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THE LIFE

OF

[Illustration: Signature: Charles Dickens]

[Illustration]

THE LIFE

OF

CHARLES DICKENS

BY

JOHN FORSTER.

THREE VOLUMES IN TWO.

VOL. I.

* * * * *

BOSTON:
JAMES R. OSGOOD & COMPANY,
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1875.

THE LIFE

OF

CHARLES DICKENS

BY

JOHN FORSTER.

VOL. I.

1812-1842.

TO THE

DAUGHTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS,

MY GOD-DAUGHTER MARY

AND

HER SISTER KATE,

=This Book is Dedicated=

BY THEIR FRIEND,

AND THEIR FATHER'S FRIEND AND EXECUTOR,

JOHN FORSTER

NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

SUCH has been the rapidity of the demand for successive impressions of this book, that I have found it impossible, until now, to correct at pages 31, 87, and 97 three errors of statement made in the former editions; and some few other mistakes, not in themselves important, at pages 96, 101, and 102. I take the opportunity of adding that the mention at p. 83 is not an allusion to the well-known "Penny" and "Saturday" Magazines, but to weekly periodicals of some years' earlier date resembling them in form. One of them, I have since found from a later mention by Dickens himself, was presumably of a less wholesome and instructive character. "I used," he says, "when I was at school, to take in the _Terrific Register_, making myself unspeakably miserable, and frightening my very wits out of my head, for the small charge of a penny weekly; which, considering that there was an illustration to every number in which there was always a pool of blood, and at least one body, was cheap." An obliging correspondent writes to me upon my reference to

the Fox-under-the-hill, at p. 62: "Will you permit me to say that the house, shut up and almost ruinous, is still to be found at the bottom of a curious and most precipitous court, the entrance of which is just past Salisbury Street. . . . It was once, I think, the approach to the halfpenny boats. The house is now shut out from the water-side by the Embankment."

PALACE GATE HOUSE, KENSINGTON,
23d December, 1871.

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THE LIFE

OF

CHARLES DICKENS.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD

1812-1822.

Birth at Landport in Portsea--Family of John Dickens--Powers of Observation in Children--Two Years Old--In London, æt. 2-3--In Chatham, æt. 4-9--Vision of Boyhood--The Queer Small Child--Mother's Teaching--Day-School in Rome Lane--Retrospects of Childhood--David Copperfield and Charles Dickens--Access to Small but Good Library--Tragedy-Writing--Comic-Song Singing--Cousin James Lamert--First taken to Theatre--At Mr. Giles's School--Encored in the Recitations--Boyish Recollections--Birthplace of his Fancy--Last Night in Chatham--In London--First Impressions--Bayham Street, Camden-town--Faculty of Early Observation--His Description of his Father--Small Theatre made for him--Sister Fanny at Royal Academy of Music--Walks about London--Biography and Autobiography--At his Godfather's and his Uncle's--First Efforts at Description--"Res Augusta Domi"--Mother exerting Herself--Father in the Marshalsea--Visit to the Prison--Captain Porter--Old Friends disposed of--At the Pawnbroker's.

CHARLES DICKENS, the most popular novelist of the century, and one of the greatest humorists that England has produced, was born at Landport in Portsea on Friday, the 7th of February, 1812.

His father, John Dickens, a clerk in the Navy-pay office, was at this time stationed in the Portsmouth dockyard. He had made acquaintance with the lady, Elizabeth Barrow, who became afterwards his wife, through her elder brother, Thomas Barrow, also engaged on the establishment at Somerset House; and she bore him in all a family of eight children, of whom two died in infancy. The eldest, Fanny (born 1810), was followed by Charles (entered in the baptismal register of Portsea as Charles John Huffham, though on the very rare occasions when he subscribed that name he wrote Huffam); by another son, named Alfred, who died in childhood; by Letitia (born 1816); by another daughter, Harriet, who died also in childhood; by Frederick (born 1820); by Alfred Lamert (born 1822); and by Augustus (born 1827); of all of whom only the second daughter now survives.

Walter Scott tells us, in his fragment of autobiography, speaking of the strange remedies applied to his lameness, that he remembered lying on the floor in the parlor of his grandfather's farm-house, swathed up in a sheepskin warm from the body of the sheep, being then not three years old. David Copperfield's memory goes beyond this. He represents himself seeing so far back into the blank of his infancy as to discern therein his mother and her servant, dwarfed to his sight by stooping down or kneeling on the floor, and himself going unsteadily from the one to the other. He admits this may be fancy, though he believes the power of observation in numbers of very young children to be quite wonderful for

its closeness and accuracy, and thinks that the recollection of most of us can go farther back into such times than many of us suppose. But what he adds is certainly not fancy. "If it should appear from anything I may set down in this narrative that I was a child of close observation, or that as a man I have a strong memory of my childhood, I undoubtedly lay claim to both of these characteristics." Applicable as it might be to David Copperfield, this was simply and unaffectedly true of Charles Dickens.

He has often told me that he remembered the small front garden to the house at Portsea, from which he was taken away when he was two years old, and where, watched by a nurse through a low kitchen-window almost level with the gravel walk, he trotted about with something to eat, and his little elder sister with him. He was carried from the garden one day to see the soldiers exercise; and I perfectly recollect that, on our being at Portsmouth together while he was writing *Nickleby*, he recognized the exact shape of the military parade seen by him as a very infant, on the same spot, a quarter of a century before.

When his father was again brought up by his duties to London from Portsmouth, they went into lodgings in Norfolk Street, Middlesex Hospital; and it lived also in the child's memory that they had come away from Portsea in the snow. Their home, shortly after, was again changed, on the elder Dickens being placed upon duty in Chatham dockyard; and the house where he lived in Chatham, which had a plain-looking whitewashed plaster front and a small garden before and behind, was in St. Mary's Place, otherwise called the Brook, and next door to a Baptist meeting-house called Providence Chapel, of which a Mr. Giles, to be presently mentioned, was minister. Charles at this time was between four and five years old;^[1] and here he stayed till he was nine. Here the most durable of his early impressions were received; and the associations that were around him when he died were those which at the outset of his life had affected him most strongly.

The house called Gadshill Place stands on the strip of highest ground in the main road between Rochester and Gravesend. Often had we traveled past it together, years and years before it became his home, and never without some allusion to what he told me when first I saw it in his company, that amid the recollections connected with his childhood it held always a prominent place, for, upon first seeing it as he came from Chatham with his father, and looking up at it with much admiration, he had been promised that he might himself live in it, or in some such house, when he came to be a man, if he would only work hard enough. Which for a long time was his ambition. The story is a pleasant one, and receives authentic confirmation at the opening of one of his essays on traveling abroad, when as he passes along the road to Canterbury there crosses it a vision of his former self:

"So smooth was the old high-road, and so fresh were the horses, and so fast went I, that it was midway between Gravesend and Rochester, and the widening river was bearing the ships, white-sailed or black-smoked, out to sea, when I noticed by the wayside a very queer small boy.

"'Holloa!' said I to the very queer small boy, 'where do you live?'

"'At Chatham,' says he.

"'What do you do there?' says I.

"'I go to school,' says he.

"I took him up in a moment, and we went on. Presently, the very queer small boy says, 'This is Gadshill we are coming to, where Falstaff went out to rob those travelers, and ran away.'

"'You know something about Falstaff, eh?' said I.

"'All about him,' said the very queer small boy. 'I am old (I am nine), and I read all sorts of books. But _do_ let us stop at the top of the hill, and look at the house there, if you please!'

"'You admire that house?' said I.

"'Bless you, sir,' said the very queer small boy, 'when I was not more than half as old as nine, it used to be a treat for me to be brought to look at it. And now I am nine, I come by myself to look at it. And ever since I can recollect, my father, seeing me so fond of it, has often said to me, _If you were to be very persevering and were to work hard, you might some day come to live in it_. Though that's impossible!' said the very queer small boy, drawing a low breath, and now staring at the house out of window with all his might.

"I was rather amazed to be told this by the very queer small boy; for that house happens to be _my_ house, and I have reason to believe that what he said was true."

The queer small boy was indeed his very self. He was a very little and a very sickly boy. He was subject to attacks of violent spasm which disabled him for any active exertion. He was never a good little cricket-player. He was never a first-rate hand at marbles, or peg-top, or prisoner's base. But he had great pleasure in watching the other boys, officers' sons for the most part, at these games, reading while they played; and he had always the belief that this early sickness had brought to himself one inestimable advantage, in the circumstance of his weak health having strongly inclined him to reading. It will not appear, as my narrative moves on, that he owed much to his parents, or was other than in his first letter to Washington Irving he described himself to have been, a "very small and not-over-particularly-taken-care-of boy;" but he has frequently been heard to say that his first desire for knowledge, and his earliest passion for reading, were awakened by his mother, who taught him the first rudiments not only of English, but also, a little later, of Latin. She taught him regularly every day for a long time, and taught him, he was convinced, thoroughly well. I once put to him a question in connection with this to which he replied in almost exactly the words he placed five years later in the mouth of David Copperfield: "I faintly remember her teaching me the alphabet; and when I look upon the fat black letters in the primer, the puzzling novelty of their shapes, and the easy good nature of O and S, always seem to

present themselves before me as they used to do."

Then followed the preparatory day-school, a school for girls and boys to which he went with his sister Fanny, and which was in a place called Rome (pronounced Room) Lane. Revisiting Chatham in his manhood, and looking for the place, he found it had been pulled down to make a new street, "ages" before; but out of the distance of the ages arose nevertheless a not dim impression that it had been over a dyer's shop; that he went up steps to it; that he had frequently grazed his knees in doing so; and that in trying to scrape the mud off a very unsteady little shoe, he generally got his leg over the scraper.[2] Other similar memories of childhood have dropped from him occasionally in his lesser writings; whose readers may remember how vividly portions of his boyhood are reproduced in his fancy of the Christmas-tree, and will hardly have forgotten what he says, in his thoughtful little paper on Nurses' stories, of the doubtful places and people to which children may be introduced before they are six years old, and forced, night after night, to go back to against their wills, by servants to whom they are intrusted. That childhood exaggerates what it sees, too, has he not tenderly told? How he thought the Rochester High Street must be at least as wide as Regent Street, which he afterwards discovered to be little better than a lane; how the public clock in it, supposed to be the finest clock in the world, turned out to be as moon-faced and weak a clock as a man's eyes ever saw; and how in its town-hall, which had appeared to him once so glorious a structure that he had set it up in his mind as the model on which the genie of the lamp built the palace for Aladdin, he had painfully to recognize a mere mean little heap of bricks, like a chapel gone demented. Yet not so painfully, either, when second thoughts wisely came. "Ah! who was I that I should quarrel with the town for being changed to me, when I myself had come back, so changed, to it? All my early readings and early imaginations dated from this place, and I took them away so full of innocent construction and guileless belief, and I brought them back so worn and torn, so much the wiser and so much the worse!"

And here I may at once expressly mention, what already has been hinted, that even as Fielding described himself and his belongings in Captain Booth and Amelia, and protested always that he had writ in his books nothing more than he had seen in life, so it may be said of Dickens in more especial relation to David Copperfield. Many guesses have been made since his death, connecting David's autobiography with his own; accounting, by means of such actual experiences, for the so frequent recurrence in his writings of the prison-life, its humor and pathos, described in them with such wonderful reality; and discovering in what David tells Steerforth at school of the stories he had read in his childhood, what it was that had given the bent to his own genius. There is not only truth in all this, but it will very shortly be seen that the identity went deeper than any had supposed, and covered experiences not less startling in the reality than they appear to be in the fiction.

Of the "readings" and "imaginings" which he describes as brought away from Chatham, this authority can tell us. It is one of the many passages in *Copperfield* which are literally true, and its proper place is here.

"My father had left a small collection of books in a little room

up-stairs to which I had access (for it adjoined my own), and which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, _Roderick Random_, _Peregrine Pickle_, _Humphrey Clinker_, _Tom Jones_, the _Vicar of Wakefield_, _Don Quixote_, _Gil Blas_, and _Robinson Crusoe_ came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time,--they, and the _Arabian Nights_ and the _Tales of the Genii_,--and did me no harm; for whatever harm was in some of them was not there for me; _I_ knew nothing of it. It is astonishing to me now how I found time, in the midst of my porings and blunderings over heavier themes, to read those books as I did. It is curious to me how I could ever have consoled myself under my small troubles (which were great troubles to me), by impersonating my favorite characters in them. . . . I have been Tom Jones (a child's Tom Jones, a harmless creature) for a week together. I have sustained my own idea of Roderick Random for a month at a stretch, I verily believe. I had a greedy relish for a few volumes of voyages and travels--I forget what, now--that were on those shelves; and for days and days I can remember to have gone about my region of our house, armed with the centre-piece out of an old set of boot-trees: the perfect realization of Captain Somebody, of the royal British Navy, in danger of being beset by savages, and resolved to sell his life at a great price. . . . When I think of it, the picture always rises in my mind, of a summer evening, the boys at play in the churchyard, and I sitting on my bed, reading as if for life. Every barn in the neighborhood, every stone in the church, and every foot of the churchyard, had some association of its own, in my mind, connected with these books, and stood for some locality made famous in them. I have seen Tom Pipes go climbing up the church-steeple; I have watched Strap, with the knapsack on his back, stopping to rest himself upon the wicket-gate; and I _know_ that Commodore Trunnion held that club with Mr. Pickle, in the parlor of our little village ale-house." Every word of this personal recollection had been written down as fact, some years before it found its way into _David Copperfield_; the only change in the fiction being his omission of the name of a cheap series of novelists then in course of publication, by which his father had become happily the owner of so large a lump of literary treasure in his small collection of books.

The usual result followed. The child took to writing, himself, and became famous in his childish circle for having written a tragedy called _Misnar_, the Sultan of India, founded (and very literally founded, no doubt) on one of the _Tales of the Genii_. Nor was this his only distinction. He told a story offhand so well, and sang small comic songs so especially well, that he used to be elevated on chairs and tables, both at home and abroad, for more effective display of these talents; and when he first told me of this, at one of the Twelfth-night parties on his eldest son's birthday, he said he never recalled it that his own shrill little voice of childhood did not again tingle in his ears, and he blushed to think what a horrible little nuisance he must have been to many unoffending grown-up people who were called upon to admire him.

His chief ally and encourager in these displays was a youth of some ability, much older than himself, named James Lamert, stepson to his mother's sister, and therefore a sort of cousin, who was his great patron and friend in his childish days. Mary, the eldest daughter of

Charles Barrow, himself a lieutenant in the navy, had for her first husband a commander in the navy called Allen; on whose death by drowning at Rio Janeiro she had joined her sister, the navy-pay clerk's wife, at Chatham; in which place she subsequently took for her second husband Dr. Lamert, an army-surgeon, whose son James, even after he had been sent to Sandhurst for his education, continued still to visit Chatham from time to time. He had a turn for private theatricals; and as his father's quarters were in the ordnance hospital there, a great rambling place otherwise at that time almost uninhabited, he had plenty of room in which to get up his entertainments. The staff-doctor himself played his part, and his portrait will be found in Pickwick.

By Lamert, I have often heard him say, he was first taken to the theatre at the very tenderest age. He could hardly, however, have been younger than Charles Lamb, whose first experience was of having seen Artaxerxes when six years old; and certainly not younger than Walter Scott, who was only four when he saw As You Like It on the Bath stage, and remembered having screamed out, Ain't they brothers? when scandalized by Orlando and Oliver beginning to fight.[3] But he was at any rate old enough to recollect how his young heart leaped with terror as the wicked king Richard, struggling for life against the virtuous Richmond, backed up and bumped against the box in which he was; and subsequent visits to the same sanctuary, as he tells us, revealed to him many wondrous secrets, "of which not the least terrific were, that the witches in Macbeth bore an awful resemblance to the thanes and other proper inhabitants of Scotland; and that the good king Duncan couldn't rest in his grave, but was constantly coming out of it and calling himself somebody else."

During the last two years of Charles's residence at Chatham, he was sent to a school kept in Clover Lane by the young Baptist minister already named, Mr. William Giles. I have the picture of him here, very strongly in my mind, as a sensitive, thoughtful, feeble-bodied little boy, with an unusual sort of knowledge and fancy for such a child, and with a dangerous kind of wandering intelligence that a teacher might turn to good or evil, happiness or misery, as he directed it. Nor does the influence of Mr. Giles, such as it was, seem to have been other than favorable. Charles had himself a not ungrateful sense in after-years that this first of his masters, in his little-cared-for childhood, had pronounced him to be a boy of capacity; and when, about half-way through the publication of Pickwick, his old teacher sent a silver snuff-box with admiring inscription to the "inimitable Boz," it reminded him of praise far more precious obtained by him at his first year's examination in the Clover Lane academy, when his recitation of a piece out of the Humorist's Miscellany about Doctor Bolus had received, unless his youthful vanity bewildered him, a double encore. A habit, the only bad one taught him by Mr. Giles, of taking for a time, in very moderate quantities, the snuff called Irish blackguard, was the result of this gift from his old master; but he abandoned it after some few years, and it was never resumed.

It was in the boys' playing-ground near Clover Lane in which the school stood, that, according to one of his youthful memories, he had been, in the hay-making time, delivered from the dungeons of Seringapatam, an

immense pile "(of haycock)," by his countrymen the victorious British "(boy next door and his two cousins)," and had been recognized with ecstasy by his affianced one "(Miss Green)," who had come all the way from England "(second house in the terrace)" to ransom and marry him. It was in this playing-field, too, as he has himself recorded, he first heard in confidence from one whose father was greatly connected, "being under government," of the existence of a terrible banditti called _the radicals_, whose principles were that the prince-regent wore stays, that nobody had a right to any salary, and that the army and navy ought to be put down; horrors at which he trembled in his bed, after supplicating that the radicals might be speedily taken and hanged. Nor was it the least of the disappointments of his visit in after-life to the scenes of his boyhood that he found this play-field had been swallowed up by a railway station. It was gone, with its two beautiful trees of hawthorn; and where the hedge, the turf, and all the buttercups and daisies had been, there was nothing but the stoniest of jolting roads.

He was not much over nine years old when his father was recalled from Chatham to Somerset House, and he had to leave this good master, and the old place endeared to him by recollections that clung to him afterwards all his life long. It was here he had made the acquaintance not only of the famous books that David Copperfield specially names, of _Roderick Random_, _Peregrine Pickle_, _Humphrey Clinker_, _Tom Jones_, the _Vicar of Wakefield_, _Don Quixote_, _Gil Blas_, _Robinson Crusoe_, the _Arabian Nights_, and the _Tales of the Genii_, but also of the _Spectator_, the _Tatler_, the _Idler_, the _Citizen of the World_, and Mrs. Inchbald's _Collection of Farces_. These latter had been, as well, in the little library to which access was open to him; and of all of them his earliest remembrance was the having read them over and over at Chatham, not for the first, the second, or the third time. They were a host of friends when he had no single friend; and in leaving the place, I have often heard him say, he seemed to be leaving them too, and everything that had given his ailing little life its picturesqueness or sunshine. It was the birthplace of his fancy; and he hardly knew what store he had set by its busy varieties of change and scene, until he saw the falling cloud that was to hide its pictures from him forever. The gay bright regiments always going and coming, the continual parading and firings, the successions of sham sieges and sham defenses, the plays got up by his cousin in the hospital, the navy-pay yacht in which he had sailed to Sheerness with his father, and the ships floating out in the Medway with their far visions of sea,--he was to lose them all. He was never to watch the boys at their games any more, or see them sham over again the sham sieges and sham defenses. He was to be taken to London inside the stage-coach Commodore; and Kentish woods and fields, Cobham park and hall, Rochester cathedral and castle, and all the wonderful romance together, including the red-cheeked baby he had been wildly in love with, were to vanish like a dream. "On the night before we came away," he told me, "my good master came flitting in among the packing-cases to give me Goldsmith's _Bee_ as a keepsake. Which I kept for his sake, and its own, a long time afterwards." A longer time afterwards he recollected the stage-coach journey, and said in one of his published papers that never had he forgotten, through all the intervening years, the smell of the damp straw in which he was packed and forwarded like game, carriage-paid. "There was no other inside

passenger, and I consumed my sandwiches in solitude and dreariness, and it rained hard all the way, and I thought life sloppier than I expected to find it."

The earliest impressions received and retained by him in London were of his father's money involvements; and now first he heard mentioned "the deed," representing that crisis of his father's affairs in fact which is ascribed in fiction to Mr. Micawber's. He knew it in later days to have been a composition with creditors; though at this earlier date he was conscious of having confounded it with parchments of a much more demoniacal description. One result from the awful document soon showed itself in enforced retrenchment. The family had to take up its abode in a house in Bayham Street, Camden-town.

Bayham Street was about the poorest part of the London suburbs then, and the house was a mean small tenement, with a wretched little back-garden abutting on a squalid court. Here was no place for new acquaintances to him: no boys were near with whom he might hope to become in any way familiar. A washerwoman lived next door, and a Bow-Street officer lived over the way. Many, many times has he spoken to me of this, and how he seemed at once to fall into a solitary condition apart from all other boys of his own age, and to sink into a neglected state at home which had been always quite unaccountable to him. "As I thought," he said on one occasion very bitterly, "in the little back-garret in Bayham Street, of all I had lost in losing Chatham, what would I have given, if I had had anything to give, to have been sent back to any other school, to have been taught something anywhere!" He was at another school already, not knowing it. The self-education forced upon him was teaching him, all unconsciously as yet, what, for the future that awaited him, it most behooved him to know.

That he took, from the very beginning of this Bayham-Street life, his first impression of that struggling poverty which is nowhere more vividly shown than in the commoner streets of the ordinary London suburb, and which enriched his earliest writings with a freshness of original humor and quite unstudied pathos that gave them much of their sudden popularity, there cannot be a doubt. "I certainly understood it," he has often said to me, "quite as well then as I do now." But he was not conscious yet that he did so understand it, or of the influence it was exerting on his life even then. It seems almost too much to assert of a child, say at nine or ten years old, that his observation of everything was as close and good, or that he had as much intuitive understanding of the character and weaknesses of the grown-up people around him, as when the same keen and wonderful faculty had made him famous among men. But my experience of him led me to put implicit faith in the assertion he unvaryingly himself made, that he had never seen any cause to correct or change what in his boyhood was his own secret impression of anybody whom he had had, as a grown man, the opportunity of testing in later years.

How it came that, being what he was, he should now have fallen into the misery and neglect of the time about to be described, was a subject on which thoughts were frequently interchanged between us; and on one occasion he gave me a sketch of the character of his father, which, as I

can here repeat it in the exact words employed by him, will be the best preface I can make to what I feel that I have no alternative but to tell. "I know my father to be as kind-hearted and generous a man as ever lived in the world. Everything that I can remember of his conduct to his wife, or children, or friends, in sickness or affliction, is beyond all praise. By me, as a sick child, he has watched night and day, unweariedly and patiently, many nights and days. He never undertook any business, charge, or trust, that he did not zealously, conscientiously, punctually, honorably discharge. His industry has always been untiring. He was proud of me, in his way, and had a great admiration of the comic singing. But, in the ease of his temper, and the straitness of his means, he appeared to have utterly lost at this time the idea of educating me at all, and to have utterly put from him the notion that I had any claim upon him, in that regard, whatever. So I degenerated into cleaning his boots of a morning, and my own; and making myself useful in the work of the little house; and looking after my younger brothers and sisters (we were now six in all); and going on such poor errands as arose out of our poor way of living."

The cousin by marriage of whom I have spoken, James Lamert, who had lately completed his education at Sandhurst and was waiting in hopes of a commission, lived now with the family in Bayham Street, and had not lost his taste for the stage, or his ingenuities in connection with it. Taking pity on the solitary lad, he made and painted a little theatre for him. It was the only fanciful reality of his present life; but it could not supply what he missed most sorely, the companionship of boys of his own age, with whom he might share in the advantages of school and contend for its prizes. His sister Fanny was at about this time elected as a pupil to the Royal Academy of Music; and he has told me what a stab to his heart it was, thinking of his own disregarded condition, to see her go away to begin her education, amid the tearful good wishes of everybody in the house.

Nevertheless, as time went on, his own education still unconsciously went on as well, under the sternest and most potent of teachers; and, neglected and miserable as he was, he managed gradually to transfer to London all the dreaminess and all the romance with which he had invested Chatham. There were then at the top of Bayham Street some almshouses, and were still when he revisited it with me nearly twenty-seven years ago; and to go to this spot, he told me, and look from it over the dust-heaps and dock-leaves and fields (no longer there when we saw it together) at the cupola of St. Paul's looming through the smoke, was a treat that served him for hours of vague reflection afterwards. To be taken out for a walk into the real town, especially if it were anywhere about Covent Garden or the Strand, perfectly entranced him with pleasure. But most of all he had a profound attraction of repulsion to St. Giles's. If he could only induce whomsoever took him out to take him through Seven-Dials, he was supremely happy. "Good Heaven!" he would exclaim, "what wild visions of prodigies of wickedness, want, and beggary arose in my mind out of that place!" He was all this time, the reader will remember, still subject to continual attacks of illness, and, by reason of them, a very small boy even for his age.

That part of his boyhood is now very near of which, when the days of

fame and prosperity came to him, he felt the weight upon his memory as a painful burden until he could lighten it by sharing it with a friend; and an accident I will presently mention led him first to reveal it. There is, however, an interval of some months still to be described, of which, from conversations or letters that passed between us, after or because of this confidence, and that already have yielded fruit to these pages, I can supply some vague and desultory notices. The use thus made of them, it is due to myself to remark, was contemplated then; for though, long before his death, I had ceased to believe it likely that I should survive to write about him, he had never withdrawn the wish at this early time strongly expressed, or the confidences, not only then but to the very eve of his death reposed in me, that were to enable me to fulfill it.[4] The fulfillment indeed he had himself rendered more easy by partially uplifting the veil in *_David Copperfield_*.

The visits made from Bayham Street were chiefly to two connections of the family, his mother's elder brother and his godfather. The latter, who was a rigger, and mast-, oar-, and block-maker, lived at Limehouse in a substantial handsome sort of way, and was kind to his godchild. It was always a great treat to him to go to Mr. Huffham's; and the London night-sights as he returned were a perpetual joy and marvel. Here, too, the comic-singing accomplishment was brought into play so greatly to the admiration of one of the godfather's guests, an honest boat-builder, that he pronounced the little lad to be a "progidy." The visits to the uncle who was at this time fellow-clerk with his father, in Somerset House, were nearer home. Mr. Thomas Barrow, the eldest of his mother's family, had broken his leg in a fall; and, while laid up with this illness, his lodging was in Gerrard Street, Soho, in the upper part of the house of a worthy gentleman then recently deceased, a bookseller named Manson, father to the partner in the celebrated firm of Christie & Manson, whose widow at this time carried on the business. Attracted by the look of the lad as he went up-stairs, these good people lent him books to amuse him; among them Miss Porter's *_Scottish Chiefs_*, Holbein's *_Dance of Death_*, and George Colman's *_Broad Grins_*. The latter seized his fancy very much; and he was so impressed by its description of Covent Garden, in the piece called "The Elder Brother," that he stole down to the market by himself to compare it with the book. He remembered, as he said in telling me this, snuffing up the flavor of the faded cabbage-leaves as if it were the very breath of comic fiction. Nor was he far wrong, as comic fiction then and for some time after was. It was reserved for himself to give sweeter and fresher breath to it. Many years were to pass first, but he was beginning already to make the trial.

His uncle was shaved by a very odd old barber out of Dean Street, Soho, who was never tired of reviewing the events of the last war, and especially of detecting Napoleon's mistakes, and rearranging his whole life for him on a plan of his own. The boy wrote a description of this old barber, but never had courage to show it. At about the same time, taking for his model the description of the canon's housekeeper in *_Gil Blas_*, he sketched a deaf old woman who waited on them in Bayham Street, and who made delicate hashes with walnut-ketchup. As little did he dare to show this, either; though he thought it, himself, extremely clever.

In Bayham Street, meanwhile, affairs were going on badly; the poor boy's visits to his uncle, while the latter was still kept a prisoner by his accident, were interrupted by another attack of fever; and on his recovery the mysterious "deed" had again come uppermost. His father's resources were so low, and all his expedients so thoroughly exhausted, that trial was to be made whether his mother might not come to the rescue. The time was arrived for her to exert herself, she said; and she "must do something." The godfather down at Limehouse was reported to have an Indian connection. People in the East Indies always sent their children home to be educated. She would set up a school. They would all grow rich by it. And then, thought the sick boy, "perhaps even I might go to school myself."

A house was soon found at number four, Gower Street north; a large brass plate on the door announced MRS. DICKENS'S ESTABLISHMENT; and the result I can give in the exact words of the then small actor in the comedy, whose hopes it had raised so high: "I left, at a great many other doors, a great many circulars calling attention to the merits of the establishment. Yet nobody ever came to school, nor do I recollect that anybody ever proposed to come, or that the least preparation was made to receive anybody. But I know that we got on very badly with the butcher and baker; that very often we had not too much for dinner; and that at last my father was arrested." The interval between the sponging-house and the prison was passed by the sorrowful lad in running errands and carrying messages for the prisoner, delivered with swollen eyes and through shining tears; and the last words said to him by his father before he was finally carried to the Marshalsea were to the effect that the sun was set upon him forever. "I really believed at the time," said Dickens to me, "that they had broken my heart." He took afterwards ample revenge for this false alarm by making all the world laugh at them in David Copperfield.

The readers of Mr. Micawber's history who remember David's first visit to the Marshalsea prison, and how upon seeing the turnkey he recalled the turnkey in the blanket in Roderick Random, will read with curious interest what follows, written as a personal experience of fact two or three years before the fiction had even entered into his thoughts:

"My father was waiting for me in the lodge, and we went up to his room (on the top story but one), and cried very much. And he told me, I remember, to take warning by the Marshalsea, and to observe that if a man had twenty pounds a year and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy; but that a shilling spent the other way would make him wretched. I see the fire we sat before, now; with two bricks inside the rusted grate, one on each side, to prevent its burning too many coals. Some other debtor shared the room with him, who came in by-and-by; and, as the dinner was a joint-stock repast, I was sent up to 'Captain Porter' in the room overhead, with Mr. Dickens's compliments, and I was his son, and could he, Captain P., lend me a knife and fork?

"Captain Porter lent the knife and fork, with his compliments in return. There was a very dirty lady in his little room; and two wan girls, his daughters, with shock heads of hair. I thought I should not have liked

to borrow Captain Porter's comb. The captain himself was in the last extremity of shabbiness; and if I could draw at all, I would draw an accurate portrait of the old, old, brown great-coat he wore, with no other coat below it. His whiskers were large. I saw his bed rolled up in a corner; and what plates, and dishes, and pots he had, on a shelf; and I knew (God knows how) that the two girls with the shock heads were Captain Porter's natural children, and that the dirty lady was not married to Captain P. My timid, wondering station on his threshold was not occupied more than a couple of minutes, I dare say; but I came down again to the room below with all this as surely in my knowledge as the knife and fork were in my hand."

How there was something agreeable and gipsy-like in the dinner after all, and how he took back the captain's knife and fork early in the afternoon, and how he went home to comfort his mother with an account of his visit, David Copperfield has also accurately told. Then, at home, came many miserable daily struggles that seemed to last an immense time, yet did not perhaps cover many weeks. Almost everything by degrees was sold or pawned, little Charles being the principal agent in those sorrowful transactions. Such of the books as had been brought from Chatham--_Peregrine Pickle_, _Roderick Random_, _Tom Jones_, _Humphrey Clinker_, and all the rest--went first. They were carried off from the little chiffonier, which his father called the library, to a bookseller in the Hampstead Road, the same that David Copperfield describes as in the City Road; and the account of the sales, as they actually occurred and were told to me long before David was born, was reproduced word for word in his imaginary narrative: "The keeper of this bookstall, who lived in a little house behind it, used to get tipsy every night, and to be violently scolded by his wife every morning. More than once, when I went there early, I had audience of him in a turn-up bedstead, with a cut in his forehead or a black eye bearing witness to his excesses overnight (I am afraid he was quarrelsome in his drink); and he, with a shaking hand, endeavoring to find the needful shillings in one or other of the pockets of his clothes, which lay upon the floor, while his wife, with a baby in her arms and her shoes down at heel, never left off rating him. Sometimes he had lost his money, and then he would ask me to call again; but his wife had always got some (had taken his, I dare say, while he was drunk), and secretly completed the bargain on the stairs, as we went down together."

The same pawnbroker's shop, too, which was so well known to David, became not less familiar to Charles; and a good deal of notice was here taken of him by the pawnbroker, or by his principal clerk who officiated behind the counter, and who, while making out the duplicate, liked of all things to hear the lad conjugate a Latin verb and translate or decline his _musa_ and _dominus_. Everything to this accompaniment went gradually; until, at last, even of the furniture of Gower Street number four there was nothing left except a few chairs, a kitchen table, and some beds. Then they encamped, as it were, in the two parlors of the emptied house, and lived there night and day.

All which is but the prelude to what remains to be described.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] "I shall cut this letter short, for they are playing Masaniello in the drawing-room, and I feel much as I used to do when I was a small child a few miles off, and Somebody (who, I wonder, and which way did _She_ go, when she died) hummed the evening hymn to me, and I cried on the pillow,--either with the remorseful consciousness of having kicked Somebody else, or because still Somebody else had hurt my feelings in the course of the day." From *Gadshill*, 24 Sept. 1857. "Being here again, or as much here as anywhere in particular."

[2] "The mistress of the establishment holds no place in our memory; but, rampant on one eternal door-mat, in an eternal entry long and narrow, is a puffy pug-dog, with a personal animosity towards us, who triumphs over Time. The bark of that baleful Pug, a certain radiating way he had of snapping at our undefended legs, the ghastly grinning of his moist black muzzle and white teeth, and the insolence of his crisp tail curled like a pastoral crook, all live and flourish. From an otherwise unaccountable association of him with a fiddle, we conclude that he was of French extraction, and his name _Fidèle_. He belonged to some female, chiefly inhabiting a back parlor, whose life appears to us to have been consumed in sniffing, and in wearing a brown beaver bonnet."--_Reprinted Pieces_, 287. (In such quotations as are made from his writings, the _Charles Dickens Edition_ will be used.)

[3] "A few weeks' residence at home convinced me, who had till then been an only child in the house of my grandfather, that a quarrel between brothers was a very natural event."--Lockhart's *_Life_*, i. 30.

[4] The reader will forgive my quoting from a letter of the date of the 22d April, 1848. "I desire no better for my fame, when my personal dustiness shall be past the control of my love of order, than such a biographer and such a critic." "You know me better," he wrote, resuming the same subject on the 6th of July, 1862, "than any other man does, or ever will." In an entry of my diary during the interval between these years, I find a few words that not only mark the time when I first saw in its connected shape the autobiographical fragment which will form the substance of the second chapter of this biography, but also express his own feeling respecting it when written: "20 January, 1849. The description may make none of the impression on others that the reality made on him. . . . Highly probable that it may never see the light. No wish. Left to J. F. or others." The first number of *_David Copperfield_* appeared five months after this date; but though I knew, even before he adapted his fragment of autobiography to the eleventh number, that he had now abandoned the notion of completing it under his own name, the "_no wish_" or the discretion left me, was never in any way subsequently modified. What follows, from the same entry, refers to the manuscript of the fragment: "No blotting, as when writing fiction; but straight on, as when writing ordinary letter."

