunting seats"—viz., Bleeding Heart Yard. There is a place of the name close by Hatton Garden, in Charles Street. It might be fancied that Bleeding Heart Yard was too fantastic a name for reality; but it is still to be found in the London directory. It is said to have obtained the name from a curious legend. The Lady Hatton had made an unholy compact with the Evil One,

gravity that "in this street lived that great financier and swindler *Mr. Merdle*, who had his residence in one of the handsomest of these handsome houses; *but it would be, perhaps, invidious to point out any particular location for the same*—Dickens himself having purposely omitted an exact address."

who when the time had expired came for her to this spot, and tore her heart out.

Hanging Sword Alley might be thought to be of the novelist's coinage, but it is to be found close to Whitefriars Street, out of Fleet Street.

In a little court out of the Strand, close by St. Mary's Church, we find that curious and interesting relic, the Old Roman Bath—a piece of genuine Roman work, always filled with the purest water, pouring in and out of it many tons a minute. Nothing seems to have escaped Dickens. The bath is of marble, and some centuries old, but the reservoir which supplies it was made by the Romans at the time of their conquest of Britain. David Copperfield, Dickens tells us, had "many a cold plunge in it." This is likely enough to be a mistake, as it is not the Roman bath but one adjoining that is used for bathing.

The old legal Inns are disappearing fast. As corporate bodies, many have been regularly extinguished; and it is almost piteous to see these quaint places gradually disappearing, or lingering on, waiting destruction. Clement's Inn, with its gardens and picturesque "garden house," is being gradually devoured by the builders. Clifford's

Inn is in a very forlorn condition, and may "go" at any moment. Lyon's Inn, and several others, have long since been swept away; a fragment of the wall of Lyon's is still to be found in Holywell Street —or Booksellers' Row, as it is now called—at the passage into the Strand, which is curiously marked by one of the old shop signs, a half moon and face. Staple Inn still remains, a delightful old straggling enclosure, full of variety. The dining-hall of such a place is almost invariably a picturesque, attractive little building, with its high roof and lantern or cupola. Dickens—who always seized on the salient grotesque point, such as would most attract the careless visitor—here tells of Mrs. Grewgious's house, which presented in black and white, over its ugly portal, the mysterious inscription :—

P
J. T.
1747.

"Perhaps John Thomas," or "Perhaps Joe Tyler." For a certainty P. J. T. was "Pretty Jolly Too." As we look at this legend over the door we feel the oddity of the thing, and every reader for the future will have the same quaint association in his mind. In the garden a few smoky spar-

rows twitter in the smoky trees as though they called to each other, "Let us play at courting."

Our author seemed ever to find a fascination in the subject of "Chambers" in these places, which seemed to suggest to him strange mysteries. At one time he had an idea of writing a regular story or series of stories on the subject. But he was constantly recurring to this one attractive theme. In "Pickwick" there are some stirring tales of "Chambers," particularly one incident that occurred in Clifford's Inn, and which was told at the "Magpie and Stump":—

"Curious little nooks," said Mr. Pickwick, "in a great place like London, these old Inns are"—which really expresses the general thought about such places. In most of his stories some dramatic scene or other is placed in "Chambers," Tom Pinch's library for instance; in "Edwin Drood" also. In the "Uncommercial Traveller" there is a chapter devoted to these Chambers legends.

Thackeray, Dickens's great competitor rather than rival, had little of this topographical instinct, and scarcely ever attempted to deal with localities, or give them a romantic interest. He simply introduced them by name in a matter-of-fact way. Sometimes, as in the case of Lord Steyne's resi-

dence, he would adopt a fictitious name, calling Cavendish Square "Gaunt Square." "Gaunt House," we are told, "occupies nearly a side of the square; the remaining three sides are composed of mansions that have passed away into dowagerism—tall, dark houses, with window-frames of stone or picked out of a lighter red. Little light seems to be behind those lean, comfortless casements now; and hospitality to have passed away from those doors, as much as the laced lackeys and link-boys of old times, who used to put out their torches in the blank iron extinguishers that still flank the lamps over the steps. Brass plates have penetrated into the Square—doctors, the Middlesex Bank, western branch. Nor is my Lord Steyne's palace less dreary: all I have seen of it is the vast wall in front, with the rustic columns in the great gate, and over the wall the garret and the bedroom windows and the chimneys." It might be thought that this was intended for Manchester Square, where stood the well-known Hertford Mansion; but none of the details apply. In Cavendish Square there is actually the branch bank; and the touches of the windows seen over the blank, and the red brick framing of the windows, can only apply to Cavendish Square.

Thackeray's method was rather to import and revive old forms of speech, old fashions of social life, which he had diligently "made up" in his reading. He gathered all the "properties" of bygone generations, working them in with much art. This was but an artificial process, and mostly studious imitation of Fielding.[1]

In "Vanity Fair" we find a curious testimony to the influence of "Pickwick," and to the strange power exercised by even its most trifling allusions. What was this quotation? Simply "the opposite side of Goswell Street was over the way." There was nothing in this simple matter-of-fact announcement worthy of being introduced, or of being selected out of the whole fund of humour that is in the book; but its significance is in this—that it "strikes a note"—the whole scene or scenes connected with Goswell Street was before the writer's mind: he saw Mrs. Bardell, the boy, and the amiable lodger, and the awkward intrusion of the Pickwickians; and a smile rose to his lips.

[1] The author of "Vanity Fair," unconsciously no doubt, borrowed a few details from the older writer, such as the two jackals of Lord Steyne, Messrs. Wegg and Wenham, who were clearly suggested by Pike and Pluck, Sir Mulberry's henchmen. Also Mr. Sedley's unhappy "native servant," which may have been suggested by Major Bagstock's "native."

Even the name "Goswell Street," without anything more, induces a smile; to this hour one cannot walk through it without a feeling of comedy arising.

The practice of introducing portraits of living personages adopted by Dickens, was followed by Thackeray in the case of some of his important characters. The most signal instance is that of his notorious Marquis of Steyne, a terrible sketch, drawn from the "wicked" Marquis of Hertford. In the earliest issue an almost exact likeness was given in one of the author's etchings, but this was at once altered or cancelled. Needless to say, this gives an extraordinary value to the first issue, in which the dealers find their account. In the picture of Mrs. Leo Hunter's Fancy *Fête*, it will be recollected, Pott was an exact likeness of Lord Brougham, but this was presently changed. The originals of Colonel Newcome, Blanche Amory, and Foker were said to be members of the Garrick Club. Costigan and his daughter were suggested by Miss O'Neil and her father. The O'Mulligan was a well-known Irish member. Quite an Irish storm was raised by an uncomplimentary allusion to "Catherine Hayes"—an operatic singer of the day—and the writer had to

explain that a notorious murderess was intended. A mention of "Laura Bell" was certainly incautious, as a lady bearing that name was at the time a good deal before the public.

An American paper, *The Star* of New York, announced that Ethel Newcome was drawn from "the beautiful Miss Sallie Baxter, who married Mr. Hampton, and died during the Civil War under the saddest circumstances."

On the grave of Major Carmichael Smyth at Ayr, who died in 1861, are these words:—

"AD SUM!"

A quotation from "The Newcomes" follows, and an announcement that he was laid here "by his stepson, W. M. Thackeray." Mrs. Ritchie, his daughter, explained that she had directed the inscription to be put on the stone "because I knew that Major Carmichael Smyth had suggested the character to my father."

Though it is not quite *à propos*, I cannot resist inserting a curious tribute to "Boz's" medical instinct displayed in "Pickwick" and other works. The *British Medical Journal* says that—

"None, except medical men, can judge of the rare fidelity with which he followed the great

mother through the devious paths of disease and death. In reading 'Oliver Twist' and 'Dombey and Son,' or 'The Chimes,' or even 'No Thoroughfare,' the physician often felt tempted to say, 'What a gain it would have been to physic if one so keen to observe, and so facile to describe, had devoted his powers to the medical art!' It must not be forgotten that his description of hectic (in 'Oliver Twist') has found its way into more than one standard work in both medicine and surgery (Miller's 'Principle of Surgery,' second edition, p. 46; also Dr. Aitkin's 'Practice of Medicine,' third edition, vol. i. p. 111; also several American and French books); that he anticipated the clinical researches of M. Dax, Broca, and Hughlings Jackson, on the connection of right hemiplegia with asphasia (*vide* 'Dombey and Son' for the last illness of Mrs. Skewton); and that his description of epilepsy in Walter Wilding, and of moral and mental insanity in characters too numerous to mention, show the hand of a master. It is feeble praise to add that he was always just, and generally generous to our profession. Even his descriptions of our Bob Sawyers, and their less reputable friends, always wanted the coarseness and, let us add, the *unreality* of Albert Smith."

DICKENS CURIOS.

AMONG the singular bibliographic developments of the day is the eagerness for early contemporary editions of Dickens's works; and it is no ephemeral craze, for the prices steadily increase every year. Nor is this so fantastic or meaningless a hobby as might be supposed; it seems to be justified by the actual typographical and pictorial merits of the books in question, which are limited in number, and cannot be renewed or supplied on demand. Another part of the attraction is the individuality of Dickens himself, which, as it were, overflowed in his writings; and also the personal share which he had in the preparation of the editions. This is proved by the fact that this "gust," as Johnson would call it, is usually for the particular works of the author where he exhibits this spontaneity to the full. These early works, it will be found, exhibit a sort of character and

individuality that is lacking in their fellows. For "Bleak House," "Dombey and Son," "Our Mutual Friend," "Little Dorrit," there is a comparative indifference, which is justifiable, as they are of the one type, and the illustrations are conventional and monotonous. "Machining," by this time had brought a dull uniformity, so that it is hardly possible to distinguish one impression from the other.

But, on the other hand, the "Sketches by Boz," "Pickwick," "Oliver Twist," "Nicholas Nickleby," "Master Humphrey's Clock," and the set of Christmas books have a dramatic *vivacity*, as it were, and a significance. There are innumerable variations and changes: the plates, print, paper, binding even, are of high merit and artistic value. Elaborate and costly as are the works of our time, they cannot be compared for individuality with these older works. It is impossible to take one of them in your hand and not be attracted. We are struck by the variety of the *format*—the shapes and treatment, which seem to be the result of the "form and pressure" of the author's exuberant versatility. The issues in portions or fragments, which were by-and-by to be a single volume, a number of distinct "parts" which were yet to be a whole, was

in itself a *bizarre*, quaint notion; yet here again the form was but the logical result of the author's treatment of his work. So with the tall, almost quarto shape of "Master Humphrey's Clock," which is altogether unique in its arrangement of the type and illustrations; and so, too, with the very elegant little set of Christmas Books, which are gems in their way.

In a work recently published, "The History of Pickwick," I have given very fully an account of all that could be collected in reference to the alterations, to the changes of artist, and the rest, in that book. There indeed seems to have been such a "superfœtation of vitality" in the work, that these changes and developments seemed to develop themselves spontaneously. They were owing a good deal to the buoyant spirits and irrepressible energy of the author, who was so exuberant in his ideas. Not only did the "numbers" differ from the completed work, but issues of the same number differed from each other. The study of the variations in the plates has become most elaborate, and these curious changes are not merely capricious or technical ones, but have a meaning, and therefore offer an interesting inquiry. It may be said, too, that the plates, for spirit and execution, are really

unique. It is enough to contrast them with those of any modern illustrated work to see their superiority. It is as though the artist had a share in the writing. They are regular pictures and scenes, full of life, movement, and animation. The figures move and have their being. As I have said, the author took his share in the composition, inspired and directed it.

The collector nowadays must perforce have his "Pickwick" in the original numbers, considering it logically as twenty separate divisions of a work, each complete ; for each number offers something characteristic of its own in the shape of addresses from the author, or advertisements, in a kind of natural growth or accretion. Early impressions are sought for with avidity. In their green wrappers they are carefully cleaned, smoothed, and even tenderly repaired and restored at the joinings and edges. Cases or boxes are made specially to hold and preserve them. The late Frank Marshall possessed, or believed that he possessed, the choicest and most perfect set of "Pickwick" in existence, though we have heard it stated by a dealer or two—probably envious—that though a good and "sound" copy, it must have been a little "*faked*," as it is called, or manipulated, like an old

picture. The reader will be interested by the following description of it, which fairly enough summarizes the "points" of a thoroughly good and correct "Pickwick."

"A remarkable copy of the 'Pickwick Papers,' in the original monthly parts, having every peculiarity that distinguishes the very earliest issue of each part throughout. The title runs: 'The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club. Containing a faithful record of the Perambulations, Perils, Travels, Adventures, and Sporting Transactions of the corresponding members, edited by "Boz," and illustrated with 43 etchings by R. Seymour, R. W. Buss, and "Phiz" (H. K. Browne).' A fine *untouched* copy, in the original twenty monthly shilling parts, with all the pictorial wrappers designed by Seymour. The following are some of the distinguishing features, marking the difference between this and an ordinary copy in parts: Part I.—On the front wrapper are the words 'With four illustrations by Seymour.' (The later issues have simply 'With illustrations.') On the back wrapper, outside, is the interesting address announcing the publication of the 'Library of Fiction.' The four etchings are from the plates *actually etched by Seymour himself*, not, as in later

issues, from those re-done by 'Phiz,' but called Seymour's. Part II.—On the front wrapper the words 'With four illustrations by Seymour,' as in Part I., and on the back wrapper the announcement of Part II. of the 'Library of Fiction.' Seymour had scarcely finished the third plate, 'The Dying Clown,' for this number when he committed suicide. There is the 'Address to the Public,' by Mr. Dickens, dated April, 1836, in this part. Part III.—On front wrapper are the words 'With illustrations by R. W. Buss.' (The artist's name is left out in later issues.) In this number is the first separate advertisement that appeared in Pickwick,' viz., a 12mo leaflet of 4 pp, page 1 of which reads: 'In a few days, price two shillings, Sunday under Three Heads, by Timothy Sparks,' and a verse of four lines, evidently written by Dickens. Page 2 announces, 'Now publishing, the "Pickwick Club," edited by "Boz," and each monthly part embellished with two illustrations by R. W. Buss.' On page 3, 'Now publishing, "The Library of Fiction," etc.' Page 4, some advertisements of travelling and hunting maps. This part has, of course, *the two etchings by Buss*, afterwards suppressed, and others by 'Phiz' substituted, and an interesting address by Charles

Dickens on 2 pp., announcing that the following numbers will be issued in an improved form. There is also a verbatim copy of a letter 'Boz' received from a gentleman who evidently thought very little of his work. At the end of the part is the 4-page advertisement of Rowland's 'Kalydor,' the first paid advertisement that appeared in the book. The back wrapper announces No. 3 of the 'Library of Fiction.' Part IV.—In this part the first illustration is one sent by 'Phiz' as a specimen of his work; in the right-hand corner of the plate are the letters N E M O. The second illustration bears no signature at all. *These are the very earliest impressions of these plates*, and were evidently struck off before 'Phiz' had executed the substituted plates in Part III. Parts V. to XX. are all the earliest issues, with all the advertisements and the two addresses in Parts X. and XV. The vignette title has the word 'Veller' on the sign-board, subsequently altered to 'Weller.' All the parts are dated on the wrappers 1836."

Of another copy offered for sale by Tregaskis, we are told it is "the original edition, bound up from the twenty shilling parts issued in green paper wrappers designed by Seymour, all of which

are here, and dated 1836; also the rare notices which appeared only in the earliest issue of Parts X., XV., and XVII., the 43 etchings of Seymour, Buss, and 'Phiz,' and 127 extra plates by Onwhyn, 'Phiz' and Seymour, the whole forming two volumes, demy 8vo, magnificently bound in whole polished maroon morocco, super extra, leather joints; the exterior perfectly plain, the interior a lovely doublée of blue morocco, Roger Payne tooling, watered silk fly-leaves, *uncut*, *leaves measure* $8\frac{3}{4}$ by $5\frac{3}{8}$. Price £30.

"Mention has been made by bibliographers of Dickens of the fact that he, in his anxiety that the illustrations of 'Pickwick' should be in perfect accord with the text, frequently had a plate altered several times and even cancelled while it was passing through the press, the result being that to a careful observer a considerable difference is apparent between plates of the earliest issue and those of a slightly later date—a comparison of these alterations forming an interesting study. The above copy contains some plates *in four such different states.* The engraved title and frontispiece each produced twice are here; the hanging sign on the title of the earlier issue, with the word 'Weller' spelt 'Veller,' forming the title of Volume

I. in this copy, and the corrected plate of later issue being placed at the commencement of Volume II. Nor were these differences confined to the plates alone—the signature of the artist, H. K. Browne, varied sometimes ; his earliest etching was signed 'Nemo,' one not at all, but most of them bore his sobriquet of 'Phiz.'

"These numbers must be of great interest to the Dickens Collector, as they contain the *whole of the illustrations in all states* (before letters, with lettered impressions of the plates, and with the addition of the publisher's name and address). Many of the etchings were collected by the late Crawford J. Pocock, Esq., of Brighton, and have been completed by the advertisers, and will serve to show the evolution of the illustration of the first edition of the 'Pickwick Papers.' *No less than ten copies of the first edition have been used to produce this remarkable copy.*"

Another dealer into whose hands it passed described it as "magnificent," and adds with perfect truth that "it is most striking, when these illustrations and those in ordinary copies are placed side by side, to see the entire difference. In all probability not more than some 200 or 300 of these earliest numbers were printed, and these were

not offered for sale to the general public, but sent hurriedly to the reviewers, after which use the great majority would find their way into the waste-paper basket, thereby greatly increasing their scarcity, and in consequence of which the advertisers do not hesitate to state that such another copy could not again be obtained at any price."

This comparison here alluded to is most striking indeed, for the first illustrations are delicate, velvety, and graceful; but the latter ones are hard and rough. It may be said here, that so markedly *individual* are the illustrations, that, presented without them, "Pickwick" always seems mutilated or abridged. And so absorbing was the fascination of "Pickwick," that numbers of artists were drawn into supplying fresh and fresh illustrations, all of which the collector is compelled to recognize. These parasitical growths are no doubt part of a disease; in nearly all cases they are discordant and inscrutable, and only serve to confirm the merits of the original designs. Strange to say, these are now set up as rarities, and partake of the favouring gale.

Evidence, therefore, of the enormous popularity of Dickens's early writing was the quantity of

these "extra illustrations" that were applied. For "Pickwick" there were the following:

1. The set of forty plates, by Alfred Crowquill, entitled "Pictures Picked from the Pickwickians," published by Ackermann in 1837. For these 15 guineas have been asked.

2. "Pickwickian Illustrations," by Heath. Twenty in number. Published by McLean, of the Haymarket, in 1837.

3. Strange's Illustrations. Five in number.

4. Sir John Gilbert's. Seventeen in number.

5. Pailthorpe's. Twenty-four etchings.

6. Onwhyn's. Thirty-two extra illustrations by "Sam Weller." In 1846 Onwhyn issued eight more, to illustrate the first cheap edition of "Pickwick."

7. "Sketches of Expeditions from the Pickwick Club," by T. Sibson, with descriptive text, ten spirited etched plates, 8vo, handsomely bound in whole polished of extra, gilt inside borders, gilt top, very scarce, fifteen guineas. 1838. This series is so extremely rare that very few collectors have ever seen a copy, much less possessed one. The following is the "Preface" to these extraordinary plates:—"Originally the 'Pickwick Club' appeared with four illustrations; but since

death chilled the life-depicting hand of poor Seymour, two embellishments have disappeared, while eight pages of letterpress have been added. These papers, thus arranged, bursting as they do with incident, and intoxicated as they are with wit, must have come before the public without illustrations for many of their most striking scenes. Reader, were it not so, these sketches had never seen the light of your eyes." By this it will be seen that "Phiz's" illustrations are quite ignored by the above artist.