HARD EXPERIENCES IN BOYHOOD.

1822-1824.

Mr. Dilke's Half-crown--Story of Boyhood
told--D. C. and C. D.--Enterprise of the
Cousins Lamert--First Employment in
Life--Blacking-Warehouse--A Poor Little
Drudge--Bob Fagin and Poll Green--"Facilis
Descensus"--Crushed Hopes--The Home in Gower
Street--Regaling Alamode--Home broken up--At
Mrs. Roylance's in Camden-town--Sundays in
Prison--Pudding-Shops and Coffee-Shops--What
was and might have been--Thomas and Harry--A
Lodging in Lant Street--Meals in the
Marshalsea--C. D. and the
Marchioness--Originals of Garland
Family--Adventure with Bob
Fagin--Saturday-Night Shows--Appraised
officially--Publican and Wife at Cannon
Row--Marshalsea Incident in
Copperfield--Incident as it
occurred--Materials for _Pickwick_--Sister
Fanny's Musical Prize--From Hungerford Stairs
to Chandos Street--Father's Quarrel with James
Lamert--Quits the Warehouse--Bitter
Associations of Servitude--What became of the
Blacking-Business.

THE incidents to be told now would probably never have been known to me, or indeed any of the occurrences of his childhood and youth, but for the accident of a question which I put to him one day in the March or April of 1847.

I asked if he remembered ever having seen in his boyhood our friend the elder Mr. Dilke, his father's acquaintance and contemporary, who had been a clerk in the same office in Somerset House to which Mr. John Dickens belonged. Yes, he said, he recollected seeing him at a house in Gerrard Street, where his uncle Barrow lodged during an illness, and Mr. Dilke had visited him. Never at any other time. Upon which I told him that some one else had been intended in the mention made to me, for that the reference implied not merely his being met accidentally, but his having had some juvenile employment in a warehouse near the Strand; at which place Mr. Dilke, being with the elder Dickens one day, had noticed him, and received, in return for the gift of a half-crown, a very low bow. He was silent for several minutes; I felt that I had unintentionally touched a painful place in his memory; and to Mr. Dilke I never spoke of the subject again. It was not, however, then, but some weeks later, that Dickens made further allusion to my thus having struck unconsciously upon a time of which he never could lose the remembrance while he remembered anything, and the recollection of which, at intervals, haunted him and made him miserable, even to that hour.

Very shortly afterwards I learnt in all their detail the incidents that had been so painful to him, and what then was said to me or written respecting them revealed the story of his boyhood. The idea of *David Copperfield*, which was to take all the world into his confidence, had not at this time occurred to him; but what it had so startled me to know, his readers were afterwards told with only such change or addition as for the time might sufficiently disguise himself under cover of his hero. For the poor little lad, with good ability and a most sensitive nature, turned at the age of ten into a "laboring hind" in the service of "Murdstone and Grinby," and conscious already of what made it seem very strange to him that he could so easily have been thrown away at such an age, was indeed himself. His was the secret agony of soul at finding himself "companion to Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes," and his the tears that mingled with the water in which he and they rinsed and washed out bottles. It had all been written, as fact, before he thought of any other use for it; and it was not until several months later, when the fancy of *David Copperfield*, itself suggested by what he had so written of his early troubles, began to take shape in his mind, that he abandoned his first intention of writing his own life. Those warehouse experiences fell then so aptly into the subject he had chosen, that he could not resist the temptation of immediately using them; and the manuscript recording them, which was but the first portion of what he had designed to write, was embodied in the substance of the eleventh and earlier chapters of his novel. What already had been sent to me, however, and proof-sheets of the novel interlined at the time, enable me now to separate the fact from the fiction, and to supply to the story of the author's childhood those passages, omitted from the book, which, apart from their illustration of the growth of his character, present to us a picture of tragical suffering, and of tender as well as humorous fancy, unsurpassed in even the wonders of his published writings.

The person indirectly responsible for the scenes to be described was the young relative James Lamert, the cousin by his aunt's marriage of whom I have made frequent mention, who got up the plays at Chatham, and after passing at Sandhurst had been living with the family in Bayham Street in the hope of obtaining a commission in the army. This did not come until long afterwards, when, in consideration of his father's services, he received it, and relinquished it then in favor of a younger brother; but he had meanwhile, before the family removed from Camden-town, ceased to live with them. The husband of a sister of his (of the same name as himself, being indeed his cousin, George Lamert), a man of some property, had recently embarked in an odd sort of commercial speculation, and had taken him into his office and his house, to assist in it. I give now the fragment of the autobiography of Dickens:

"This speculation was a rivalry of 'Warren's Blacking, 30, Strand,'--at that time very famous. One Jonathan Warren (the famous one was Robert), living at 30, Hungerford Stairs, or Market, Strand (for I forget which it was called then), claimed to have been the original inventor or proprietor of the blacking-recipe, and to have been deposed and ill used by his renowned relation. At last he put himself in the way of selling his recipe, and his name, and his 30, Hungerford Stairs, Strand (30, Strand, very large, and the intermediate direction very small), for an annuity; and he set forth by his agents that a little capital would make

a great business of it. The man of some property was found in George Lamert, the cousin and brother-in-law of James. He bought this right and title, and went into the blacking-business and the blacking-premises.

"--In an evil hour for me, as I often bitterly thought. Its chief manager, James Lamert, the relative who had lived with us in Bayham Street, seeing how I was employed from day to day, and knowing what our domestic circumstances then were, proposed that I should go into the blacking-warehouse, to be as useful as I could, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. I am not clear whether it was six or seven. I am inclined to believe, from my uncertainty on this head, that it was six at first, and seven afterwards. At any rate, the offer was accepted very willingly by my father and mother, and on a Monday morning I went down to the blacking-warehouse to begin my business life.

"It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age. It is wonderful to me that, even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me--a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally--to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school. Our friends, I take it, were tired out. No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have been more so if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar-school, and going to Cambridge.

"The blacking-warehouse was the last house on the left-hand side of the way, at old Hungerford Stairs. It was a crazy, tumble-down old house, abutting of course on the river, and literally overrun with rats. Its wainscoted rooms, and its rotten floors and staircase, and the old gray rats swarming down in the cellars, and the sound of their squeaking and scuffling coming up the stairs at all times, and the dirt and decay of the place, rise up visibly before me, as if I were there again. The counting-house was on the first floor, looking over the coal-barges and the river. There was a recess in it, in which I was to sit and work. My work was to cover the pots of paste-blackening; first with a piece of oil-paper, and then with a piece of blue paper; to tie them round with a string; and then to clip the paper close and neat, all round, until it looked as smart as a pot of ointment from an apothecary's shop. When a certain number of grosses of pots had attained this pitch of perfection, I was to paste on each a printed label, and then go on again with more pots. Two or three other boys were kept at similar duty down-stairs on similar wages. One of them came up, in a ragged apron and a paper cap, on the first Monday morning, to show me the trick of using the string and tying the knot. His name was Bob Fagin; and I took the liberty of using his name, long afterwards, in Oliver Twist.

"Our relative had kindly arranged to teach me something in the dinner-hour; from twelve to one, I think it was; every day. But an arrangement so incompatible with counting-house business soon died away, from no fault of his or mine; and, for the same reason, my small work-table, and my grosses of pots, my papers, string, scissors, paste-pot, and labels, by little and little, vanished out of the recess in the counting-house, and kept company with the other small

work-tables, grosses of pots, papers, string, scissors, and paste-pots, down-stairs. It was not long before Bob Fagin and I, and another boy whose name was Paul Green, but who was currently believed to have been christened Poll (a belief which I transferred, long afterwards again, to Mr. Sweedlepipe, in _Martin Chuzzlewit_), worked generally, side by side. Bob Fagin was an orphan, and lived with his brother-in-law, a waterman. Poll Green's father had the additional distinction of being a fireman, and was employed at Drury Lane theatre; where another relation of Poll's, I think his little sister, did imps in the pantomimes.

"No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship; compared these every-day associates with those of my happier childhood; and felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more; cannot be written. My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man; and wander desolately back to that time of my life.

"My mother and my brothers and sisters (excepting Fanny in the Royal Academy of Music) were still encamped, with a young servant-girl from Chatham workhouse, in the two parlors in the emptied house in Gower Street north. It was a long way to go and return within the dinner-hour, and usually I either carried my dinner with me, or went and bought it at some neighboring shop. In the latter case, it was commonly a saveloy and a penny loaf; sometimes, a fourpenny plate of beef from a cook's shop; sometimes, a plate of bread and cheese, and a glass of beer, from a miserable old public-house over the way: the Swan, if I remember right, or the Swan and something else that I have forgotten. Once, I remember tucking my own bread (which I had brought from home in the morning) under my arm, wrapped up in a piece of paper like a book, and going into the best dining-room in Johnson's alamode beef-house in Clare Court, Drury Lane, and magnificently ordering a small plate of alamode beef to eat with it. What the waiter thought of such a strange little apparition, coming in all alone, I don't know; but I can see him now, staring at me as I ate my dinner, and bringing up the other waiter to look. I gave him a halfpenny, and I wish, now, that he hadn't taken it."

I lose here for a little while the fragment of direct narrative, but I perfectly recollect that he used to describe Saturday night as his great treat. It was a grand thing to walk home with six shillings in his pocket, and to look in at the shop-windows and think what it would buy. Hunt's roasted corn, as a British and patriotic substitute for coffee, was in great vogue just then; and the little fellow used to buy it, and roast it on the Sunday. There was a cheap periodical of selected pieces called the _Portfolio_, which he had also a great fancy for taking home with him. The new proposed "deed," meanwhile, had failed to propitiate his father's creditors; all hope of arrangement passed away; and the end was that his mother and her encampment in Gower Street north broke up

and went to live in the Marshalsea. I am able at this point to resume his own account:

"The key of the house was sent back to the landlord, who was very glad to get it; and I (small Cain that I was, except that I had never done harm to any one) was handed over as a lodger to a reduced old lady, long known to our family, in Little College Street, Camden-town, who took children in to board, and had once done so at Brighton; and who, with a few alterations and embellishments, unconsciously began to sit for Mrs. Pipchin in *_Dombey_* when she took in me.

"She had a little brother and sister under her care then; somebody's natural children, who were very irregularly paid for; and a widow's little son. The two boys and I slept in the same room. My own exclusive breakfast, of a penny cottage loaf and a penny-worth of milk, I provided for myself. I kept another small loaf, and a quarter of a pound of cheese, on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard; to make my supper on when I came back at night. They made a hole in the six or seven shillings, I know well; and I was out at the blacking-warehouse all day, and had to support myself upon that money all the week. I suppose my lodging was paid for, by my father. I certainly did not pay it myself; and I certainly had no other assistance whatever (the making of my clothes, I think, excepted), from Monday morning until Saturday night. No advice, no counsel, no encouragement, no consolation, no support, from any one that I can call to mind, so help me God.

"Sundays, Fanny and I passed in the prison. I was at the academy in Tenterden Street, Hanover Square, at nine o'clock in the morning, to fetch her; and we walked back there together, at night.

"I was so young and childish, and so little qualified--how could I be otherwise?--to undertake the whole charge of my own existence, that, in going to Hungerford Stairs of a morning, I could not resist the stale pastry put out at half-price on trays at the confectioners' doors in Tottenham Court Road; and I often spent in that the money I should have kept for my dinner. Then I went without my dinner, or bought a roll, or a slice of pudding. There were two pudding-shops between which I was divided, according to my finances. One was in a court close to St. Martin's Church (at the back of the church) which is now removed altogether. The pudding at that shop was made with currants, and was rather a special pudding, but was dear: two penn'orth not being larger than a penn'orth of more ordinary pudding. A good shop for the latter was in the Strand, somewhere near where the Lowther Arcade is now. It was a stout, hale pudding, heavy and flabby; with great raisins in it, stuck in whole, at great distances apart. It came up hot, at about noon every day; and many and many a day did I dine off it.

"We had half an hour, I think, for tea. When I had money enough, I used to go to a coffee-shop, and have half a pint of coffee, and a slice of bread-and-butter. When I had no money, I took a turn in Covent Garden market, and stared at the pineapples. The coffee-shops to which I most resorted were, one in Maiden Lane; one in a court (non-existent now) close to Hungerford market; and one in St. Martin's Lane, of which I only recollect that it stood near the church, and that in the door

there was an oval glass plate, with COFFEE-ROOM painted on it, addressed towards the street. If I ever find myself in a very different kind of coffee-room now, but where there is such an inscription on glass, and read it backward on the wrong side MOOR-EEFFOC (as I often used to do then, in a dismal reverie,) a shock goes through my blood.

"I know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by any one, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through; by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting-house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount and labeled with a different day. I know that I have lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.

"But I held some station at the blacking-warehouse too. Besides that my relative at the counting-house did what a man so occupied, and dealing with a thing so anomalous, could, to treat me as one upon a different footing from the rest, I never said, to man or boy, how it was that I came to be there, or gave the least indication of being sorry that I was there. That I suffered in secret, and that I suffered exquisitely, no one ever knew but I. How much I suffered, it is, as I have said already, utterly beyond my power to tell. No man's imagination can overstep the reality. But I kept my own counsel, and I did my work. I knew from the first that, if I could not do my work as well as any of the rest, I could not hold myself above slight and contempt. I soon became at least as expeditious and as skillful with my hands as either of the other boys. Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manners were different enough from theirs to place a space between us. They, and the men, always spoke of me as 'the young gentleman.' A certain man (a soldier once) named Thomas, who was the foreman, and another named Harry, who was the carman and wore a red jacket, used to call me 'Charles' sometimes, in speaking to me; but I think it was mostly when we were very confidential, and when I had made some efforts to entertain them over our work with the results of some of the old readings, which were fast perishing out of my mind. Poll Green uprose once, and rebelled against the 'young gentleman' usage; but Bob Fagin settled him speedily.

"My rescue from this kind of existence I considered quite hopeless, and abandoned as such, altogether; though I am solemnly convinced that I never, for one hour, was reconciled to it, or was otherwise than miserably unhappy. I felt keenly, however, the being so cut off from my parents, my brothers and sisters, and, when my day's work was done, going home to such a miserable blank; and that, I thought, might be corrected. One Sunday night I remonstrated with my father on this head, so pathetically, and with so many tears, that his kind nature gave way. He began to think that it was not quite right. I do believe he had never thought so before, or thought about it. It was the first remonstrance I had ever made about my lot, and perhaps it opened up a little more than I intended. A back-attic was found for me at the house

of an insolvent-court agent, who lived in Lant Street in the borough, where Bob Sawyer lodged many years afterwards. A bed and bedding were sent over for me, and made up on the floor. The little window had a pleasant prospect of a timber-yard; and when I took possession of my new abode I thought it was a Paradise."

There is here another blank, which it is, however, not difficult to supply from letters and recollections of my own. What was to him of course the great pleasure of his paradise of a lodging was its bringing him again, though after a fashion sorry enough, within the circle of home. From this time he used to breakfast "at home,"--in other words, in the Marshalsea; going to it as early as the gates were open, and for the most part much earlier. They had no want of bodily comforts there. His father's income, still going on, was amply sufficient for that; and in every respect indeed but elbow-room, I have heard him say, the family lived more comfortably in prison than they had done for a long time out of it. They were waited on still by the maid-of-all-work from Bayham Street, the orphan girl of the Chatham workhouse, from whose sharp little worldly and also kindly ways he took his first impression of the Marchioness in the _Old Curiosity Shop_. She also had a lodging in the neighborhood, that she might be early on the scene of her duties; and when Charles met her, as he would do occasionally, in his lounging-place by London Bridge, he would occupy the time before the gates opened by telling her quite astonishing fictions about the wharves and the tower. "But I hope I believed them myself," he would say. Besides breakfast, he had supper also in the prison, and got to his lodging generally at nine o'clock. The gates closed always at ten.

I must not omit what he told me of the landlord of this little lodging. He was a fat, good-natured, kind old gentleman. He was lame, and had a quiet old wife; and he had a very innocent grown-up son, who was lame too. They were all very kind to the boy. He was taken with one of his old attacks of spasm one night, and the whole three of them were about his bed until morning. They were all dead when he told me this; but in another form they still live very pleasantly as the Garland family in the _Old Curiosity Shop_.

He had a similar illness one day in the warehouse, which I can describe in his own words: "Bob Fagin was very good to me on the occasion of a bad attack of my old disorder. I suffered such excruciating pain that time, that they made a temporary bed of straw in my old recess in the counting-house, and I rolled about on the floor, and Bob filled empty blacking-bottles with hot water, and applied relays of them to my side, half the day. I got better, and quite easy towards evening; but Bob (who was much bigger and older than I) did not like the idea of my going home alone, and took me under his protection. I was too proud to let him know about the prison, and, after making several efforts to get rid of him, to all of which Bob Fagin in his goodness was deaf, shook hands with him on the steps of a house near Southwark Bridge on the Surrey side, making believe that I lived there. As a finishing piece of reality in case of his looking back, I knocked at the door, I recollect, and asked, when the woman opened it, if that was Mr. Robert Fagin's house."

The Saturday nights continued, as before, to be precious to him. "My

usual way home was over Blackfriars Bridge, and down that turning in the Blackfriars Road which has Rowland Hill's chapel on one side, and the likeness of a golden dog licking a golden pot over a shop-door on the other. There are a good many little low-browed old shops in that street, of a wretched kind; and some are unchanged now. I looked into one a few weeks ago, where I used to buy boot-laces on Saturday nights, and saw the corner where I once sat down on a stool to have a pair of ready-made half-boots fitted on. I have been seduced more than once, in that street on a Saturday night, by a show-van at a corner; and have gone in, with a very motley assemblage, to see the Fat-pig, the Wild-indian, and the Little-lady. There were two or three hat-manufactories there then (I think they are there still); and among the things which, encountered anywhere or under any circumstances, will instantly recall that time, is the smell of hat-making."

His father's attempts to avoid going through the court having failed, all needful ceremonies had to be undertaken to obtain the benefit of the insolvent debtors' act; and in one of these little Charles had his part to play. One condition of the statute was that the wearing-apparel and personal matters retained were not to exceed twenty pounds sterling in value. "It was necessary, as a matter of form, that the clothes I wore should be seen by the official appraiser. I had a half-holiday to enable me to call upon him, at his own time, at a house somewhere beyond the Obelisk. I recollect his coming out to look at me with his mouth full, and a strong smell of beer upon him, and saying good-naturedly that 'that would do,' and 'it was all right.' Certainly the hardest creditor would not have been disposed (even if he had been legally entitled) to avail himself of my poor white hat, little jacket, or corduroy trowsers. But I had a fat old silver watch in my pocket, which had been given me by my grandmother before the blacking-days, and I had entertained my doubts as I went along whether that valuable possession might not bring me over the twenty pounds. So I was greatly relieved, and made him a bow of acknowledgment as I went out."

Still, the want felt most by him was the companionship of boys of his own age. He had no such acquaintance. Sometimes he remembered to have played on the coal-barges at dinner-time, with Poll Green and Bob Fagin; but those were rare occasions. He generally strolled alone, about the back streets of the Adelphi, or explored the Adelphi arches. One of his favorite localities was a little public-house by the water-side, called the Fox-under-the-hill, approached by an underground passage which we once missed in looking for it together; and he had a vision which he has mentioned in *Copperfield* of sitting eating something on a bench outside, one fine evening, and looking at some coal-heavers dancing before the house. "I wonder what they thought of me," says David. He had himself already said the same in his fragment of autobiography.

Another characteristic little incident he made afterwards one of David's experiences, but I am able to give it here without the disguises that adapt it to the fiction: "I was such a little fellow, with my poor white hat, little jacket, and corduroy trowsers, that frequently, when I went into the bar of a strange public-house for a glass of ale or porter to wash down the saveloy and the loaf I had eaten in the street, they didn't like to give it me. I remember, one evening (I had been somewhere

for my father, and was going back to the borough over Westminster Bridge), that I went into a public-house in Parliament Street,--which is still there, though altered,--at the corner of the short street leading into Cannon Row, and said to the landlord behind the bar, 'What is your very best--the VERY _best_--ale, a glass?' For the occasion was a festive one, for some reason: I forget why. It may have been my birthday, or somebody else's. 'Two-pence,' 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 my 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 asked me a good many questions, as what my name was, how old I was, where I lived, how I was employed, etc. etc. To all of which, that I might commit nobody, I invented appropriate answers. They served me with the ale, though I suspect it was not the strongest on the premises; and the landlord's wife, opening the little half-door and bending down, gave me a kiss that was half admiring and half compassionate, but all womanly and good, I am sure."

A later, and not less characteristic, incident of the true story of this time found also a place, three or four years after it was written, in his now famous fiction. It preceded but by a short time the discharge, from the Marshalsea, of the elder Dickens; to whom a rather considerable legacy from a relative had accrued not long before ("some hundreds," I understood), and had been paid into court during his imprisonment. The scene to be described arose on the occasion of a petition drawn up by him before he left, praying, not for the abolition of imprisonment for debt, as David Copperfield relates, but for the less dignified but more accessible boon of a bounty to the prisoners to drink his majesty's health on his majesty's forthcoming birthday.

"I mention the circumstance because it illustrates, to me, my early interest in observing people. When I went to the Marshalsea of a night, I was always delighted to hear from my mother what she knew about the histories of the different debtors in the prison; and when I heard of this approaching ceremony, I was so anxious to see them all come in, one after another (though I knew the greater part of them already, to speak to, and they me), that I got leave of absence on purpose, and established myself in a corner, near the petition. It was stretched out, I recollect, on a great ironing-board, under the window, which in another part of the room made a bedstead at night. The internal regulations of the place, for cleanliness and order, and for the government of a common room in the ale-house, where hot water and some means of cooking, and a good fire, were provided for all who paid a very small subscription, were excellently administered by a governing committee of debtors, of which my father was chairman for the time being. As many of the principal officers of this body as could be got into the small room without filling it up, supported him, in front of the petition; and my old friend Captain Porter (who had washed himself,

to do honor to so solemn an occasion) stationed himself close to it, to read it to all who were unacquainted with its contents. The door was then thrown open, and they began to come in, in a long file; several waiting on the landing outside, while one entered, affixed his signature, and went out. To everybody in succession, Captain Porter said, 'Would you like to hear it read?' If he weakly showed the least disposition to hear it, Captain Porter, in a loud sonorous voice, gave him every word of it. I remember a certain luscious roll he gave to such words as 'Majesty--gracious Majesty--your gracious Majesty's unfortunate subjects--your Majesty's well-known munificence,'--as if the words were something real in his mouth, and delicious to taste; my poor father meanwhile listening with a little of an author's vanity, and contemplating (not severely) the spikes on the opposite wall. Whatever was comical in this scene, and whatever was pathetic, I sincerely believe I perceived in my corner, whether I demonstrated or not, quite as well as I should perceive it now. I made out my own little character and story for every man who put his name to the sheet of paper. I might be able to do that now, more truly: not more earnestly, or with a closer interest. Their different peculiarities of dress, of face, of gait, of manner, were written indelibly upon my memory. I would rather have seen it than the best play ever played; and I thought about it afterwards, over the pots of paste-blackening, often and often. When I looked, with my mind's eye, into the Fleet prison during Mr. Pickwick's incarceration, I wonder whether half a dozen men were wanting from the Marshalsea crowd that came filing in again, to the sound of Captain Porter's voice!"

When the family left the Marshalsea they all went to lodge with the lady in Little College Street, a Mrs. Roylance, who has obtained unexpected immortality as Mrs. Pipchin; and they afterwards occupied a small house in Somers-town. But, before this time, Charles was present with some of them in Tenterden Street to see his sister. Fanny received one of the prizes given to the pupils of the Royal Academy of Music. "I could not bear to think of myself--beyond the reach of all such honorable emulation and success. The tears ran down my face. I felt as if my heart were rent. I prayed, when I went to bed that night, to be lifted out of the humiliation and neglect in which I was. I never had suffered so much before. There was no envy in this." There was little need that he should say so. Extreme enjoyment in witnessing the exercise of her talents, the utmost pride in every success obtained by them, he manifested always to a degree otherwise quite unusual with him; and on the day of her funeral, which we passed together, I had most affecting proof of his tender and grateful memory of her in these childish days. A few more sentences, certainly not less touching than any that have gone before, will bring the story of them to its close. They stand here exactly as written by him:

"I am not sure that it was before this time, or after it, that the blacking-warehouse was removed to Chandos Street, Covent Garden. It is no matter. Next to the shop at the corner of Bedford Street in Chandos Street are two rather old-fashioned houses and shops adjoining one another. They were one then, or thrown into one, for the blacking-business; and had been a butter-shop. Opposite to them was, and is, a public-house, where I got my ale, under these new circumstances. The stones in the street may be smoothed by my small feet going across

to it at dinner-time, and back again. The establishment was larger now, and we had one or two new boys. Bob Fagin and I had attained to great dexterity in tying up the pots. I forget how many we could do in five minutes. We worked, for the light's sake, near the second window as you come from Bedford Street; and we were so brisk at it that the people used to stop and look in. Sometimes there would be quite a little crowd there. I saw my father coming in at the door one day when we were very busy, and I wondered how he could bear it.

"Now, I generally had my dinner in the warehouse. Sometimes I brought it from home, so I was better off. I see myself coming across Russell Square from Somers-town, one morning, with some cold hotch-potch in a small basin tied up in a handkerchief. I had the same wanderings about the streets as I used to have, and was just as solitary and self-dependent as before; but I had not the same difficulty in merely living. I never, however, heard a word of being taken away, or of being otherwise than quite provided for.

"At last, one day, my father, and the relative so often mentioned, quarreled; quarreled by letter, for I took the letter from my father to him which caused the explosion, but quarreled very fiercely. It was about me. It may have had some backward reference, in part, for anything I know, to my employment at the window. All I am certain of is, that, soon after I had given him the letter, my cousin (he was a sort of cousin, by marriage) told me he was very much insulted about me, and that it was impossible to keep me after that. I cried very much, partly because it was so sudden, and partly because in his anger he was violent about my father, though gentle to me. Thomas, the old soldier, comforted me, and said he was sure it was for the best. With a relief so strange that it was like oppression, I went home.

"My mother set herself to accommodate the quarrel, and did so next day. She brought home a request for me to return next morning, and a high character of me, which I am very sure I deserved. My father said I should go back no more, and should go to school. I do not write resentfully or angrily; for I know how all these things have worked together to make me what I am; but I never afterwards forgot, I never shall forget, I never can forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back.

"From that hour until this at which I write, no word of that part of my childhood which I have now gladly brought to a close has passed my lips to any human being. I have no idea how long it lasted; whether for a year, or much more, or less. From that hour until this my father and my mother have been stricken dumb upon it. I have never heard the least allusion to it, however far off and remote, from either of them. I have never, until I now impart it to this paper, in any burst of confidence with any one, my own wife not excepted, raised the curtain I then dropped, thank God.

"Until old Hungerford market was pulled down, until old Hungerford Stairs were destroyed, and the very nature of the ground changed, I never had the courage to go back to the place where my servitude began. I never saw it. I could not endure to go near it. For many years, when I

came near to Robert Warren's in the Strand, I crossed over to the opposite side of the way, to avoid a certain smell of the cement they put upon the blacking-corks, which reminded me of what I was once. It was a very long time before I liked to go up Chandos Street. My old way home by the borough made me cry, after my eldest child could speak.

"In my walks at night I have walked there often, since then, and by degrees I have come to write this. It does not seem a tithe of what I might have written, or of what I meant to write."

The substance of some after-talk explanatory of points in the narrative, of which a note was made at the time, may be briefly added. He could hardly have been more than twelve years old when he left the place, and was still unusually small for his age; much smaller, though two years older, than his own eldest son was at the time of these confidences. His mother had been in the blacking-warehouse many times; his father not more than once or twice. The rivalry of Robert Warren by Jonathan's representatives, the cousins George and James, was carried to wonderful extremes in the way of advertisement; and they were all very proud, he told me, of the cat scratching the boot, which was _their_ house's device. The poets in the house's regular employ he remembered, too, and made his first study from one of them for the poet of Mrs. Jarley's wax-work. The whole enterprise, however, had the usual end of such things. The younger cousin tired of the concern; and a Mr. Wood, the proprietor who took James's share and became George's partner, sold it ultimately to Robert Warren. It continued to be his at the time Dickens and myself last spoke of it together, and he had made an excellent bargain of it.

CHAPTER III.

SCHOOL-DAYS AND START IN LIFE.

1824-1830.

Outcome of Boyish Trials--Disadvantage in Later Years--Advantages--Next Move in Life--Wellington House Academy--Revisited and Described--Letter from a Schoolfellow--C. D.'s Recollections of School--Schoolfellow's Recollections of C. D.--Fac-simile of Schoolboy Letter--Daniel Tobin--Another Schoolfellow's Recollections--Writing Tales and getting up Plays--Master Beverley
Scene-Painter--Street-acting--The Schoolfellows after Forty Years--Smallness of the World--In Attorneys' Offices--At Minor Theatres--The Father on the Son's Education--Studying Short-hand--In British Museum Reading Room--Preparing for the Gallery--D. C. for C. D.--A Real Dora in 1829--The same Dora in

1855--Dora changed into Flora--Ashes of Youth
and Hope.

IN what way these strange experiences of his boyhood affected him afterwards, this narrative of his life must show; but there were influences that made themselves felt even on his way to manhood.

What at once he brought out of the humiliation that had impressed him so deeply, though scarcely as yet quite consciously, was a natural dread of the hardships that might still be in store for him, sharpened by what he had gone through; and this, though in its effect for the present imperfectly understood, became by degrees a passionate resolve, even while he was yielding to circumstances, _not to be_ what circumstances were conspiring to make him. All that was involved in what he had suffered and sunk into, could not have been known to him at the time; but it was plain enough later, as we see; and in conversation with me after the revelation was made, he used to find, at extreme points in his life, the explanation of himself in those early trials. He had derived great good from them, but not without alloy. The fixed and eager determination, the restless and resistless energy, which opened to him opportunities of escape from many mean environments, not by turning off from any path of duty, but by resolutely rising to such excellence or distinction as might be attainable in it, brought with it some disadvantage among many noble advantages. Of this he was himself aware, but not to the full extent. What it was that in society made him often uneasy, shrinking, and over-sensitive, he knew; but all the danger he ran in bearing down and overmastering the feeling, he did not know. A too great confidence in himself, a sense that everything was possible to the will that would make it so, laid occasionally upon him self-imposed burdens greater than might be borne by any one with safety. In that direction there was in him, at such times, something even hard and aggressive; in his determinations a something that had almost the tone of fierceness; something in his nature that made his resolves insuperable, however hasty the opinions on which they had been formed. So rare were these manifestations, however, and so little did they prejudice a character as entirely open and generous as it was at all times ardent and impetuous, that only very infrequently, towards the close of the middle term of a friendship which lasted without the interruption of a day for more than three-and-thirty years, were they ever unfavorably presented to me. But there they were; and when I have seen strangely present, at such chance intervals, a stern and even cold isolation of self-reliance side by side with a susceptibility almost feminine and the most eager craving for sympathy, it has seemed to me as though his habitual impulses for everything kind and gentle had sunk, for the time, under a sudden hard and inexorable sense of what fate had dealt to him in those early years. On more than one occasion, indeed, I had confirmation of this. "I must entreat you," he wrote to me in June, 1862, "to pause for an instant, and go back to what you know of my childish days, and to ask yourself whether it is natural that something of the character formed in me then, and lost under happier circumstances, should have reappeared in the last five years. The never-to-be-forgotten misery of that old time bred a certain shrinking sensitiveness in a certain ill-clad ill-fed child, that I have found

come back in the never-to-be-forgotten misery of this later time."

One good there was, however, altogether without drawback, and which claims simply to be mentioned before my narrative is resumed. The story of his childish misery has itself sufficiently shown that he never throughout it lost his precious gift of animal spirits, or his native capacity for humorous enjoyment; and there were positive gains to him from what he underwent, which were also rich and lasting. To what in the outset of his difficulties and trials gave the decisive bent to his genius, I have already made special reference; and we are to observe, of what followed, that with the very poor and unprosperous, out of whose sufferings and strugglings, and the virtues as well as vices born of them, his not least splendid successes were wrought, his childish experiences had made him actually one. They were not his clients whose cause he pleaded with such pathos and humor, and on whose side he got the laughter and tears of all the world, but in some sort his very self. Nor was it a small part of this manifest advantage that he should have obtained his experience as a child and not as a man; that only the good part, the flower and fruit of it, was plucked by him; and that nothing of the evil part, none of the earth in which the seed was planted, remained to soil him.

His next move in life can also be given in his own language: "There was a school in the Hampstead Road kept by Mr. Jones, a Welshman, to which my father dispatched me to ask for a card of terms. The boys were at dinner, and Mr. Jones was carving for them with a pair of holland sleeves on, when I acquitted myself of this commission. He came out, and gave me what I wanted; and hoped I should become a pupil. I did. At seven o'clock one morning, very soon afterwards, I went as day-scholar to Mr. Jones's establishment, which was in Mornington Place, and had its school-room sliced away by the Birmingham Railway, when that change came about. The school-room, however, was not threatened by directors or civil engineers then, and there was a board over the door, graced with the words WELLINGTON HOUSE ACADEMY."

At Wellington House Academy he remained nearly two years, being a little over fourteen years of age when he quitted it. In his minor writings as well as in *Copperfield* will be found general allusions to it, and there is a paper among his pieces reprinted from *Household Words* which purports specifically to describe it. To the account therein given of himself when he went to the school, as advanced enough, so safely had his memory retained its poor fragments of early schooling, to be put into *Virgil*, as getting sundry prizes, and as attaining to the eminent position of its first boy, one of his two schoolfellows with whom I have had communication makes objection; but both admit that the general features of the place are reproduced with wonderful accuracy, and more especially in those points for which the school appears to have been much more notable than for anything connected with the scholarship of its pupils.

In the reprinted piece Dickens describes it as remarkable for white mice. He says that red-polls, linnets, and even canaries were kept by the boys in desks, drawers, hat-boxes, and other strange refuges for birds; but that white mice were the favorite stock, and that the boys

trained the mice much better than the master trained the boys. He recalled in particular one white mouse who lived in the cover of a Latin dictionary, ran up ladders, drew Roman chariots, shouldered muskets, turned wheels, and even made a very creditable appearance on the stage as the dog of Montàrgis, who might have achieved greater things but for having had the misfortune to mistake his way in a triumphal procession to the Capitol, when he fell into a deep inkstand and was dyed black and drowned.

Nevertheless he mentions the school as one also of some celebrity in its neighborhood, though nobody could have said why; and adds that among the boys the master was supposed to know nothing, and one of the ushers was supposed to know everything. "We are still inclined to think the first-named supposition perfectly correct. We went to look at the place only this last midsummer, and found that the railway had cut it up, root and branch. A great trunk line had swallowed the playground, sliced away the school-room, and pared off the corner of the house. Which, thus curtailed of its proportions, presented itself in a green stage of stucco, profile-wise towards the road, like a forlorn flat-iron without a handle, standing on end."