Recently twelve more plates by Onwhyn have come to light :—

"Plate mark 9 by 5½ inches. Price the set, India proofs, 30*s.*; etching coloured by Pailthorpe, 25*s.* This set of plates was designed and etched in 1847, and have been recently discovered by the Onwhyn family, from whom they were purchased, and are now published for the first time. Apart from the interest attaching to the illustrating of so phenomenal a book of the century as 'Pickwick,' by an artist of the time, and a book illustrator of note, the designs have decided merit of their own, and will be welcomed by every collector of the works of Charles Dickens. They possess also the advantage of being of a size

suitable for insertion in *any* edition of the work."

"Alfred Crowquill" was one Robert Forrester. In the Heath case you must see the "label is on one side." The copies, too, are rarely found "in an untouched state." Get "the pictorial wrappers" if possible, and no "jagged edges." The quaint enthusiasm here is refreshing. Note the phrase "untouched copy"—as though it were some rare old picture. But these "untouched" copies will unhappily suggest other copies that have been "touched," or "faked."

Nothing strikes us so much in modern publishing as the general lack of taste and elegance in the decorations and treatment of books. There used to be an artistic feeling and grace, which was extended to paper, illustrations, and bindings. One spirit seemed to combine and direct these elements. There was a homogeneousness. In evidence of this truth we have only to look at the works issued by Mr. Ruskin, Moxon, and others of a former era. The early Tennyson volumes are delicate, graceful things, works of art, even to the tint of the green cloth. The later issues are rude, coarse, and unpleasing. Above all, the five little Christmas Books of Dickens are the most charm-

ing, enticing little volumes that can be conceived. They seem to be "entire perfect chrysolites." This, however, rather applies to the first, the "Christmas Carol," which is perfect in the writing, print, paper, binding, and illustrations. Every one concerned showed *feeling*. The pictures suited the story, for they were done by the author's own friends; the binding, though only in cloth, might be treated as permanent; the gilding of the edges was a different thing from the system now in vogue. We need not wonder at the high prices asked and given, viz. from one to five pounds, "according to condition." Much of the attraction was owing to the excellence of the materials and workmanship. As we know, nothing becomes more squalidly unpleasant or mean than a cloth-bound book of our day; with every year its squalidness increases—the bad paper decays, the bad print fades, the badly dyed cloth loses colour. But these Christmas tales seem to mellow and improve, the fresh colour does not fade, the gilding brightens, the print grows more brilliant.

These little books, it is known, were illustrated by Leech, Stanfield, Doyle, Tenniel, in a most charming, graceful, and fanciful way. They seemed really inspired. The etchings of the

"Carol" were brilliantly coloured by hand, after a fashion that was then popular. The frontispiece of Mr. Fezziwig dancing, which is faced by the delicate title in coloured lettering, lingers in the memory. Nothing can be more artistic, also, than the fashion in which some of the illustrations are blended with the text—treated on such occasions with a delicate reserve, and not obtrusive. They seemed designed for their places: very different from the modern treatment of such things where the text is often dislodged and disordered to make room for them. Even in these little books we find curious variations, as in the case of "the earliest issue of the first edition, with 'Stave I.,' that was afterwards altered to 'Stave One,' the end-papers green, original pictorial cloth, a very beautiful copy, being simply *as bright and fresh* as on the day of publication." Another copy is described as being in the "*original* pictorial cloth, *in the most beautiful condition that it is possible to imagine, even the silver tissue papers are there.*" This is an honest enthusiasm, and not undeserved. The "silver tissue papers," by the way, are often torn out, as it is thought they stain or "fox" the plates. Another copy is "a thoroughly good one, but not so *fresh.*"

The title is daintily printed in red and blue characters. But there was a copy lately offered in "the original *brown* cloth," and which was "in a very rare state, the title being printed in red and *green*." A complete set of good editions, "'The Carol' in brown, the others in red cloth, 1843—1848," has been offered for ten guineas. "The Battle of Life," it seems, has "A Love Story" printed in a simple scroll, and underneath the publisher's name, address, and date, 1846, which is a variation.

In appraising the old Elzevirs there are the most minute points to be considered—a little bull's head is wanting on one of the pages, and you have bought the wrong and worthless, edition. A misplaced word makes all the difference. So in the case of "The Chimes," the earliest issue has the publishers' names *on* the engraved part of the vignette title, *not* underneath.

Fancy the pains and searching investigations that can discover such points as this! We have also a facsimile reproduction of the author's original manuscript, with an introduction by F. G. Kitton, in 1850.

With what pleasant associations of childhood is Thomas Tegg associated! In those early days

we knew Thomas Tegg perfectly. His books were charming books—charmingly "got up," the wood engravings spirited and delicate. Peter Parley issued a Penny Library in 1842, with some odd abridgments of Dickens stories: "The Old Curiosity Shop," "Barnaby Rudge," and the "Picnic Papers," abridged from Charles Dickens's "Master Humphrey's Clock," etc., illustrated with a portrait of Dickens, and twenty-six original cuts of characters and incidents in the novels that appear in no other work. This unusual proceeding was done without the approval or permission of Dickens, though the volume is dedicated to him. This publication somewhat comes in aid of the theory that Dickens was the author of "Sergeant Bell's Raree Show," another capital child's book, also published by Tegg.[1]

In May, 1875, Mr. William Tegg stated that there had been a negotiation between his father,

[1] See an article by Mr. R. H. Shepherd in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1889. In an autograph letter sold some years ago, Dickens denounces this Peter in strong language, promising him a very summary ejectment should he present himself at his house. There was a dedication in which "Boz" is saluted as "the living Shakespeare!" The Preface to the third volume shows what steps Dickens took to check this piracy.

Thomas Tegg, and Dickens, upon the subject of Dickens writing a work for him entitled "Sergeant Bell and his Raree Show." William had suggested the subject and the engagement after reading the articles in the *Chronicle*. Dickens seemed to incline to the proposal, and wrote from "15, Furnival's Inn, Wednesday morning. I have made the nearest calculation in my power of the length of the little work you speak of; and guiding my own demand by the nature of the arrangements I am in the habit of making with other booksellers, I could not agree to do it for less than 120*l*. I am not aware what the profit is upon this description of book, or whether it would or would not justify you in such an outlay. If it would, I should be prepared to produce the whole by Christmas; the sale at that time of year I apprehend would be important. For many reasons, I should agree with you in not wishing the name 'Boz' to be appended to the work. I shall be happy to receive your answer before I leave town, which will most probably be on Wednesday next. I am, dear sir, your very obt. servant."

Mr. William Tegg seems to speak confidently on the matter, saying, "The terms were agreed

upon and accepted, but for some reason fell through." It is strange, therefore, that this book should be so often set down as Dickens' work. The only thing that favours the theory of authorship is the stipulation that "Boz's" name should not be attached to it. I well remember the appearance of this child's story-book, which was somehow associated with the ever-welcome "Peter Parley's" series. It was bought for us as a special present. The sergeant exhibited various historical scenes in his "show," which were set off by graphic descriptions.

Some years ago there was offered a rare Dickensian treasure. Everything about the "Christmas Carol" is attractive and inviting. It is bound up with innumerable graceful and tender associations; the little book suggests the old delights of the first reading—an old long-forgotten night of exquisite pleasure; the picture-scenes are as of real personages; we hear the voice of the author as he read it. This was—

"The seven original drawings for the illustrations, namely: Marley's Ghost (in pencil and water colours); The Old Ghost in a White Waistcoat; The Last of the Spirits; Mr. Fezziwig's Ball (in pencil and water-colours); 'The Spirit

dropped beneath it'; '"Deny it," cried the Spirit'; Scrooge and Bob Cratchit.

"This series of drawings (we are told) to one of Dickens's most famous books was formerly in the possession of the artist's daughter. But few books have been ushered into existence with a happier accompaniment of illustrations than the 'Christmas Carol'; and Leech's designs (a beautiful demonstration of the friendship subsisting between author and artist) may justly claim some share of the celebrity belonging to the book. Bound in a copy of the 'Carol' they would make the grandest copy extant. A single drawing for 'The Battle of Life' was sold by auction recently for £35."

The price demanded for the set was £240. What would the author and the artist have thought of such a thing? This has probably found its way to my friend Mr. Wright, of Paris, who has a matchless collection. One of the most curious oddities connected with the "Carol" is, that there is an edition dated 1844, which has no number of the edition on the title. Though the book was published in 1843, this edition of 1844 is held to be actually an older one. I know not why.

All this may seem far-fetched, fanciful, and trivial enough; but it must be recollected that

these books stand upon their merits, and that they are as rare as they are artistic, or rather, that they are rare because they are artistic. The books of other writers almost as popular as Dickens, such as Thackeray, Macaulay, Carlyle, Tennyson, have not excited so great a "gust"; "Vanity Fair" and "Pendennis" are without any of these piquant variations, though, of course, the first editions, like most first editions, are sought after.

Another handsome and enticing work of the Dickens series is "Master Humphrey's Clock." Now, this again stands upon its own merits, quite apart from any rare bibliographical interest. First, it is of a very large and even stately shape, it is finely printed, and a pleasure to look on. The illustrations are truly beautiful and full of feeling, being inspired by both the author and the artists, George Cattermole and Hablot Browne. Here, too, we find the usual caprice and changes. At the beginning it was issued in weekly numbers, with white covers, and was intended as a vehicle for short stories. This plan was soon abandoned, and the two long, well-known tales introduced and steadily pursued without interruption. In later editions the rather purposeless framework which reintroduced the Pickwickians was cut away, and it

now stands as two distinct narratives. The proper form is three volumes, but sometimes it appears as two, and often as one. Here are two specimens of desirable copies fully described :—

"'Master Humphrey's Clock,' by Charles Dickens, with illustrations by George Cattermole and Hablot K. Browne, extra illustrated with the seventy beautiful full-page etchings, designed and etched by Thomas Sibson, complete with the title-page and list of the plates that was printed specially for them. First edition throughout, 3 vols. imp. 8vo. Costly and beautifully bound, the edges entirely uncut. Also preserved in a separate volume bound to match are the whole of the eighty-eight pictorial wrappers that were issued with the 'Clock.' It is very essential to have these, as several contain 'Addresses to the Reader' written by Charles Dickens. The whole forming one of the choicest books ever offered for sale. Absolutely faultless, 4 vols. imperial 8vo, thirty-five guineas. Chapman & Hall & Tyas, 1840-42."

The "addresses" are a curious element. Another is strangely and mysteriously issued in "black cloth" :—

"*Original pictorial black cloth*, edges entirely

uncut. It would be difficult for anyone who has never seen these extra illustrations to imagine how clever and essential they are to have with the book. Thirty guineas. This is the only copy I have seen in black pictorial cloth. They have the famous 'clock' on the sides, and the lettering is enclosed in a peculiar, but I think ugly scroll."

We have also "one of the 'portfolios' issued to preserve the weekly numbers of 'Master Humphrey's Clock' at the time of their publication, with a design in gold of the 'Clock' on the side," all which shows a singular, and even tender interest.

Presentation copies of "Pickwick" are now coming into the market, for Dickens, as may be supposed, had innumerable friends and admirers, and gave a great many copies away. I possess a most interesting copy—an American edition presented by Mrs. Dickens to her servant, "Ann Brown," in 1842, in the early harmonious days, when they were in America.

The "Sketches by Boz," Dickens's first serious work, has also its variations. The distinction between the first and later editions is here shown :—

"'Sketches by Boz,' illustrative of every-day life and every-day people, with twenty-eight fine

illustrations by George Cruikshank, the two series complete, and all earliest issues of the first editions. 3 vols. post 8vo. Expensively bound in half crimson levant morocco extra, in the best style, fine copies, £15 15*s*. Macrone, 1836-7.

"The second series has the two extra plates which appeared in the second edition and not in the first, inserted, thus making this set all a collector could desire. A genuine (like the above) first edition of the first series very seldom occurs for sale.

"'Sketches by Boz,' illustrative of every-day life and every-day people. 1839. First complete edition, with earliest impressions of the forty beautiful engravings by George Cruikshank, 8vo. A splendid copy, in stained calf super extra, very elegantly tooled back and borders, top edges gilt, totally uncut, with the original cloth back and sides preserved at end, by Riviere (a very scarce book in this fine state), £10 10*s*.

"This is the octavo edition, and contains thirteen new plates which do not appear in the former editions. It is valued by Mr. Johnson in his 'Hints to the Dickens Collector' (1885) at from £8 to £10 in cloth."

What devotional enthusiasm in having the

"original cloth back and sides preserved at the end," in an officially bound book by Riviere! Cruikshank's plates, it need not be said, are spirited, but are even more interesting from the various figures introduced, that suggest those of Pickwick; and, in the text too, there are several Pickwickian hints developed later.

Another little trifle, eagerly sought, is the "Ballad of Lord Bateman." This was a little tract, a mere waif and stray, thus described :—

"'The Loving Ballad of Lord Bateman.' Illustrated with eleven full-page plates and one page of music by George Cruikshank, with preface and notes written by Charles Dickens, 32mo, first edition, original green cloth, with Cruikshank's design in gold on sides. Earliest issue, with etchings in first state. London: Charles Tilt, Fleet Street, and Mustapha Syried, Constantinople."

The price eight guineas! Something, of course, must be allowed for the rarity, but there can be no doubt that the real interest was excited by the enthusiastic dramatic interest which prompted the two authors.

"Mr. Walter Hamilton tells us that George Cruikshank 'sang the old English ballad' in the manner of a street-ballad singer at a dinner of the

Antiquarian Society, at which Dickens and Thackeray were present. The latter is reported to have remarked, 'I should like to print that ballad, with illustrations,' but Cruikshank warned him off, saying that this was exactly what he himself had resolved to do. The original ballad was much longer than that which Cruikshank illustrated, and to which Charles Dickens furnished humorous notes, and was *not* comic in any respect.

"'Lord Bateman' was Cruikshank's delight. The exquisite foolery expressed in his plates of this eccentric nobleman he would act, at any moment, in any place, to the end of his life. Mr. Percival Leigh remembers a characteristic scene at the 'Cheshire Cheese,' Fleet Street, about 1842 or 1843. 'This,' he says, 'was in G. C.'s pre-teetotal period. After dinner came drink and smoke, of course; and G. C. was induced to sing "Billy Taylor," which he did with grotesque expression and action, varied to suit the words. He likewise sang "Lord Bateman" in his shirt-sleeves, with his coat flung cloak-wise over his left arm, whilst he paced up and down, disporting himself with a walking-stick, after the manner of the noble lord, as represented in his illustration to the ballad.'

"Six-and-twenty years afterwards we find the bright-hearted old man still with spirits enough for his favourite parts.

"'One day,' says Mr. Frederick Locker, 'he asked us to tea and to hear him sing "Lord Bateman" *in character*, which he did to our infinite delight. He posed in the costume of that deeply interesting, but somewhat mysterious nobleman. I am often reminded of the circumstance; for I have a copy of "Lord Bateman" (1851), and on the false title is written:

"'"This evening, July 13, 1868,

"'"I sang 'Lord Bateman'

"'"to

"'"My dear little friend, Eleanor Locker.

"'"GEORGE CRUIKSHANK."'

"This in his seventy-sixth year!"

But we must be careful to see that our first edition—that is, the earliest issue of the first edition—has the pagination in the middle of each page, 12mo., in the original pictorial cloth designed by G. C. You must see, too, that you have "all the advertisements," and also "the original pictorial cover."

What odd mysteries there are as to the "condition" of certain books, which almost always "turn

up" in a particular "state," as will be seen from this specimen, a little early trifle of "Boz":—

"Extremely rare in this state. 'Sketches of Young Couples,' with an urgent remonstrance to the Gentlemen of England on the present alarming crisis, with six illustrations by 'Phiz,' 1840. Genuine first edition, 12mo, choice copy, in the original illustrated cover. Unusually clean and fresh. £5 10*s*."

"Very seldom indeed is the above little book found in good state. Even if the sides are in fair condition, the back with the lettering is generally missing. This copy, however, is most perfect; there is no single blemish either in the cover or book itself; even the tissue paper to the plates is intact."

"Unusually clean and fresh"! How quaint is this—as though it must be its ordained fate to be thumbed, frayed, knocked about, and it were highly creditable in the present copy to present itself in decent condition. Why should "the back with the lettering" be "generally missing"? This is evidently some "Poor Jo" of the trade, forced to "move on."

The little tract "Sunday under Three Heads" now brings an enormous price, and has even been

reprinted in facsimile. Years ago at an auction I recall the late Dr. Joly, who secured a volume of tracts for a shilling, pointing out, with some triumph, to his friend this very "Sunday under Three Heads," which, he said, carelessly, was "rather scarce." A copy has been announced with great pride, and claiming attention for its merits: "An exceptionally large copy, with the edges quite rough and uncut. It has been generally found in stiff boards, with the edges cut. The present copy *is the largest* the advertiser has seen," and so he asks ten guineas for it. A bookseller in Manchester once sold a copy for threepence—it was not long after re-sold for eight guineas. Again we may speculate how amused would the author have been at these pranks.

Here is another rarity :—

"'Drooping Buds,' by Charles Dickens, Esq., printed for private circulation by the Royal Infirmary Dorcas Society, to awaken interest in a hospital for sick children in Glasgow, 11 pp., 8vo, original wrappers, £15 15*s*. 1866.

"The only copy that seems to be extant. It was shown some eighteen months back to Chas. Plumtre Johnson, Esq., the well-known Dickens bibliographer, who declared it quite unknown to

him. This gentleman subsequently wrote to the *Athenæum* on the subject, November 16, 1889, and as no collector or other person wrote saying they were in possession of a copy, or even knew of one, this one may be fairly presumed to be unique. Certainly no copy has turned up in any of the fine, and presumed to be complete, Dickens collections that have been dispersed during the last ten years."

It may be said that the Dickens "boom" is now subsiding, having been somewhat overdone. We have heard of one dealer who has in his hands forty illustrated Pickwicks, all in numbers.

You may think yourself happy in the possession of the first edition of Oliver Twist, three volumes in the "original cloth," and "uncut." How brilliant and dramatic are the plates of the early issues, so that the artist made that mad claim of having suggested or half written some of the most striking incidents. But the real judge of such things, turning it over, will instantly exclaim: "Where is the rare list of illustrations, and the suppressed plate?" Without these you are undone.

"'Oliver Twist: or, the Parish Boy's Progress,' by 'Boz,' illustrated with twenty-three etchings by

George Cruikshank. The real first edition, being the pages and plates taken out of the magazine in which the work first made its appearance, and bound into a volume, with a fine portrait of Dickens (specially coloured by hand) inserted, and a specially printed title-page prefixed; also one of the original paper covers of the magazine (designed by Cruikshank) inserted; full bound in maroon morocco, gilt back, top edges gilt, £3 3*s*. Bentley, 1837-39. 8vo.

"A volume well worth possessing, as it shows both the story and the scarcely less famous etchings in their original state, before their publication in book form. It is therefore the *real* first edition of the work, and the plates can nowhere else be seen in such brilliancy."

It must be confessed there is but little exaggeration in this. It is difficult to give an idea of the brilliancy and dramatic effect of these early impressions: while the type and *format* of the text—from *Bentley's Magazine*—seem quite in harmony. These older magazines—Bentley's and Ainsworth's, a long series, and bound up—are really very striking and handsome works. They have an artistic and literary merit far beyond what we find in similar works of our day, which are ephemeral

in all points. What sound and entertaining reading, too! Cruikshank is here seen at his best.

There is actually a writing of Dickens of which only one copy is known. This is a little tract of some twenty pages, which he furnished as the contribution to an annual, and is called "To be Read at Dusk." Mr. Charles Plumtre Johnson writes of it in the *Athenæum*, on May 11th, 1891 :—

"Every Dickens' collector knows that this tale appeared in the *Keepsake* in 1852, under the editorship of Miss Power. I question, however, whether it is known that it was also issued, as was Thackeray's 'An Interesting Event,' in a separate pamphlet. By the courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Tregaskis, the booksellers in Holborn, I am able to describe the pamphlet. It consists of nineteen pages octavo. The type was reset, and differs from that used in the *Keepsake*. The title-page reads, '"To be Read at Dusk," by Charles Dickens. London: 1852.' The printer was the same as of the *Keepsake*; 'G. Barclay, Castle Street, Leicester Square.' I fear that the pamphlet is only interesting to the bibliographer, as the collector can hardly hope to possess a volume so rare as I believe this to be.—CHAS. P. JOHNSON."