One who knew him in those early days, Mr. Owen P. Thomas, thus writes to me (February, 1871): "I had the honor of being Mr. Dickens's schoolfellow for about two years (1824-1826), both being day-scholars, at Mr. Jones's 'Classical and Commercial Academy,' as then inscribed in front of the house, and which was situated at the corner of Granby Street and the Hampstead Road. The house stands now in its original state, but the school and large playground behind disappeared on the formation of the London and Northwestern Railway, which at this point runs in a slanting direction from Euston Square underneath the Hampstead Road. We were all companions and playmates when out of school, as well as fellow-students therein." (Mr. Thomas includes in this remark the names of Henry Danson, now a physician in practice in London; of Daniel Tobin, whom I remember to have been frequently assisted by his old schoolfellow in later years; and of Richard Bray.) "You will find a graphic sketch of the school by Mr. Dickens himself in Household Words of 11th October, 1851. The article is entitled Our School. The names of course are feigned; but, allowing for slight coloring, the persons and incidents described are all true to life, and easily recognizable by any one who attended the school at the time. The Latin master was Mr. Manville, or Mandeville, who for many years was well known at the library of the British Museum. The academy, after the railroad overthrew it, was removed to another house in the neighborhood, but Mr. Jones and two at least of his assistant masters have long ago departed this life."

One of the latter was the usher believed to know everything, who was writing-master, mathematical master, English master, divided the little boys with the Latin master, made out the bills, mended the pens, and always called at parents' houses to inquire after sick boys, because he had gentlemanly manners. This picture my correspondent recognized; as well as those of the fat little dancing-master who taught them hornpipes, of the Latin master who stuffed his ears with onions for his deafness, of the gruff serving-man who nursed the boys in scarlet fever,

and of the principal himself, who was always ruling ciphering-books with a bloated mahogany ruler, smiting the palms of offenders with the same diabolical instrument, or viciously drawing a pair of pantaloons tight with one of his large hands and caning the wearer with the other.

"My recollection of Dickens whilst at school," Mr. Thomas continues, "is that of a healthy-looking boy, small but well built, with a more than usual flow of spirits, inducing to harmless fun, seldom or never I think to mischief, to which so many lads at that age are prone. I cannot recall anything that then indicated he would hereafter become a literary celebrity; but perhaps he was too young then. He usually held his head more erect than lads ordinarily do, and there was a general smartness about him. His weekday dress of jacket and trowsers, I can clearly remember, was what is called pepper-and-salt; and, instead of the frill that most boys of his age wore then, he had a turn-down collar, so that he looked less youthful in consequence. He invented what we termed a 'lingo,' produced by the addition of a few letters of the same sound to every word; and it was our ambition, walking and talking thus along the street, to be considered foreigners. As an alternate amusement the present writer well remembers extemporizing tales of some sort, and reciting them offhand, with Dickens and Danson or Tobin walking on either side of him. I inclose you a copy of a note I received from him when he was between thirteen and fourteen years of age, perhaps one of the earliest productions of his pen. The Leg referred to was the Legend of something, a pamphlet romance I had lent him; the Clavis was of course the Latin school-book so named."

There is some underlying whim or fun in the "Leg" allusions which Mr. Thomas appears to have overlooked, and certainly fails to explain; but the note, which is here given in fac-simile, may be left to speak for itself; and in the signature the reader will be amused to see the first faint beginning of a flourish afterwards famous.

"After a lapse of years," Mr. Thomas continues, "I recognized the celebrated writer as the individual I had known so well as a boy, from having preserved this note; and upon Mr. Dickens visiting Reading in December, 1854, to give one of his earliest readings for the benefit of the literary institute, of which he had become president on Mr. Justice Talfourd's death, I took the opportunity of showing it to him, when he was much diverted therewith. On the same occasion we conversed about mutual schoolfellows, and among others Daniel Tobin was referred to, whom I remembered to have been Dickens's _most_ intimate companion in the school-days (1824 to 1826). His reply was that Tobin either was then, or had previously been, assisting him in the capacity of amanuensis; but there is a subsequent mystery about Tobin, in connection with his friend and patron, which I have never been able to comprehend; for I understood shortly afterwards that there was entire separation between them, and it must have been an offense of some gravity to have sundered an acquaintance formed in early youth, and which had endured, greatly to Tobin's advantage, so long. He resided in our school-days in one of the now old and grimy-looking stone-fronted houses in George Street, Euston Road, a few doors from the Orange-tree tavern. It is the opinion of the other schoolfellow with whom we were intimate, Doctor Danson, that upon leaving school Mr. Dickens and Tobin entered the same

solicitor's office, and this he thinks was either in or near Lincoln's Inn Fields."

[Illustration: Handwritten note: Punctuation and capitalization, retained:

Tim/

I am quite ashamed I have not returned your Leg
but you shall have it by Harry to-morrow If you
would like to purchase my Clavis you shall have
it at a very ~reduced price~ Cheaper in
comparison than a Leg.

Yours &c
~C Dickens.~

PS. I suppose all this time you have had ~a
wooden~ leg. I have weighed yours every saturday
Night

(No date, but was written in latter part of 1825.))

The offense of Tobin went no deeper than the having at last worn out even Dickens's patience and kindness. His applications for relief were so incessantly repeated, that to cut him and them adrift altogether was the only way of escape from what had become an intolerable nuisance. To Mr. Thomas's letter the reader will thank me for adding one not less interesting with which Dr. Henry Danson has favored me. We have here, with the same fun and animal spirits, a little of the proneness to mischief which his other schoolfellow says he was free from; but the mischief is all of the harmless kind, and might perhaps have been better described as but part of an irrepressible vivacity:

"My impression is that I was a schoolfellow of Dickens for nearly two years: he left before me, I think at about fifteen years of age. Mr. Jones's school, called the Wellington Academy, was in the Hampstead Road, at the northeast corner of Granby Street. The school-house was afterwards removed for the London and Northwestern Railway. It was considered at the time a very superior sort of school,--one of the best, indeed, in that part of London; but it was most shamefully mismanaged, and the boys made but very little progress. The proprietor, Mr. Jones, was a Welshman; a most ignorant fellow, and a mere tyrant; whose chief employment was to scourge the boys. Dickens has given a very lively account of this place in his paper entitled *Our School*, but it is very mythical in many respects, and more especially in the compliment he pays in it to himself. I do not remember that Dickens distinguished himself in any way, or carried off any prizes. My belief is that he did not learn Greek or Latin there; and you will remember there is no allusion to the classics in any of his writings. He was a handsome, curly-headed lad, full of animation and animal spirits, and probably was connected with every mischievous prank in the school. I do not think he came in for any of Mr. Jones's scourging propensity: in fact, together with myself, he was only a day-pupil, and with these there was a wholesome

fear of tales being carried home to the parents. His personal appearance at that time is vividly brought home to me in the portrait of him taken a few years later by Mr. Lawrence. He resided with his friends in a very small house in a street leading out of Seymour Street, north of Mr. Judkin's chapel.

"Depend on it, he was quite a self-made man, and his wonderful knowledge and command of the English language must have been acquired by long and patient study after leaving his last school.

"I have no recollection of the boy you name. His chief associates were, I think, Tobin, Mr. Thomas, Bray, and myself. The first-named was his chief ally, and his acquaintance with him appears to have continued many years afterwards. At about that time Penny and Saturday Magazines were published weekly, and were greedily read by us. We kept bees, white mice, and other living things clandestinely in our desks; and the mechanical arts were a good deal cultivated, in the shape of coach-building, and making pumps and boats, the motive power of which was the white mice.

"I think at that time Dickens took to writing small tales, and we had a sort of club for lending and circulating them. Dickens was also very strong in using a sort of lingo, which made us quite unintelligible to bystanders. We were very strong, too, in theatricals. We mounted small theatres, and got up very gorgeous scenery to illustrate the _Miller and his Men_ and _Cherry and Fair Star_. I remember the present Mr. Beverley, the scene-painter, assisted us in this. Dickens was always a leader at these plays, which were occasionally presented with much solemnity before an audience of boys and in the presence of the ushers. My brother, assisted by Dickens, got up the _Miller and his Men_, in a very gorgeous form. Master Beverley constructed the mill for us in such a way that it could tumble to pieces with the assistance of crackers. At one representation the fireworks in the last scene, ending with the destruction of the mill, were so very real that the police interfered and knocked violently at the doors. Dickens's after-taste for theatricals might have had its origin in these small affairs.

"I quite remember Dickens on one occasion heading us in Drummond Street in pretending to be poor boys, and asking the passers-by for charity,--especially old ladies, one of whom told us she 'had no money for beggar-boys.' On these adventures, when the old ladies were quite staggered by the impudence of the demand, Dickens would explode with laughter and take to his heels.

"I met him one Sunday morning shortly after he left the school, and we very piously attended the morning service at Seymour Street Chapel. I am sorry to say Master Dickens did not attend in the slightest degree to the service, but incited me to laughter by declaring his dinner was ready and the potatoes would be spoiled, and in fact behaved in such a manner that it was lucky for us we were not ejected from the chapel.

"I heard of him some time after from Tobin, whom I met carrying a foaming pot of London particular in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and I then understood that Dickens was in the same or some neighboring office.

"Many years elapsed after this before I became aware, from accidentally reading *Our School*, that the brilliant and now famous Dickens was my old schoolfellow. I didn't like to intrude myself upon him; and it was not until three or four years ago, when he presided at the University College dinner at Willis's rooms, and made a most brilliant and effective speech, that I sent him a congratulatory note reminding him of our former fellowship. To this he sent me a kind note in reply, and which I value very much. I send you copies of these." [5]

From Dickens himself I never heard much allusion to the school thus described; but I knew that, besides being the subject dealt with in *_Household Words_*, it had supplied some of the lighter traits of *Salem House* for *_Copperfield_*; and that to the fact of one of its tutors being afterwards engaged to teach a boy of Macready's, our common friend, Dickens used to point for one of the illustrations of his favorite theory as to the smallness of the world, and how things and persons apparently the most unlikely to meet were continually knocking up against each other. The employment as his amanuensis of his schoolfellow Tobin dates as early as his Doctors'-Commons days, but both my correspondents are mistaken in the impression they appear to have received that Tobin had been previously his fellow-clerk in the same attorney's office. I had thought him more likely to have been accompanied there by another of his boyish acquaintances who became afterwards a solicitor, Mr. Mitton, not recollected by either of my correspondents in connection with the school, but whom I frequently met with him in later years, and for whom he had the regard arising out of such early associations. In this, however, I have since discovered my own mistake: the truth being that it was this gentleman's connection, not with the Wellington Academy, but with a school kept by Mr. Dawson in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, where the brothers of Dickens were subsequently placed, which led to their early knowledge of each other. I fancy that they were together also, for a short time, at Mr. Molloy's in New Square, Lincoln's Inn; but, whether or not this was so, Dickens certainly had not quitted school many months before his father had made sufficient interest with an attorney of Gray's Inn, Mr. Edward Blackmore, to obtain him regular employment in his office. In this capacity of clerk, our only trustworthy glimpse of him we owe to the last-named gentleman, who has described briefly, and I do not doubt authentically, the services so rendered by him to the law. It cannot be said that they were noteworthy, though it might be difficult to find a more distinguished person who has borne the title, unless we make exception for the very father of literature himself, whom Chaucer, with amusing illustration of the way in which words change their meanings, calls "that conceited clerke Homère."

"I was well acquainted," writes Mr. Edward Blackmore of Alresford, "with his parents, and, being then in practice in Gray's Inn, they asked me if I could find employment for him. He was a bright, clever-looking youth, and I took him as a clerk. He came to me in May, 1827, and left in November, 1828; and I have now an account-book which he used to keep of petty disbursements in the office, in which he charged himself with the modest salary first of thirteen shillings and sixpence, and afterwards of fifteen shillings, a week. Several incidents took place in the office

of which he must have been a keen observer, as I recognized some of them in his Pickwick and Nickleby; and I am much mistaken if some of his characters had not their originals in persons I well remember. His taste for theatricals was much promoted by a fellow-clerk named Potter, since dead, with whom he chiefly associated. They took every opportunity, then unknown to me, of going together to a minor theatre, where (I afterwards heard) they not unfrequently engaged in parts. After he left me I saw him at times in the lord chancellor's court, taking notes of cases as a reporter. I then lost sight of him until his Pickwick made its appearance." This letter indicates the position he held at Mr. Blackmore's; and we have but to turn to the passage in Pickwick which describes the several grades of attorney's clerk, to understand it more clearly. He was very far below the articled clerk, who has paid a premium and is attorney in perspective. He was not so high as the salaried clerk, with nearly the whole of his weekly thirty shillings spent on his personal pleasures. He was not even on the level with his middle-aged copying-clerk, always needy and uniformly shabby. He was simply among, however his own nature may have lifted him above, the "office-lads in their first surtouts, who feel a befitting contempt for boys at day-schools, club as they go home at night for saveloys and porter, and think there's nothing like life." Thus far, not more or less, had he now reached. He was one of the office-lads, and probably in his first surtout.

But, even thus, the process of education went on, defying what seemed to interrupt it; and in the amount of his present equipment for his needs of life, what he brought from the Wellington House Academy can have borne but the smallest proportion to his acquirement at Mr. Blackmore's. Yet to seek to identify, without help from himself, any passages in his books with those boyish law-experiences, would be idle and hopeless enough. In the earliest of his writings, and down to the very latest, he worked exhaustively the field which is opened by an attorney's office to a student of life and manners; but we have not now to deal with his numerous varieties of the genus clerk drawn thus for the amusement of others, but with the acquisitions which at present he was storing up for himself from the opportunities such offices opened to him. Nor would it be possible to have better illustrative comment on all these years than is furnished by his father's reply to a friend it was now hoped to interest on his behalf, which more than once I have heard him whimsically, but good-humoredly, imitate. "Pray, Mr. Dickens, where was your son educated?" "Why, indeed, sir--ha! ha!--he may be said to have educated himself!" Of the two kinds of education which Gibbon says that all men who rise above the common level receive,--the first, that of his teachers, and the second, more personal and more important, his own,--he had the advantage only of the last. It nevertheless sufficed for him.

Very nearly another eighteen months were now to be spent mainly in practical preparation for what he was, at this time, led finally to choose as an employment from which a fair income was certain with such talents as he possessed; his father already having taken to it, in these latter years, in aid of the family resources. In his father's house, which was at Hampstead through the first portion of the Mornington Street school time, then in the house out of Seymour Street mentioned by

Dr. Danson, and afterwards, upon the elder Dickens going into the gallery, in Bentinck Street, Manchester Square, Charles had continued to live; and, influenced doubtless by the example before him, he took sudden determination to qualify himself thoroughly for what his father was lately become, a newspaper parliamentary reporter. He set resolutely, therefore, to the study of short-hand; and, for the additional help of such general information about books as a fairly-educated youth might be expected to have, as well as to satisfy some higher personal cravings, he became an assiduous attendant in the British Museum reading-room. He would frequently refer to these days as decidedly the usefulest to himself he had ever passed; and, judging from the results, they must have been so. No man who knew him in later years, and talked to him familiarly of books and things, would have suspected his education in boyhood, almost entirely self-acquired as it was, to have been so rambling or hap-hazard as I have here described it. The secret consisted in this, that, whatever for the time he had to do, he lifted himself, there and then, to the level of, and at no time disregarded the rules that guided the hero of his novel. "Whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do well. What I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely. Never to put one hand to anything on which I could throw my whole self, and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was, I find now to have been my golden rules."

Of the difficulties that beset his short-hand studies, as well as of what first turned his mind to them, he has told also something in Copperfield. He had heard that many men distinguished in various pursuits had begun life by reporting the debates in parliament, and he was not deterred by a friend's warning that the mere mechanical accomplishment for excellence in it might take a few years to master thoroughly; "a perfect and entire command of the mystery of short-hand writing and reading being about equal in difficulty to the mastery of six languages." Undaunted, he plunged into it, self-teaching in this as in graver things, and, having bought Mr. Gurney's half-guinea book, worked steadily his way through its distractions. "The changes that were rung upon dots, which in such a position meant such a thing, and in such another position something else entirely different; the wonderful vagaries that were played by circles; the unaccountable consequences that resulted from marks like flies' legs; the tremendous effects of a curve in a wrong place; not only troubled my waking hours, but reappeared before me in my sleep. When I had groped my way, blindly, through these difficulties, and had mastered the alphabet, there then appeared a procession of new horrors, called arbitrary characters; the most despotic characters I have ever known; who insisted, for instance, that a thing like the beginning of a cobweb meant expectation, and that a pen-and-ink sky-rocket stood for disadvantageous. When I had fixed these wretches in my mind, I found that they had driven everything else out of it; then, beginning again, I forgot them; while I was picking them up, I dropped the other fragments of the system: in short, it was almost heart-breaking."

What it was that made it not quite heart-breaking to the hero of the fiction, its readers know; and something of the same kind was now to enter into the actual experience of its writer. First let me say,

however, that after subduing to his wants in marvelously quick time this unruly and unaccommodating servant of stenography, what he most desired was still not open to him. "There never _was_ such a short-hand writer," has been often said to me by Mr. Beard, the friend he first made in that line when he entered the gallery, and with whom to the close of his life he maintained the friendliest intercourse. But there was no opening for him in the gallery yet. He had to pass nearly two years as a reporter for one of the offices in Doctors' Commons, practicing in this and the other law courts, before he became a sharer in parliamentary toils and triumphs; and what sustained his young hero through something of the same sort of trial was also his own support. He too had his Dora, at apparently the same hopeless elevation; striven for as the one only thing to be attained, and even more unattainable, for neither did he succeed nor happily did she die; but the one idol, like the other, supplying a motive to exertion for the time, and otherwise opening out to the idolater, both in fact and fiction, a highly unsubstantial, happy, foolish time. I used to laugh and tell him I had no belief in any but the book Dora, until the incident of a sudden reappearance of the real one in his life, nearly six years after Copperfield was written, convinced me there had been a more actual foundation for those chapters of his book than I was ready to suppose. Still, I would hardly admit it, and, that the matter could possibly affect him then, persisted in a stout refusal to believe. His reply (1855) throws a little light on this juvenile part of his career, and I therefore venture to preserve it:

"I don't quite apprehend what you mean by my overrating the strength of the feeling of five-and-twenty years ago. If you mean of my own feeling, and will only think what the desperate intensity of my nature is, and that this began when I was Charley's age; that it excluded every other idea from my mind for four years, at a time of life when four years are equal to four times four; and that I went at it with a determination to overcome all the difficulties, which fairly lifted me up into that newspaper life, and floated me away over a hundred men's heads; then you are wrong, because nothing can exaggerate that. I have positively stood amazed at myself ever since!--And so I suffered, and so worked, and so beat and hammered away at the maddest romances that ever got into any boy's head and stayed there, that to see the mere cause of it all, now, loosens my hold upon myself. Without for a moment sincerely believing that it would have been better if we had never got separated, I cannot see the occasion of so much emotion as I should see any one else. No one can imagine in the most distant degree what pain the recollection gave me in Copperfield. And, just as I can never open that book as I open any other book, I cannot see the face (even at four-and-forty), or hear the voice, without going wandering away over the ashes of all that youth and hope in the wildest manner." More and more plainly seen, however, in the light of four-and-forty, the romance glided visibly away, its work being fairly done; and at the close of the month following that in which this letter was written, during which he had very quietly made a formal call with his wife at his youthful Dora's house, and contemplated with a calm equanimity, in the hall, her stuffed favorite Jip, he began the fiction in which there was a Flora to set against its predecessor's Dora, both derived from the same original. The fancy had a comic humor in it he found it impossible to resist, but it was kindly and pleasant to the last;[6] and if the later picture showed

him plenty to laugh at in this retrospect of his youth, there was nothing he thought of more tenderly than the earlier, as long as he was conscious of anything.

FOOTNOTES:

[5] The reader will probably think them worth subjoining. Dr. Danson wrote: "_April, 1864._ DEAR SIR, On the recent occasion of the U. C. H. dinner, you would probably have been amused and somewhat surprised to learn that one of those whom you addressed had often accompanied you over that 'field of forty footsteps' to which you so aptly and amusingly alluded. It is now some years since I was accidentally reading a paper written by yourself in the _Household Words_, when I was first impressed with the idea that the writer described scenes and persons with which I was once familiar, and that he must necessarily be the veritable Charles Dickens of 'our school,'--the school of Jones! I did not then, however, like to intrude myself upon you, for I could hardly hope that you would retain any recollection of myself; indeed, it was only barely possible you should do so, however vividly _I_ might recall you in many scenes of fun and frolic of my school-days. I happened to be present at the dinner of Tuesday last (being interested as an old student in the school of the hospital), and was seated very near you; I was tempted during the evening to introduce myself to you, but feared lest an explanation such as this in a public room might attract attention and be disagreeable to yourself. A man who has attained a position and celebrity such as yours will probably have many early associates and acquaintances claiming his notice. I beg of you to believe that such is not my object, but that having so recently met you I feel myself unable to repress the desire to assure you that no one in the room could appreciate the fame and rank you have so fairly won, or could wish you more sincerely long life and happiness to enjoy them, than, Dear Sir, your old schoolfellow, HENRY DANSON." To this Dickens replied: "GADSHILL PLACE, _Thursday, 5th May, 1864_. DEAR SIR, I should have assured you before now that the receipt of your letter gave me great pleasure, had I not been too much occupied to have leisure for correspondence. I perfectly recollect your name as that of an old schoolfellow, and distinctly remember your appearance and dress as a boy, and believe you had a brother who was unfortunately drowned in the Serpentine. If you had made yourself personally known to me at the dinner, I should have been well pleased; though in that case I should have lost your modest and manly letter. Faithfully yours, CHARLES DICKENS."

[6] I take other fanciful allusions to the lady from two of his occasional writings. The first from his visit to the city churches (written during the Dombey time, when he had to select a church for the marriage of Florence): "Its drowsy cadence soon lulls the three old women asleep, and the unmarried tradesman sits looking out at window, and the married tradesman sits looking at his wife's bonnet, and the lovers sit looking at one another, so superlatively happy, that I mind when I, turned of eighteen, went with my Angelica to a city church on account of a shower (by this special coincidence that it was in Huggin Lane), and when I said to my Angelica, 'Let the blessed event, Angelica, occur at no altar but this!' and when my Angelica consented that it should occur at no other--which it certainly never did, for it never

occurred anywhere. And O, Angelica, what has become of you, this present Sunday morning when I can't attend to the sermon? and, more difficult question than that, what has become of Me as I was when I sat by your side?" The second, from his pleasant paper on birthdays: "I gave a party on the occasion. She was there. It is unnecessary to name Her, more particularly; She was older than I, and had pervaded every chink and crevice of my mind for three or four years. I had held volumes of Imaginary Conversations with her mother on the subject of our union, and I had written letters more in number than Horace Walpole's, to that discreet woman, soliciting her daughter's hand in marriage. I had never had the remotest intention of sending any of those letters; but to write them, and after a few days tear them up, had been a sublime occupation."

CHAPTER IV.

REPORTERS' GALLERY AND NEWSPAPER LITERATURE.

1831-1835.

Reporting for _True Sun_--First seen by me--Reporting for _Mirror_ and _Chronicle_--First Published Piece--Discipline and Experiences of Reporting--Life as a Reporter--John Black--Mr. Thomas Beard--A Letter to his Editor--Incident of Reporting Days--The same more correctly told--Origin of "Boz"--Captain Holland--Mr. George Hogarth--Sketches in _Evening Chronicle_--C. D.'s First Hearty Appreciator.

DICKENS was nineteen years old when at last he entered the gallery. His father, with whom he still lived in Bentinck Street, had already, as we have seen, joined the gallery as a reporter for one of the morning papers, and was now in the more comfortable circumstances derived from the addition to his official pension which this praiseworthy labor insured; but his own engagement on the _Chronicle_ dates somewhat later. His first parliamentary service was given to the _True Sun_, a journal which had then on its editorial staff some dear friends of mine, through whom I became myself a contributor to it, and afterwards, in common with all concerned, whether in its writing, reporting, printing, or publishing, a sharer in its difficulties. The most formidable of these arrived one day in a general strike of the reporters; and I well remember noticing at this dread time, on the staircase of the magnificent mansion we were lodged in, a young man of my own age, whose keen animation of look would have arrested attention anywhere, and whose name, upon inquiry, I then for the first time heard. It was coupled with the fact, which gave it interest even then, that "young Dickens" had been spokesman for the recalcitrant reporters, and conducted their case triumphantly. He was afterwards during two sessions engaged for the _Mirror of Parliament_, which one of his uncles by the mother's side

originated and conducted; and finally, in his twenty-third year, he became a reporter for the Morning Chronicle.

A step far more momentous to him (though then he did not know it) he had taken shortly before. In the December number for 1833 of what then was called the Old Monthly Magazine, his first published piece of writing had seen the light. He has described himself dropping this paper (Mr. Minns and his Cousin, as he afterwards entitled it, but which appeared in the magazine as *A Dinner at Poplar Walk*) stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, into a dark letter-box in a dark office up a dark court in Fleet Street; and he has told his agitation when it appeared in all the glory of print: "On which occasion I walked down to Westminster Hall, and turned into it for half an hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride that they could not bear the street, and were not fit to be seen there." He had purchased the magazine at a shop in the Strand; and exactly two years afterwards, in the younger member of a publishing firm who had called, at the chambers in Furnival's Inn to which he had moved soon after entering the gallery, with the proposal that originated Pickwick, he recognized the person he had bought that magazine from, and whom before or since he had never seen.

This interval of two years more than comprised what remained of his career in the gallery and the engagements connected with it; but that this occupation was of the utmost importance in its influence on his life, in the discipline of his powers as well as of his character, there can be no doubt whatever. "To the wholesome training of severe newspaper work, when I was a very young man, I constantly refer my first successes," he said to the New York editors when he last took leave of them. It opened to him a wide and varied range of experience, which his wonderful observation, exact as it was humorous, made entirely his own. He saw the last of the old coaching-days, and of the old inns that were a part of them; but it will be long before the readers of his living page see the last of the life of either. "There never was," he once wrote to me (in 1845), "anybody connected with newspapers who, in the same space of time, had so much express and post-chaise experience as I. And what gentlemen they were to serve, in such things, at the old Morning Chronicle! Great or small it did not matter. I have had to charge for half a dozen break-downs in half a dozen times as many miles. I have had to charge for the damage of a great-coat from the drippings of a blazing wax candle, in writing through the smallest hours of the night in a swift-flying carriage-and-pair. I have had to charge for all sorts of breakages fifty times in a journey without question, such being the ordinary results of the pace which we went at. I have charged for broken hats, broken luggage, broken chaises, broken harness--everything but a broken head, which is the only thing they would have grumbled to pay for."

Something to the same effect he said publicly twenty years later, on the occasion of his presiding, in May, 1865, at the second annual dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund, when he condensed within the compass of his speech a summary of the whole of his reporting life. "I am not here," he said, "advocating the case of a mere ordinary client of whom I have little or no knowledge. I hold a brief to-night for my brothers. I went

into the gallery of the House of Commons as a parliamentary reporter when I was a boy, and I left it--I can hardly believe the inexorable truth--nigh thirty years ago. I have pursued the calling of a reporter under circumstances of which many of my brethren here can form no adequate conception. I have often transcribed for the printer, from my short-hand notes, important public speeches in which the strictest accuracy was required, and a mistake in which would have been to a young man severely compromising, writing on the palm of my hand, by the light of a dark-lantern, in a post-chaise and four, galloping through a wild country, and through the dead of the night, at the then surprising rate of fifteen miles an hour. The very last time I was at Exeter, I strolled into the castle-yard there, to identify, for the amusement of a friend, the spot on which I once 'took,' as we used to call it, an election-speech of Lord John Russell at the Devon contest, in the midst of a lively fight maintained by all the vagabonds in that division of the county, and under such a pelting rain that I remember two good-natured colleagues, who chanced to be at leisure, held a pocket-handkerchief over my note-book, after the manner of a state canopy in an ecclesiastical procession. I have worn my knees by writing on them on the old back row of the old gallery of the old House of Commons; and I have worn my feet by standing to write in a preposterous pen in the old House of Lords, where we used to be huddled together like so many sheep,--kept in waiting, say, until the woolsack might want restuffing. Returning home from exciting political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known in this country. I have been, in my time, belated on miry by-roads, towards the small hours, forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheelless carriage, with exhausted horses and drunken post-boys, and have got back in time for publication, to be received with never-forgotten compliments by the late Mr. Black, coming in the broadest of Scotch from the broadest of hearts I ever knew. These trivial things I mention as an assurance to you that I never have forgotten the fascination of that old pursuit. The pleasure that I used to feel in the rapidity and dexterity of its exercise has never faded out of my breast. Whatever little cunning of hand or head I took to it, or acquired in it, I have so retained as that I fully believe I could resume it to-morrow, very little the worse from long disuse. To this present year of my life, when I sit in this hall, or where not, hearing a dull speech (the phenomenon does occur), I sometimes beguile the tedium of the moment by mentally following the speaker in the old, old way; and sometimes, if you can believe me, I even find my hand going on the table-cloth, taking an imaginary note of it all." The latter I have known him do frequently. It was indeed a quite ordinary habit with him.

Mr. James Grant, a writer who was himself in the gallery with Dickens, and who states that among its eighty or ninety reporters he occupied the very highest rank, not merely for accuracy in reporting but for marvelous quickness in transcribing, has lately also told us that while there he was exceedingly reserved in his manners, and that, though showing the usual courtesies to all he was concerned with in his duties, the only personal intimacy he formed was with Mr. Thomas Beard, then too reporting for the Morning Chronicle. I have already mentioned the friendly and familiar relations maintained with this gentleman to the

close of his life; and in confirmation of Mr. Grant's statement I can further say that the only other associate of these early reporting days to whom I ever heard him refer with special regard was the late Mr. Vincent Dowling, many years editor of Bell's Life, with whom he did not continue much personal intercourse, but of whose character as well as talents he had formed a very high opinion. Nor is there anything to add to the notice of these days which the reader's fancy may not easily supply. A letter has been kept as written by him while engaged on one of his "expresses;" but it is less for its saying anything new, than for its confirming with a pleasant vividness what has been said already, that its contents will justify mention here.

He writes, on a "Tuesday morning" in May, 1835, from the Bush Inn, Bristol; the occasion that has taken him to the west, connected with a reporting party, being Lord John Russell's Devonshire contest above named, and his associate-chief being Mr. Beard, intrusted with command for the Chronicle in this particular express. He expects to forward "the conclusion of Russell's dinner" by Cooper's company's coach leaving the Bush at half-past six next morning; and by the first Ball's coach on Thursday morning he will forward the report of the Bath dinner, indorsing the parcel for immediate delivery, with extra rewards for the porter. Beard is to go over to Bath next morning. He is himself to come back by the mail from Marlborough; he has no doubt, if Lord John makes a speech of any ordinary dimensions, it can be done by the time Marlborough is reached; "and taking into consideration the immense importance of having the addition of saddle-horses from thence, it is, beyond all doubt, worth an effort. . . . I need not say," he continues, "that it will be sharp work and will require two of us; for we shall both be up the whole of the previous night, and shall have to sit up all night again to get it off in time." He adds that as soon as they have had a little sleep they will return to town as quickly as they can; but they have, if the express succeeds, to stop at sundry places along the road to pay money and notify satisfaction. And so, for himself and Beard, he is his editor's very sincerely.

Another anecdote of these reporting days, with its sequel, may be added from his own alleged relation, in which, however, mistakes occur that it seems strange he should have made. The story, as told, is that the late Lord Derby, when Mr. Stanley, had on some important occasion made a speech which all the reporters found it necessary greatly to abridge; that its essential points had nevertheless been so well given in the Chronicle that Mr. Stanley, having need of it for himself in greater detail, had sent a request to the reporter to meet him in Carlton House Terrace and take down the entire speech; that Dickens attended and did the work accordingly, much to Mr. Stanley's satisfaction; and that, on his dining with Mr. Gladstone in recent years, and finding the aspect of the dining-room strangely familiar, he discovered afterwards on inquiry that it was there he had taken the speech. The story, as it actually occurred, is connected with the brief life of the Mirror of Parliament. It was not at any special desire of Mr. Stanley's, but for that new record of the debates, which had been started by one of the uncles of Dickens and professed to excel Hansard in giving verbatim reports, that the famous speech against O'Connell was taken as described. The young reporter went to the room in Carlton Terrace

because the work of his uncle Barrow's publication required to be done there; and if, in later years, the great author was in the same room as the guest of the prime minister, it must have been but a month or two before he died, when for the first time he visited and breakfasted with Mr. Gladstone.

The mention of his career in the gallery may close with the incident. I will only add that his observation while there had not led him to form any high opinion of the House of Commons or its heroes, and that of the Pickwickian sense which so often takes the place of common sense in our legislature he omitted no opportunity of declaring his contempt at every part of his life.

The other occupation had meanwhile not been lost sight of, and for this we are to go back a little. Since the first sketch appeared in the Monthly Magazine, nine others have enlivened the pages of later numbers of the same magazine, the last in February, 1835, and that which appeared in the preceding August having first had the signature of Boz. This was the nickname of a pet child, his youngest brother Augustus, whom in honor of the Vicar of Wakefield he had dubbed Moses, which being facetiously pronounced through the nose became Boses, and being shortened became Boz. "Boz was a very familiar household word to me, long before I was an author, and so I came to adopt it." Thus had he fully invented his Sketches by Boz before they were even so called, or any one was ready to give much attention to them; and the next invention needful to himself was some kind of payment in return for them. The magazine was owned as well as conducted at this time by a Mr. Holland, who had come back from Bolivar's South American campaigns with the rank of captain, and had hoped to make it a popular mouthpiece for his ardent liberalism. But this hope, as well as his own health, quite failed; and he had sorrowfully to decline receiving any more of the sketches when they had to cease as voluntary offerings. I do not think that either he or the magazine lived many weeks after an evening I passed with him in Doughty Street in 1837, when he spoke in a very touching way of the failure of this and other enterprises of his life, and of the help that Dickens had been to him.

Nothing thus being forthcoming from the Monthly, it was of course but natural the sketches too should cease to be forthcoming; and, even before the above-named February number appeared, a new opening had been found for them. An evening offshoot to the Morning Chronicle had been lately in hand; and to a countryman of Black's engaged in the preparations for it, Mr. George Hogarth, Dickens was communicating from his rooms in Furnival's Inn, on the evening of Tuesday, the 20th of January, 1835, certain hopes and fancies he had formed. This was the beginning of his knowledge of an accomplished and kindly man, with whose family his relations were soon to become so intimate as to have an influence on all his future career. Mr. Hogarth had asked him, as a favor to himself, to write an original sketch for the first number of the enterprise, and in writing back to say with what readiness he should comply, and how anxiously he should desire to do his best for the person who had made the request, he mentioned what had arisen in his mind. It had occurred to him that he might not be unreasonably or improperly trespassing farther on Mr. Hogarth if, trusting to his kindness to refer

the application to the proper quarter, he begged to ask whether it was probable, if he commenced a regular series of articles under some attractive title for the Evening Chronicle, its conductors would think he had any claim to some additional remuneration (of course, of no great amount) for doing so. In short, he wished to put it to the proprietors--first, whether a continuation of some chapters of light papers in the style of his street-sketches would be considered of use to the new journal; and secondly, if so, whether they would not think it fair and reasonable that, taking his share of the ordinary reporting business of the Chronicle besides, he should receive something for the papers beyond his ordinary salary as a reporter. The request was thought fair, he began the sketches, and his salary was raised from five to seven guineas a week.

They went on, with undiminished spirit and freshness, throughout the year; and, much as they were talked of outside as well as in the world of newspapers, nothing in connection with them delighted the writer half so much as the hearty praise of his own editor. Mr. Black is one of the men who has passed without recognition out of a world his labors largely benefited, but with those who knew him no man was so popular, as well for his broad kindly humor as for his honest great-hearted enjoyment of whatever was excellent in others. Dickens to the last remembered that it was most of all the cordial help of this good old mirth-loving man which had started him joyfully on his career of letters. "It was John Black that flung the slipper after me," he would often say. "Dear old Black! my first hearty out-and-out appreciator," is an expression in one of his letters written to me in the year he died.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST BOOK, AND ORIGIN OF PICKWICK.

1836.

Sketches by Boz--Fancy-piece by N. P. Willis:
a Poor English Author--Start of
Pickwick--Marriage to Miss Hogarth--First
Connection with Chapman & Hall--Mr. Seymour's
Part in Pickwick--Letters relating
thereto--C. D.'s own Account--False Claims
refuted--Pickwick's Original, his Figure and
his Name--First Sprightly Runnings of
Genius--The Sketches characterized--Mr.
Seymour's Death--New Illustrator chosen--Mr.
Hablot K. Browne--C. D. leaves the
Gallery--Strange Gentleman and Village
Coquettes.

THE opening of 1836 found him collecting into two volumes the first series of Sketches by Boz, of which he had sold the copyright for a

conditional payment of (I think) a hundred and fifty pounds to a young publisher named Macrone, whose acquaintance he had made through Mr. Ainsworth a few weeks before.[7] At this time also, we are told in a letter before quoted, the editorship of the Monthly Magazine having come into Mr. James Grant's hands, this gentleman, applying to him through its previous editor to know if he would again contribute to it, learned two things: the first, that he was going to be married; and the second, that, having entered into an arrangement to write a monthly serial, his duties in future would leave him small spare time. Both pieces of news were soon confirmed. The Times of the 26th of March, 1836, gave notice that on the 31st would be published the first shilling number of the Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, edited by Boz; and the same journal a few days later announced that on the 2d of April Mr. Charles Dickens had married Catherine, the eldest daughter of Mr. George Hogarth, whom already we have met as his fellow-worker on the Chronicle. The honeymoon was passed in the neighborhood to which at all times of interest in his life he turned with a strange recurring fondness; and while the young couple are at the quiet little village of Chalk, on the road between Gravesend and Rochester, I will relate exactly the origin of the ever-memorable Mr. Pickwick.

A young publishing-house had started recently, among other enterprises ingenious rather than important, a Library of Fiction; among the authors they wished to enlist in it was the writer of the sketches in the Monthly; and, to the extent of one paper during the past year, they had effected this through their editor, Mr. Charles Whitehead, a very ingenious and very unfortunate man. "I was not aware," wrote the elder member of the firm to Dickens, thirteen years later, in a letter to which reference was made[8] in the preface to Pickwick in one of his later editions, "that you were writing in the Chronicle, or what your name was; but Whitehead, who was an old Monthly man, recollected it, and got you to write The Tuggs's at Ramsgate."

And now comes another person on the scene. "In November, 1835," continues Mr. Chapman, "we published a little book called the Squib Annual, with plates by Seymour; and it was during my visit to him to see after them that he said he should like to do a series of cockney-sporting plates of a superior sort to those he had already published. I said I thought they might do, if accompanied by letter-press and published in monthly parts; and, this being agreed to, we wrote to the author of Three Courses and a Dessert, and proposed it; but, receiving no answer, the scheme dropped for some months, till Seymour said he wished us to decide, as another job had offered which would fully occupy his time; and it was on this we decided to ask you to do it. Having opened already a connection with you for our Library of Fiction, we naturally applied to you to do the Pickwick; but I do not think we even mentioned our intention to Mr. Seymour, and I am quite sure that from the beginning to the end nobody but yourself had anything whatever to do with it. Our prospectus was out at the end of February, and it had all been arranged before that date."

The member of the firm who carried the application to him in Furnival's Inn was not the writer of this letter, but Mr. Hall, who had sold him two years before, not knowing that he was the purchaser, the magazine in

which his first effusion was printed; and he has himself described what passed at the interview: "The idea propounded to me was that the monthly something should be a vehicle for certain plates to be executed by Mr. Seymour; and there was a notion, either on the part of that admirable humorous artist, or of my visitor, that a NIMROD CLUB, the members of which were to go out shooting, fishing, and so forth, and getting themselves into difficulties through their want of dexterity, would be the best means of introducing these. I objected, on consideration that, although born and partly bred in the country, I was no great sportsman, except in regard to all kinds of locomotion; that the idea was not novel, and had already been much used; that it would be infinitely better for the plates to arise naturally out of the text; and that I would like to take my own way, with a freer range of English scenes and people, and was afraid I should ultimately do so in any case, whatever course I might prescribe to myself at starting. My views being deferred to, I thought of Mr. Pickwick, and wrote the first number; from the proof-sheets of which Mr. Seymour made his drawing of the club and his happy portrait of its founder. I connected Mr. Pickwick with a club, because of the original suggestion; and I put in Mr. Winkle expressly for the use of Mr. Seymour."

Mr. Hall was dead when this statement was first made, in the preface to the cheap edition in 1847; but Mr. Chapman clearly recollected his partner's account of the interview, and confirmed every part of it, in his letter of 1849,[9] with one exception. In giving Mr. Seymour credit for the figure by which all the habitable globe knows Mr. Pickwick, and which certainly at the outset helped to make him a reality, it had given the artist too much. The reader will hardly be so startled as I was on coming to the closing line of Mr. Chapman's confirmatory letter: "As this letter is to be historical, I may as well claim what little belongs to me in the matter, and that is the figure of Pickwick. Seymour's first sketch was of a long, thin man. The present immortal one he made from my description of a friend of mine at Richmond, a fat old beau, who would wear, in spite of the ladies' protests, drab tights and black gaiters. His name was John Foster."

On the coincidences, resemblances, and surprises of life, Dickens liked especially to dwell, and few things moved his fancy so pleasantly. The world, he would say, was so much smaller than we thought it; we were all so connected by fate without knowing it; people supposed to be far apart were so constantly elbowing each other; and to-morrow bore so close a resemblance to nothing half so much as to yesterday. Here were the only two leading incidents of his own life before I knew him, his marriage and the first appearance of his Pickwick; and it turned out after all that I had some shadowy association with both. He was married on the anniversary of my birthday, and the original of the figure of Mr. Pickwick bore my name.[10]

The first number had not yet appeared when his *Sketches by Boz, Illustrative of Every-Day Life and Every-Day People*, came forth in two duodecimos with some capital cuts by Cruikshank, and with a preface in which he spoke of the nervousness he should have had in venturing alone before the public, and of his delight in getting the help of Cruikshank, who had frequently contributed to the success, though his well-earned

reputation rendered it impossible for him ever to have shared the hazard, of similar undertakings. It very soon became apparent that there was no hazard here. The _Sketches_ were much more talked about than the first two or three numbers of _Pickwick_, and I remember still with what hearty praise the book was first named to me by my dear friend Albany Fonblanque, as keen and clear a judge as ever lived either of books or men. Richly did it merit all the praise it had, and more, I will add, than he was ever disposed to give to it himself. He decidedly underrated it. He gave, in subsequent writings, so much more perfect form and fullness to everything it contained, that he did not care to credit himself with the marvel of having yet so early anticipated so much. But the first sprightly runnings of his genius are undoubtedly here. Mr. Bumble is in the parish sketches, and Mr. Dawkins the dodger in the Old Bailey scenes. There is laughter and fun to excess, never misapplied; there are the minute points and shades of character, with all the discrimination and nicety of detail, afterwards so famous; there is everywhere the most perfect ease and skill of handling. The observation shown throughout is nothing short of wonderful. Things are painted literally as they are, and, whatever the picture, whether of every-day vulgar, shabby-genteel, or downright low, with neither the condescending air which is affectation, nor the too familiar one which is slang. The book altogether is a perfectly unaffected, unpretentious, honest performance. Under its manly, sensible, straightforward vein of talk there is running at the same time a natural flow of sentiment never sentimental, of humor always easy and unforced, and of pathos for the most part dramatic or picturesque, under which lay the germ of what his mature genius took afterwards most delight in. Of course there are inequalities in it, and some things that would have been better away; but it is a book that might have stood its ground, even if it had stood alone, as containing unusually truthful observation of a sort of life between the middle class and the low, which, having few attractions for bookish observers, was quite unhackneyed ground. It had otherwise also the very special merit of being in no respect bookish or commonplace in its descriptions of the old city with which its writer was so familiar. It was a picture of every-day London at its best and worst, in its humors and enjoyments as well as its sufferings and sins, pervaded everywhere not only with the absolute reality of the things depicted, but also with that subtle sense and mastery of feeling which gives to the reader's sympathies invariably right direction, and awakens consideration, tenderness, and kindness precisely for those who most need such help.

Between the first and the second numbers of _Pickwick_, the artist, Mr. Seymour, died by his own hand; and the number came out with three instead of four illustrations. Dickens had seen the unhappy man only once, forty-eight hours before his death; when he went to Furnival's Inn with an etching for the "stroller's tale" in that number, which, altered at Dickens's suggestion, he brought away again for the few further touches that occupied him to a late hour of the night before he destroyed himself. A notice attached to the number informed the public of this latter fact. There was at first a little difficulty in replacing him, and for a single number Mr. Buss was interposed. But before the fourth number a choice had been made, which as time went on was so thoroughly justified, that through the greater part of the wonderful

career which was then beginning the connection was kept up, and Mr. Hablot Browne's name is not unworthily associated with the masterpieces of Dickens's genius. An incident which I heard related by Mr. Thackeray at one of the Royal Academy dinners belongs to this time: "I can remember when Mr. Dickens was a very young man, and had commenced delighting the world with some charming humorous works in covers which were colored light green and came out once a month, that this young man wanted an artist to illustrate his writings; and I recollect walking up to his chambers in Furnival's Inn, with two or three drawings in my hand, which, strange to say, he did not find suitable." Dickens has himself described another change now made in the publication: "We started with a number of twenty-four pages and four illustrations. Mr. Seymour's sudden and lamented death before the second number was published, brought about a quick decision upon a point already in agitation: the number became one of thirty-two pages with only two illustrations, and remained so to the end."

The Session of 1836 terminated his connection with the gallery, and some fruits of his increased leisure showed themselves before the close of the year. His eldest sister's musical attainments and connections had introduced him to many cultivators and professors of that art; he was led to take much interest in Mr. Braham's enterprise at the St. James's theatre; and in aid of it he wrote a farce for Mr. Harley, founded upon one of his sketches, and the story and songs for an opera composed by his friend Mr. Hullah. Both the *Strange Gentleman*, acted in September, and the *Village Coquettes*, produced in December, 1836, had a good success; and the last is memorable to me for having brought me first into personal communication with Dickens.

FOOTNOTES:

[7] To this date belongs a visit paid him at Furnival's Inn in Mr. Macrone's company by the notorious Mr. N. P. Willis, who calls him "a young paragraphist for the *Morning Chronicle*," and thus sketches his residence and himself: "In the most crowded part of Holborn, within a door or two of the Bull-and-Mouth Inn, we pulled up at the entrance of a large building used for lawyers' chambers. I followed by a long flight of stairs to an upper story, and was ushered into an uncarpeted and bleak-looking room, with a deal table, two or three chairs and a few books, a small boy and Mr. Dickens, for the contents. I was only struck at first with one thing (and I made a memorandum of it that evening as the strongest instance I had seen of English obsequiousness to employers), the degree to which the poor author was overpowered with the honor of his publisher's visit! I remember saying to myself, as I sat down on a rickety chair, 'My good fellow, if you were in America with that fine face and your ready quill, you would have no need to be condescended to by a publisher.' Dickens was dressed very much as he has since described Dick Swiveller, *minus* the swell look. His hair was cropped close to his head, his clothes scant, though jauntily cut, and, after changing a ragged office-coat for a shabby blue, he stood by the door, collarless and buttoned up, the very personification, I thought, of a close sailer to the wind." I remember, while my friend lived, our laughing heartily at this description, hardly a word of which is true; and I give it now as no unfair specimen of the kind of garbage that

since his death also has been served up only too plentifully by some of his own as well as by others of Mr. Willis's countrymen.

[8] Not quoted in detail, on that or any other occasion; though referred to. It was, however, placed in my hands, for use if occasion should arise, when Dickens went to America in 1867. The letter bears date the 7th July, 1849, and was Mr. Chapman's answer to the question Dickens had asked him, whether the account of the origin of Pickwick which he had given in the preface to the cheap edition in 1847 was not strictly correct. "It is so correctly described," was Mr. Chapman's opening remark, "that I can throw but little additional light on it." The name of his hero, I may add, Dickens took from that of a celebrated coach-proprietor of Bath.

[9] The appeal was then made to him because of recent foolish statements by members of Mr. Seymour's family, which Dickens thus contradicted: "It is with great unwillingness that I notice some intangible and incoherent assertions which have been made, professedly on behalf of Mr. Seymour, to the effect that he had some share in the invention of this book, or of anything in it, not faithfully described in the foregoing paragraph. With the moderation that is due equally to my respect for the memory of a brother-artist, and to my self-respect, I confine myself to placing on record here the facts--That Mr. Seymour never originated or suggested an incident, a phrase, or a word, to be found in this book. That Mr. Seymour died when only twenty-four pages of this book were published, and when assuredly not forty-eight were written. That I believe I never saw Mr. Seymour's handwriting in my life. That I never saw Mr. Seymour but once in my life, and that was on the night but one before his death, when he certainly offered no suggestion whatsoever. That I saw him then in the presence of two persons, both living, perfectly acquainted with all these facts, and whose written testimony to them I possess. Lastly, that Mr. Edward Chapman (the survivor of the original firm of Chapman & Hall) has set down in writing, for similar preservation, his personal knowledge of the origin and progress of this book, of the monstrosity of the baseless assertions in question, and (tested by details) even of the self-evident impossibility of there being any truth in them." The "written testimony" alluded to is also in my possession, having been inclosed to me by Dickens, in 1867, with Mr. Chapman's letter here referred to.

[10] Whether Mr. Chapman spelt the name correctly, or has unconsciously deprived his fat beau of the letter "r," I cannot say; but experience tells me that the latter is probable. I have been trying all my life to get my own name spelt correctly, and have only very imperfectly succeeded.

CHAPTER VI.

WRITING THE PICKWICK PAPERS.

1837.

First Letter from him--As he was Thirty-five Years ago--Mrs. Carlyle and Leigh Hunt--Birth of Eldest Son--From Furnival's Inn to Doughty Street--A Long-Remembered Sorrow--I visit him--Hasty Compacts with Publishers--Self-sold into Quasi-Bondage--Agreements for Editorship and Writing--Mr. Macrone's Scheme to reissue Sketches--Attempts to prevent it--Exorbitant Demand--Impatience of Suspense--Purchase advised--Oliver Twist--Characters real to himself--Sense of Responsibility for his Writings--Criticism that satisfied him--Help given with his Proofs--Writing Pickwick, Nos. 14 and 15--Scenes in a Debtors' Prison--A Recollection of Smollett--Reception of Pickwick--A Popular Rage--Mr. Carlyle's "Dreadful" Story--Secrets of Success--Pickwick inferior to Later Books--Exception for Sam Weller and Mr. Pickwick--Personal Habits of C. D.--Reliefs after Writing--Natural Discontents--The Early Agreements--Tale to follow Oliver Twist--Compromise with Mr. Bentley--Trip to Flanders--First Visit to Broadstairs--Piracies of Pickwick--A Sufferer from Agreements--First Visit to Brighton--What he is doing with Oliver Twist--Reading De Foe--"No Thoroughfare"--Proposed Help to Macready.

THE first letter I had from him was at the close of 1836, from Furnival's Inn, when he sent me the book of his opera of the Village Coquettes, which had been published by Mr. Bentley; and this was followed, two months later, by his collected Sketches, both first and second series; which he desired me to receive "as a very small testimony of the donor's regard and obligations, as well as of his desire to cultivate and avail himself of a friendship which has been so pleasantly thrown in his way. . . . In short, if you will receive them for my sake and not for their own, you will very greatly oblige me." I had met him in the interval at the house of our common friend Mr. Ainsworth, and I remember vividly the impression then made upon me.

Very different was his face in those days from that which photography has made familiar to the present generation. A look of youthfulness first attracted you, and then a candor and openness of expression which made you sure of the qualities within. The features were very good. He had a capital forehead, a firm nose with full wide nostril, eyes wonderfully beaming with intellect and running over with humor and cheerfulness, and a rather prominent mouth strongly marked with sensibility. The head was altogether well formed and symmetrical, and the air and carriage of it were extremely spirited. The hair so scant and grizzled in later days was then of a rich brown and most luxuriant abundance, and the bearded face of his last two decades had hardly a

vestige of hair or whisker; but there was that in the face as I first recollect it which no time could change, and which remained implanted on it unalterably to the last. This was the quickness, keenness, and practical power, the eager, restless, energetic outlook on each several feature, that seemed to tell so little of a student or writer of books, and so much of a man of action and business in the world. Light and motion flashed from every part of it. _It was as if made of steel_, was said of it, four or five years after the time to which I am referring, by a most original and delicate observer, the late Mrs. Carlyle. "What a face is his to meet in a drawing-room!" wrote Leigh Hunt to me, the morning after I made them known to each other. "It has the life and soul in it of fifty human beings." In such sayings are expressed not alone the restless and resistless vivacity and force of which I have spoken, but that also which lay beneath them of steadiness and hard endurance.

Several unsuccessful efforts were made by each to get the other to his house before the door of either was opened at last. A son had been born to him on Twelfth-day (the 6th January, 1837), and before the close of the following month he and his wife were in the lodgings at Chalk they had occupied after their marriage. Early in March there is a letter from him accounting for the failure of a promise to call on me because of "a crew of house-agents and attorneys" through whom he had nearly missed his conveyance to Chalk, and been made "more than half wild besides." This was his last letter from Furnival's Inn. In that same month he went to 48, Doughty Street; and in his first letter to me from that address, dated at the close of the month, there is this passage: "We only called upon you a second time in the hope of getting you to dine with us, and were much disappointed not to find you. I have delayed writing a reply to your note, meaning to call upon you. I have been so much engaged, however, in the pleasant occupation of 'moving' that I have not had time; and I am obliged at last to write and say that I have been long engaged to the _Pickwick_ publishers to a dinner in honor of that hero which comes off to-morrow. I am consequently unable to accept your kind invite, which I frankly own I should have liked much better."

That Saturday's celebration of his twelfth number, the anniversary of the birth of _Pickwick_, preceded by but a few weeks a personal sorrow which profoundly moved him. His wife's next younger sister, Mary, who lived with them, and by sweetness of nature even more than by graces of person had made herself the ideal of his life, died with a terrible suddenness that for the time completely bore him down.[11] His grief and suffering were intense, and affected him, as will be seen, through many after-years. The publication of _Pickwick_ was interrupted for two months, the effort of writing it not being possible to him. He moved for change of scene to Hampstead, and here, at the close of May, I visited him, and became first his guest. More than ordinarily susceptible at the moment to all kindest impressions, his heart opened itself to mine. I left him as much his friend, and as entirely in his confidence, as if I had known him for years. Nor had many weeks passed before he addressed to me from Doughty Street words which it is my sorrowful pride to remember have had literal fulfillment: "I look back with unmingled pleasure to every link which each ensuing week has added to the chain of our attachment. It shall go hard, I hope, ere anything but Death impairs the toughness of a bond now so firmly riveted." It remained unweakened

till death came.

There were circumstances that drew us at once into frequent and close communication. What the sudden popularity of his writings implied, was known to others some time before it was known to himself; and he was only now becoming gradually conscious of all the disadvantage this had placed him at. He would have laughed if, at this outset of his wonderful fortune in literature, his genius acknowledged by all without misgiving, young, popular, and prosperous, any one had compared him to the luckless men of letters of former days, whose common fate was to be sold into a slavery which their later lives were passed in vain endeavors to escape from. Not so was his fate to be, yet something of it he was doomed to experience. He had unwittingly sold himself into a quasi-bondage, and had to purchase his liberty at a heavy cost, after considerable suffering.

It was not until the fourth or fifth number of Pickwick (in the latter Sam Weller made his first appearance) that its importance began to be understood by "the trade," and on the eve of the issue of its sixth number, the 22d August, 1836, he had signed an agreement with Mr. Bentley to undertake the editorship of a monthly magazine to be started the following January, to which he was to supply a serial story; and soon afterwards he had agreed with the same publisher to write two other tales, the first at a specified early date; the expressed remuneration in each case being certainly quite inadequate to the claims of a writer of any marked popularity. Under these Bentley agreements he was now writing, month by month, the first half of Oliver Twist, and, under his Chapman & Hall agreement, the last half of Pickwick, not even by a week in advance of the printer with either; when a circumstance became known to him of which he thus wrote to me:

"I heard half an hour ago, on authority which leaves me in no doubt about the matter (from the binder of Pickwick, in fact), that Macrone intends publishing a new issue of my Sketches in monthly parts of nearly the same size and in just the same form as the Pickwick Papers. I need not tell you that this is calculated to injure me most seriously, or that I have a very natural and most decided objection to being supposed to presume upon the success of the Pickwick, and thus foist this old work upon the public in its new dress for the mere purpose of putting money in my own pocket. Neither need I say that the fact of my name being before the town, attached to three publications at the same time, must prove seriously prejudicial to my reputation. As you are acquainted with the circumstances under which these copyrights were disposed of, and as I know I may rely on your kind help, may I beg you to see Macrone, and to state in the strongest and most emphatic manner my feeling on this point? I wish him to be reminded of the sums he paid for those books; of the sale he has had for them; of the extent to which he has already pushed them; and of the very great profits he must necessarily have acquired from them. I wish him also to be reminded that no intention of publishing them in this form was in the remotest manner hinted to me, by him or on his behalf, when he obtained possession of the copyright. I then wish you to put it to his feelings of common honesty and fair dealing whether after this communication he will persevere in his intention." What else the letter contained need not be

quoted, but it strongly moved me to do my best.

I found Mr. Macrone inaccessible to all arguments of persuasion, however. That he had bought the book for a small sum at a time when the smallest was not unimportant to the writer, shortly before his marriage, and that he had since made very considerable profits by it, in no way disturbed his position that he had a right to make as much as he could of what was his, without regard to how it had become so. There was nothing for it but to change front, and, admitting it might be a less evil to the unlucky author to repurchase than to let the monthly issue proceed, to ask what further gain was looked for; but so wide a mouth was opened at this that I would have no part in the costly process of filling it. I told Dickens so, and strongly counseled him to keep quiet for a time.

But the worry and vexation were too great with all the work he had in hand, and I was hardly surprised next day to receive the letter sent me; which yet should be prefaced with the remark that suspense of any kind was at all times intolerable to the writer. The interval between the accomplishment of anything, and "its first motion," Dickens never could endure, and he was too ready to make any sacrifice to abridge or end it. This did not belong to the strong side of his character, and advantage was frequently taken of the fact. "I sent down just now to know whether you were at home (two o'clock), as Chapman & Hall were with me, and, the case being urgent, I wished to have the further benefit of your kind advice and assistance. Macrone and H---- (arcades ambo) waited on them this morning, and after a long discussion peremptorily refused to take one farthing less than the two thousand pounds. H---- repeated the statement of figures which he made to you yesterday, and put it to Hall whether he could say from his knowledge of such matters that the estimate of probable profit was exorbitant. Hall, whose judgment may be relied on in such matters, could not dispute the justice of the calculation. And so the matter stood. In this dilemma it occurred to them (my Pickwick men), whether, if the Sketches must appear in monthly numbers, it would not be better for them to appear for their benefit and mine conjointly than for Macrone's sole use and behoof; whether they, having all the Pickwick machinery in full operation, could not obtain for them a much larger sale than Macrone could ever get; and whether, even at this large price of two thousand pounds, we might not, besides retaining the copyright, reasonably hope for a good profit on the outlay. These suggestions having presented themselves, they came straight to me (having obtained a few hours' respite) and proposed that we should purchase the copyrights between us for the two thousand pounds, and publish them in monthly parts. I need not say that no other form of publication would repay the expenditure; and they wish me to explain by an address that they, who may be fairly put forward as the parties, have been driven into that mode of publication, or the copyrights would have been lost. I considered the matter in every possible way. I sent for you, but you were out. I thought of"--what need not be repeated, now that all is past and gone--"and consented. Was I right? I think you will say yes." I could not say no, though I was glad to have been no party to a price so exorbitant; which yet profited extremely little the person who received it. He died in hardly more than two years; and if Dickens had enjoyed the most liberal treatment at his

hands, he could not have exerted himself more generously for the widow and children.

His new story was now beginning largely to share attention with his Pickwick Papers, and it was delightful to see how real all its people became to him. What I had most, indeed, to notice in him, at the very outset of his career, was his indifference to any praise of his performances on the merely literary side, compared with the higher recognition of them as bits of actual life, with the meaning and purpose on their part, and the responsibility on his, of realities rather than creatures of fancy. The exception that might be drawn from Pickwick is rather in seeming than substance. A first book has its immunities, and the distinction of this from the rest of the writings appears in what has been said of its origin. The plan of it was simply to amuse. It was to string together whimsical sketches of the pencil by entertaining sketches of the pen; and, at its beginning, where or how it was to end was as little known to himself as to any of its readers. But genius is a master as well as a servant, and when the laughter and fun were at their highest something graver made its appearance. He had to defend himself for this; and he said that, though the mere oddity of a new acquaintance was apt to impress one at first, the more serious qualities were discovered when we became friends with the man. In other words he might have said that the change was become necessary for his own satisfaction. The book itself, in teaching him what his power was, had made him more conscious of what would be expected from its use; and this never afterwards quitted him. In what he was to do hereafter, as in all he was doing now, with Pickwick still to finish and Oliver only beginning, it constantly attended him. Nor could it well be otherwise, with all those fanciful creations so real, to a nature in itself so practical and earnest; and in this spirit I had well understood the letter accompanying what had been published of Oliver since its commencement the preceding February, which reached me the day after I visited him. Something to the effect of what has just been said, I had remarked publicly of the portion of the story sent to me; and his instant warm-hearted acknowledgment, of which I permit myself to quote a line or two, showed me in what perfect agreement we were: "How can I thank you? Can I do better than by saying that the sense of poor Oliver's reality, which I know you have had from the first, has been the highest of all praise to me? None that has been lavished upon me have I felt half so much as that appreciation of my intent and meaning. You know I have ever done so, for it was your feeling for me and mine for you that first brought us together, and I hope will keep us so till death do us part. Your notices make me grateful, but very proud: so have a care of them."

There was nothing written by him after this date which I did not see before the world did, either in manuscript or proofs; and in connection with the latter I shortly began to give him the help which he publicly mentioned twenty years later in dedicating his collected writings to me. One of his letters reminds me when these corrections began, and they were continued very nearly to the last. They lightened for him a labor of which he had more than enough imposed upon him at this time by others, and they were never anything but an enjoyment to me. "I have," he wrote, "so many sheets of the Miscellany to correct before I can

begin _Oliver_, that I fear I shall not be able to leave home this morning. I therefore send your revise of the _Pickwick_ by Fred, who is on his way with it to the printers. You will see that my alterations are very slight, but I think for the better." This was the fourteenth number of the _Pickwick Papers_. Fred was his next younger brother, who lived with him at the time.

The number following this was the famous one in which the hero finds himself in the Fleet; and another of his letters will show what enjoyment the writing of it had given to himself. I had sent to ask him where we were to meet for a proposed ride that day. "HERE," was his reply. "I am slippered and jacketed, and, like that same starling who is so very seldom quoted, can't get out. I am getting on, thank Heaven, like 'a house o' fire,' and think the next _Pickwick_ will bang all the others. I shall expect you at one, and we will walk to the stable together. If you know anybody at Saint Paul's, I wish you'd send round and ask them not to ring the bell so. I can hardly hear my own ideas as they come into my head, and say what they mean."

The exulting tone of confidence in what he had thus been writing was indeed well justified. He had as yet done nothing so remarkable, in blending humor with tragedy, as his picture of what the poor side of a debtors' prison was in the days of which we have seen that he had himself had bitter experience; and we have but to recall, as it rises sharply to the memory, what is contained in this portion of a work that was not only among his earliest but his least considered as to plan, to understand what it was that not alone had given him his fame so early, but that in itself held the germ of the future that awaited him. Every point was a telling one, and the truthfulness of the whole unerring. The dreadful restlessness of the place, undefined yet unceasing, unsatisfying and terrible, was pictured throughout with De Foe's minute reality; while points of character were handled in that greater style which connects with the richest oddities of humor an insight into principles of character universal as nature itself. When he resolved that Sam Weller should be occupant of the prison with Mr. Pickwick, he was perhaps thinking of his favorite Smollett, and how, when Peregrine Pickle was inmate of the Fleet, Hatchway and Pipes refused to leave him; but Fielding himself might have envied his way of setting about it. Nor is any portion of his picture less admirable than this. The comedy gradually deepening into tragedy; the shabby vagabonds who are the growth of debtors' prisons, contrasting with the poor simple creatures who are their sacrifices and victims; Mr. Mivins and Mr. Smangle side by side with the cobbler ruined by his legacy, who sleeps under the table to remind himself of his old four-poster; Mr. Pickwick's first night in the marshal's room, Sam Weller entertaining Stiggins in the snugger, Jingle in decline, and the chancery prisoner dying; in all these scenes there was writing of the first order, a deep feeling of character, that delicate form of humor which has a quaintly pathetic turn in it as well, comedy of the richest and broadest kind, and the easy handling throughout of a master in his art. We place the picture by the side of those of the great writers of this style, of fiction in our language, and it does not fall by the comparison.

Of what the reception of the book had been up to this time, and of the

popularity Dickens had won as its author, this also will be the proper place to speak. For its kind, its extent, and the absence of everything unreal or factitious in the causes that contributed to it, it is unexampled in literature. Here was a series of sketches, without the pretense to such interest as attends a well-constructed story; put forth in a form apparently ephemeral as its purpose; having none that seemed higher than to exhibit some studies of cockney manners with help from a comic artist; and after four or five parts had appeared, without newspaper notice or puffing, and itself not subserving in the public anything false or unworthy, it sprang into a popularity that each part carried higher and higher, until people at this time talked of nothing else, tradesmen recommended their goods by using its name, and its sale, outstripping at a bound that of all the most famous books of the century, had reached to an almost fabulous number. Of part one, the binder prepared four hundred; and of part fifteen, his order was for more than forty thousand. Every class, the high equally with the low, was attracted to it. The charm of its gayety and good humor, its inexhaustible fun, its riotous overflow of animal spirits, its brightness and keenness of observation, and, above all, the incomparable ease of its many varieties of enjoyment, fascinated everybody. Judges on the bench and boys in the street, gravity and folly, the young and the old, those who were entering life and those who were quitting it, alike found it to be irresistible. "An archdeacon," wrote Mr. Carlyle afterwards to me, "with his own venerable lips, repeated to me, the other night, a strange profane story: of a solemn clergyman who had been administering ghostly consolation to a sick person; having finished, satisfactorily as he thought, and got out of the room, he heard the sick person ejaculate, 'Well, thank God, Pickwick will be out in ten days any way!'--This is dreadful."

Let me add that there was something more in it all than the gratification of mere fun and laughter, more even than the rarer pleasure that underlies the outbreak of all forms of genuine humor. Another chord had been struck. Over and above the lively painting of manners which at first had been so attractive, there was something that left deeper mark. Genial and irrepressible enjoyment, affectionate heartiness of tone, unrestrained exuberance of mirth, these are not more delightful than they are fleeting and perishable qualities; but the attention eagerly excited by the charm of them in Pickwick found itself retained by something more permanent. We had all become suddenly conscious, in the very thick of the extravaganza of adventure and fun set before us, that here were real people. It was not somebody talking humorously about them, but they were there themselves. That a number of persons belonging to the middle and lower ranks of life (Wardles, Winkles, Wellers, Tupmans, Bardells, Snubbinses, Perkers, Bob Sawyers, Dodsons, and Fogg) had been somehow added to his intimate and familiar acquaintance, the ordinary reader knew before half a dozen numbers were out; and it took not many more to make clear to the intelligent reader that a new and original genius in the walk of Smollett and Fielding had arisen in England.

I do not, for reasons to be hereafter stated, think the Pickwick Papers comparable to the later books; but, apart from the new vein of humor it opened, its wonderful freshness and its unflagging animal

spirits, it has two characters that will probably continue to attract to it an unfading popularity. Its pre-eminent achievement is of course Sam Weller,--one of those people that take their place among the supreme successes of fiction, as one that nobody ever saw but everybody recognizes, at once perfectly natural and intensely original. Who is there that has ever thought him tedious? Who is so familiar with him as not still to be finding something new in him? Who is so amazed by his inexhaustible resources, or so amused by his inextinguishable laughter, as to doubt of his being as ordinary and perfect a reality, nevertheless, as anything in the London streets? When indeed the relish has been dulled that makes such humor natural and appreciable, and not his native fun only, his ready and rich illustration, his imperturbable self-possession, but his devotion to his master, his chivalry and his gallantry, are no longer discovered, or believed no longer to exist, in the ranks of life to which he belongs, it will be worse for all of us than for the fame of his creator. Nor, when faith is lost in that possible combination of eccentricities and benevolences, shrewdness and simplicity, good sense and folly, all that suggests the ludicrous and nothing that suggests contempt for it, which form the delightful oddity of Pickwick, will the mistake committed be one merely of critical misjudgment. But of this there is small fear. Sam Weller and Mr. Pickwick are the Sancho and the Quixote of Londoners, and as little likely to pass away as the old city itself.

Dickens was very fond of riding in these early years, and there was no recreation he so much indulged, or with such profit to himself, in the intervals of his hardest work. I was his companion oftener than I could well afford the time for, the distances being great and nothing else to be done for the day; but when a note would unexpectedly arrive while I knew him to be hunted hard by one of his printers, telling me he had been sticking to work so closely that he must have rest, and, by way of getting it, proposing we should start together that morning at eleven o'clock for "a fifteen-mile ride out, ditto in, and a lunch on the road" with a wind-up of six o'clock dinner in Doughty Street, I could not resist the good fellowship. His notion of finding rest from mental exertion in as much bodily exertion of equal severity, continued with him to the last; taking in the later years what I always thought the too great strain of as many miles in walking as he now took in the saddle, and too often indulging it at night; for, though he was always passionately fond of walking, he observed as yet a moderation in it, even accepting as sufficient my seven or eight miles' companionship. "What a brilliant morning for a country walk!" he would write, with not another word in his dispatch. Or, "Is it possible that you can't, oughtn't, shouldn't, mustn't, _won't_ be tempted, this gorgeous day?" Or, "I start precisely--precisely, mind--at half-past one. Come, come, _come_, and walk in the green lanes. You will work the better for it all the week. Come! I shall expect you." Or, "You don't feel disposed, do you, to muffle yourself up and start off with me for a good brisk walk over Hampstead Heath? I know a good 'ous there where we can have a red-hot chop for dinner, and a glass of good wine:" which led to our first experience of Jack Straw's Castle, memorable for many happy meetings in coming years. But the rides were most popular and frequent. "I think," he would write, "Richmond and Twickenham, thro' the park, out at Knightsbridge, and over Barnes Common, would make a beautiful ride."