This tract was offered for twenty-five guineas.

A little book is associated in the oddest way, with Dickens: "Infelicia," by Adah Isaacs Menken. It is dedicated to him, and the authoress printed a facsimile of his letter acknowledging the compliment. These verses are sought by the bibliophiles, and are essential for any complete collection; the book fetching about £2. I have heard Dickens relate in his richest comic manner the incidents of his introduction. The lady at one time was the talk of the town, from her performance of Mazeppa, when she appeared bound to her untamed and fiery steed—of course a very pliant, well-broken quadruped—in the airiest of raiment. "Boz" was one night seated in the stalls looking on, when her business manager, a Yankee, stood before him with a pressing invitation from the fair and massively-built equestrienne to come and see her. The emissary, in the usual nasal tone, represented that this meeting was the dream of her—the equestrienne's—life. The novelist politely waived off the interview, deprecating the compliment; but the manager returned with more pressing insistence, and "Boz" had to yield. He gave a humorous sketch of the interview, and the lavish incense that was offered to him. "The dream of her life" was still insisted on, but un-

luckily I have forgotten the details. The lady had literary instincts, and her verses are full of fire. Sometimes, we are told, they have been "attributed to Swinburne."

She later transferred her adoration—strange to say—to the elder Dumas, and I possess that rarest and most curious of curios, a photograph representing her and the grand French novelist standing together. Later, I think, she married the pugilist Heenan. Altogether an odd history.

Another Dickens treasure, exceedingly rare, is the "Curious Dance round a Curious Tree," a tract of 20 pages, published by the Committee of St. Luke's Hospital, in 1860.

There is also "The Village Coquettes," a comic opera in two acts, the music by John Hullah. There was a copy sold "clean as new in the wrapper, unopened, as it left the printer's hands," of which £25 was the price. Another copy, which had the misfortune to be a "cut copy," only brought £15 5*s.* at Sotheby's.

Then we have "Hunted Down: a story," with some account of Thomas Griffith Wainwright, the poisoner, which Dickens wrote for a New York paper and for which he received £1000.

Mr. James Payn, the editor of *The Cornhill*,

wrote, I think, in that journal an account of "The Youth and Middle-age of Charles Dickens." This was "privately printed," and only twenty copies were issued. It is, therefore, very rare indeed.

"The Child's History of England" is also extraordinarily scarce. It appeared in *Household Words* originally, and was later issued in three pretty little quartos. But it must be the first edition,—and "see that you get it"—for there is a later one, frontispiece by F. W. Topham, 1850-59, which, in binding and size, "are identically the same as the rare first edition, which commands so high a price." This thing you can have for some 35*s.*

Mr. Justice Stareleigh, who tried the famous action "Bardell *v.* Pickwick," was, it is known, drawn from Mr. Justice Gazelee. The strokes are admirable, and, though the judge's peculiarities are humorous enough, they suggest a disagreeable character. It is odd, however, that Gazelee's name is not handed down as an odious judge. Mr. Crabb Robinson furnishes an unpleasant trait, but it is the only one I can find. At Norwich, Robinson was defending some burglars, against whom the evidence of an accomplice was the only evidence. That evidence, odd to say, was only receivable on the terms that he had been im-

prisoned and whipped, or fined. The witness, however, had only been imprisoned, and the objection was made. Gazelee, however, admitted the evidence, and the men were convicted. Their counsel, however, privately intimated to the judge that unless the men were discharged he would state the whole to the Secretary of State. In a few days the men were released, which was significant. Busfuz's son is now with us in the person of Mr. Bompas, Q.C.

I may add as a *bonne bouche*, this tribute to the popularity of "Pickwick." Neale, in his sprightly account of the kingdom of Siam, describes the heir to the throne, Prince Chou Faa—a most accomplished man and eager English reader. "I have seen him," he says, "laugh as heartily over 'Pickwick' as though he had been accustomed to the scenes that book depicts from his earliest childhood."

In a recently published biography of an Irish Dominican friar we find: "'Pickwick,'" he says, "chanced to fall into my hands. I had never before read it, and the loud laughter which it drew from me made a Father come to my cell to see what was the matter. Years after I found 'Pickwick' hid away under the bed of a novice.

I was about to visit him with a severe penance, when I remembered my own weakness for the book, and the happiness it had afforded me."

In the January of this year, when there was sold the library of the late Edmund Yates, "Pickwick" brought 11*l*., and the "Tale of Two Cities" the same. Lot 200, "Letters of Charles Dickens to Edmund Yates, 1854 to 1870," excited lively interest. The letters, dated either from Gadshill Place, Tavistock House, Doughty Street, or the office of *All the Year Round*, are written in a clear small hand, without erasures. One of them, written four days before his death, shows no traces of any faltering or weakness on the part of the writer. Another, dated January 5th, 1860, says: "Saturday for the Britannia. I have written to Lane. Wilkie will probably be with us; and I propose a British steak at the 'Cock' in Fleet Street at ½ past 4." This refers to a project which, as may be remembered, resulted in a description of the Britannia, and Britannia audiences, by Dickens, in his weekly periodical. Among the volume of letters is an interesting playbill of Tavistock House, where a domestic melodrama in two acts, entitled "The Lighthouse," by Wilkie Collins, was produced, with scenery

by Mr. Stanfield. The players were the author, Mark Lemon, Miss Hogarth, and Miss Dickens. The lessee and manager was, of course, the immortal Mr. Crummles himself. After some brisk bidding, this lot was finally knocked down for 86*l.* A perfect sensation was produced by the competition for a very simple article—a plain "writing slope," or desk. A silver plate upon it bears the following inscription: "This Desk, which belonged to CHARLES DICKENS, and was used by him on the day of his death, was one of the familiar objects of his Study, which were ordered by his Will to be distributed amongst those who loved him, and was accordingly given by his Executrix to Edmund Yates." Fifty guineas was the first offer made, and it was knocked down to Mr. Bancroft, amidst loud applause, for one hundred guineas!

I may add that under the same provisions of his will I received his paper-knife and a letter-weight, marked with his initials in gold.

The subject of Dickens's portraits is a deeply interesting one. Mr. Kitton has made a unique collection in the *Pen and Pencil* volume. A dealer was lately offering the earliest portrait, painted in water colours on ivory, by Janet Barrow (*née*

Ross), 1830, representing Dickens at the age of eighteen. "As *the first authentic portrait* of Dickens from life, this work of art will always possess a surpassing interest. It will be remembered that Dickens's mother's name before marriage was Barrow, and the artist, whose name (Ross) is famous in the world of miniature art, probably married into that branch of the family. The miniature was until recently in the possession of a near relative of Sir Edwin Landseer." 50*l.* was the price.

The most brilliant and interesting, in our eyes, of all the portraits, is the crayon and water-colour portrait of Dickens by S. Laurence, 1838, signed and dated by the artist, and also bearing the signature "Boz" beneath the drawing in Dickens's handwriting. "A most beautifully executed crayon and water-colour portrait, *drawn from life*, shortly after the publication of the 'Pickwick Papers,' and presented to Fanny Dickens, the sister of Charles Dickens, by the novelist. Size of the drawing, 17 by 12 inches. Convincing and satisfying beyond all others for its truthful and vivid portraiture of Dickens, as he appeared in the Pickwick days, this presentment of the great novelist should find a place in the National

Portrait Gallery, or in the National Gallery, beside the far-famed, but (as George Eliot described it) rather 'keepsakey' portrait of Maclise." The price was 225*l.*

There were also the two drawings by "Phiz" (H. K. Browne), executed in 1837 (probably from life), at the time "Pickwick Papers" was appearing in monthly parts. One of the drawings is in pencil, and the other (on the reverse side of the paper) chiefly in sepia. From these drawings an etching was made in 1837, and they were again engraved in *facsimile* in "Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil," where a full description will be found. 45*l.* was the price.

In spite of the pious labours of Miss Hogarth and her niece, there are numbers of Dickens's letters still tossed about the world, and unpublished. They are constantly turning up at sales. Those written in his youth, and in the early days of his career, are few and far between, and are such as we would most hugely covet. In these there was a buoyancy of tone and a joyousness that distinguishes them from his later, more formal efforts. We have seen in a sale-catalogue—but "lumped" with a number of theatrical letters—no less than *eighty* letters of his, addressed to J. P. Harley,

the comedian, who played in Boz's early pieces. What a *trouvaille!* and where are these?

Shortly after the appearance of "Pickwick," a club was formed in Edinburgh bearing that name. Mr. Howison, of that city, wrote to inform him of the compliment, and Dickens's answer is noteworthy, as showing his partiality for the Scotch. After thanking him for his kind expressions, and assuring him of his good wishes and sympathy with the institution, he added: "All my relations by marriage are of Scotland. Many of my dearest living friends are natives of your fine city, and my most cherished recollections are of a dearly loved friend and companion, who drew his first breath in Edinburgh and died beside me . . . . *Mr. Pickwick's heart is among you always.*" This characteristic letter is dated December 31, 1837.

In another catalogue we find a collection of fifty-six original autograph letters, ranging from 1842 to 1869, including seven splendid specimens, on 4to paper, of from one to four pages in length; also a curious and characteristic letter of three pages (4to) in the form of an "affidavit," signed in full with his own name, and another signature, "John Pirie, Mayor." The letters, of *note* size, vary in length

from one to four pages. The whole in a 4to volume.

There is also an important series of autograph letters, abounding in characteristic references to personal, theatrical, literary, and political matters, and of especial value to the American collector, on account of the deeply interesting allusions to the United States in the letters written in and about that country. *One letter* in this collection would be a revelation to our Transatlantic friends as to Dickens's "secret opinion" of America. Two hundred and thirty-five pounds is the price asked.