Or, "Do you know, I shouldn't object to an early chop at some village inn?" Or, "Not knowing whether my head was off or on, it became so addled with work, I have gone riding the old road, and should be truly delighted to meet or be overtaken by you." Or, "Where shall it be--_oh, where_--Hampstead, Greenwich, Windsor? WHERE?????? while the day is bright, not when it has dwindled away to nothing! For who can be of any use whatsoever such a day as this, excepting out of doors?" Or it might be interrogatory summons to "A hard trot of three hours?" or intimation as laconic "To be heard of at Eel-pie House, Twickenham!" When first I knew him, I may add, his carriage for his wife's use was a small chaise with a smaller pair of ponies, which, having a habit of making sudden rushes up by-streets in the day and peremptory standstills in ditches by night, were changed in the following year for a more suitable equipage.

To this mention of his habits while at work when our friendship began, I have to add what will complete the relation already given, in connection with his _Sketches_, of the uneasy sense accompanying his labor that it was yielding insufficient for himself while it enriched others, which is a needful part of his story at this time. At midsummer, 1837, replying to some inquiries, and sending his agreement with Mr. Bentley for the _Miscellany_ under which he was writing _Oliver_, he went on: "It is a very extraordinary fact (I forgot it on Sunday) that I have NEVER HAD from him a copy of the agreement respecting the novel, which I never saw before or since I signed it at his house one morning long ago. Shall I ask him for a copy or no? I have looked at some memoranda I made at the time, and I _fear_ he has my second novel on the same terms, under the same agreement. This is a bad lookout, but we must try and mend it. You will tell me you are very much surprised at my doing business in this way. So am I, for in most matters of labor and application I am punctuality itself. The truth is (though you do not need I should explain the matter to you, my dear fellow), that if I had allowed myself to be worried by these things, I could never have done as much as I have. But I much fear, in my desire to avoid present vexations, I have laid up a bitter store for the future." The second novel, which he had promised in a complete form for a very early date, and had already selected subject and title for, was published four years later as _Barnaby Rudge_; but of the third he at present knew nothing but that he was expected to begin it, if not in the magazine, somewhere or other independently within a specified time.

The first appeal made, in taking action upon his letter, had reference to the immediate pressure of the _Barnaby_ novel; but it also opened up the question of the great change of circumstances since these various agreements had been precipitately signed by him, the very different situation brought about by the extraordinary increase in the popularity of his writings, and the advantage it would be to both Mr. Bentley and himself to make more equitable adjustment of their relations. Some misunderstandings followed, but were closed by a compromise in September, 1837; by which the third novel was abandoned[12] on certain conditions, and _Barnaby_ was undertaken to be finished by November, 1838. This involved a completion of the new story during the progress of _Oliver_, whatever might be required to follow on the close of _Pickwick_; and I doubted its wisdom. But it was accepted for the time.

He had meanwhile taken his wife abroad for a ten days' summer holiday, accompanied by the shrewd observant young artist, Mr. Hablot Browne, whose admirable illustrations to Pickwick had more than supplied Mr. Seymour's loss; and I had a letter from him on their landing at Calais on the 2d of July:

"We have arranged for a post-coach to take us to Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp, and a hundred other places, that I cannot recollect now and couldn't spell if I did. We went this afternoon in a barouche to some gardens where the people dance, and where they were footing it most heartily,--especially the women, who in their short petticoats and light caps look uncommonly agreeable. A gentleman in a blue surtout and silken berlins accompanied us from the hotel, and acted as curator. He even waltzed with a very smart lady (just to show us, condescendingly, how it ought to be done), and waltzed elegantly, too. We rang for slippers after we came back, and it turned out that this gentleman was the Boots."

His later sea-side holiday was passed at Broadstairs, as were those of many subsequent years, and the little watering-place has been made memorable by his pleasant sketch of it. From his letters to myself a few lines may be given of his first doings and impressions there.

Writing on the 3d of September, he reports himself just risen from an attack of illness. "I am much better, and hope to begin Pickwick No. 18_ to-morrow. You will imagine how queer I must have been when I tell you that I have been compelled for four-and-twenty mortal hours to abstain from porter or other malt liquor!!! I have done it though--really. . . . I have discovered that the landlord of the Albion has delicious hollands (but what is that to you? for you cannot sympathize with my feelings), and that a cobbler who lives opposite to my bedroom window is a Roman Catholic, and gives an hour and a half to his devotions every morning behind his counter. I have walked upon the sands at low-water from this place to Ramsgate, and sat upon the same at high-ditto till I have been flayed with the cold. I have seen ladies and gentlemen walking upon the earth in slippers of buff, and pickling themselves in the sea in complete suits of the same. I have seen stout gentlemen looking at nothing through powerful telescopes for hours, and, when at last they saw a cloud of smoke, fancying a steamer behind it, and going home comfortable and happy. I have found out that our next neighbor has a wife and something else under the same roof with the rest of his furniture,--the wife deaf and blind, and the something else given to drinking. And if you ever get to the end of this letter you will find out that I subscribe myself on paper, as on everything else (some atonement perhaps for its length and absurdity)," etc. etc.

In his next letter (from 12, High Street, Broadstairs, on the 7th) there is allusion to one of the many piracies of Pickwick, which had distinguished itself beyond the rest by a preface abusive of the writer plundered: "I recollect this 'member of the Dramatic Authors' Society' bringing an action once against Chapman who rented the City theatre, in which it was proved that he had undertaken to write under special agreement seven melodramas for five pounds, to enable him to do which a

room had been hired in a gin-shop close by. The defendant's plea was that the plaintiff was always drunk, and had not fulfilled his contract. Well, if the _Pickwick_ has been the means of putting a few shillings in the vermin-eaten pockets of so miserable a creature, and has saved him from a workhouse or a jail, let him empty out his little pot of filth and welcome. I am quite content to have been the means of relieving him. Besides, he seems to have suffered by agreements!"

His own troubles in that way were compromised for the time, as already hinted, at the close of this September month; and at the end of the month following, after finishing _Pickwick_ and resuming _Oliver_, the latter having been suspended by him during the recent disputes, he made his first visit to Brighton. The opening of his letter of Friday the 3d of November is full of regrets that I had been unable to join them there: "It is a beautiful day, and we have been taking advantage of it, but the wind until to-day has been so high and the weather so stormy that Kate has been scarcely able to peep out of doors. On Wednesday it blew a perfect hurricane, breaking windows, knocking down shutters, carrying people off their legs, blowing the fires out, and causing universal consternation. The air was for some hours darkened with a shower of black hats (second-hand), which are supposed to have been blown off the heads of unwary passengers in remote parts of the town, and have been industriously picked up by the fishermen. Charles Kean was advertised for _Othello_ 'for the benefit of Mrs. Sefton, having most kindly postponed for this one day his departure for London.' I have not heard whether he got to the theatre, but I am sure nobody else did. They do _The Honeymoon_ to-night, on which occasion I mean to patronize the drayma. We have a beautiful bay-windowed sitting-room here, fronting the sea, but I have seen nothing of B.'s brother who was to have shown me the lions, and my notions of the place are consequently somewhat confined: being limited to the pavilion, the chain-pier, and the sea. The last is quite enough for me, and, unless I am joined by some male companion (_do you think I shall be?_), is most probably all I shall make acquaintance with. I am glad you like _Oliver_ this month: especially glad that you particularize the first chapter. I hope to do great things with Nancy. If I can only work out the idea I have formed of her, and of the female who is to contrast with her, I think I may defy Mr. ---- and all his works.[13] I have had great difficulty in keeping my hands off Fagin and the rest of them in the evenings; but, as I came down for rest, I have resisted the temptation, and steadily applied myself to the labor of being idle. Did you ever read (of course you have, though) De Foe's _History of the Devil_? What a capital thing it is! I bought it for a couple of shillings yesterday morning, and have been quite absorbed in it ever since. We must have been jolter-headed geniuses not to have anticipated M.'s reply. My best remembrances to him. I see H. at this moment. I must be present at a rehearsal of that opera. It will be better than any comedy that was ever played. Talking of comedies, I still see NO THOROUGHFARE staring me in the face, every time I look down that road. I have taken places for Tuesday next. We shall be at home at six o'clock, and I shall hope at least to see you that evening. I am afraid you will find this letter extremely dear at eightpence, but if the warmest assurances of friendship and attachment, and anxious lookings-forward to the pleasure of your society, be worth anything, throw them into the balance, together with a hundred good

wishes and one hearty assurance that I am," etc. etc. "CHARLES DICKENS.
No room for the flourish--I'll finish it the next time I write to you."

The flourish that accompanied his signature is familiar to every one. The allusion to the comedy expresses a fancy he at this time had of being able to contribute some such achievement in aid of Macready's gallant efforts at Covent Garden to bring back to the stage its higher associations of good literature and intellectual enjoyment. It connects curiously now that unrealized hope with the exact title of the only story he ever helped himself to dramatize, and which Mr. Fechter played at the Adelphi three years before his death.

FOOTNOTES:

[11] Her epitaph, written by him, remains upon a gravestone in the cemetery at Kensal Green: "Young, beautiful, and good, God numbered her among his angels at the early age of seventeen."

[12] I have a memorandum in Dickens's writing that five hundred pounds was to have been given for it, and an additional two hundred and fifty pounds on its sale reaching three thousand copies; but I feel certain it was surrendered on more favorable terms.

[13] The allusion was to the supposed author of a paper in the Quarterly Review (Oct. 1837), in the course of which there was much high praise, but where the writer said at the close, "Indications are not wanting that the particular vein of humor which has hitherto yielded so much attractive metal is worked out. . . . The fact is, Mr. Dickens writes too often and too fast. . . . If he persists much longer in this course, it requires no gift of prophecy to foretell his fate:--he has risen like a rocket, and he will come down like the stick."

CHAPTER VII.

BETWEEN PICKWICK AND NICKLEBY.

1837-1838.

Edits Life of Grimaldi--His Own Opinion of it--An Objection answered--His Recollections of 1823--Completion of Pickwick--A Purpose long entertained--Relations with Chapman & Hall--Payments made for Pickwick--Agreement for Nicholas Nickleby--Oliver Twist characterized--Reasons for Acceptance with every Class--Nightmare of an Agreement--Letter to Mr. Bentley--Proposal as to Barnaby Rudge--Result of it--Birth of Eldest Daughter--Young Gentlemen and Young Couples--First Number of Nicholas Nickleby--2d of April, 1838.

NOT remotely bearing on the stage, nevertheless, was the employment on which I found him busy at his return from Brighton; one result of his more satisfactory relations with Mr. Bentley having led to a promise to edit for him a life of the celebrated clown Grimaldi. The manuscript had been prepared from autobiographical notes by a Mr. Egerton Wilks, and contained one or two stories told so badly, and so well worth better telling, that the hope of enlivening their dullness at the cost of very little labor constituted a sort of attraction for him. Except the preface, he did not write a line of this biography, such modifications or additions as he made having been dictated by him to his father; whom I found often in the supreme enjoyment of the office of amanuensis. He had also a most indifferent opinion of the mass of material which in general composed it, describing it to me as "twaddle," and his own modest estimate of the book, on its completion, may be guessed from the number of notes of admiration (no less than thirty) which accompanied his written mention to me of the sale with which it started in the first week of its publication: "Seventeen hundred _Grimaldis_ have been already sold, and the demand increases daily!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

It was not to have all its own way, however. A great many critical faults were found; and one point in particular was urged against his handling such a subject, that he could never himself even have seen Grimaldi. To this last objection he was moved to reply, and had prepared a letter for the _Miscellany_, "from editor to sub-editor," which it was thought best to suppress, but of which the opening remark may now be not unamusing: "I understand that a gentleman unknown is going about this town privately informing all ladies and gentlemen of discontented natures, that, on a comparison of dates and putting together of many little circumstances which occur to his great sagacity, he has made the profound discovery that I can never have seen Grimaldi whose life I have edited, and that the book must therefore of necessity be bad. Now, sir, although I was brought up from remote country parts in the dark ages of 1819 and 1820 to behold the splendor of Christmas pantomimes and the humor of Joe, in whose honor I am informed I clapped my hands with great precocity, and although I even saw him act in the remote times of 1823, yet as I had not then aspired to the dignity of a tail-coat, though forced by a relentless parent into my first pair of boots, I am willing, with the view of saving this honest gentleman further time and trouble, to concede that I had not arrived at man's estate when Grimaldi left the stage, and that my recollections of his acting are, to my loss, but shadowy and imperfect. Which confession I now make publically, and without mental qualification or reserve, to all whom it may concern. But the deduction of this pleasant gentleman that therefore the Grimaldi book must be bad, I must take leave to doubt. I don't think that to edit a man's biography from his own notes it is essential you should have known him, and I don't believe that Lord Braybrooke had more than the very slightest acquaintance with Mr. Pepys, whose memoirs he edited two centuries after he died."

Enormous meanwhile, and without objection audible on any side, had been the success of the completed _Pickwick_, which we celebrated by a dinner, with himself in the chair and Talfourd in the vice-chair,

everybody in hearty good humor with every other body; and a copy of which I received from him on the 11th of December in the most luxurious of Hayday's bindings, with a note worth preserving for its closing allusion. The passage referred to in it was a comment, in delicately chosen words, that Leigh Hunt had made on the inscription at the grave in Kensal Green:[14] "Chapman & Hall have just sent me, with a copy of our deed, three 'extra-super' bound copies of Pickwick, as per specimen inclosed. The first I forward to you, the second I have presented to our good friend Ainsworth, and the third Kate has retained for herself. Accept your copy with one sincere and most comprehensive expression of my warmest friendship and esteem; and a hearty renewal, if there need be any renewal when there has been no interruption, of all those assurances of affectionate regard which our close friendship and communion for a long time back has every day implied. . . . That beautiful passage you were so kind and considerate as to send me, has given me the only feeling akin to pleasure (sorrowful pleasure it is) that I have yet had, connected with the loss of my dear young friend and companion; for whom my love and attachment will never diminish, and by whose side, if it please God to leave me in possession of sense to signify my wishes, my bones, whenever or wherever I die, will one day be laid. Tell Leigh Hunt when you have an opportunity how much he has affected me, and how deeply I thank him for what he has done. You cannot say it too strongly."

The "deed" mentioned was one executed in the previous month to restore to him a third ownership in the book which had thus far enriched all concerned but himself. The original understanding respecting it Mr. Edward Chapman thus describes for me: "There was no agreement about Pickwick except a verbal one. Each number was to consist of a sheet and a half, for which we were to pay fifteen guineas; and we paid him for the first two numbers at once, as he required the money to go and get married with. We were also to pay more according to the sale, and I think Pickwick altogether cost us three thousand pounds." Adjustment to the sale would have cost four times as much, and of the actual payments I have myself no note; but, as far as my memory serves, they are overstated by Mr. Chapman. My impression is that, above and beyond the first sum due for each of the twenty numbers (making no allowance for their extension after the first to thirty-two pages), successive checks were given, as the work went steadily on to the enormous sale it reached, which brought up the entire sum received to two thousand five hundred pounds. I had, however, always pressed so strongly the importance to him of some share in the copyright, that this at last was conceded in the deed above mentioned, though five years were to elapse before the right should accrue; and it was only yielded as part consideration for a further agreement entered into at the same date (the 19th of November, 1837), whereby Dickens engaged to "write a new work, the title whereof shall be determined by him, of a similar character and of the same extent as the Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club," the first number of which was to be delivered on the 15th of the following March, and each of the numbers on the same day of each of the successive nineteen months; which was also to be the date of the payment to him, by Messrs. Chapman & Hall, of twenty several sums of one hundred and fifty pounds each for five years' use of the copyright, the entire ownership in which was then to revert to Dickens. The name of this new book, as

all the world knows, was The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby; and between April, 1838, and October, 1839, it was begun and finished accordingly.

All through the interval of these arrangements Oliver Twist had been steadily continued. Month by month, for many months, it had run its opening course with the close of Pickwick, as we shall see it close with the opening of Nickleby; and the expectations of those who had built most confidently on the young novelist were more than confirmed. Here was the interest of a story simply but well constructed; and characters with the same impress of reality upon them, but more carefully and skillfully drawn. Nothing could be meaner than the subject, the progress of a parish or workhouse boy, nothing less so than its treatment. As each number appeared, his readers generally became more and more conscious of what already, as we have seen, had revealed itself amid even the riotous fun of Pickwick, that the purpose was not solely to amuse; and, far more decisively than its predecessor, the new story further showed what were the not least potent elements in the still increasing popularity that was gathering around the writer. His qualities could be appreciated as well as felt in an almost equal degree by all classes of his various readers. Thousands were attracted to him because he placed them in the midst of scenes and characters with which they were already themselves acquainted; and thousands were reading him with no less avidity because he introduced them to passages of nature and life of which they before knew nothing, but of the truth of which their own habits and senses sufficed to assure them. Only to genius are so revealed the affinities and sympathies of high and low, in regard to the customs and usages of life; and only a writer of the first rank can bear the application of such a test. For it is by the alliance of common habits, quite as much as by the bonds of a common humanity, that we are all of us linked together; and the result of being above the necessity of depending on other people's opinions, and that of being below it, are pretty much the same. It would equally startle both high and low to be conscious of the whole that is implied in this close approximation; but for the common enjoyment of which I speak such consciousness is not required; and for the present Fagin may be left undisturbed in his school of practical ethics with only the Dodger, Charley Bates, and his other promising scholars.

With such work as this in hand, it will hardly seem surprising that as the time for beginning Nickleby came on, and as he thought of his promise for November, he should have the sense of "something hanging over him like a hideous nightmare." He felt that he could not complete the Barnaby Rudge novel by the November of that year, as promised, and that the engagement he would have to break was unfitting him for engagements he might otherwise fulfill. He had undertaken what, in truth, was impossible. The labor of at once editing the Miscellany and supplying it with monthly portions of Oliver more than occupied all the time left him by other labors absolutely necessary. "I no sooner get myself up," he wrote, "high and dry, to attack Oliver manfully, than up come the waves of each month's work, and drive me back again into a sea of manuscript." There was nothing for it but that he should make further appeal to Mr. Bentley. "I have recently," he wrote to him on the 11th of February, 1838, "been thinking a great deal about Barnaby

Rudge_. _Grimaldi_ has occupied so much of the short interval I had between the completion of the _Pickwick_ and the commencement of the new work, that I see it will be wholly impossible for me to produce it by the time I had hoped, with justice to myself or profit to you. What I wish you to consider is this: would it not be far more to your interest, as well as within the scope of my ability, if _Barnaby Rudge_ began in the _Miscellany_ immediately on the conclusion of _Oliver Twist_, and were continued there for the same time, and then published in three volumes? Take these simple facts into consideration. If the _Miscellany_ is to keep its ground, it _must_ have some continuous tale from me when _Oliver_ stops. If I sat down to _Barnaby Rudge_, writing a little of it when I could (and with all my other engagements it would necessarily be a very long time before I could hope to finish it that way), it would be clearly impossible for me to begin a new series of papers in the _Miscellany_. The conduct of three different stories at the same time, and the production of a large portion of each, every month, would have been beyond Scott himself. Whereas, having _Barnaby_ for the _Miscellany_, we could at once supply the gap which the cessation of _Oliver_ must create, and you would have all the advantage of that prestige in favor of the work which is certain to enhance the value of _Oliver Twist_ considerably. Just think of this at your leisure. I am really anxious to do the best I can for you as well as for myself, and in this case the pecuniary advantage must be all on your side." This letter nevertheless, which had also requested an overdue account of the sales of the _Miscellany_, led to differences which were only adjusted after six months' wrangling; and I was party to the understanding then arrived at, by which, among other things, _Barnaby_ was placed upon the footing desired, and was to begin when _Oliver_ closed.

Of the progress of his _Oliver_, and his habits of writing at the time, it may perhaps be worth giving some additional glimpses from his letters of 1838. "I was thinking about _Oliver_ till dinner-time yesterday," he wrote on the 9th of March,[15] "and, just as I had fallen upon him tooth and nail, was called away to sit with Kate. I did eight slips, however, and hope to make them fifteen this morning." Three days before, a little daughter had been born to him, who became a little god-daughter to me; on which occasion (having closed his announcement with a postscript of "I can do nothing this morning. What time will you ride? The sooner the better, for a good long spell"), we rode out fifteen miles on the great north road, and, after dining at the Red Lion in Barnet on our way home, distinguished the already memorable day by bringing in both hacks dead lame.

On that day week, Monday, the 13th, after describing himself "sitting patiently at home waiting for _Oliver Twist_ who has not yet arrived," which was his pleasant form of saying that his fancy had fallen into sluggishness that morning, he made addition not less pleasant as to some piece of painful news I had sent him, now forgotten: "I have not yet seen the paper, and you throw me into a fever. The comfort is, that all the strange and terrible things come uppermost, and that the good and pleasant things are mixed up with every moment of our existence so plentifully that we scarcely heed them." At the close of the month Mrs. Dickens was well enough to accompany him to Richmond, for now the time was come to start _Nickleby_; and, having been away from town when

Pickwick's first number came out, he made it a superstition to be absent at all future similar times. The magazine-day of that April month, I remember, fell upon a Saturday, and the previous evening had brought me a peremptory summons: "Meet me at the Shakspeare on Saturday night at eight; order your horse at midnight, and ride back with me." Which was done accordingly. The smallest hour was sounding from St. Paul's into the night before we started, and the night was none of the pleasantest; but we carried news that lightened every part of the road, for the sale of _Nickleby_ had reached that day the astonishing number of nearly fifty thousand! I left him working with unusual cheerfulness at _Oliver Twist_ when I left the Star and Garter on the next day but one, after celebrating with both friends on the previous evening an anniversary^[16] which concerned us all (their second and my twenty-sixth), and which we kept always in future at the same place, except when they were living out of England, for twenty successive years. It was a part of his love of regularity and order, as well as of his kindliness of nature, to place such friendly meetings as these under rules of habit and continuance.

FOOTNOTES:

[14] See _ante_, p. 120.

[15] There is an earlier allusion I may quote, from a letter in January, for its mention of a small piece written by him at this time, but not included in his acknowledged writings: "I am as badly off as you. I have not done the _Young Gentlemen_, nor written the preface to _Grimaldi_, nor thought of _Oliver Twist_, or even supplied a subject for the plate." The _Young Gentlemen_ was a small book of sketches which he wrote anonymously as the companion to a similar half-crown volume of _Young Ladies_ (not written by him), for Messrs. Chapman & Hall. He added subsequently a like volume of _Young Couples_, also without his name.

[16] See _ante_, p. 113.

CHAPTER VIII.

OLIVER TWIST.

1838.

Interest in Characters at Close of
Oliver--Writing of the Last
Chapter--Cruikshank Illustrations--Etchings for
Last Volume--How executed--Slander respecting
them exposed--Falsehood ascribed to the
Artist--Reputation of the New Tale--Its
Workmanship--Social Evils passed away--Living
only in what destroyed them--Chief Design of
the Story--Its Principal Figures--Comedy and

Tragedy of Crime--Reply to Attacks--Le Sage,
Gay, and Fielding--Likeness to them--Again the
Shadow of _Barnaby_ --Appeal to Mr. Bentley for
Delay--A Very Old Story--"Sic Vos non
Vobis"--_Barnaby_ given up by Mr.
Bentley--Resignation of _Miscellany_ --Parent
parting from Child.

THE whole of his time not occupied by _Nickleby_ was now given to _Oliver_, and as the story shaped itself to its close it took extraordinary hold of him. I never knew him work so frequently after dinner, or to such late hours (a practice he afterwards abhorred), as during the final months of this task; which it was now his hope to complete before October, though its close in the magazine would not be due until the following March. "I worked pretty well last night," he writes, referring to it in May, "very well indeed; but, although I did eleven close slips before half-past twelve, I have four to write to complete the chapter; and, as I foolishly left them till this morning, have the steam to get up afresh." A month later he writes, "I got to the sixteenth slip last night, and shall try hard to get to the thirtieth before I go to bed." [17] Then, on a "Tuesday night," at the opening of August, he wrote, "Hard at work still. Nancy is no more. I showed what I have done to Kate last night, who was in an unspeakable '_state_:' from which and my own impression I augur well. When I have sent Sikes to the devil, I must have yours." "No, no," he wrote, in the following month: "don't, don't let us ride till to-morrow, not having yet disposed of the Jew, who is such an out-and-outer that I don't know what to make of him." No small difficulty to an inventor, where the creatures of his invention are found to be as real as himself; but this also was mastered; and then there remained but the closing quiet chapter to tell the fortunes of those who had figured in the tale. To this he summoned me in the first week of September, replying to a request of mine that he'd give me a call that day: "Come and give _me_ a call, and let us have 'a bit o' talk' before we have a bit o' som'at else. My missis is going out to dinner, and I ought to go, but I have got a bad cold. So do you come, and sit here, and read, or work, or do something, while I write the LAST chapter of _Oliver_, which will be arter a lamb chop." How well I remember that evening! and our talk of what should be the fate of Charley Bates, on behalf of whom (as indeed for the Dodger too) Talfourd had pleaded as earnestly in mitigation of judgment as ever at the bar for any client he had most respected.

The publication had been announced for October, but the third-volume illustrations intercepted it a little. This part of the story, as we have seen, had been written in anticipation of the magazine, and the designs for it, having to be executed "in a lump," were necessarily done somewhat hastily. The matter supplied in advance of the monthly portions in the magazine formed the bulk of the last volume as published in the book; and for this the plates had to be prepared by Cruikshank also in advance of the magazine, to furnish them in time for the separate publication: Sikes and his dog, Fagin in the cell, and Rose Maylie and Oliver, being the three last. None of these Dickens had seen until he saw them in the book on the eve of its publication; when he so strongly

objected to one of them that it had to be canceled. "I returned suddenly to town yesterday afternoon," he wrote to the artist at the end of October, "to look at the latter pages of *Oliver Twist* before it was delivered to the booksellers, when I saw the majority of the plates in the last volume for the first time. With reference to the last one,--Rose Maylie and Oliver,--without entering into the question of great haste, or any other cause, which may have led to its being what it is, I am quite sure there can be little difference of opinion between us with respect to the result. May I ask you whether you will object to designing this plate afresh, and doing so *at once*, in order that as few impressions as possible of the present one may go forth? I feel confident you know me too well to feel hurt by this inquiry, and with equal confidence in you I have lost no time in preferring it." This letter, printed from a copy in Dickens's handwriting fortunately committed to my keeping, entirely disposes of a wonderful story^[18] originally promulgated in America with a minute particularity of detail that might have raised the reputation of Sir Benjamin Backbite himself. Whether all Sir Benjamin's laurels, however, should fall to the person by whom the tale is told,^[19] or whether any part belongs to the authority alleged for it, is unfortunately not quite clear. There would hardly have been a doubt, if the fable had been confined to the other side of the Atlantic; but it has been reproduced and widely circulated on this side also; and the distinguished artist whom it calumniates by attributing the invention to him has been left undefended from its slander. Dickens's letter spares me the necessity of characterizing, by the only word which would have been applicable to it, a tale of such incredible and monstrous absurdity as that one of the masterpieces of its author's genius had been merely an illustration of etchings by Mr. Cruikshank!

The completed *Oliver Twist* found a circle of admirers, not so wide in its range as those of others of his books, but of a character and mark that made their honest liking for it, and steady advocacy of it, important to his fame; and the book has held its ground in the first class of his writings. It deserves that place. The admitted exaggerations in *Pickwick* are incident to its club's extravaganza of adventure, of which they are part, and are easily separable from the reality of its wit and humor, and its incomparable freshness; but no such allowances were needed here. Make what deduction the too scrupulous reader of *Oliver* might please for "lowness" in the subject, the precision and the unexaggerated force of the delineation were not to be disputed. The art of copying from nature as it really exists in the common walks had not been carried by any one to greater perfection, or to better results in the way of combination. Such was his handling of the piece of solid, existing, every-day life, which he made here the groundwork of his wit and tenderness, that the book which did much to help out of the world the social evils it portrayed will probably preserve longest the picture of them as they then were. Thus far, indeed, he had written nothing to which in a greater or less degree this felicity did not belong. At the time of which I am speaking, the debtors' prisons described in *Pickwick*, the parochial management denounced in *Oliver*, and the Yorkshire schools exposed in *Nickleby*, were all actual existences,--which now have no vivid existence than in the forms he thus gave to them. With wiser purposes, he superseded the

old petrifying process of the magician in the Arabian tale, and struck the prisons and parish abuses of his country, and its schools of neglect and crime, into palpable life forever. A portion of the truth of the past, of the character and very history of the moral abuses of his time, will thus remain always in his writings; and it will be remembered that with only the light arms of humor and laughter, and the gentle ones of pathos and sadness, he carried cleansing and reform into those Augean stables.

Not that such intentions are in any degree ever intruded by this least didactic of writers. It is the fact that teaches, and not any sermonizing drawn from it. *Oliver Twist* is the history of a child born in a workhouse and brought up by parish overseers, and there is nothing introduced that is out of keeping with the design. It is a series of pictures from the tragi-comedy of lower life, worked out by perfectly natural agencies, from the dying mother and the starved wretches of the first volume, through the scenes and gradations of crime, careless or deliberate, which have a frightful consummation in the last volume, but are never without the reliefs and self-assertions of humanity even in scenes and among characters so debased. It is indeed the primary purpose of the tale to show its little hero, jostled as he is in the miserable crowd, preserved everywhere from the vice of its pollution by an exquisite delicacy of natural sentiment which clings to him under every disadvantage. There is not a more masterly touch in fiction, and it is by such that this delightful fancy is consistently worked out to the last, than Oliver's agony of childish grief on being brought away from the branch-workhouse, the wretched home associated only with suffering and starvation, and with no kind word or look, but containing still his little companions in misery.

Of the figures the book has made familiar to every one it is not my purpose to speak. To name one or two will be enough. Bumble and his wife; Charley Bates and the Artful Dodger; the cowardly charity-boy, Noah Claypole, whose *Such agony, please, sir*, puts the whole of a school-life into one phrase; the so-called merry old Jew, supple and black-hearted Fagin; and Bill Sikes, the bolder-faced bulky-legged ruffian, with his white hat and white shaggy dog,--who does not know them all, even to the least points of dress, look, and walk, and all the small peculiarities that express great points of character? I have omitted poor wretched Nancy; yet it is to be said of her, with such honest truthfulness her strength and weakness are shown, in the virtue that lies neighbored in her nature so closely by vice, that the people meant to be entirely virtuous show poorly beside her. But, though Rose and her lover are trivial enough beside Bill and his mistress, being indeed the weak part of the story, it is the book's pre-eminent merit that vice is nowhere made attractive in it. Crime is not more intensely odious, all through, than it is also most wretched and most unhappy. Not merely when its exposure comes, when the latent recesses of guilt are laid bare, and all the agonies of remorse are witnessed; not in the great scenes only, but in those lighter passages where no such aim might seem to have guided the apparently careless hand, this is emphatically so. Whether it be the comedy or the tragedy of crime, terror and retribution dog closely at its heels. They are as plainly visible when Fagin is first shown in his den, boiling the coffee in the saucepan and

stopping every now and then to listen when there is the least noise below,--the villainous confidence of habit never extinguishing in him the anxious watchings and listenings of crime,--as when we see him at the last in the condemned cell, like a poisoned human rat in a hole.

A word may be added upon the attacks directed against the subject of the book, to which Dickens made reply in one of his later editions, declaring his belief that he had tried to do a service to society, and had certainly done no disservice, in depicting a knot of such associates in crime in all their deformity and squalid wretchedness, skulking uneasily through a miserable life to a painful and shameful death. It is, indeed, never the subject that can be objectionable, if the treatment is not so, as we may see by much popular writing since, where subjects unimpeachably high are brought low by degrading sensualism. When the object of a writer is to exhibit the vulgarity of vice, and not its pretensions to heroism or cravings for sympathy, he may measure his subject with the highest. We meet with a succession of swindlers and thieves in *Gil Blas*; we shake hands with highwaymen and housebreakers all round in the *Beggars' Opera*; we pack cards with *La Ruse* or pick pockets with Jonathan in Fielding's *Mr. Wild the Great*; we follow cruelty and vice from its least beginning to its grossest ends in the prints of Hogarth; but our morals stand none the looser for any of them. As the spirit of the Frenchman was pure enjoyment, the strength of the Englishmen lay in wisdom and satire. The low was set forth to pull down the false pretensions of the high. And though for the most part they differ in manner and design from Dickens in this tale, desiring less to discover the soul of goodness in things evil than to brand the stamp of evil on things apt to pass for good, their objects and results are substantially the same. Familiar with the lowest kind of abasement of life, the knowledge is used, by both him and them, to teach what constitutes its essential elevation; and by the very coarseness and vulgarity of the materials employed we measure the gentlemanliness and beauty of the work that is done. The quack in morality will always call such writing immoral, and the impostors will continue to complain of its treatment of imposture, but for the rest of the world it will still teach the invaluable lesson of what men ought to be from what they are. We cannot learn it more than enough. We cannot too often be told that as the pride and grandeur of mere external circumstance is the falsest of earthly things, so the truth of virtue in the heart is the most lovely and lasting; and from the pages of *Oliver Twist* this teaching is once again to be taken by all who will look for it there.

And now, while *Oliver* was running a great career of popularity and success, the shadow of the tale of *Barnaby Rudge*, which he was to write on similar terms, and to begin in the *Miscellany* when the other should have ended, began to darken everything around him. We had much discussion respecting it, and I had no small difficulty in restraining him from throwing up the agreement altogether; but the real hardship of his position, and the considerate construction to be placed on every effort made by him to escape from obligations incurred in ignorance of the sacrifices implied by them, will be best understood from his own frank and honest statement. On the 21st of January, 1839, inclosing me the copy of a letter which he proposed to send to Mr. Bentley the following morning, he thus wrote: "From what I have already said to you,

you will have been led to expect that I entertained some such intention. I know you will not endeavor to dissuade me from sending it. Go it MUST. It is no fiction to say that at present I _cannot_ write this tale. The immense profits which _Oliver_ has realized to its publisher and is still realizing; the paltry, wretched, miserable sum it brought to me (not equal to what is every day paid for a novel that sells fifteen hundred copies at most); the recollection of this, and the consciousness that I have still the slavery and drudgery of another work on the same journeyman-terms; the consciousness that my books are enriching everybody connected with them but myself, and that I, with such a popularity as I have acquired, am struggling in old toils, and wasting my energies in the very height and freshness of my fame, and the best part of my life, to fill the pockets of others, while for those who are nearest and dearest to me I can realize little more than a genteel subsistence: all this puts me out of heart and spirits. And I cannot--cannot and will not--under such circumstances that keep me down with an iron hand, distress myself by beginning this tale until I have had time to breathe, and until the intervention of the summer, and some cheerful days in the country, shall have restored me to a more genial and composed state of feeling. There--for six months _Barnaby Rudge_ stands over. And but for you, it should stand over altogether. For I do most solemnly declare that morally, before God and man, I hold myself released from such hard bargains as these, after I have done so much for those who drove them. This net that has been wound about me so chafes me, so exasperates and irritates my mind, that to break it at whatever cost--_that_ I should care nothing for--is my constant impulse. But I have not yielded to it. I merely declare that I must have a postponement very common in all literary agreements; and for the time I have mentioned--six months from the conclusion of _Oliver_ in the _Miscellany_--I wash my hands of any fresh accumulation of labor, and resolve to proceed as cheerfully as I can with that which already presses upon me." [20]

To describe what followed upon this is not necessary. It will suffice to state the results. Upon the appearance in the _Miscellany_, in the early months of 1839, of the last portion of _Oliver Twist_, its author, having been relieved altogether from his engagement to the magazine, handed over, in a familiar epistle from a parent to his child, the editorship to Mr. Ainsworth; and the still subsisting agreement to write _Barnaby Rudge_ was, upon the overture of Mr. Bentley himself in June of the following year, 1840, also put an end to, on payment by Dickens, for the copyright of _Oliver Twist_ and such printed stock as remained of the edition then on hand, of two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds. What was further incident to this transaction will be told hereafter; and a few words may meanwhile be taken, not without significance in regard to it, from the parent's familiar epistle. It describes the child as aged two years and two months (so long had he watched over it); gives sundry pieces of advice concerning its circulation, and the importance thereto of light and pleasant articles of food; and concludes, after some general moralizing on the shiftings and changes of this world having taken so wonderful a turn that mail-coach guards were become no longer judges of horse-flesh, "I reap no gain or profit by parting from you, nor will any conveyance of your property be required, for in this respect you have always been literally Bentley's Miscellany and never

mine."

FOOTNOTES:

[17] Here is another of the same month: "All day I have been at work on _Oliver_, and hope to finish the chapter by bedtime. I wish you'd let me know what Sir Francis Burdett has been saying about him at some Birmingham meeting. B. has just sent me the _Courier_ containing some reference to his speech; but the speech I haven't seen."

[18] Reproduced as below, in large type, and without a word of contradiction or even doubt, in a biography of Mr. Dickens put forth by Mr. Hotten: "Dr. Shelton McKenzie, in the American _Round Table_, relates this anecdote of _Oliver Twist_: In London I was intimate with the brothers Cruikshank, Robert and George, but more particularly with the latter. Having called upon him one day at his house (it was then in Myddelton Terrace, Pentonville), I had to wait while he was finishing an etching, for which a printer's boy was waiting. To while away the time, I gladly complied with his suggestion that I should look over a portfolio crowded with etchings, proofs, and drawings, which lay upon the sofa. Among these, carelessly tied together in a wrap of brown paper, was a series of some twenty-five or thirty drawings, very carefully finished, through most of which were carried the well-known portraits of Fagin, Bill Sikes and his dog, Nancy, the Artful Dodger, and Master Charles Bates--all well known to the readers of _Oliver Twist_. There was no mistake about it; and when Cruikshank turned round, his work finished, I said as much. He told me that it had long been in his mind to show the life of a London thief by a series of drawings engraved by himself, in which, without a single line of letter-press, the story would be strikingly and clearly told. 'Dickens,' he continued, 'dropped in here one day, just as you have done, and, while waiting until I could speak with him, took up that identical portfolio, and ferreted out that bundle of drawings. When he came to that one which represents Fagin in the condemned cell, he studied it for half an hour, and told me that he was tempted to change the whole plot of his story; not to carry Oliver Twist through adventures in the country, but to take him up into the thieves' den in London, show what their life was, and bring Oliver through it without sin or shame. I consented to let him write up to as many of the designs as he thought would suit his purpose; and that was the way in which Fagin, Sikes, and Nancy were created. My drawings suggested them, rather than his strong individuality suggested my drawings.'"

[19] This question has been partly solved, since my last edition, by Mr. Cruikshank's announcement in the _Times_, that, though Dr. Mackenzie had "confused some circumstances with respect to Mr. Dickens looking over some drawings and sketches," the substance of his information as to who it was that originated _Oliver Twist_, and all its characters, had been derived from Mr. Cruikshank himself. The worst part of the foregoing fable, therefore, has not Dr. Mackenzie for its author; and Mr. Cruikshank is to be congratulated on the prudence of his rigid silence respecting it as long as Mr. Dickens lived.

[20] Upon receiving this letter I gently reminded him that I had made

objection at the time to the arrangement on the failure of which he empowered me to bring about the settlement it was now proposed to supersede. I cannot give his reply, as it would be unbecoming to repeat the warmth of its expression to myself, but I preserve its first few lines to guard against any possible future misstatement: "If you suppose that anything in my letter could by the utmost latitude of construction imply the smallest dissatisfaction on my part, for God's sake dismiss such a thought from your mind. I have never had a momentary approach to doubt or discontent where you have been mediating for me. . . . I could say more, but you would think me foolish and rhapsodical; and such feeling as I have for you is better kept within one's own breast than vented in imperfect and inexpressive words."

CHAPTER IX.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.

1838-1839.

Doubts of Success dispelled--Realities of English Life--Characters self-revealed--Miss Bates and Mrs. Nickleby--Smike and Dotheboys--A Favorite Type of Humanity--Sydney Smith and Newman Noggs--Kindliness and Breadth of Humor--Goldsmith and Smollett--Early and Later Books--Biographical not critical--Characteristics--Materials for the Book--Birthday Letter--A Difficulty at Starting--Never in Advance with _Nickleby_--Always with Later Books--Enjoying a Play--At the Adelphi--Writing Mrs. Nickleby's Love-scene--Sydney Smith vanquished--Winding up the Story--Parting from Creatures of his Fancy--The Nickleby Dinner--Persons present--The Maclise Portrait.

I WELL recollect the doubt there was, mixed with the eager expectation which the announcement of his second serial story had awakened, whether the event would justify all that interest, and if indeed it were possible that the young writer could continue to walk steadily under the burden of the popularity laid upon him. The first number dispersed this cloud of a question in a burst of sunshine; and as much of the gayety of nations as had been eclipsed by old Mr. Pickwick's voluntary exile to Dulwich was restored by the cheerful confidence with which young Mr. Nicholas Nickleby stepped into his shoes. Everything that had given charm to the first book was here, with more attention to the important requisite of a story, and more wealth as well as truth of character.

How this was poured forth in each successive number, it hardly needs that I should tell. To recall it now, is to talk of what since has so

interwoven itself with common speech and thought as to have become almost part of the daily life of us all. It was well said of him, soon after his death, in mentioning how largely his compositions had furnished one of the chief sources of intellectual enjoyment to this generation, that his language had become part of the language of every class and rank of his countrymen, and his characters were a portion of our contemporaries. "It seems scarcely possible," continued this otherwise not too indulgent commentator, "to believe that there never were any such persons as Mr. Pickwick and Mrs. Nickleby and Mrs. Gamp. They are to us not only types of English life, but types actually existing. They at once revealed the existence of such people, and made them thoroughly comprehensible. They were not studies of persons, but persons. And yet they were idealized in the sense that the reader did not think that they were drawn from the life. They were alive; they were themselves." The writer might have added that this is proper to all true masters of fiction who work in the higher regions of their calling.

Nothing certainly could express better what the new book was at this time making manifest to its thousands of readers; not simply an astonishing variety in the creations of character, but what it was that made these creations so real; not merely the writer's wealth of genius, but the secret and form of his art. There never was any one who had less need to talk about his characters, because never were characters so surely revealed by themselves; and it was thus their reality made itself felt at once. They talked so well that everybody took to repeating what they said, as the writer just quoted has pointed out; and the sayings being the constituent elements of the characters, these also of themselves became part of the public. This, which must always be a novelist's highest achievement, was the art carried to exquisite perfection on a more limited stage by Miss Austen; and, under widely different conditions both of art and work, it was pre-eminently that of Dickens. I told him, on reading the first dialogue of Mrs. Nickleby and Miss Knag, that he had been lately reading Miss Bates in *Emma*, but I found that he had not at this time made the acquaintance of that fine writer.

Who that recollects the numbers of *Nickleby* as they appeared can have forgotten how each number added to the general enjoyment? All that had given *Pickwick* its vast popularity, the overflowing mirth, hearty exuberance of humor, and genial kindliness of satire, had here the advantage of a better-laid design, more connected incidents, and greater precision of character. Everybody seemed immediately to know the Nickleby family as well as his own. Dotheboys, with all that rendered it, like a piece by Hogarth, both ludicrous and terrible, became a household word. Successive groups of Mantalins, Kenwigses, Crummleses, introduced each its little world of reality, lighted up everywhere with truth and life, with capital observation, the quaintest drollery, and quite boundless mirth and fun. The brothers Cheeryble brought with them all the charities. With Smike came the first of those pathetic pictures that filled the world with pity for what cruelty, ignorance, or neglect may inflict upon the young. And Newman Noggs ushered in that class of the creatures of his fancy in which he took himself perhaps the most delight, and which the oftener he dealt with the more he seemed to know how to vary and render attractive: gentlemen by nature, however shocking

bad their hats or ungenteel their dialects; philosophers of modest endurance, and needy but most respectable coats; a sort of humble angels of sympathy and self-denial, though without a particle of splendor or even good looks about them, except what an eye as fine as their own feelings might discern. "My friends," wrote Sydney Smith, describing to Dickens the anxiety of some ladies of his acquaintance to meet him at dinner, "have not the smallest objection to be put into a number, but on the contrary would be proud of the distinction; and Lady Charlotte, in particular, you may marry to Newman Noggs." Lady Charlotte was not a more real person to Sydney than Newman Noggs; and all the world that Dickens attracted to his books could draw from them the same advantage as the man of wit and genius. It has been lately objected that humanity is not seen in them in its highest or noblest types, and the assertion may hereafter be worth considering; but what is very certain is, that they have inculcated humanity in familiar and engaging forms to thousands and tens of thousands of their readers, who can hardly have failed each to make his little world around him somewhat the better for their teaching. From first to last they were never for a moment alien to either the sympathies or the understandings of any class; and there were crowds of people at this time that could not have told you what imagination meant, who were adding month by month to their limited stores the boundless gains of imagination.

One other kindest product of humor in *Nickleby*, not to be passed over in even thus briefly recalling a few first impressions of it, was the good little miniature-painter Miss La Creevy, living by herself, overflowing with affections she has nobody to bestow on, but always cheerful by dint of industry and good-heartedness. When she is disappointed in the character of a woman she has been to see, she eases her mind by saying a very cutting thing at her expense *in a soliloquy*: and thereby illustrates one of the advantages of having lived alone so long, that she made always a confidante of herself; was as sarcastic as she could be, by herself, on people who offended her; pleased herself, and did no harm. Here was one of those touches, made afterwards familiar to the readers of Dickens by innumerable similar fancies, which added affection to their admiration for the writer, and enabled them to anticipate the feeling with which posterity would regard him as indeed the worthy companion of the Goldsmiths and Fieldings. There was a piece of writing, too, within not many pages of it, of which Leigh Hunt exclaimed on reading it that it surpassed the best things of the kind in Smollett that he was able to call to mind. This was the letter of Miss Squeers to Ralph Nickleby, giving him her version of the chastisement inflicted by Nicholas on the schoolmaster: "My pa requests me to write to you, the doctors considering it doubtful whether he will ever recuver the use of his legs which prevents his holding a pen. We are in a state of mind beyond everything, and my pa is one mask of brooses both blue and green likewise two forms are steeped in his Goar. . . . Me and my brother were then the victims of his feury since which we have suffered very much which leads us to the arrowing belief that we have received some injury in our insides, especially as no marks of violence are visible externally. I am screaming out loud all the time I write and so is my brother which takes off my attention rather and I hope will excuse mistakes". . . .

Thus rapidly may be indicated some elements that contributed to the sudden and astonishingly wide popularity of these books. I purposely reserve from my present notices of them, which are biographical rather than critical, any statement of the reasons for which I think them inferior in imagination and fancy to some of the later works; but there was continued and steady growth in them on the side of humor, observation, and character, while freshness and raciness of style continued to be an important help. There are faults of occasional exaggeration in the writing, but none that do not spring from animal spirits and good humor, or a pardonable excess, here and there, on the side of earnestness; and it has the rare virtue, whether gay or grave, of being always thoroughly intelligible and for the most part thoroughly natural, of suiting itself without effort to every change of mood, as quick, warm, and comprehensive as the sympathies it is taxed to express. The tone also is excellent. We are never repelled by egotism or conceit, and misplaced ridicule never disgusts us. When good is going on, we are sure to see all the beauty of it; and when there is evil, we are in no danger of mistaking it for good. No one can paint more picturesquely by an apposite epithet, or illustrate more happily by a choice allusion. Whatever he knows or feels, too, is always at his fingers' ends, and is present through whatever he is doing. What Rebecca says to Ivanhoe of the black knight's mode of fighting would not be wholly inapplicable to Dickens's manner of writing: "There is more than mere strength, there seems as if the whole soul and spirit of the champion were given to every blow he deals." This, when a man deals his blows with a pen, is the sort of handling that freshens with new life the oldest facts, and breathes into thoughts the most familiar an emotion not felt before. There seemed to be not much to add to our knowledge of London until his books came upon us, but each in this respect outstripped the other in its marvels. In *Nickleby* the old city reappears under every aspect; and whether warmth and light are playing over what is good and cheerful in it, or the veil is uplifted from its darker scenes, it is at all times our privilege to see and feel it as it absolutely is. Its interior hidden life becomes familiar as its commonest outward forms, and we discover that we hardly knew anything of the places we supposed that we knew the best.

Of such notices as his letters give of his progress with *Nickleby*, which occupied him from February, 1838, to October, 1839, something may now be said. Soon after the agreement for it was signed, before the Christmas of 1837 was over, he went down into Yorkshire with Mr. Hablot Browne to look up the Cheap Schools in that county to which public attention had been painfully drawn by a law-case in the previous year; which had before been notorious for cruelties committed in them, whereof he had heard as early as in his childish days;^[21] and which he was bent upon destroying if he could. I soon heard the result of his journey; and the substance of that letter, returned to him for the purpose, is in his preface to the story written for the collected edition. He came back confirmed in his design, and in February set to work upon his first chapter. On his birthday he wrote to me, "I *have* begun! I wrote four slips last night, so you see the beginning is made. And what is more, I can go on: so I hope the book is in training at last." "The first chapter of *Nicholas* is done," he wrote two days later. "It took time, but I think answers the purpose as well as it could." Then, after a

dozen days more, "I wrote twenty slips of _Nicholas_ yesterday, left only four to do this morning (up at 8 o'clock too!), and have ordered my horse at one." I joined him as he expected, and we read together at dinner that day the first number of _Nicholas Nickleby_.

In the following number there was a difficulty which it was marvelous should not oftener have occurred to him in this form of publication. "I could not write a line till three o'clock," he says, describing the close of that number, "and have yet five slips to finish, and don't know what to put in them, for I have reached the point I meant to leave off with." He found easy remedy for such a miscalculation at his outset, and it was nearly his last as well as first misadventure of the kind: his difficulty in _Pickwick_, as he once told me, having always been, not the running short, but the running over: not the whip, but the drag, that was wanted. Sufflaminandus erat, as Ben Jonson said of Shakspeare. And in future works, with such marvelous nicety could he do always what he had planned, strictly within the space available, that only another similar instance is remembered by me. The third number introduced the school; and "I remain dissatisfied until you have seen and read number three," was his way of announcing to me his own satisfaction with that first handling of Dotheboys Hall. Nor had it the least part in my admiration of his powers at this time that he never wrote without the printer at his heels; that, always in his later works two or three numbers in advance, he was never a single number in advance with this story; that the more urgent the call upon him the more readily he rose to it; and that his astonishing animal spirits never failed him. As late in the November month of 1838 as the 20th, he thus wrote to me: "I have just begun my second chapter; cannot go out to-night; must get on; think there _will_ be a _Nickleby_ at the end of this month now (I doubted it before); and want to make a start towards it if I possibly can." That was on Tuesday; and on Friday morning in the same week, explaining to me the failure of something that had been promised the previous day, he tells me, "I was writing incessantly until it was time to dress; and have not yet got the subject of my last chapter, which _must be_ finished to-night."

But this was not all. Between that Tuesday and Friday an indecent assault had been committed on his book by a theatrical adapter named Stirling, who seized upon it without leave while yet only a third of it was written; hacked, cut, and garbled its dialogue to the shape of one or two farcical actors; invented for it a plot and an ending of his own, and produced it at the Adelphi; where the outraged author, hard pressed as he was with an unfinished number, had seen it in the interval between the two letters I have quoted. He would not have run such a risk in later years, but he threw off lightly at present even such offenses to his art; and though I was with him at a representation of his _Oliver Twist_ the following month at the Surrey theatre, when in the middle of the first scene he laid himself down upon the floor in a corner of the box and never rose from it until the drop-scene fell, he had been able to sit through _Nickleby_ and to see a kind of merit in some of the actors. Mr. Yates had a sufficiently humorous meaning in his wildest extravagance, and Mr. O. Smith could put into his queer angular oddities enough of a hard dry pathos, to conjure up shadows at least of Mantalini and Newman Noggs; of Ralph Nickleby there was indeed nothing visible

save a wig, a spencer, and a pair of boots; but there was a quaint actor named Wilkinson who proved equal to the drollery though not to the fierce brutality of Squeers; and even Dickens, in the letter that amazed me by telling me of his visit to the theatre, was able to praise "the skillful management and dressing of the boys, the capital manner and speech of Fanny Squeers, the dramatic representation of her card-party in Squeers's parlor, the careful making-up of all the people, and the exceedingly good tableaux formed from Browne's sketches. . . . Mrs. Keeley's first appearance beside the fire (see wollum), and all the rest of Smike, was excellent; bating sundry choice sentiments and rubbish regarding the little robins in the fields which have been put in the boy's mouth by Mr. Stirling the adapter." His toleration could hardly be extended to the robins, and their author he very properly punished by introducing and denouncing him at Mr. Crummles's farewell supper.

The story was well in hand at the next letter to be quoted, for I limit myself to those only with allusions that are characteristic or illustrative. "I must be alone in my glory to-day," he wrote, "and see what I can do. I perpetrated a great amount of work yesterday, and have every day indeed since Monday, but I must buckle-to again and endeavor to get the steam up. If this were to go on long, I should 'bust' the boiler. I think Mrs. Nickleby's love-scene will come out rather unique." The steam doubtless rose dangerously high when such happy inspiration came. It was but a few numbers earlier than this, while that eccentric lady was imparting her confidences to Miss Knag, that Sydney Smith confessed himself vanquished by a humor against which his own had long striven to hold out. "_Nickleby_ is _very good_," he wrote to Sir George Phillips after the sixth number. "I stood out against Mr. Dickens as long as I could, but he has conquered me." [22]

The close of the story was written at Broadstairs, from which (he had taken a house "two doors from the Albion Hotel, where we had that merry night two years ago") he wrote to me on the 9th September, 1839, "I am hard at it, but these windings-up wind slowly, and I shall think I have done great things if I have entirely finished by the 20th. Chapman & Hall came down yesterday with Browne's sketches, and dined here. They imparted their intentions as to a Nicklebeian fête which will make you laugh heartily--so I reserve them till you come. It has been blowing great guns for the last three days, and last night (I wish you could have seen it!) there was such a sea! I staggered down to the pier, and, creeping under the lee of a large boat which was high and dry, watched it breaking for nearly an hour. Of course I came back wet through." On the afternoon of Wednesday, the 18th, he wrote again: "I shall not finish entirely before Friday, sending Hicks the last twenty pages of manuscript by the night-coach. I have had pretty stiff work, as you may suppose, and I have taken great pains. The discovery is made, Ralph is dead, the loves have come all right, Tim Linkinwater has proposed, and I have now only to break up Dotheboys and the book together. I am very anxious that you should see this conclusion before it leaves my hands, and I plainly see therefore that I must come to town myself on Saturday if I would not endanger the appearance of the number. So I have written to Hicks to send proofs to your chambers as soon as he can that evening; and, if you don't object, I will dine with you any time after five, and we will devote the night to a careful reading. I have not written to

Macready, for they have not yet sent me the title-page of dedication, which is merely 'To W. C. Macready, Esq., the following pages are inscribed, as a slight token of admiration and regard, by his friend the Author.' Meanwhile will you let him know that I have fixed the Nickleby dinner for Saturday, the 5th of October? Place, the Albion in Aldersgate Street. Time, six for half-past exactly. . . . I shall be more glad than I can tell you to see you again, and I look forward to Saturday, and the evenings that are to follow it, with most joyful anticipation. I have had a good notion for Barnaby, of which more anon."

The shadow from the old quarter, we see, the unwritten Barnaby tale, intrudes itself still; though hardly, as of old, making other pleasanter anticipations less joyful. Such, indeed, at this time was his buoyancy of spirit that it cost him little, compared with the suffering it gave him at all subsequent similar times, to separate from the people who for twenty months had been a part of himself. The increased success they had achieved left no present room but for gladness and well-won pride; and so, to welcome them into the immortal family of the English novel, and open cheerily to their author "fresh woods and pastures new," we had the dinner celebration. But there is small need now to speak of what has left, to one of the few survivors, only the sadness of remembering that all who made the happiness of it are passed away. There was Talfourd, facile and fluent of kindest speech, with whom we were in constant and cordial intercourse, and to whom, grateful for his copyright exertions in the House of Commons, he had dedicated Pickwick; there was Maclise, dear and familiar friend to us both, whose lately-painted portrait of Dickens hung in the room;^[23] and there was the painter of the Rent-day, who made a speech as good as his pictures, rich in color and quaint with homely allusion, all about the reality of Dickens's genius, and how there had been nothing like him issuing his novels part by part since Richardson issued his novels volume by volume, and how in both cases people talked about the characters as if they were next-door neighbors or friends; and as many letters were written to the author of Nickleby to implore him not to kill poor Smike, as had been sent by young ladies to the author of Clarissa to "save Lovelace's soul alive." These and others are gone. Of those who survive, only three arise to my memory,--Macready, who spoke his sense of the honor done him by the dedication in English as good as his delivery of it, Mr. Edward Chapman, and Mr. Thomas Beard.

FOOTNOTES:

[21] "I cannot call to mind now how I came to hear about Yorkshire schools when I was a not very robust child, sitting in by-places near Rochester castle, with a head full of Partridge, Strap, Tom Pipes, and Sancho Panza; but I know that my first impressions of them were picked up at that time."

[22] Moore, in his Diary (April, 1837), describes Sydney crying down Dickens at a dinner in the Row, "and evidently without having given him a fair trial."

[23] This portrait was given to Dickens by his publishers, for whom it was painted with a view to an engraving for Nickleby, which, however,

was poorly executed, and of a size too small to do the original any kind of justice. To the courtesy of its present possessor, the Rev. Sir Edward Repps Joddrell, and to the careful art of Mr. Robert Graves, A.R.A., I owe the illustration at the opening of this volume, in which the head is for the first time worthily expressed. In some sort to help also the reader's fancy to a complete impression, Maclise having caught as happily the figure as the face, a skillful outline of the painting has been executed for the present page by Mr. Jeens. "As a likeness," said Mr. Thackeray of the work, and no higher praise could be given to it, "it is perfectly amazing. A looking-glass could not render a better fac-simile. We have here the real identical man Dickens, the inward as well as the outward of him."

CHAPTER X.

DURING AND AFTER NICKLEBY.

1838-1839.

The Cottage at Twickenham--Daniel
Maclise--Ainsworth and other Friends--Mr.
Stanley of Alderley--Petersham
Cottage--Childish Enjoyments--Writes a Farce
for Covent Garden--Entered at the Middle
Temple--We see Wainewright in Newgate--_Oliver
Twist_ and the _Quarterly_--Hood's _Up the
Rhine_--Shakspeare Society--Birth of Second
Daughter--House-Hunting--_Barnaby_ at his Tenth
Page--Letter from Exeter--A Landlady and her
Friends--A Home for his Father and
Mother--Autobiographical--Visit to an
Upholsterer--Visit from the Same.

THE name of his old gallery-companion may carry me back from the days to which the close of _Nickleby_ had led me to those when it was only beginning. "This snow will take away the cold weather," he had written, in that birthday letter of 1838 already quoted, "and then for Twickenham." Here a cottage was taken, nearly all the summer was passed, and a familiar face there was Mr. Beard's. There, with Talfourd and with Thackeray and Jerrold, we had many friendly days, too; and the social charm of Maclise was seldom wanting. Nor was there anything that exercised a greater fascination over Dickens than the grand enjoyment of idleness, the ready self-abandonment to the luxury of laziness, which we both so laughed at in Maclise, under whose easy swing of indifference, always the most amusing at the most aggravating events and times, we knew that there was artist-work as eager, energy as unwearying, and observation almost as penetrating as Dickens's own. A greater enjoyment than the fellowship of Maclise at this period it would indeed be difficult to imagine. Dickens hardly saw more than he did, while yet he seemed to be seeing nothing; and the small esteem in which this rare

faculty was held by himself, a quaint oddity that gave to shrewdness itself in him an air of Irish simplicity, his unquestionable turn for literature, and a varied knowledge of it not always connected with such intense love and such unwearied practice of one special and absorbing art, combined to render him attractive far beyond the common. His fine genius and his handsome person, of neither of which at any time he seemed himself to be in the slightest degree conscious, completed the charm. Edwin Landseer, all the world's favorite, and the excellent Stanfield, came a few months later, in the Devonshire-Terrace days; but another painter-friend was George Cattermole, who had then enough and to spare of fun as well as fancy to supply ordinary artists and humorists by the dozen, and wanted only a little more ballast and steadiness to have had all that could give attraction to good-fellowship. A friend now especially welcome, too, was the novelist Mr. Ainsworth, who shared with us incessantly for the three following years in the companionship which began at his house; with whom we visited, during two of those years, friends of art and letters in his native Manchester, from among whom Dickens brought away his Brothers Cheeryble, and to whose sympathy in tastes and pursuits, accomplishments in literature, open-hearted generous ways, and cordial hospitality, many of the pleasures of later years were due. Frederick Dickens, to whom soon after this a treasury clerkship was handsomely given, on Dickens's application, by Mr. Stanley of Alderley, known in and before those Manchester days, was for the present again living with his father, but passed much time in his brother's home; and another familiar face was that of Mr. Thomas Mitton, who had known him when himself a law-clerk in Lincoln's Inn, through whom there was introduction of the relatives of a friend and partner, Mr. Smithson, the gentleman connected with Yorkshire mentioned in his preface to *Nickleby*, who became very intimate in his house. These, his father and mother and their two younger sons, with members of his wife's family, and his married sisters and their husbands, Mr. and Mrs. Burnett and Mr. and Mrs. Austin, are figures that all associate themselves prominently with the days of Doughty Street and the cottages of Twickenham and Petersham as remembered by me in the summers of 1838 and 1839.

In the former of these years the sports were necessarily quieter^[24] than at Petersham, where extensive garden-grounds admitted of much athletic competition, from the more difficult forms of which I in general modestly retired, but where Dickens for the most part held his own against even such accomplished athletes as Maclise and Mr. Beard. Bar-leaping, bowling, and quoits were among the games carried on with the greatest ardor; and in sustained energy, what is called keeping it up, Dickens certainly distanced every competitor. Even the lighter recreations of battledoor and bagatelle were pursued with relentless activity; and at such amusements as the Petersham races, in those days rather celebrated, and which he visited daily while they lasted, he worked much harder himself than the running horses did.

What else his letters of these years enable me to recall, that could possess any interest now, may be told in a dozen sentences. He wrote a farce by way of helping the Covent Garden manager which the actors could not agree about, and which he turned afterwards into a story called *The Lamplighter*. He entered his name among the students at the inn of the

Middle Temple, though he did not eat dinners there until many years later. We made together a circuit of nearly all the London prisons, and, in coming to the prisoners under remand while going over Newgate, accompanied by Macready and Mr. Hablot Browne,[25] were startled by a sudden tragic cry of "My God! there's Wainewright!" In the shabby-genteel creature, with sandy disordered hair and dirty moustache, who had turned quickly round with a defiant stare at our entrance, looking at once mean and fierce, and quite capable of the cowardly murders he had committed, Macready had been horrified to recognize a man familiarly known to him in former years, and at whose table he had dined. Between the completion of *Oliver* and its publication, Dickens went to see something of North Wales; and, joining him at Liverpool, I returned with him.[26] Soon after his arrival he had pleasant communication with Lockhart, dining with him at Cruikshank's a little later; and this was the prelude to a *Quarterly* notice of *Oliver* by Mr. Ford, written at the instance of Lockhart, but without the raciness he would have put into it, in which amende was made for previous less favorable remarks in that review. Dickens had not, however, waited for this to express publicly his hearty sympathy with Lockhart's handling of some passages in his admirable *Life of Scott* that had drawn down upon him the wrath of the Ballantynes. This he did in the *Examiner*; where also I find him noticing a book by Thomas Hood: "rather poor, but I have not said so, because Hood is too, and ill besides." In the course of the year he was taken into Devonshire to select a home for his father, on the removal of the latter (who had long given up his reporting duties) from his London residence; and this he found in a cottage at Alphington, near Exeter, where he placed the elder Dickens with his wife and their youngest son. The same year closed Macready's Covent Garden management, and at the dinner to the retiring manager, when the Duke of Cambridge took the chair, Dickens spoke with that wonderful instinct of knowing what to abstain from saying, as well as what to say, which made his after-dinner speeches quite unique. Nor should mention be omitted of the Shakspeare Society, now diligently attended, of which Procter, Talfourd, Macready, Thackeray, Henry Davison, Blanchard, Charles Knight, John Bell, Douglas Jerrold, Maclise, Stanfield, George Cattermole, the good Tom Landseer, Frank Stone, and other old friends were members, and where, out of much enjoyment and many disputings,[27] there arose, from Dickens and all of us, plenty of after-dinner oratory. The closing months of this year of 1839 had special interest for him. At the end of October another daughter was born to him, who bears the name of that dear friend of his and mine, Macready, whom he asked to be her godfather; and before the close of the year he had moved out of Doughty Street into Devonshire Terrace, a handsome house with a garden of considerable size, shut out from the New Road by a high brick wall facing the York Gate into Regent's Park. These various matters, and his attempts at the *Barnaby* novel on the conclusion of *Nickleby*, are the subject of his letters between October and December.

"Thank God, all goes famously. I have worked at *Barnaby* all day, and moreover seen a beautiful (and reasonable) house in Kent Terrace, where Macready once lived, but larger than his." Again (this having gone off): "*Barnaby* has suffered so much from the house-hunting, that I mustn't chop to-day." Then (for the matter of the Middle Temple), "I return the form. It's the right temple, I take for granted. *Barnaby* moves, not at

race-horse speed, but yet as fast (I think) as under these unsettled circumstances could possibly be expected." Or again: "All well. _Barnaby_ has reached his tenth page. I have just turned lazy, and have passed into _Christabel_, and thence to _Wallenstein_." At last the choice was made. "A house of great promise (and great premium), 'undeniable' situation, and excessive splendor, is in view. Mitton is in treaty, and I am in ecstatic restlessness. Kate wants to know whether you have any books to send her, so please to shoot here any literary rubbish on hand." To these I will only add a couple of extracts from his letters while in Exeter arranging his father's and mother's new home. They are very humorous; and the vividness with which everything, once seen, was photographed in his mind and memory, is pleasantly shown in them.

"I took a little house for them this morning" (5th March, 1839: from the New London Inn), "and if they are not pleased with it I shall be grievously disappointed. Exactly a mile beyond the city on the Plymouth road there are two white cottages: one is theirs and the other belongs to their landlady. I almost forget the number of rooms, but there is an excellent parlor with two other rooms on the ground floor, there is really a beautiful little room over the parlor which I am furnishing as a drawing-room, and there is a splendid garden. The paint and paper throughout is new and fresh and cheerful-looking, the place is clean beyond all description, and the neighborhood I suppose the most beautiful in this most beautiful of English counties. Of the landlady, a Devonshire widow with whom I had the honor of taking lunch to-day, I must make most especial mention. She is a fat, infirm, splendidly-fresh-faced country dame, rising sixty and recovering from an attack 'on the nerves'--I thought they never went off the stones, but I find they try country air with the best of us. In the event of my mother's being ill at any time, I really think the vicinity of this good dame, the very picture of respectability and good humor, will be the greatest possible comfort. _Her_ furniture and domestic arrangements are a capital picture, but that I reserve till I see you, when I anticipate a hearty laugh. She bears the highest character with the bankers and the clergyman (who formerly lived in _my_ cottage himself), and is a kind-hearted worthy capital specimen of the sort of life, or I have no eye for the real and no idea of finding it out.

"This good lady's brother and his wife live in the next nearest cottage, and the brother transacts the good lady's business, the nerves not admitting of her transacting it herself, although they leave her in her debilitated state something sharper than the finest lancet. Now, the brother having coughed all night till he coughed himself into such a perspiration that you might have 'wringed his hair,' according to the asseveration of eye-witnesses, his wife was sent for to negotiate with me; and if you could have seen me sitting in the kitchen with the two old women, endeavoring to make them comprehend that I had no evil intentions or covert designs, and that I had come down all that way to take some cottage and had _happened_ to walk down that road and see that particular one, you would never have forgotten it. Then, to see the servant-girl run backwards and forwards to the sick man, and when the sick man had signed one agreement which I drew up and the old woman instantly put away in a disused tea-caddy, to see the trouble and the

number of messages it took before the sick man could be brought to sign another (a duplicate) that we might have one apiece, was one of the richest scraps of genuine drollery I ever saw in all my days. How, when the business was over, we became conversational; how I was facetious, and at the same time virtuous and domestic; how I drank toasts in the beer, and stated on interrogatory that I was a married man and the father of two blessed infants; how the ladies marveled thereat; how one of the ladies, having been in London, inquired where I lived, and, being told, remembered that Doughty Street and the Foundling Hospital were in the Old Kent Road, which I didn't contradict,--all this and a great deal more must make us laugh when I return, as it makes me laugh now to think of. Of my subsequent visit to the upholsterer recommended by the landlady; of the absence of the upholsterer's wife, and the timidity of the upholsterer fearful of acting in her absence; of my sitting behind a high desk in a little dark shop, calling over the articles in requisition and checking off the prices as the upholsterer exhibited the goods and called them out; of my coming over the upholsterer's daughter with many virtuous endearments, to propitiate the establishment and reduce the bill; of these matters I say nothing, either, for the same reason as that just mentioned. The discovery of the cottage I seriously regard as a blessing (not to speak it profanely) upon our efforts in this cause. I had heard nothing from the bank, and walked straight there, by some strange impulse, directly after breakfast. I am sure they may be happy there; for if I were older, and my course of activity were run, I am sure I could, with God's blessing, for many and many a year." . . .

"The theatre is open here, and Charles Kean is to-night playing for his last night. If it had been the 'rig'lar' drama I should have gone, but I was afraid Sir Giles Overreach might upset me, so I stayed away. My quarters are excellent, and the head-waiter is such a waiter! Knowles (not Sheridan Knowles, but Knowles of the Cheetham Hill Road[28]) is an ass to him. This sounds bold, but truth is stranger than fiction.

By-the-by, not the least comical thing that has occurred was the visit of the upholsterer (with some further calculations) since I began this letter. I think they took me here at the New London for the Wonderful Being I am; they were amazingly sedulous; and no doubt they looked for my being visited by the nobility and gentry of the neighborhood. My first and only visitor came to-night: a ruddy-faced man in faded black, with extracts from a feather-bed all over him; an extraordinary and quite miraculously dirty face; a thick stick; and the personal appearance altogether of an amiable bailiff in a green old age. I have not seen the proper waiter since, and more than suspect I shall not recover this blow. He was announced (by the waiter) as 'a person.' I expect my bill every minute. . . .