It seems almost a mystery what has become of Dickens's smaller MSS., those of his lighter papers, of which he wrote quite a profusion. That of the "Sketches by Boz" would naturally have disappeared, being lost or destroyed at the printing office, or when returned to the writer. Nearly all the MSS. of his important works are in the Kensington Museum, and that of the "Christmas Carol" in America. The "Four Christmas Stories" have not all been satisfactorily accounted for, neither have the "Pictures from Italy," or the "American Notes." These, however, in great part first appeared in a newspaper, from which "copy"

no doubt the books were printed. But where was "Pickwick"—the immortal—and "Nickleby"?

Lately there was a book sale in New York which helps to clear up this interesting matter. On Mr. Foote's death (a very intelligent and judicious collector of choice things) his library was brought to the hammer, and among its rarities was an "autograph portion of Pickwick," only thirty-three pages. For this MS. and also for a portion of "Nickleby," Mr. Foote paid about £100 —or 500 dollars. The Pickwick MS. alone now brought 775 dollars. With the Pickwick leaves were these jocular verses, addressed by the author to the printer:—

O Mr. Hick—
'S I am heartily sick
Of this sixteenth Pickwick
Which is just in the nick
For the publishing trick,
And will read nice and slick.
If you'd only be quick;
I don't write on tick,
That's my comfort, avick.
July, 26, 1837.

In his "Household Words," where there are many *exposés* of abuses, he had attacked the Court of Chancery on the score of the abuses of "contempt of Court," there was an article called "Martyrs

in Chancery," which was replied to in the *Times* of January 7, 1851, by no less a person than Sir Edward Sugden, who proved that the account was exaggerated, if not incorrect.[1]

[1] In proof of what I have stated in these pages, that the subject of Dickens, his localities, allusions, sayings, etc., is ever recurring in daily life, it may be mentioned that even as I write the newspapers report how, at "The Spaniards" Inn, the floor of a room gave way and precipitated the occupants into the one below. We are thus reminded how it was at "The Spaniards" Mrs. Bardell and party went out to spend a happy evening, and was followed there by Dodson and Fogg's clerk and the bailiff.

PERSONAL TRAITS AND PORTRAITS.

"BLEAK HOUSE" was not merely stored with familiar localities, but also presented a number of portraits. The sketch of Savage Landor was faithful, admirable for its "boisterousness" recognized by all. Mrs. Jellaby was assumed to be drawn from Miss Martineau, who had boldly attacked the author for his caricature of Borioboola Gha. Chadband was Stiggins revived, but with inferior effect.

Hortense, Lady Dedlock's French maid, it is known, was suggested by the notorious Mrs. Manning, the murderess of Mr. O'Conor, and whose trial and execution Dickens had witnessed. She was, I think, a Frenchwoman too. It is said that her manner and phrases are exactly reproduced in the story. His letter on the execution contributed to the reform of their being performed in private. The sketch of Skimpole involved some

well meant, rather awkward explanations and softenings, which did not much explain or soften anything. The defence was that the manner but not the character was borrowed. That "sort of gay and ostentatious wilfulness" in the humouring of a subject, which had many a time delighted him, and impressed him as being unspeakably whimsical and attractive, was the airy quality he wanted for Harold Skimpole. "Partly for this reason, and partly (he has since often grieved to think) for the pleasure it afforded him to find that delightful manner reproducing itself, under his hand, he yielded to the temptation of too often making the character *speak* like his old friend. He no more thought (God forgive him!) that the admired original would ever be charged with the imaginary vices of the fictitious creature, than he has himself ever thought of charging the blood of Desdemona and Othello on the innocent Academy model who sat for Iago's leg in the picture." Even as to the mere occasional manner, he meant to be so cautious and conscientious that he privately referred the proof sheets of the first number of that book to two intimate literary friends of Leigh Hunt (both still living), and altered the whole of that part of the

text on their discovering too strong a resemblance to his "way."

To his friend John Forster was submitted everything he wrote, who conscientiously exercised his office of reviser and suggester of improvements during a long course of years—a troublesome and laborious task when thoroughly carried out. Forster had often a substantial share in directing the course of the stories, and we find passages omitted and phrases altered at his suggestion. It was a bold thing, therefore, under such conditions, to introduce his friend in a shape that was recognizable. It may be thought that this was hardly a "correct" thing, but I really believe Dickens was helpless in the matter, and was all but compelled by the pressure of his story, and its situations, to introduce such a character. It was a general type, of which Forster's was the species. A professional observer as he was, he relished any of the specially humorous traits of his friend with the keenest enjoyment; and these certainly belonged to the highest form of comedy. In the following passages we have the actual living Forster. "Thus happily acquainted with his own merit and importance, Mr. Podsnap settled that whatever he put behind him he put out

of existence. 'I don't want to know about it: I don t choose to discuss it: I don't admit it—' As a so eminently respectable man Mr. Podsnap was sensible of its being required of him to take Providence under his protection. Consequently he always knew exactly what Providence meant."

On a reference to the circumstance that some half-dozen people had lately died in the streets of starvation,—

"I don't believe it," said Mr. Podsnap, putting it behind him—"I must decline to pursue this painful discussion. It is not pleasant to my feelings; it is repugnant to my feelings. I have said that I do not admit these things. It is not for *me*," etc. "Besides," said Mr. Podsnap, flushing high up among his hair-brushes with a strong sense of personal affront, "the subject is a very disagreeable one. I will go so far as to say it is an odious one." He finished with that flourish of his arm, which added more expressively than any words, —and I remove it from the face of the earth.

Chesney Wold, in "Bleak House," was suggested at least by "many bits, chiefly about trees and shadows;" by observations made at Rockingham, the house of his attached friends, the Watsons. 'Blunderstone Rookery" was the name of the

Copperfield mansion in Suffolk. It might seem a fanciful one—such as Dickens might have devised. But the fact is, that before writing the story he went down to Yarmouth on January 7, 1848, "on an exploring expedition," and walking over to Lowestoft actually saw the name on a direction post, half-way between the two places. His Swiss friend Cerjat seems to have suggested to him some strange coincidence about this Blunderstone, which struck him "of all the odd things he had ever heard, to be the oddest." Something real, no doubt, and like the story, had happened, but it is impossible now to discover his meaning.

Mr. Ashby Sterry has taken great pains to identify Miss Trotwood's house at Dover, and believes that he has done so. But the description seems too general. At the market-place a hackney coachman pointed "towards the heights," bidding the inquirer "go up there and keep right on till you come to some houses facing the sea." The boy walked on "a good distance" without coming to any house, and inquired again at a shop. He then came to a neat little cottage, "with cheerful bow-windows," and a garden in front; all of which must have been somewhere on the road leading up to the castle, on the left cliff, as you

look from the sea. Captain Jorgan, in the "Message from the Sea," was drawn from an American seaman to whom Dickens was very partial, Captain Morgan.

It is curious what a *penchant* Dickens had for certain melodramatic situations, which seemed to his fancy so telling that he repeated and reproduced them many times over. He had a lively dramatic turn, and I always thought must have made an extraordinary success as a dramatist. I once asked him why he had not taken up this "line" seriously, and I think he made the excuse—it was long ago, many years before his death—that he had not time, taste, or patience. The real reason, no doubt, was, that he could not work without expanding, and could not "carve heads upon a cherry-stone." A literary friend, who has his "Boz" at his fingers' ends, has with great acuteness pointed out to me that Nicholas Nickleby was a genuine "Adelphi walking gentleman": his manner, heroic bursts, protection of his sister, bearding of Ralph, &c., were all elements in the Adelphi melodrama; and though the author appreciated the absurdities of the "Adelphi guests," etc., he was certainly influenced by the place. Ralph, too, was a regular stage villain. That his

works are all dramatic and conceived in the true spirit of the stage is plain from the vast list of adaptations. Each story has been adapted again and again, and will still bear the process admirably.

One thoroughly melodramatic method for winding up his plot, and to which he was excessively partial, was the unmasking of the villain owing to the betrayal of some confederate. The parties are generally brought together in a room by the more virtuous members; the confederate then emerges from his concealment, and tells a long story of villainy. We have this *denouement* first in "Oliver Twist," where Monks makes his revelations: in "Nickleby" Ralph is confronted with "the man Snawley," and Squeers: in the "Old Curiosity Shop," Quilp is similarly exposed. In "Barnaby Rudge," Haredale forces his hereditary enemy to make revelations. In "Chuzzlewit," Jonas is confronted with another betrayer. In "Copperfield," Uriah Heep is denounced and exposed by Mr. Micawber. In "Bleak House," Lady Dedlock is similarly tracked. In "Little Dorrit" Rigaud makes his disclosures at Mrs. Clennam's house. In nearly all the cases the guilty person goes off and commits suicide.

Another favourite method of his was the introduction of a person who is being "blackmailed" in some way. Thus in "Barnaby Rudge," we have the widow and Stagg, and the operation seen and suspected by her mad son. In "Copperfield" we have Miss Trotwood blackmailed also, and the proceeding watched by the mad Mr. Dick.

The magistrates in Dickens's youth must have been terrible tyrants, and he laid his lash on their backs with tremendous force. As is well known, there was a Mr. Laing, who is described in "Oliver Twist" with extraordinary dramatic effect as Mr. Fang—half despot, whole bully—and his treatment of the witnesses is in keeping. It has been pointed out by Mr Theodore Taylor that to this sketch we owe Hood's "Song of the Shirt," which is connected also with another magistrate, Sir Peter Laurie—introduced into the "Chimes" as Alderman Cute—who was determined, like Sir Peter, to "put down" all offences in general, and suicide in particular. In a letter to Hood, Boz had called attention to the case of an unfortunate sempstress "making shirts at three half-pence apiece," who, being robbed of her wretched earnings, attempted to drown herself, and was told

from the Bench that she had "no hope of mercy in this world"; and he invites Hood to look in the papers of Wednesday, April 17, 1844. In the next number of Hood's magazine we find the celebrated "Song of the Shirt."