"The waiter is laughing outside the door with another waiter--this is the latest intelligence of my condition."

FOOTNOTES:

[24] We had at Twickenham a balloon club for the children, of which I appear to have been elected the president on condition of supplying all the balloons, a condition which I seem so insufficiently to have

complied with as to bring down upon myself the subjoined resolution. The Snodgering Blee and Popem Jee were the little brother and sister, for whom, as for their successors, he was always inventing these surprising descriptive epithets. "Gammon Lodge, Saturday evening, June 23d, 1838. Sir, I am requested to inform you that at a numerous meeting of the Gammon Aeronautical Association for the Encouragement of Science and the Consumption of Spirits (of Wine)--Thomas Beard Esquire, Mrs. Charles Dickens, Charles Dickens, Esquire, the Snodgering Blee, Popem Jee, and other distinguished characters being present and assenting, the vote of censure of which I inclose a copy was unanimously passed upon you for gross negligence in the discharge of your duty, and most unjustifiable disregard of the best interests of the Society. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant, Charles Dickens, Honorary Secretary. To John Forster, Esquire."

[25] Not Mr. Procter, as, by an oversight of his own, Dickens caused to be said in an interesting paper on Wainewright which appeared in his weekly periodical.

[26] I quote from a letter dated Llangollen, Friday morning, 3d Nov. 1838: "I wrote to you last night, but by mistake the letter has gone on Heaven knows where in my portmanteau. I have only time to say, go straight to Liverpool by the first Birmingham train on Monday morning, and at the Adelphi Hotel in that town you will find me. I trust to you to see my dear Kate and bring the latest intelligence of her and the darlings. My best love to them."

[27] One of these disputes is referred to by Charles Knight in his Autobiography; and I see in Dickens's letters the mention of another in which I seem to have been turned by his kindly counsel from some folly I was going to commit: "I need not, I am sure, impress upon you the sincerity with which I make this representation. Our close and hearty friendship happily spares me the necessity. But I will add this--that feeling for you an attachment which no ties of blood or other relationship could ever awaken, and hoping to be to the end of my life your affectionate and chosen friend, I am convinced that I counsel you now as you would counsel me if I were in the like case; and I hope and trust that you will be led by an opinion which I am sure cannot be wrong when it is influenced by such feelings as I bear towards you, and so many warm and grateful considerations."

[28] This was the butler of Mr. Gilbert Winter, one of the kind Manchester friends whose hospitality we had enjoyed with Mr. Ainsworth, and whose shrewd, quaint, old-world ways come delightfully back to me as I write his once well-known and widely-honored name.

CHAPTER XI.

NEW LITERARY PROJECT.

1839.

Thoughts for the Future--Doubts of old Serial
Form--Suggestion for his Publishers--My
Mediation with them--Proposed Weekly
Publication--Design of it--Old Favorites to be
revived--Subjects to be dealt with--Chapters on
Chambers--Gog and Magog Relaxations--Savage
Chronicles--Others as well as himself to
write--Travels to Ireland and America in
View--Stipulation as to Property and
Payments--Great Hopes of Success--Assent of his
Publishers--No Planned Story--Terms of
Agreement--Notion for his Hero--A Name hit
upon--Sanguine of the Issue.

THE time was now come for him seriously to busy himself with a successor to Pickwick and Nickleby, which he had not, however, waited thus long before turning over thoroughly in his mind. Nickleby's success had so far outgone even the expectation raised by Pickwick's, that, without some handsome practical admission of this fact at the close, its publishers could hardly hope to retain him. This had been frequently discussed by us, and was well understood. But, apart from the question of his resuming with them at all, he had persuaded himself it might be unsafe to resume in the old way, believing the public likely to tire of the same twenty numbers over again. There was also another and more sufficient reason for change which naturally had great weight with him, and this was the hope that, by invention of a new mode as well as kind of serial publication, he might be able for a time to discontinue the writing of a long story with all its strain on his fancy, in any case to shorten and vary the length of the stories written by himself, and perhaps ultimately to retain all the profits of a continuous publication without necessarily himself contributing every line that was to be written for it. These considerations had been discussed still more anxiously; and for several months some such project had been taking form in his thoughts.

While he was at Petersham (July, 1839) he thus wrote to me: "I have been thinking that subject over. Indeed, I have been doing so to the great stoppage of Nickleby and the great worrying and fidgeting of myself. I have been thinking that if Chapman & Hall were to admit you into their confidence with respect to what they mean to do at the conclusion of Nickleby, without admitting me, it would help us very much. You know that I am well disposed towards them, and that if they do something handsome, even handsomer perhaps than they dreamt of doing, they will find it their interest, and will find me tractable. You know also that I have had straightforward offers from responsible men to publish anything for me at a percentage on the profits and take all the risk; but that I am unwilling to leave them, and have declared to you that if they behave with liberality to me I will not on any consideration, although to a certain extent I certainly and surely must gain by it. Knowing all this, I feel sure that if you were to put before them the glories of our new project, and, reminding them that when Barnaby is published I am clear of all engagements, were to tell them that if they wish to secure me and

perpetuate our connection now is the time for them to step gallantly forward and make such proposals as will produce that result,--I feel quite sure that if this should be done by you, as you only can do it, the result will be of the most vital importance to me and mine, and that a very great deal may be effected, thus, to recompense your friend for very small profits and very large work as yet. I shall see you, please God, on Tuesday night; and if they wait upon you on Wednesday, I shall remain in town until that evening."

They came; and the tenor of the interview was so favorable that I wished him to put in writing what from time to time had been discussed in connection with the new project. This led to the very interesting letter I shall now quote, written also in the same month from Petersham. I did not remember, until I lately read it, that the notion of a possible visit to America had been in his thoughts so early.

"I should be willing to commence on the thirty-first of March, 1840, a new publication, consisting entirely of original matter, of which one number, price threepence, should be published every week, and of which a certain amount of numbers should form a volume, to be published at regular intervals. The best general idea of the plan of the work might be given, perhaps, by reference to the *_Spectator_*, the *_Tatler_*, and Goldsmith's *_Bee_*; but it would be far more popular both in the subjects of which it treats and its mode of treating them.

"I should propose to start, as the *_Spectator_* does, with some pleasant fiction relative to the origin of the publication; to introduce a little club or knot of characters and to carry their personal histories and proceedings through the work; to introduce fresh characters constantly; to reintroduce Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, the latter of whom might furnish an occasional communication with great effect; to write amusing essays on the various foibles of the day as they arise; to take advantage of all passing events; and to vary the form of the papers by throwing them into sketches, essays, tales, adventures, letters from imaginary correspondents, and so forth, so as to diversify the contents as much as possible.

"In addition to this general description of the contents, I may add that under particular heads I should strive to establish certain features in the work, which should be so many veins of interest and amusement running through the whole. Thus the Chapters on Chambers, which I have long thought and spoken of, might be very well incorporated with it; and a series of papers has occurred to me containing stories and descriptions of London as it was many years ago, as it is now, and as it will be many years hence, to which I would give some such title as *The Relaxations of Gog and Magog*, dividing them into portions like the *_Arabian Nights_*, and supposing Gog and Magog to entertain each other with such narrations in Guildhall all night long, and to break off every morning at daylight. An almost inexhaustible field of fun, raillery, and interest would be laid open by pursuing this idea.

"I would also commence, and continue from time to time, a series of satirical papers purporting to be translated from some *Savage Chronicles*, and to describe the administration of justice in some

country that never existed, and record the proceedings of its wise men. The object of this series (which if I can compare it with anything would be something between *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Citizen of the World*) would be to keep a special lookout upon the magistrates in town and country, and never to leave those worthies alone.

"The quantity of each number that should be written by myself would be a matter for discussion and arrangement. Of course I should pledge and bind myself upon that head. Nobody but myself would ever pursue *these ideas*, but I must have assistance of course, and there must be some contents of a different kind. Their general nature might be agreed upon beforehand, but I should stipulate that this assistance is chosen solely by myself, and that the contents of every number are as much under my own control, and subject to as little interference, as those of a number of *Pickwick* or *Nickleby*.

"In order to give fresh novelty and interest to this undertaking, I should be ready to contract to go at any specified time (say in the midsummer or autumn of the year, when a sufficient quantity of matter in advance should have been prepared, or earlier if it were thought fit) either to Ireland or to America, and to write from thence a series of papers descriptive of the places and people I see, introducing local tales, traditions, and legends, something after the plan of Washington Irving's *Alhambra*. I should wish the republication of these papers in a separate form, with others to render the subject complete (if we should deem it advisable), to form part of the arrangement for the work; and I should wish the same provision to be made for the republication of the *Gog and Magog* series, or indeed any that I undertook.

"This is a very rough and slight outline of the project I have in view. I am ready to talk the matter over, to give any further explanations, to consider any suggestions, or to go into the details of the subject immediately. I say nothing of the novelty of such a publication nowadays, or its chances of success. Of course I think them very great, very great indeed,--almost beyond calculation,--or I should not seek to bind myself to anything so extensive.

"The heads of the terms upon which I should be prepared to go into this undertaking would be--That I be made a proprietor in the work and a sharer in the profits. That when I bind myself to write a certain portion of every number, I am insured, *for* that writing in every number, a certain sum of money. That those who assist me, and contribute the remainder of every number, shall be paid by the publishers immediately after its appearance, according to a scale to be calculated and agreed upon, on presenting my order for the amount to which they may be respectively entitled. Or, if the publishers prefer it, that they agree to pay me a certain sum for the *whole* of every number, and leave me to make such arrangements for that part which I may not write, as I think best. Of course I should require that for these payments, or any other outlay connected with the work, I am not held accountable in any way; and that no portion of them is to be considered as received by me on account of the profits. I need not add that some arrangement would have to be made, if I undertake my *Travels*, relative to the expenses of traveling.

"Now, I want our publishing friends to take these things into consideration, and to give me the views and proposals they would be disposed to entertain when they have maturely considered the matter."

The result of their consideration was, on the whole, satisfactory. An additional fifteen hundred pounds was to be paid at the close of Nickleby, the new adventure was to be undertaken, and Cattermole was to be joined with Browne as its illustrator. Nor was its plan much modified before starting, though it was felt by us all that, for the opening numbers at least, Dickens would have to be sole contributor, and that, whatever otherwise might be its attraction, or the success of the detached papers proposed by him, some reinforcement of them from time to time, by means of a story with his name continued at reasonable if not regular intervals, would be found absolutely necessary. Without any such planned story, however, the work did actually begin, its course afterwards being determined by circumstances stronger than any project he had formed. The agreement, drawn up in contemplation of a mere miscellany of detached papers or essays, and in which no mention of any story appeared, was signed at the end of March; and its terms were such as to place him in his only proper and legitimate position in regard to all such contracts, of being necessarily a gainer in any case, and, in the event of success, the greatest gainer of all concerned in the undertaking. All the risk of every kind was to be undergone by the publishers; and, as part of the expenses to be defrayed by them of each weekly number, he was to receive fifty pounds. Whatever the success or failure, this was always to be paid. The numbers were then to be accounted for separately, and half the realized profits paid to him, the other half going to the publishers; each number being held strictly responsible for itself, and the loss upon it, supposing any, not carried to the general account. The work was to be continued for twelve months certain, with leave to the publishers then to close it; but if they elected to go on, he was himself bound to the enterprise for five years, and the ultimate copyright as well as profit was to be equally divided.

Six weeks before signature of this agreement, while a title was still undetermined, I had this letter from him: "I will dine with you. I intended to spend the evening in strict meditation (as I did last night); but perhaps I had better go out, lest all work and no play should make me a dull boy. I have a list of titles too, but the final title I have determined on--or something very near it. I have a notion of this old file in the queer house, opening the book by an account of himself, and, among other peculiarities, of his affection for an old quaint queer-cased clock; showing how that when they have sat alone together in the long evenings, he has got accustomed to its voice, and come to consider it as the voice of a friend; how its striking, in the night, has seemed like an assurance to him that it was still, a cheerful watcher at his chamber-door; and now its very face has seemed to have something of welcome in its dusty features, and to relax from its grimness when he has looked at it from his chimney-corner. Then I mean to tell how that he has kept odd manuscripts in the old, deep, dark, silent closet where the weights are; and taken them from thence to read (mixing up his enjoyments with some notion of his clock); and how, when the club came to be formed, they, by reason of their punctuality and his

regard for this dumb servant, took their name from it. And thus I shall call the book either _Old Humphrey's Clock_, or _Master Humphrey's Clock_; beginning with a woodcut of old Humphrey and his clock, and explaining the why and wherefore. All Humphrey's own papers will be dated then From my clock-side, and I have divers thoughts about the best means of introducing the others. I thought about this all day yesterday and all last night till I went to bed. I am sure I can make a good thing of this opening, which I have thoroughly warmed up to in consequence."

A few days later: "I incline rather more to _Master Humphrey's Clock_ than _Old Humphrey's_--if so be that there is no danger of the pensive confounding master with a boy." After two days more: "I was thinking all yesterday, and have begun at _Master Humphrey_ to-day." Then, a week later: "I have finished the first number, but have not been able to do more in the space than lead up to the Giants, who are just on the scene."

CHAPTER XII.

THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.

1840-1841.

Visit to Walter Landor--First Thought of Little Nell--Hopeful of Master Humphrey--A Title for the Child-Story--First Sale of _Master Humphrey's Clock_--Its Original Plan abandoned--Reasons for this--To be limited to One Story--Disadvantages of Weekly Publication--A Favorite Description--In Bevis Marks for Sampson Brass--At Lawn House, Broadstairs--Dedication of his First Volume to Rogers--Chapters 43-45--Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness--Masterpiece of Kindly Fun--Closing of the Tale--Effect upon the Writer--Making-believe very much--The End approaching--The Realities of Fiction--Death of Little Nell--My Share in the Close--A Suggestion adopted by him--Success of the Story--Useful Lessons--Its Mode of Construction--Character and Characteristics--The Art of it--A Recent Tribute--Harte's "Dickens in Camp."

A DAY or two after the date of the last letter quoted, Dickens and his wife, with Maclise and myself, visited Landor in Bath, and it was during three happy days we passed together there that the fancy which was shortly to take the form of Little Nell first occurred to its author,[29]--but as yet with the intention only of making out of it a tale of a few chapters. On the 1st of March we returned from Bath; and

on the 4th I had this letter: "If you can manage to give me a call in the course of the day or evening, I wish you would. I am laboriously turning over in my mind how I can best effect the improvement we spoke of last night, which I will certainly make by hook or by crook, and which I would like you to see _before_ it goes finally to the printer's. I have determined not to put that witch-story into number 3, for I am by no means satisfied of the effect of its contrast with Humphrey. I think of lengthening Humphrey, finishing the description of the society, and closing with the little child-story, which is SURE to be effective, especially after the old man's quiet way." Then there came hard upon this: "What do you think of the following double title for the beginning of that little tale? 'PERSONAL ADVENTURES OF MASTER HUMPHREY: _The Old Curiosity Shop_.' I have thought of _Master Humphrey's Tale_, _Master Humphrey's Narrative_, _A Passage in Master Humphrey's Life_--but I don't think any does as well as this. I have also thought of _The Old Curiosity Dealer and the Child_ instead of _The Old Curiosity Shop_. Perpend. Topping waits."----And thus was taking gradual form, with less direct consciousness of design on his own part than I can remember in any other instance of all his career, a story which was to add largely to his popularity, more than any other of his works to make the bond between himself and his readers one of personal attachment, and very widely to increase the sense entertained of his powers as a pathetic as well as humorous writer.

He had not written more than two or three chapters, when the capability of the subject for more extended treatment than he had at first proposed to give to it pressed itself upon him, and he resolved to throw everything else aside, devoting himself to the one story only. There were other strong reasons for this. Of the first number of the _Clock_ nearly seventy thousand were sold; but with the discovery that there was no continuous tale the orders at once diminished, and a change must have been made even if the material and means for it had not been ready. There had been an interval of three numbers between the first and second chapters, which the society of Mr. Pickwick and the two Wellers made pleasant enough; but after the introduction of Dick Swiveller there were three consecutive chapters; and in the continued progress of the tale to its close there were only two more breaks, one between the fourth and fifth chapters and one between the eighth and ninth, pardonable and enjoyable now for the sake of Sam and his father. The reintroduction of these old favorites, it will have been seen, formed part of his original plan; of his abandonment of which his own description may be added, from his preface to the collected edition: "The first chapter of this tale appeared in the fourth number of _Master Humphrey's Clock_, when I had already been made uneasy by the desultory character of that work, and when, I believe, my readers had thoroughly participated in the feeling. The commencement of a story was a great satisfaction to me, and I had reason to believe that my readers participated in this feeling too. Hence, being pledged to some interruptions and some pursuit of the original design, I set cheerfully about disentangling myself from those impediments as fast as I could; and, this done, from that time until its completion _The Old Curiosity Shop_ was written and published from week to week, in weekly parts."

He had very early himself become greatly taken with it. "I am very glad

indeed," he wrote to me after the first half-dozen chapters, "that you think so well of the _Curiosity Shop_, and especially that what may be got out of Dick strikes you. I _mean_ to make much of him. I feel the story extremely myself, which I take to be a good sign; and am already warmly interested in it. I shall run it on now for four whole numbers together, to give it a fair chance." Every step lightened the road as it became more and more real with each character that appeared in it, and I still recall the glee with which he told me what he intended to do not only with Dick Swiveller, but with Septimus Brass, changed afterwards to Sampson. Undoubtedly, however, Dick was his favorite. "Dick's behavior in the matter of Miss Wackles will, I hope, give you satisfaction," is the remark of another of his letters. "I cannot yet discover that his aunt has any belief in him, or is in the least degree likely to send him a remittance, so that he will probably continue to be the sport of destiny." His difficulties were the quickly recurring times of publication, the confined space in each number that yet had to contribute its individual effect, and (from the suddenness with which he had begun) the impossibility of getting in advance. "I was obliged to cramp most dreadfully what I thought a pretty idea in the last chapter. I hadn't room to turn:" to this or a similar effect his complaints are frequent, and of the vexations named it was by far the worst. But he steadily bore up against all, and made a triumph of the little story.

To help his work he went twice to Broadstairs, in June and in September. From this he wrote to me (17th June), "It's now four o'clock, and I have been at work since half-past eight. I have really dried myself up into a condition which would almost justify me in pitching off the cliff, head first--but I must get richer before I indulge in a crowning luxury. Number 15, which I began to-day, I anticipate great things from. There is a description of getting gradually out of town, and passing through neighborhoods of distinct and various characters, with which, if I had read it as anybody else's writing, I think I should have been very much struck. The child and the old man are on their journey of course, and the subject is a very pretty one." Between these two Broadstairs visits he wrote to me, "I intended calling on you this morning on my way back from Bevis Marks, whither I went to look at a house for Sampson Brass. But I got mingled up in a kind of social paste with the Jews of Houndsditch, and roamed about among them till I came out in Moorfields, quite unexpectedly. So I got into a cab, and came home again, very tired, by way of the City Road." At the opening of September he was again at Broadstairs. The residence he most desired there, Fort House, stood prominently at the top of a breezy hill on the road to Kingsgate, with a corn-field between it and the sea, and this in many subsequent years he always occupied; but he was fain to be content, as yet, with Lawn House, a smaller villa between the hill and the corn-field, from which he now wrote of his attentions to Mr. Sampson Brass's sister: "I have been at work of course" (2d September), "and have just finished a number. I have effected a reform by virtue of which we breakfast at a quarter-before eight, so that I get to work at half-past, and am commonly free by one o'clock or so, which is a great happiness. Dick is now Sampson's clerk, and I have touched Miss Brass in Number 25, lightly, but effectively I hope."

At this point it became necessary to close the first volume of the

Clock, which was issued accordingly with a dedication to Rogers, and a preface to which allusion will be made hereafter. "I have opened the second volume," he wrote to me on the 9th of September, "with Kit; and I saw this morning looking out at the sea, as if a veil had been lifted up, an affecting thing that I can do with him by-and-by. Nous verrons." "I am glad you like that Kit number," he wrote twelve days later; "I thought you would. I have altered that about the opera-going. Of course I had no intention to delude the many-headed into a false belief concerning opera-nights, but merely to specify a class of senators. I needn't have done it, however, for God knows they're pretty well all alike." This referred to an objection made by me to something he had written of "opera-going senators on Wednesday nights;" and, of another change made in compliance with some other objection of mine, he wrote on the 4th of October, "You will receive the proof herewith. I have altered it. You must let it stand now. I really think the dead mankind a million fathoms deep, the best thing in the sentence. I have a notion of the dreadful silence down there, and of the stars shining down upon their drowned eyes,--the fruit, let me tell you, of a solitary walk by starlight on the cliffs. As to the child-image, I have made a note of it for alteration. In number thirty there will be some cutting needed, I think. I have, however, something in my eye near the beginning which I can easily take out. You will recognize a description of the road we traveled between Birmingham and Wolverhampton; but I had conceived it so well in my mind that the execution doesn't please me quite as 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. It would have been a good thing to have opened a new story with, I have been thinking since."

In the middle of October he returned to town, and by the end of the month he had so far advanced that the close of the story began to be not far distant. "Tell me what you think," he had written just before his return, "of 36 and 37? The way is clear for Kit now, and for a great effect at the last with the Marchioness." The last allusion I could not in the least understand, until I found, in the numbers just sent me, those exquisite chapters of the tale, the 57th and 58th, in which Dick Swiveller realizes his threat to Miss Wackles, discovers the small creature that his destiny is expressly saving up for him, dubs her Marchioness, and teaches her the delights of hot purl and cribbage. This is comedy of the purest kind; its great charm being the good-hearted fellow's kindness to the poor desolate child hiding itself under cover of what seems only mirth and fun. Altogether, and because of rather than in spite of his weakness, Dick is a captivating person. His gayety and good humor survive such accumulations of "staggerers," he makes such discoveries of the "rosy" in the very smallest of drinks, and becomes himself by his solacements of verse such a "perpetual grand Apollo," that his failings are all forgiven, and hearts resolutely shut against victims of destiny in general open themselves freely to Dick Swiveller.

At the opening of November, there seems to have been a wish on Maclise's part to try his hand at an illustration for the story; but I do not remember that it bore other fruit than a very pleasant day at Jack Straw's Castle, where Dickens read one of the later numbers to us. "Maclise and myself (alone in the carriage)," he wrote, "will be with you at two exactly. We propose driving out to Hampstead and walking

there, if it don't rain in buckets'-full. I sha'n't send Bradburys' the MS. of next number till to-morrow, for it contains the shadow of the number after that, and I want to read it to Mac, as, if he likes the subject, it will furnish him with one, I think. You can't imagine (gravely I write and speak) how exhausted I am to-day with yesterday's labors. I went to bed last night utterly dispirited and done up. All night I have been pursued by the child; and this morning I am unrefreshed and miserable. I don't know what to do with myself. . . . I think the close of the story will be great." Connected with the same design on Maclise's part there was another reading, this time at my house, and of the number shadowed forth by what had been read at Hampstead. "I will bring the MS.," he writes on the 12th of November, "and, for Mac's information if needful, the number before it. I have only this moment put the finishing touch to it. The difficulty has been tremendous--the anguish unspeakable. I didn't say six. Therefore dine at half-past five like a Christian. I shall bring Mac at that hour."

He had sent me, shortly before, the chapters in which the Marchioness nurses Dick in his fever, and puts his favorite philosophy to the hard test of asking him whether he has ever put pieces of orange-peel into cold water and made believe it was wine. "If you make believe very much, it's quite nice; but if you don't, you know, it hasn't much flavor:" so it stood originally, and to the latter word in the little creature's mouth I seem to have objected. Replying (on the 16th of December) he writes, "'If you make believe very much, it's quite nice; but if you don't, you know, it seems as if it would bear a little more seasoning, certainly.' I think that's better. Flavor is a common word in cookery, and among cooks, and so I used it. The part you cut out in the other number, which was sent me this morning, I had put in with a view to Quilp's last appearance on any stage, which is casting its shadow upon my mind; but it will come well enough without such a preparation, so I made no change. I mean to shirk Sir Robert Inglis, and work to-night. I have been solemnly revolving the general story all this morning. The forty-fifth number will certainly close. Perhaps this forty-first, which I am now at work on, had better contain the announcement of _Barnaby_? I am glad you like Dick and the Marchioness in that sixty-fourth chapter. I thought you would."

Fast shortening as the life of little Nell was now, the dying year might have seen it pass away; but I never knew him wind up any tale with such a sorrowful reluctance as this. He caught at any excuse to hold his hand from it, and stretched to the utmost limit the time left to complete it in. Christmas interposed its delays too, so that Twelfth-night had come and gone when I wrote to him in the belief that he was nearly done. "Done!" he wrote back to me on Friday, the 7th; "Done!!! Why, bless you, I shall not be done till Wednesday night. I only began yesterday, and this part of the story is not to be galloped over, I can tell you. I think it will come famously--but I am the wretchedest of the wretched. It casts the most horrible shadow upon me, and it is as much as I can do to keep moving at all. I tremble to approach the place a great deal more than Kit; a great deal more than Mr. Garland; a great deal more than the Single Gentleman. I sha'n't recover it for a long time. Nobody will miss her like I shall. It is such a very painful thing to me, that I really cannot express my sorrow. Old wounds bleed afresh when I only

think of the way of doing it: what the actual doing it will be, God knows. I can't preach to myself the schoolmaster's consolation, though I try. Dear Mary died yesterday, when I think of this sad story. I don't know what to say about dining to-morrow--perhaps you'll send up to-morrow morning for news? That'll be the best way. I have refused several invitations for this week and next, determining to go nowhere till I had done. I am afraid of disturbing the state I have been trying to get into, and having to fetch it all back again." He had finished, all but the last chapter, on the Wednesday named; that was the 12th of January; and on the following night he read to me the two chapters of Nell's death, the seventy-first and seventy-second, with the result described in a letter to me of the following Monday, the 17th January, 1841:

"I can't help letting you know how much your yesterday's letter pleased me. I felt sure you liked the chapters when we read them on Thursday night, but it was a great delight to have my impression so strongly and heartily confirmed. You know how little value I should set on what I had done, if all the world cried out that it was good, and those whose good opinion and approbation I value most were silent. The assurance that this little closing of the scene touches and is felt by you so strongly, is better to me than a thousand most sweet voices out of doors. When I first began, *_on your valued suggestion_*, to keep my thoughts upon this ending of the tale, I resolved to try and do something which might be read by people about whom Death had been, with a softened feeling, and with consolation. . . . After you left last night, I took my desk up-stairs, and, writing until four o'clock this morning, finished the old story. It makes me very melancholy to think that all these people are lost to me forever, and I feel as if I never could become attached to any new set of characters." The words printed in italics, as underlined by himself, give me my share in the story which had gone so closely to his heart. I was responsible for its tragic ending. He had not thought of killing her, when, about half-way through, I asked him to consider whether it did not necessarily belong even to his own conception, after taking so mere a child through such a tragedy of sorrow, to lift her also out of the commonplace of ordinary happy endings so that the gentle pure little figure and form should never change to the fancy. All that I meant he seized at once, and never turned aside from it again.

The published book was an extraordinary success, and, in America more especially, very greatly increased the writer's fame. The pathetic vein it had opened was perhaps mainly the cause of this, but opinion at home continued still to turn on the old characteristics,--the freshness of humor of which the pathos was but another form and product, the grasp of reality with which character had again been seized, the discernment of good under its least attractive forms and of evil in its most captivating disguises, the cordial wisdom and sound heart, the enjoyment and fun, luxuriant yet under proper control. No falling-off was found in these; and I doubt if any of his people have been more widely liked than Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness. The characters generally, indeed, work out their share in the purpose of the tale; the extravagances of some of them help to intensify its meaning; and the sayings and doings of the worst and the best alike have their point and applicability. Many

an oversuspicious person will find advantage in remembering what a too liberal application of Foxey's principle of suspecting everybody brought Mr. Sampson Brass to; and many an overhasty judgment of poor human nature will unconsciously be checked, when it is remembered that Mr. Christopher Nubbles did come back to work out that shilling.

But the main idea and chief figure of the piece constitute its interest for most people, and give it rank upon the whole with the most attractive productions of English fiction. I am not acquainted with any story in the language more adapted to strengthen in the heart what most needs help and encouragement, to sustain kindly and innocent impulses, and to awaken everywhere the sleeping germs of good. It includes necessarily much pain, much uninterrupted sadness; and yet the brightness and sunshine quite overtop the gloom. The humor is so benevolent; the view of errors that have no depravity of heart in them is so indulgent; the quiet courage under calamity, the purity that nothing impure can soil, are so full of tender teaching. Its effect as a mere piece of art, too, considering the circumstances in which I have shown it to be written, I think very noteworthy. It began with a plan for but a short half-dozen chapters; it grew into a full-proportioned story under the warmth of the feeling it had inspired its writer with; its very incidents created a necessity at first not seen; and it was carried to a close only contemplated after a full half of it had been written. Yet, from the opening of the tale to that undesigned ending,--from the image of little Nell asleep amid the quaint grotesque figures of the old curiosity warehouse to that other final sleep she takes among the grim forms and carvings of the old church aisle,--the main purpose seems to be always present. The characters and incidents that at first appear most foreign to it are found to have had with it a close relation. The hideous lumber and rottenness that surround the child in her grandfather's home take shape again in Quilp and his filthy gang. In the first still picture of Nell's innocence in the midst of strange and alien forms, we have the forecast of her after-wanderings, her patient miseries, her sad maturity of experience before its time. Without the show-people and their blended fictions and realities, their wax-works, dwarfs, giants, and performing dogs, the picture would have wanted some part of its significance. Nor could the genius of Hogarth himself have given it higher expression than in the scenes by the cottage door, the furnace-fire, and the burial-place of the old church, over whose tombs and gravestones hang the puppets of Mr. Punch's show while the exhibitors are mending and repairing them. And when, at last, Nell sits within the quiet old church where all her wanderings end, and gazes on those silent monumental groups of warriors,--helmets, swords, and gauntlets wasting away around them,--the associations among which her life had opened seem to have come crowding on the scene again, to be present at its close,--but stripped of their strangeness; deepened into solemn shapes by the suffering she has undergone; gently fusing every feeling of a life past into hopeful and familiar anticipation of a life to come; and already imperceptibly lifting her, without grief or pain, from the earth she loves, yet whose grosser paths her light steps only touched to show the track through them to heaven. This is genuine art, and such as all cannot fail to recognize who read the book in a right sympathy with the conception that pervades it. Nor, great as the discomfort was of reading it in brief weekly snatches, can I be wholly

certain that the discomfort of so writing it involved nothing but disadvantage. With so much in every portion to do, and so little space to do it in, the opportunities to a writer for mere self-indulgence were necessarily rare.

Of the innumerable tributes the story has received, and to none other by Dickens have more or more various been paid, there is one, the very last, which has much affected me. Not many months before my friend's death, he had sent me two Overland Monthlies containing two sketches by a young American writer far away in California, "The Luck of Roaring Camp," and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," in which he had found such subtle strokes of character as he had not anywhere else in late years discovered; the manner resembling himself, but the matter fresh to a degree that had surprised him; the painting in all respects masterly, and the wild rude thing painted a quite wonderful reality. I have rarely known him more honestly moved. A few months passed; telegraph-wires flashed over the world that he had passed away on the 9th of June; and the young writer of whom he had then written to me, all unconscious of that praise, put his tribute of gratefulness and sorrow into the form of a poem called Dickens in Camp.^[30] It embodies the same kind of incident which had so affected the master himself, in the papers to which I have referred; it shows the gentler influences which, in even those Californian wilds, can restore outlawed "roaring camps" to silence and humanity; and there is hardly any form of posthumous tribute which I can imagine likely to have better satisfied his desire of fame than one which should thus connect, with the special favorite among all his heroines, the restraints and authority exerted by his genius over the rudest and least civilized of competitors in that far fierce race for wealth.

"Above the pines the moon was slowly drifting,
The river sang below;
The dim Sierras, far beyond, uplifting
Their minarets of snow:

"The roaring camp-fire, with rude humor, painted
The ruddy tints of health
On haggard face and form that drooped and fainted
In the fierce race for wealth;

"Till one arose, and from his pack's scant treasure
A hoarded volume drew,
And cards were dropped from hands of listless leisure
To hear the tale anew;

"And then, while round them shadows gathered faster,
And as the fire-light fell,
He read aloud the book wherein the Master
Had writ of 'Little Nell:'

"Perhaps 'twas boyish fancy,--for the reader
Was youngest of them all,--
But, as he read, from clustering pine and cedar
A silence seemed to fall;

"The fir-trees, gathering closer in the shadows,
Listened in every spray,
While the whole camp with 'Nell' on English meadows
Wandered and lost their way.

"And so in mountain solitudes--o'ertaken
As by some spell divine--
Their cares dropped from them like the needles shaken
From out the gusty pine.

"Lost is that camp, and wasted all its fire;
And he who wrought that spell?--
Ah, towering pine and stately Kentish spire,
Ye have one tale to tell!

"Lost is that camp! but let its fragrant story
Blend with the breath that thrills
With hop-vines' incense all the pensive glory
That fills the Kentish hills.

"And on that grave where English oak and holly
And laurel wreaths entwine,
Deem it not all a too presumptuous folly,--
This spray of Western pine!

"July, 1870."

FOOTNOTES:

[29] I have mentioned the fact in my Life of Landor; and to the passage I here add the comment made by Dickens when he read it: "It was at a celebration of his birthday in the first of his Bath lodgings, 35, St. James's Square, that the fancy which took the form of Little Nell in the Curiosity Shop first dawned on the genius of its creator. No character in prose fiction was a greater favorite with Landor. He thought that, upon her, Juliet might for a moment have turned her eyes from Romeo, and that Desdemona might have taken her hair-breadth escapes to heart, so interesting and pathetic did she seem to him; and when, some years later, the circumstance I have named was recalled to him, he broke into one of those whimsical bursts of comical extravagance out of which arose the fancy of Boythorn. With tremendous emphasis he confirmed the fact, and added that he had never in his life regretted anything so much as his having failed to carry out an intention he had formed respecting it; for he meant to have purchased that house, 35, St. James's Square, and then and there to have burnt it to the ground, to the end that no meaner association should ever desecrate the birthplace of Nell. Then he would pause a little, become conscious of our sense of his absurdity, and break into a thundering peal of laughter." Dickens had himself proposed to tell this story as a contribution to my biography of our common friend, but his departure for America prevented him. "I see," he wrote to me, as soon as the published book reached him, "you have told, with what our friend would have called won-derful accuracy, the little St. James's Square story, which a certain faithless

wretch was to have related."

[30] *Poems.* By Bret Harte (Boston: Osgood & Co., 1871), pp. 32-35.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE AND BROADSTAIRS.

1840.

A Good Saying--Landor mystified--The Mirthful
Side of Dickens--Extravagant Flights--Humorous
Despair--Riding Exercise--First of the
Ravens--The Groom Topping--The Smoky
Chimneys--Juryman at an Inquest--Practical
Humanity--Publication of *Clock's* First
Number--Transfer of *Barnaby* settled--A True
Prediction--Revisiting Old Scenes--C. D. to
Chapman & Hall--Terms of Sale of *Barnaby*--A
Gift to a Friend--Final Escape from
Bondage--Published Libels about him--Said to be
demented--To be insane and turned
Catholic--Begging Letter-Writers--A Donkey
asked for--Mr. Kindheart--Friendly
Meetings--Social Talk--Reconciling
Friends--Hint for judging Men.