Many a reader has amused himself by noting Boz's lapses and oversights. Some of them are amusing enough, but we do not think the less of him on this account. As when the "rough and tough" Bagstock sits down to play piquet with Mrs. Shenton, we have: "Do you *propose?*" which, of course, belongs to *écarté*. So, when Dr. Blimber directs that St. Paul's "*first* Epistle to the Ephesians" should be written out as a task—there being only one. We should have smiled at the next instance. A clerk in "Dr. Marigold" is described as being in charge of, and taking about with him, a quarter of a million in specie. This, someone (in *Notes and Queries*) calculated, would weigh one ton seventeen hundred-weight! A thief makes off with "a carpet bag full of sovereigns," which would weigh five cwt.; and Tatty Coram enters with an iron box "two feet square," which no girl could carry.

In "David Copperfield" the author describes Peggotty's odd residence, which was an old boat

drawn up on land and fashioned into a house. In the picture we have, what might be expected, an inverted boat; but it is clear from the text that Dickens intended a boat that was standing on its keel. He speaks of its being left "high and dry," as though it were a boat that had been washed ashore. Again, Captain Cuttle is portrayed in one plate with his famous hook on his left hand, in the other on his right. There was a time when such mistakes would have agitated our author. We can recall his distress when Maclise made the blunder as to the elopement in the "Battle of Life."

A pleasant oversight, too, is found in Lord Decimus Tite Barnacle's speech, which he was always repeating: "My Lords, I have yet to be told," etc. Being an Earl's son, as his name shows, he could not have addressed the House of Lords. In the "Haunted Man" the prayer which he quotes, "Lord, keep my memory green!" curiously refers to the preserving of one's faculties—not to the having a good reputation. Mr. Vernon, the accomplished Dante commentator, who is also an ardent Pickwickian, has pointed out to me yet another of these little oversights. In Chapter X. Sam speaks of his "elder brother."

But in Chapter XXIII. he is called Mr. Weller the elder's "first born."

Another little oversight is found in the passage where the "Fat Boy" at Osborn's Hotel receives half-crowns, "and burst into a hoarse laugh, being for the first and only time in his existence." Yet we are told some time before that at Dingley Dell, during the rook-shooting, "he *laughed* as he retired with the birds."

We are naturally interested in Pecksniff and all that concerns him. The portraits certainly suggest Sir Robert Peel, and this notion was for a time accepted by the public. Dickens, however, had this been so, would have acted as he did in the case of Mr. Potts, in "Pickwick," who originally presented so startling a likeness to Lord Brougham. Another original has been named, the late Samuel Carter Hall, who, when he went to lecture in the United States, was awkwardly heralded by American papers as "the original of Pecksniff." Having heard the novelist speak of this writer, I might be inclined to think the theory is not so far-fetched. It is said that there is a house pointed out at Aldersbury, just two miles from Salisbury, which was the Pecksniffian residence; and here can be seen the

turret from which his young men were supposed to prepare his "elevations" of the cathedral.

Some of the most effective passages in Dickens's writings are, as we all know, directed against crying public abuses. He has scarcely been given sufficient credit for his work as a reformer in this direction, but it is really extraordinary how much he has done. He certainly enjoyed the task, and his "flaying" was the more acceptable to him, as it supplied him with a certain dramatic stimulus or motive-power. Once started, and furnished with something *real* or living to work on, his imagination kindled; fancies rushed upon him, and he put the topic in all sorts of forms. It supplied him with characters and situations. It would be idle to say that there was no exaggeration; but he generally succeeded in his purpose. We need only point to the Fleet, and imprisonment for debt, in "Pickwick"; to the Yorkshire schools, in "Nickleby"; to the American abuses, slavery, etc., in "Chuzzlewit"; to the workhouse system and tyrannous magistrates, in "Oliver Twist"; to his Christmas book characters, Mr. Fang and Alderman Cute; to the law's delay, in "Bleak House"; to capital punishment, in "Barnaby Rudge"; and to the nurses and nursing

in "Chuzzlewit." "Bleak House," of course, was an indictment drawn up against the abuses of the Court of Chancery. "Hard Times" gibbeted strikes and the oppression of the manufacturers; "Little Dorrit," the abuses of the Government offices and their system. In all these cases he was successful in bringing about reform, or in rousing the public feeling.

No doubt, as we read the scenes with the Tite Barnacles, their answers and puttings-off, we are conscious of some caricature. But Dickens merely presented the reality under the conditions required by a humorous story. Even in the present day we see enough of the official methods of dealing with a complaint when you are "referred" to "the proper department," and are overwhelmed with "forms" to be "filled up." The "circumlocution office" seems a title lacking in probability; even the Tite Barnacles would hardly have adopted so grotesque a term. It is odd that it was his friend Sir E. L. Bulwer who, shortly after the publication, was to furnish a striking instance of the abuses of the department. He was minister at the Colonial Office, and, being waited on by a deputation, it was found that their memorial had been lost, or

lost sight of; and he explained to them that "in the public offices papers of importance passed through several departments, and required time for inspection." Now this was the official plausible statement; but it almost amounts to the same thing as the fanciful methods by which Clennam and his friend Doyce were obstructed. Had Dickens presented it as his friend did, it might have passed and seemed no very crying grievance. He had to bring it home to light novel readers.

The boldest and most elaborate of these attacks were those in "Bleak House" and "Little Dorrit," in which, with much art, he makes the stories themselves turn on the abuses which he gibbeted. In "Jarndyce *v.* Jarndyce," as is well known, he had in view a monstrous Chancery suit relating to the Jennings property, which had dragged on in the Courts for years, and in the end left nothing. The house was a deserted mansion at Acton, in Suffolk, which belonged to a notorious old miser Jennings, or Jennens, who died in 1798, when ninety-seven years old. He had made a will: but neither it nor executors could be found. At last the heir-at-law was traced in the person of the great-great-grandson of one C. Jennens, of Gopsal, the eldest uncle of the deceased—and who

then entered into possession of the property. So lately as the year 1878 the case was in the Courts —just eighty years after the owner's death.

"Our Mutual Friend" has always seemed to be a not very successful story, and the humour —shall we say it?—a little wire-drawn. Boffin, however, and Silas Wegg are an inimitable pair, who play up to each other like two practised comedians. Boffin belongs to that group of *niais*, as the French call them, for which Dickens had an exceeding fancy, and which he excelled in touching—such as Pumblechook, Sapsea, Bumble, and many more—pompous, self-sufficient persons; though Boffin was redeemed by much good nature. He was, it seems, sketched from the life, it is said from a Mr. Dodd, who was in the dust business. Mr. Braye, of the Kensington Vestry, knew much about him, and furnished this account of him:—

"As to the healthiness of the calling, I have the authority of a gentleman descended from a long line of dust contractors, and a near relation to Mr. Boffin, immortalized by Dickens in 'Our Mutual Friend' as the 'Golden Dustman.' This gentleman, who is still slightly connected with the dust business, I will call Boffin, junior;

he was well acquainted with the great novelist, made a large fortune in the family business, devotes his time, and, I should think, a considerable sum of money, to the study of natural history—(his place is a sort of zoological and botanic garden combined);—and he is as conversant with Darwin and the great men of science as he is with the best means of making money out of dustbin refuse. So, such is the force of habit, that he has set aside a corner of his park for the neighbouring townsfolk to shoot their dust. He says he likes the smell; it reminds him of old times. The story told by Dickens is substantially correct. Mr. Boffin had one daughter; she was sought in marriage by a gentleman of aristocratic connections. On the wedding morn the 'Golden Dustman,' instead of coming down with a big cheque, to the dismay of the gentleman, said the only present he could make the bride would be one of his dust-heaps. The bridegroom accepted, as he thought, a bad bargain; but he sold it to the brickmakers for £10,000."[1]

Mr. Boffin lived in a "corner house not far from Cavendish Square," which was likely enough in one of those long genteel streets—Wimpole

[1] From *The Metropolitan*.

or Harley—which were Dickens's pet aversion. Here the famous Silas Wegg had his post. Denizens of the Pimlico district, who dwell "not a hundred miles from Eccleston Square," know well a sort of replica of this personage, one-legged also, who strangely, and of course unconsciously, reproduces many traits of the original. He is a perfect character—has his privileges, his chair, in defiance of street regulations, knows every one in the street, and I daresay talks of "our house." Like his predecessor, he at one time had literary tastes, and I recall his showing me verses, of a pious cast, which he professed to be of his own "engendure." Thus in every direction we are being reminded of the great writer's power, and knowledge of human character.

In the case of Wegg, Dickens pointed out how there was often hesitation to ask. When all chance of return for the official civility seemed hopeless, he pictured him as putting a question, "Shall I inwest a bow in him or not?" This seemed the only incongruity. The opposite is the custom of the trade; unruffled affability to all and everyone—with the result of an unfailing average of "takings" on the whole investment.

Mr. Venus's extraordinary establishment where

he pursued his "articulation" of skeletons, etc., was fixed in Clerkenwell—where were "the poorer shops of small retail traders in commodities to eat and drink and keep folks warm, and of Italian frame-makers, and of barbers, and of brokers, and of dealers in dogs and singing-birds. From these, in a narrow and a dirty street devoted to such callings, Mr. Wegg selects one dark shop-window with a tallow candle dimly burning in it, surrounded by a muddle of objects vaguely resembling pieces of leather and dry stick, but among which nothing is resolvable into anything distinct, save the candle itself in its old tin candlestick, and two preserved frogs, fighting a small-sword duel."

Which is not at all like Clerkenwell, where watch dealers and fancy goodsmen mainly flourish. We can recognize such a place much nearer to the West End. I have been assured by a friend, that the author was told by Wilkie Collins of such a shop in St. Andrews Street, one of the streets leading to the Seven Dials, where dealers in birds, rabbits, etc., abound, and that he duly reported this "find" to Dickens—who both adopted and adapted the suggestion. I myself recall the very shop, with its dirt and darkness, and the articulated skeletons seen dimly though the frowsy

panes. This again suggests how much this special form has "gone out" in writing fiction. No one would now dream of such photographic accounts of tradesmen and their peculiar callings; but beyond question such is an element of interest, and of dramatic interest too.

One of Dickens's favourite walks was by way of Higham to the little village of Cooling, among the marshes between the Thames and the Medway. This is the lonely village of "Great Expectations," wherein it is reproduced with extraordinary faithfulness: its narrow, neglected roads, its few scattered houses, its forlorn rectory, its general aspect of decay and dreariness. "In its churchyard, 'a bleak place, overgrown with nettles,' still stand the dozen little grave-stones, of varying sizes, of the dozen little children, which he was fond of pointing out to his friends, and which he has reduced to 'five little stone-lozenges,' for Pip to puzzle over. The visit should be made on a cloudy day, such as Dickens himself used to select; for it is then that the weird strangeness of the scene is best shown. As we stand in the graveyard, looking across the low wall over which the convict climbed before Pip dared start away, we see the same dreary marshes, the limitless stretches of low land

and grass and mud, intersected with dikes and mounds and gates, the low, leaden line of the river beyond ; damp mists hang heavy over it all, and the wind 'rushes from its distant savage lair' off to the ocean."

"Across the marshes and stubble-fields we come to the Thames, and the scene of the attempt to put the convict, Magwitch, on the out-going Hamburg or Rotterdam steamer, which resulted in his capture. Just above is an old water-side inn, the 'Ship and Lobster,' wherein the party spent the preceding night, and where Pip, on awakening, heard the sign of the house (the 'Ship' he calls it) 'creaking and banging about.' The whole description of their rowing from the Temple stairs down the river is full of vivid and accurate detail; to make sure of which, we are told, Dickens chartered a steamer and made the trip, with a party of invited friends. It is worth while to go over the same course in the Gravesend steamer from London Bridge, on any bright day, such as he then selected." Thus Mr. Allbut.

Dickens showed a special art in describing the physiognomy of private houses—not so much their actual form or outline, as the tone and expression. Thus "Mr. Dombey's house was a large one,

on the shady side of a tall, dark, *dreadfully genteel* street in the region between Portland Place and Bryanston Square. It was a corner house, with great wide areas containing cellars, frowned upon by barred windows, and leered at by crooked-eyed doors leading to dust-bins. It was a house of dismal state, with a circular back to it, containing a whole suite of drawing-rooms looking upon a gravelled yard." Mr Allbut fixes upon a great mansion in Mansfield Street, which is close to Portland Place, which offers all these elements of grim state. Dickens, we should say, selected a type, and there are many specimens which would answer his description. How expressive is the phrase "Dreadfully genteel Street." The "circular back" is a note of the houses built by Adam, a once fashionable architect, which are mostly of this pattern. We trace him all along the route in the great district between Portland Place and Bryanston Square, and we could name many a house and street which exactly answers the description. Adam was always dreadfully genteel.

This power of delineating the characteristics of the different quarters of London is still better exhibited in his sketch of Cadogan Place.

"Cadogan Place is the one slight bond which

joins two extremities; it is the connecting link between the aristocratic pavements of Belgrave Square and the barbarism of Chelsea. It is in Sloane Street, but not of it. The people of Cadogan Place look down upon Sloane Street, and think Brompton low. They affect fashion, too, and wonder where the New Road is. Not that they claim to be on precisely the same footing as the high folks of Belgrave Square and Grosvenor Place, but that they stand, in reference to them, rather in the light of those illegitimate children of the great, who are content to boast of their connections, although their connections disavow them."

This is almost perfect. Though Sloane Street has since been much promoted, this sort of feeling is still inspired by the affected gentility of the place. You are affected by it yourself, as you pass from the noisy traffic, omnibuses, etc., of the street into the privacy of the "Place," and thence into the supporting gentility of the Belgravian district just beyond.[1]

It was our author's habit, when he had conceived

[1] Dickens delighted in placing the residences of fashionable people over or near a mews. As a character remarked in a deliciously quaint speech, "the archway leads to a mews: meweses must exist."

a character, to go forth and select a suitable residence for it. Thus we find in one of his letters, "I am going to look for a house for Sampson Brass. Bevis Marks—close to St. Mary Axe." This somehow seems appropriate; the very sound of the words brings up the figure of that disreputable solicitor. "Most of the old houses," Mr. Allbut tells us, "are pulled down, but the house of Mr. Brass, *number ten*, still exists for the benefit of the curious." This is being *plus papiste que le pape*, and this exactness as to the very number of the house, would have confounded the author himself.

One of the most old-fashioned, quaintest, and least changed parts of London is the quarter just beyond Dean's Yard, Westminster. There we find many an old street and house—such as College Street, which flanks the gardens of Westminster School, and runs down straight to the river, the end being usually closed by a picturesque barge. The old houses which the canons affect might have recalled to Dickens his favourite Minor Canon Row, at Rochester.

Proceeding further on, we come to a street which brings up the image of Jenny Wren, the dolls' dressmaker.

"In this region are a certain little street called

Church Street, and a certain little blind square called Smith Square, in the centre of which last retreat is a very hideous church, with four towers at the four corners, generally resembling some petrified monster, frightful and gigantic, on its back, with its legs in the air."

This grotesque description of the church is quite accurate. It seems a sort of monster sprawling on its back—a monument of forlornness. We wonder how such a ponderous thing found place among such ramshackle surroundings, which it completely overpowers, and makes more ramshackle still.

Close to Wardour Street we find ourselves in a cluster of courts and passages, and at the bottom of one we note a stately, old-fashioned mansion of some pretension with a pediment in its centre, and bearing the name "Carlisle House." The court is Carlisle Street, and the house faces old Soho Square. It is now a furniture warehouse. With his usual art, Dickens throws an air of poetry about this grimed and homely building, and in his "Tale of Two Cities" makes it the residence of Dr. Manette and his daughter.

"A quainter corner than the corner where the Doctor lived was not to be found in London. There was no way through it, and the front

windows of the Doctor's lodgings commanded a pleasant little vista of street that had a congenial air of retirement on it. There were few buildings then north of the Oxford Road, and forest trees flourished, and wild flowers grew, and the hawthorn blossomed, in the now vanished fields."

"The garden behind the house," Mr. Allbut adds, "referred to in the above-mentioned book, has been covered in, and a glass roof built over it." In Newman Street, which turns out of Oxford Street, Dickens placed Mr. Turveydrop's dancing school, "established in a sufficiently dingy house at the corner of an archway." This is known as Newman's Passage, and the dancing master's large room was "built out into a mews at the back."

It has often been assumed that the curious bow-windowed house which rises upon an exposed hill above the Broadstairs-like harbour, was the original "Bleak House." This is Fort House, where the novelist himself resided. The natives ought to be content with this, without claiming the house in the story. This, it is there stated, was near St. Albans, in Hertfordshire, a place for which Dickens had a *penchant*, as he also makes it the scene of Gabriel Grubb's adventure.

Shortly after the conclusion of "Little Dorrit,"

a rather scornful attack was made upon its author in the *Edinburgh Review*. This was chiefly directed against his system of "gibbeting" public abuses and institutions, and it was insisted that he was never just in his dealing with the superior classes. There was a very hostile tone all through, as was clear from this scornful statement:—"Even the catastrophe in 'Little Dorrit' is evidently borrowed from the recent fall of houses in Tottenham Court Road, which happened to have appeared in the newspapers at a convenient moment." As though a writer of Dickens's position would turn to profit a chance accident of this kind.

This last charge was too much for the author, who replied in his own journal very angrily indeed, and with reason, for it was a rather scandalous charge to make in the case of a writer of his standing. Anyone who had really followed the story—Dickens proved it clearly in his article "Curious Misprint in the *Edinburgh Review*,"—would have recognized the premonitory symptoms of the fate of the house from the commencement. The *Review* scarcely seemed to recognize this sequence of events:

"In answer," it wrote, in a note, "to some of the remarks contained in our review of 'Little

Dorrit,' Mr. Dickens states, in *Household Words* of the 1st of August, that the catastrophe of that tale formed part of his original plan, and was not suggested by a contemporary occurrence. The coincidence was thoroughly accidental." It might almost seem that the "coincidence," as the *Review* called it, was no more than the usual sagacity of "Boz" in forecasting the daily issues of life. In his walks he had seen many a crazy, tottering house which he may have said to himself as he passed that it would assuredly one day sink down in ruins, to the astonishment of the public. The finding here a suitable catastrophe for one of his "villains" was easy. What he thus skilfully forecasted was certain to come about, if not in his own day, in the course of time; and every day we see our public teachers applying these Dickensian formulæ to some fresh modern instance.

It has not been noted how insensibly Thackeray was influenced by Dickens's writings, and how many of the letters, "situations," and characters are reproduced—in "Pendennis" particularly. Thus in Chapter XXX. we have a leader from *The Dawn* quoted, which is exactly in the strain of *The Eatanswill Gazette*. The scenes

at the country theatre recall Mr. Crummles and his company. We have even the London manager coming down, and the company playing to him, exactly as did Mr. Crummles' corps. Lord Steyne has his satellites Wagg and Wenham, exactly as Sir Mulberry has his—Pyke and Pluck. The fashionable flunkeys have their clubs, etc., just like the bath footmen in "Pickwick." The scene between the Major and his nephew, when the latter refuses to forward his plans about Clavering and Blanche, recalls that between Sir John Chester and his son, and both shut their doors to their *protégés*. The reconciliation between old Mr. Huxter and his son, who had married without his consent, is on the lines of that between Mr. Winkle and *his* son. And the melodramatic catastrophe of Altamont, his fall from the house-gutter by which he was trying to escape, somehow recalls Bill Sikes's end. All these things and many more are of course treated in quite a new and different spirit.

"Put it down a wee," cried out Mr. Weller senior, at the famous trial, which suggests an interesting question. It has been urged that Sam's peculiar dialect—the putting "v's" for "w's" and *vice versa*—is now quite unknown and was perhaps imaginative.

We do not now hear cabmen say, "*Vere to?*" The fact is these forms of speech have "gone out." The familiar "coster" dialect, "sai" for "say," and "Disey" for "Daisy," is comparatively new, and is said to have come from association with foreign tones of speech, Russians, Germans, and other immigrants abounding in the East End.

Here I must conclude, though much more could be said on what is really an interesting subject. I doubt if there is any other instance of a highly popular and successful writer of fiction thus suggesting subjects of investigation quite outside his own proper *metier*.

THE END.

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