IT was an excellent saying of the first Lord Shaftesbury, that, seeing every man of any capacity holds within himself two men, the wise and the foolish, each of them ought freely to be allowed his turn; and it was one of the secrets of Dickens's social charm that he could, in strict accordance with this saying, allow each part of him its turn; could afford thoroughly to give rest and relief to what was serious in him, and, when the time came to play his gambols, could surrender himself wholly to the enjoyment of the time, and become the very genius and embodiment of one of his own most whimsical fancies.

Turning back from the narrative of his last piece of writing to recall a few occurrences of the year during which it had occupied him, I find him at its opening in one of these humorous moods, and another friend, with myself, enslaved by its influence. "What on earth does it all mean?" wrote poor puzzled Mr. Landor to me, inclosing a letter from him of the date of the 11th of February, the day after the royal nuptials of that year. In this he had related to our old friend a wonderful hallucination arising out of that event, which had then taken entire possession of him. "Society is unhinged here," thus ran the letter, "by her majesty's marriage, and I am sorry to add that I have fallen hopelessly in love with the Queen, and wander up and down with vague and dismal thoughts of running away to some uninhabited island with a maid of honor, to be entrapped by conspiracy for that purpose. Can you

suggest any particular young person, serving in such a capacity, who would suit me? It is too much perhaps to ask you to join the band of noble youths (Forster is in it, and Maclise) who are to assist me in this great enterprise, but a man of your energy would be invaluable. I have my eye upon Lady . . . , principally because she is very beautiful and has no strong brothers. Upon this, and other points of the scheme, however, we will confer more at large when we meet; and meanwhile burn this document, that no suspicion may arise or rumor get abroad."

The maid of honor and the uninhabited island were flights of fancy, but the other daring delusion was for a time encouraged to such whimsical lengths, not alone by him, but (under his influence) by the two friends named, that it took the wildest forms of humorous extravagance; and of the private confidences much interchanged, as well as of the style of open speech in which our joke of despairing unfitness for any further use or enjoyment of life was unflaggingly kept up, to the amazement of bystanders knowing nothing of what it meant, and believing we had half lost our senses, I permit myself to give from his letters one further illustration. "I am utterly lost in misery," he writes to me on the 12th of February, "and can do nothing. I have been reading Oliver, Pickwick, and Nickleby to get my thoughts together for the new effort, but all in vain:

"My heart is at Windsor,
My heart isn't here;
My heart is at Windsor.
A following my dear.

I saw the Responsibilities this morning, and burst into tears. The presence of my wife aggravates me. I loathe my parents. I detest my house. I begin to have thoughts of the Serpentine, of the Regent's Canal, of the razors up-stairs, of the chemist's down the street, of poisoning myself at Mrs. ----'s table, of hanging myself upon the pear-tree in the garden, of abstaining from food and starving myself to death, of being bled for my cold and tearing off the bandage, of falling under the feet of cab-horses in the New Road, of murdering Chapman & Hall and becoming great in story (SHE must hear something of me then--perhaps sign the warrant: or is that a fable?), of turning Chartist, of heading some bloody assault upon the palace and saving Her by my single hand--of being anything but what I have been, and doing anything but what I have done. Your distracted friend, C. D." The wild derangement of asterisks in every shape and form, with which this incoherence closed, cannot here be given.

Some ailments which dated from an earlier period in his life made themselves felt in the spring of the year, as I remember, and increased horse-exercise was strongly recommended to him. "I find it will be positively necessary to go, for five days in the week, at least," he wrote to me in March, "on a perfect regimen of diet and exercise, and am anxious therefore not to delay treating for a horse." We were now in consequence, when he was not at the sea-side, much on horseback in suburban lanes and roads; and the spacious garden of his new house was also turned to healthful use at even his busiest times of work. I mark this, too, as the time when the first of his ravens took up residence

there; and as the beginning of disputes with two of his neighbors about the smoking of the stable-chimney, which his groom Topping, a highly absurd little man with flaming red hair, so complicated by secret devices of his own, meant to conciliate each complainant alternately and having the effect of aggravating both, that law-proceedings were only barely avoided. "I shall give you," he writes, "my latest report of the chimney in the form of an address from Topping, made to me on our way from little Hall's at Norwood the other night, where he and Chapman and I had been walking all day, while Topping drove Kate, Mrs. Hall, and her sisters, to Dulwich. Topping had been regaled upon the premises, and was just drunk enough to be confidential. 'Beggin' your pardon, sir, but the genelman next door sir, seems to be gettin' quite comfortable and pleasant about the chimley.'--'I don't think he is, Topping.'--'Yes he is sir I think. He comes out in the yard this morning and says, '_Coachman_ he says' (observe the vision of a great large fat man called up by the word) _is that your raven_ he says, _Coachman? or is it Mr. Dickens's raven?_ he says. My master's sir, I says. Well, he says, It's a fine bird. _I think the chimley 'ill do now Coachman,--now the jint's taken off the pipe_ he says. I hope it will sir, I says; my master's a genelman as wouldn't annoy no genelman if he could help it, I'm sure; and my missis is so afraid of havin' a bit o' fire that o' Sundays our little bit o' weal or wot not, goes to the baker's a purpose.--_Damn the chimley, Coachman_, he says, _it's a smokin' now_.--It ain't a smokin' your way sir, I says; Well he says _no more it is, Coachman, and as long as it smokes anybody else's way, it's all right and I'm agreeable_. Of course I shall now have the man from the other side upon me, and very likely with an action of nuisance for smoking into his conservatory."

A graver incident, which occurred to him also among his earliest experiences as tenant of Devonshire Terrace, illustrates too well the always practical turn of his kindness and humanity not to deserve relation here. He has himself described it in one of his minor writings, in setting down what he remembered as the only good that ever came of a beadle. Of that great parish functionary, he says, "having newly taken the lease of a house in a certain distinguished metropolitan parish, a house which then appeared to me to be a frightfully first-class family mansion involving awful responsibilities, I became the prey." In other words, he was summoned, and obliged to sit, as juryman at an inquest on the body of a little child alleged to have been murdered by its mother; of which the result was, that, by his persevering exertion, seconded by the humane help of the coroner, Mr. Wakley, the verdict of himself and his fellow-jurymen charged her only with concealment of the birth. "The poor desolate creature dropped upon her knees before us with protestations that we were right (protestations among the most affecting that I have ever heard in my life), and was carried away insensible. I caused some extra care to be taken of her in the prison, and counsel to be retained for her defense when she was tried at the Old Bailey; and her sentence was lenient, and her history and conduct proved that it was right." How much he felt the little incident, at the actual time of its occurrence, may be judged from the few lines written to me next morning: "Whether it was the poor baby, or its poor mother, or the coffin, or my fellow-jurymen, or what not, I can't say, but last night I had a most violent attack of sickness and indigestion, which not only prevented me from sleeping, but even from lying down. Accordingly Kate and I sat up

through the dreary watches."

The day of the first publication of Master Humphrey (Saturday, 4th April) had by this time come, and, according to the rule observed in his two other great ventures, he left town with Mrs. Dickens on Friday, the 3d. With Maclise we had been together at Richmond the previous night; and I joined him at Birmingham the day following with news of the sale of the whole sixty thousand copies to which the first working had been limited, and of orders already in hand for ten thousand more! The excitement of the success somewhat lengthened our holiday; and, after visiting Shakspeare's house at Stratford and Johnson's at Lichfield, we found our resources so straitened in returning, that, employing as our messenger of need his younger brother Alfred, who had joined us from Tamworth, where he was a student-engineer, we had to pawn our gold watches at Birmingham.

At the end of the following month he went to Broadstairs, and not many days before (on the 20th of May) a note from Mr. Jordan on behalf of Mr. Bentley opened the negotiations formerly referred to,[31] which transferred to Messrs. Chapman & Hall the agreement for Barnaby Rudge. I was myself absent when he left, and in a letter announcing his departure he had written, "I don't know of a word of news in all London, but there will be plenty next week, for I am going away, and I hope you'll send me an account of it. I am doubtful whether it will be a murder, a fire, a vast robbery, or the escape of Gould, but it will be something remarkable no doubt. I almost blame myself for the death of that poor girl who leaped off the monument upon my leaving town last year. She would not have done it if I had remained, neither would the two men have found the skeleton in the sewers." His prediction was quite accurate, for I had to tell him, after not many days, of the potboy who shot at the queen. "It's a great pity," he replied, very sensibly, "they couldn't suffocate that boy, Master Oxford, and say no more about it. To have put him quietly between two feather beds would have stopped his heroic speeches, and dulled the sound of his glory very much. As it is, she will have to run the gauntlet of many a fool and madman, some of whom may perchance be better shots and use other than Brummagem firearms." How much of this actually came to pass, the reader knows.

From the letters of his present Broadstairs visit, there is little further to add to their account of his progress with his story; but a couple more lines may be given for their characteristic expression of his invariable habit upon entering any new abode, whether to stay in it for days or for years. On a Monday night he arrived, and on the Tuesday (2d of June) wrote to me, "Before I tasted bit or drop yesterday, I set out my writing-table with extreme taste and neatness, and improved the disposition of the furniture generally." He stayed till the end of June; when Maclise and myself joined him for the pleasure of posting back home with him and Mrs. Dickens, by way of his favorite Chatham and Rochester and Cobham, where we passed two agreeable days in revisiting well-remembered scenes. I had meanwhile brought to a close the treaty for repurchase of Oliver and surrender of Barnaby, upon terms which are succinctly stated in a letter written by him to Messrs. Chapman & Hall on the 2d of July, the day after our return:

"The terms upon which you advance the money to-day for the purchase of the copyright and stock[32] of _Oliver_ on my behalf are understood between us to be these. That this 2250_l._ is to be deducted from the purchase-money of a work by me entitled _Barnaby Rudge_, of which two chapters are now in your hands, and of which the whole is to be written within some convenient time to be agreed upon between us. But if it should not be written (which God forbid!) within five years, you are to have a lien to this amount on the property belonging to me that is now in your hands, namely, my shares in the stock and copyright of _Sketches by Boz_, _The Pickwick Papers_, _Nicholas Nickleby_, _Oliver Twist_, and _Master Humphrey's Clock_; in which we do not include any share of the current profits of the last-named work, which I shall remain at liberty to draw at the times stated in our agreement. Your purchase of _Barnaby Rudge_ is made upon the following terms. It is to consist of matter sufficient for ten monthly numbers of the size of _Pickwick_ and _Nickleby_, which you are, however, at liberty to divide and publish in fifteen smaller numbers if you think fit. The terms for the purchase of this edition in numbers, and for the copyright of the whole book for six months after the publication of the last number, are 3000_l._ At the expiration of the six months the whole copyright reverts to me." The sequel was, as all the world knows, that Barnaby became successor to Little Nell, the money being repaid by the profits of the _Clock_; but I ought to mention also the more generous sequel that my own small service had, on my receiving from him, after not many days, an antique silver-mounted jug of great beauty of form and workmanship, but with a wealth far beyond jeweler's chasing or artist's design in the written words that accompanied it.[33] I accepted them to commemorate, not the help they would have far overpaid, but the gladness of his own escape from the last of the agreements that had hampered the opening of his career, and the better future that was now before him.

At the opening of August he was with Mrs. Dickens for some days in Devonshire, on a visit to his father, but he had to take his work with him; and, as he wrote to me, they had only one real holiday, when Dawlish, Teignmouth, Babbicombe, and Torquay were explored, returning to Exeter at night. In the beginning of September he was again at Broadstairs.

"I was just going to work," he wrote on the 9th, "when I got this letter, and the story of the man who went to Chapman & Hall's knocked me down flat. I wrote until now (a quarter to one) against the grain, and have at last given it up for one day. Upon my word it is intolerable. I have been grinding my teeth all the morning. I think I could say in two lines something about the general report with propriety. I'll add them to the proof" (the preface to the first volume of the _Clock_ was at this time in preparation), "giving you full power to cut them out if you should think differently from me, and from C. and H., who in such a matter must be admitted judges." He refers here to a report, rather extensively circulated at the time, and which through various channels had reached his publishers, that he was suffering from loss of reason and was under treatment in an asylum.[34] I would have withheld from him the mention of it, as an absurdity that must quickly pass away, but against my wish it had been communicated to him, and I had difficulty in keeping within judicious bounds his extreme and very

natural wrath.

A few days later (the 15th) he wrote, "I have been rather surprised of late to have applications from Roman Catholic clergymen, demanding (rather pastorally, and with a kind of grave authority) assistance, literary employment, and so forth. At length it struck me that, through some channel or other, I must have been represented as belonging to that religion. Would you believe that in a letter from Lamert, at Cork, to my mother, which I saw last night, he says, 'What do the papers mean by saying that Charles is demented, and, further, _that he has turned Roman Catholic_?'--!" Of the begging-letter-writers, hinted at here, I ought earlier to have said something. In one of his detached essays he has described, without a particle of exaggeration, the extent to which he was made a victim by this class of swindler, and the extravagance of the devices practiced on him; but he has not confessed, as he might, that for much of what he suffered he was himself responsible, by giving so largely, as at first he did, to almost every one who applied to him. What at last brought him to his senses in this respect, I think, was the request made by the adventurer who had exhausted every other expedient, and who desired finally, after describing himself reduced to the condition of a traveling Cheap Jack in the smallest way of crockery, that a donkey might be left out for him next day, which he would duly call for. This I perfectly remember, and I much fear that the applicant was the Daniel Tobin before mentioned.[35]

Many and delightful were other letters written from Broadstairs at this date, filled with whimsical talk and humorous description relating chiefly to an eccentric friend who stayed with him most of the time, and is sketched in one of his published papers as Mr. Kindheart; but all too private for reproduction now. He returned in the middle of October, when we resumed our almost daily ridings, foregatherings with Maclise at Hampstead and elsewhere, and social entertainments with Macready, Talfourd, Procter, Stanfield, Fonblanque, Elliotson, Tennent, D'Orsay, Quin, Harness, Wilkie, Edwin Landseer, Rogers, Sydney Smith, and Bulwer. Of the genius of the author of Pelham and Eugene Aram he had, early and late, the highest admiration, and he took occasion to express it during the present year in a new preface which he published to Oliver Twist. Other friends became familiar in later years; but, disinclined as he was to the dinner-invitations that reached him from every quarter, all such meetings with those whom I have named, and in an especial manner the marked attentions shown him by Miss Coutts which began with the very beginning of his career, were invariably welcome.

To speak here of the pleasure his society afforded, would anticipate the fitter mention to be made hereafter. But what in this respect distinguishes nearly all original men, he possessed eminently. His place was not to be filled up by any other. To the most trivial talk he gave the attraction of his own character. It might be a small matter,--something he had read or observed during the day, some quaint odd fancy from a book, a vivid little out-door picture, the laughing exposure of some imposture, or a burst of sheer mirthful enjoyment,--but of its kind it would be something unique, because genuinely part of himself. This, and his unwearying animal spirits, made him the most delightful of companions; no claim on good-fellowship ever found him

wanting; and no one so constantly recalled to his friends the description Johnson gave of Garrick, as the cheerfulest man of his age.

Of what occupied him in the way of literary labor in the autumn and winter months of the year, some description has been given; and, apart from what has already thus been said of his work at the closing chapters of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, nothing now calls for more special allusion, except that in his town-walks in November, impelled thereto by specimens recently discovered in his country-walks between Broadstairs and Ramsgate, he thoroughly explored the ballad literature of Seven-Dials, and took to singing himself, with an effect that justified his reputation for comic singing in his childhood, not a few of these wonderful productions. His last successful labor of the year was the reconciliation of two friends; and his motive, as well as the principle that guided him, as they are described by himself, I think worth preserving. For the first: "In the midst of this child's death, I, over whom something of the bitterness of death has passed, not lightly perhaps, was reminded of many old kindnesses, and was sorry in my heart that men who really liked each other should waste life at arm's length." For the last: "I have laid it down as a rule in my judgment of men, to observe narrowly whether some (of whom one is disposed to think badly) don't carry all their faults upon the surface, and others (of whom one is disposed to think well) don't carry many more beneath it. I have long ago made sure that our friend is in the first class; and when I know all the foibles a man has, with little trouble in the discovery, I begin to think he is worth liking." His latest letter of the year, dated the day following, closed with the hope that we might, he and I, enjoy together "fifty more Christmases, at least, in this world, and eternal summers in another." Alas!

FOOTNOTES:

[31] See *ante*, p. 163.

[32] By way of a novelty to help off the stock, he had suggested (17th June), "Would it not be best to print new title-pages to the copies sheets and publish them as a new edition, with an interesting Preface? I am talking about all this as though the treaty were concluded, but I hope and trust that in effect it is, for negotiation and delay are worse to me than drawn daggers." See my remark *ante*, p. 123.

[33] "Accept from me" (July 8, 1840), "as a slight memorial of your attached companion, the poor keepsake which accompanies this. My heart is not an eloquent one on matters which touch it most, but suppose this claret-jug the urn in which it lies, and believe that its warmest and truest blood is yours. This was the object of my fruitless search, and your curiosity, on Friday. At first I scarcely knew what trifle (you will deem it valuable, I know, for the giver's sake) to send you; but I thought it would be pleasant to connect it with our jovial moments, and to let it add, to the wine we shall drink from it together, a flavor which the choicest vintage could never impart. Take it from my hand,--filled to the brim and running over with truth and earnestness. I have just taken one parting look at it, and it seems the most elegant thing in the world to me, for I lose sight of the vase in the crowd of

welcome associations that are clustering and wreathing themselves about it."

[34] Already he had been the subject of similar reports on the occasion of the family sorrow which compelled him to suspend the publication of *Pickwick* for two months (*ante*, p. 120), when, upon issuing a brief address in resuming his work (30th June, 1837), he said, "By one set of intimate acquaintances, especially well informed, he has been killed outright; by another, driven mad; by a third, imprisoned for debt; by a fourth, sent per steamer to the United States; by a fifth, rendered incapable of mental exertion for evermore; by all, in short, represented as doing anything but seeking in a few weeks' retirement the restoration of that cheerfulness and peace of which a sad bereavement had temporarily deprived him."

[35] See *ante*, p. 81.

CHAPTER XIV.

BARNABY RUDGE.

1841.

Advantage in beginning *Barnaby*--Birth of Fourth Child and Second Son--The Raven--A Loss in the Family--Grip's Death--C. D. describes his Illness--Family Mourners--Apotheosis by Maclise--Grip the Second--The Inn at Chigwell--A *Clock* Dinner--Lord Jeffrey in London--The *Lamplighter*--The *Pic Nic Papers*--Character of Lord George Gordon--A Doubtful Fancy--Interest in New Labor--Constraints of Weekly Publication--The Prison--Riots--A Serious Illness--Close of *Barnaby*--Character of the Tale--Defects in the Plot--The No-Popery Riots--Descriptive Power displayed--Leading Persons in Story--Mr. Dennis the Hangman.

THE letters of 1841 yield similar fruit as to his doings and sayings, and may in like manner first be consulted for the literary work he had in hand.

He had the advantage of beginning *Barnaby Rudge* with a fair amount of story in advance, which he had only to make suitable, by occasional readjustment of chapters, to publication in weekly portions; and on this he was engaged before the end of January. "I am at present" (22d January, 1841) "in what Leigh Hunt would call a kind of impossible state,--thinking what on earth Master Humphrey can think of through four mortal pages. I added, here and there, to the last chapter of the

Curiosity Shop yesterday, and it leaves me only four pages to write." (They were filled by a paper from Humphrey introductory of the new tale, in which will be found a striking picture of London from midnight to the break of day.) "I also made up, and wrote the needful insertions for, the second number of _Barnaby_,--so that I came back to the mill a little." Hardly yet; for after four days he writes, having meanwhile done nothing, "I have been looking (three o'clock) with an appearance of extraordinary interest and study at _one leaf_ of the _Curiosities of Literature_ ever since half-past ten this morning--I haven't the heart to turn over." Then on Friday the 29th better news came. "I didn't stir out yesterday, but sat and _thought_ all day; not writing a line; not so much as the cross of a t or dot of an i. I imaged forth a good deal of _Barnaby_ by keeping my mind steadily upon him; and am happy to say I have gone to work this morning in good twig, strong hope, and cheerful spirits. Last night I was unutterably and impossible-to-form-an-idea-of-ably miserable. . . . By-the-by, don't engage yourself otherwise than to me for Sunday week, because it's my birthday. I have no doubt we shall have got over our troubles here by that time, and I purpose having a snug dinner in the study." We had the dinner, though the troubles were not over; but the next day another son was born to him. "Thank God," he wrote on the 9th, "quite well. I am thinking hard, and have just written to Browne inquiring when he will come and confer about the raven." He had by this time resolved to make that bird, whose accomplishments had been daily ripening and enlarging for the last twelve months to the increasing mirth and delight of all of us, a prominent figure in _Barnaby_; and the invitation to the artist was for a conference how best to introduce him graphically.

The next letter mentioning _Barnaby_ was from Brighton (25th February), whither he had flown for a week's quiet labor: "I have (it's four o'clock) done a very fair morning's work, at which I have sat very close, and been blessed besides with a clear view of the end of the volume. As the contents of one number usually require a day's thought at the very least, and often more, this puts me in great spirits. I think--that is, I hope--the story takes a great stride at this point, and takes it WELL. Nous verrons. Grip will be strong, and I build greatly on the Varden household."

Upon his return he had to lament a domestic calamity, which, for its connection with that famous personage in _Barnaby_, must be mentioned here. The raven had for some days been ailing, and Topping had reported of him, as Shakspeare of Hamlet, that he had lost his mirth and foregone all customary exercises; but Dickens paid no great heed, remembering his recovery from an illness of the previous summer when he swallowed some white paint; so that the graver report which led him to send for the doctor came upon him unexpectedly, and nothing but his own language can worthily describe the result. Unable from the state of his feelings to write two letters, he sent the narrative to Maclise, under an enormous black seal, for transmission to me; and thus it befell that this fortunate bird receives a double passport to fame, so great a humorist having celebrated his farewell to the present world, and so great a painter his welcome to another.

"You will be greatly shocked" (the letter is dated Friday evening,

March 12, 1841) "and grieved to hear that the Raven is no more. He expired to-day at a few minutes after twelve o'clock at noon. He had been ailing for a few days, but we anticipated no serious result, conjecturing that a portion of the white paint he swallowed last summer might be lingering about his vitals without having any serious effect upon his constitution. Yesterday afternoon he was taken so much worse that I sent an express for the medical gentleman (Mr. Herring), who promptly attended, and administered a powerful dose of castor oil. Under the influence of this medicine, he recovered so far as to be able at eight o'clock P.M. to bite Topping. His night was peaceful. This morning at daybreak he appeared better; received (agreeably to the doctor's directions) another dose of castor oil; and partook plentifully of some warm gruel, the flavor of which he appeared to relish. Towards eleven o'clock he was so much worse that it was found necessary to muffle the stable-knocker. At half-past, or thereabouts, he was heard talking to himself about the horse and Topping's family, and to add some incoherent expressions which are supposed to have been either a foreboding of his approaching dissolution, or some wishes relative to the disposal of his little property: consisting chiefly of half-pence which he had buried in different parts of the garden. On the clock striking twelve he appeared slightly agitated, but he soon recovered, walked twice or thrice along the coach-house, stopped to bark, staggered, exclaimed _Halloa old girl!_ (his favorite expression), and died.

"He behaved throughout with a decent fortitude, equanimity, and self-possession, which cannot be too much admired. I deeply regret that being in ignorance of his danger I did not attend to receive his last instructions. Something remarkable about his eyes occasioned Topping to run for the doctor at twelve. When they returned together our friend was gone. It was the medical gentleman who informed me of his decease. He did it with great caution and delicacy, preparing me by the remark that 'a jolly queer start had taken place;' but the shock was very great notwithstanding. I am not wholly free from suspicions of poison. A malicious butcher has been heard to say that he would 'do' for him: his plea was that he would not be molested in taking orders down the mews, by any bird that wore a tail. Other persons have also been heard to threaten: among others, Charles Knight, who has just started a weekly publication price fourpence: _Barnaby_ being, as you know, threepence. I have directed a post-mortem examination, and the body has been removed to Mr. Herring's school of anatomy for that purpose.

"I could wish, if you can take the trouble, that you could inclose this to Forster immediately after you have read it. I cannot discharge the painful task of communication more than once. Were they ravens who took manna to somebody in the wilderness? At times I hope they were, and at others I fear they were not, or they would certainly have stolen it by the way. In profound sorrow, I am ever your bereaved friend C. D. Kate is as well as can be expected, but terribly low, as you may suppose. The children seem rather glad of it. He bit their ankles. But that was play."

[Illustration: [Sideways text: apotheosis] My dear Forster

Dickens desires me transmit to you the enclosed announcement of the

Raven's decease - which took place in Devonshire Terrace

March 1841

HIC DM]

Maclise's covering letter was an apotheosis, to be rendered only in fac-simile.

In what way the loss was replaced, so that Barnaby should have the fruit of continued study of the habits of the family of birds which Grip had so nobly represented, Dickens has told in the preface to the story; and another, older, and larger Grip, obtained through Mr. Smithson, was installed in the stable, almost before the stuffed remains of his honored predecessor had been sent home in a glass case, by way of ornament to his master's study.

I resume our correspondence on what he was writing: "I see there is yet room for a few lines" (25th March), "and you are quite right in wishing what I cut out to be restored. I did not want Joe to be so short about Dolly, and really wrote his references to that young lady carefully,--as natural things with a meaning in them. Chigwell, my dear fellow, is the greatest place in the world. Name your day for going. Such a delicious old inn opposite the churchyard,--such a lovely ride,--such beautiful forest scenery,--such an out-of-the-way, rural place,--such a sexton! I say again, name your day." The day was named at once; and the whitest of stones marks it, in now sorrowful memory. His promise was exceeded by our enjoyment; and his delight in the double recognition, of himself and of Barnaby, by the landlord of the nice old inn, far exceeded any pride he would have taken in what the world thinks the highest sort of honor.

"I have shut myself up" (26th March) "by myself to-day, and mean to try and 'go it' at the Clock; Kate being out, and the house peacefully dismal. I don't remember altering the exact part you object to, but if there be anything here you object to, knock it out ruthlessly." "Don't fail" (April the 5th) "to erase anything that seems to you too strong. It is difficult for me to judge what tells too much, and what does not. I am trying a very quiet number to set against this necessary one. I hope it will be good, but I am in very sad condition for work. Glad you think this powerful. What I have put in is more relief, from the raven." Two days later: "I have done that number, and am now going to work on another. I am bent (please Heaven) on finishing the first chapter by Friday night. I hope to look in upon you to-night, when we'll dispose of the toasts for Saturday. Still bilious--but a good number, I hope, notwithstanding. Jeffrey has come to town, and was here yesterday." The toasts to be disposed of were those to be given at the dinner on the 10th to celebrate the second volume of Master Humphrey: when Talfourd presided, when there was much jollity, and, according to the memorandum drawn up that Saturday night now lying before me, we all in the greatest good humor glorified each other: Talfourd proposing the Clock, Macready Mrs. Dickens, Dickens the publishers, and myself the artists; Macready giving Talfourd, Talfourd Macready, Dickens myself, and myself the comedian Mr. Harley, whose humorous songs had been the not least

considerable element in the mirth of the evening.

Five days later he writes, "I finished the number yesterday, and, although I dined with Jeffrey, and was obliged to go to Lord Denman's afterwards (which made me late), have done eight slips of the _Lamplighter_ for Mrs. Macrone, this morning. When I have got that off my mind, I shall try to go on steadily, fetching up the _Clock_ lee-way." The _Lamplighter_ was his old farce,[36] which he now turned into a comic tale; and this, with other contributions given him by friends and edited by him as _Pic Nic Papers_, enabled him to help the widow of his old publisher in her straitened means by a gift of £300. He had finished his work of charity before he next wrote of _Barnaby Rudge_, but he was fetching up his lee-way lazily. "I am getting on" (29th of April) "very slowly. I want to stick to the story; and the fear of committing myself, because of the impossibility of trying back or altering a syllable, makes it much harder than it looks. It was too bad of me to give you the trouble of cutting the number, but I knew so well you would do it in the right places. For what Harley would call the 'onward work' I really think I have some famous thoughts." There is an interval of a month before the next allusion: "Solomon's expression" (3d of June) "I meant to be one of those strong ones to which strong circumstances give birth in the commonest minds. Deal with it as you like. . . . Say what you please of Gordon" (I had objected to some points in his view of this madman, stated much too favorably as I thought), "he must have been at heart a kind man, and a lover of the despised and rejected, after his own fashion. He lived upon a small income, and always within it; was known to relieve the necessities of many people; exposed in his place the corrupt attempt of a minister to buy him out of Parliament; and did great charities in Newgate. He always spoke on the people's side, and tried against his muddled brains to expose the profligacy of both parties. He never got anything by his madness, and never sought it. The wildest and most raging attacks of the time allow him these merits: and not to let him have 'em in their full extent, remembering in what a (politically) wicked time he lived, would lie upon my conscience heavily. The libel he was imprisoned for when he died, was on the Queen of France; and the French government interested themselves warmly to procure his release,--which I think they might have done, but for Lord Grenville." I was more successful in the counsel I gave against a fancy he had at this part of the story, that he would introduce as actors in the Gordon riots three splendid fellows who should order, lead, control, and be obeyed as natural guides of the crowd in that delirious time, and who should turn out, when all was over, to have broken out from Bedlam; but, though he saw the unsoundness of this, he could not so readily see, in Gordon's case, the danger of taxing ingenuity to ascribe a reasonable motive to acts of sheer insanity. The feeblest parts of the book are those in which Lord George and his secretary appear.

He left for Scotland after the middle of June, but he took work with him. "You may suppose," he wrote from Edinburgh on the 30th, "I have not done much work; but by Friday night's post from here I hope to send the first long chapter of a number and both the illustrations; from Loch Earn on Tuesday night, the closing chapter of that number; from the same place on Thursday night, the first long chapter of another, with both

the illustrations; and, from some place which no man ever spelt but which sounds like Ballyhoolish, on Saturday, the closing chapter of that number, which will leave us all safe till I return to town." Nine days later he wrote from "Ballechelish," "I have done all I can or need do in the way of _Barnaby_ until I come home, and the story is progressing (I hope you will think) to good strong interest. I have left it, I think, at an exciting point, with a good dawning of the riots. In the first of the two numbers I have written since I have been away, I forget whether the blind man, in speaking to Barnaby about riches, tells him they are to be found in _crowds_. If I have not actually used that word, will you introduce it? A perusal of the proof of the following number (70) will show you how, and why." "Have you," he wrote shortly after his return (29th July), "seen No. 71? I thought there was a good glimpse of a crowd, from a window--eh?" He had now taken thoroughly to the interest of his closing chapters, and felt more than ever the constraints of his form of publication. "I am warming up very much" (on the 5th August from Broadstairs) "about _Barnaby_. Oh! if I only had him, from this time to the end, in monthly numbers. _N'importe!_ I hope the interest will be pretty strong,--and, in every number, stronger." Six days later, from the same place: "I was always sure I could make a good thing of _Barnaby_, and I think you'll find that it comes out strong to the last word. I have another number ready, all but two slips. Don't fear for young Chester. The time hasn't come----there we go again, you see, with the weekly delays. I am in great heart and spirits with the story, and with the prospect of having time to think before I go on again." A month's interval followed, and what occupied it will be described shortly. On the 11th September he wrote, "I have just burnt into Newgate, and am going in the next number to tear the prisoners out by the hair of their heads. The number which gets into the jail you'll have in proof by Tuesday." This was followed up a week later: "I have let all the prisoners out of Newgate, burnt down Lord Mansfield's, and played the very devil. Another number will finish the fires, and help us on towards the end. I feel quite smoky when I am at work. I want elbow-room terribly." To this trouble, graver supervened at his return, a serious personal sickness not the least; but he bore up gallantly, and I had never better occasion than now to observe his quiet endurance of pain, how little he thought of himself where the sense of self is commonly supreme, and the manful duty with which everything was done that, ailing as he was, he felt it necessary to do. He was still in his sick-room (22d October) when he wrote, "I hope I sha'n't leave off any more, now, until I have finished _Barnaby_." Three days after that, he was busying himself eagerly for others; and on the 2d of November the printers received the close of _Barnaby Rudge_.

This tale was Dickens's first attempt out of the sphere of the life of the day and its actual manners. Begun during the progress of _Oliver Twist_, it had been for some time laid aside; the form it ultimately took had been comprised only partially within its first design; and the story in its finished shape presented strongly a special purpose, the characteristic of all but his very earliest writings. Its scene is laid at the time when the incessant execution of men and women, comparatively innocent, disgraced every part of the country; demoralizing thousands, whom it also prepared for the scaffold. In those days the theft of a few rags from a bleaching-ground, or the abstraction of a roll of ribbons

from a counter, was visited with the penalty of blood; and such laws brutalized both their ministers and victims. It was the time, too, when a false religious outcry brought with it appalling guilt and misery. These are vices that leave more behind them than the first forms assumed, and they involve a lesson sufficiently required to justify a writer in dealing with them. There were also others grafted on them. In *Barnaby Rudge* himself it was desired to show what sources of comfort there might be, for the patient and cheerful heart, in even the worst of all human afflictions; and in the hunted life of his outcast father, whose crime had entailed not that affliction only but other more fearful wretchedness, we have as powerful a picture as any in his writings of the inevitable and unfathomable consequences of sin. But, as the story went on, it was incident to these designs that what had been accomplished in its predecessor could hardly be attained here, in singleness of purpose, unity of idea, or harmony of treatment; and other defects supervened in the management of the plot. The interest with which the tale begins has ceased to be its interest before the close; and what has chiefly taken the reader's fancy at the outset almost wholly disappears in the power and passion with which, in the later chapters, the great riots are described. So admirable is this description, however, that it would be hard to have to surrender it even for a more perfect structure of fable.

There are few things more masterly in any of his books. From the first low mutterings of the storm to its last terrible explosion, this frantic outbreak of popular ignorance and rage is depicted with unabated power. The aimlessness of idle mischief by which the ranks of the rioters are swelled at the beginning; the recklessness induced by the monstrous impunity allowed to the early excesses; the sudden spread of this drunken guilt into every haunt of poverty, ignorance, or mischief in the wicked old city, where the rich materials of crime lie festering; the wild action of its poison on all, without scheme or plan of any kind, who come within its reach; the horrors that are more bewildering for this complete absence of purpose in them; and, when all is done, the misery found to have been self-inflicted in every cranny and corner of London, as if a plague had swept over the streets: these are features in the picture of an actual occurrence, to which the manner of the treatment gives extraordinary force and meaning. Nor, in the sequel, is there anything displayed with more profitable vividness than the law's indiscriminate cruelty at last, in contrast with its cowardly indifference at first; while, among the casual touches lighting up the scene with flashes of reality that illumine every part of it, may be instanced the discovery, in the quarter from which screams for succor are loudest when Newgate is supposed to be accidentally on fire, of four men who were certain in any case to have perished on the drop next day.

The story, which has unusually careful writing in it, and much manly upright thinking, has not so many people eagerly adopted as of kin by everybody, as its predecessors are famous for; but it has yet a fair proportion of such as take solid form within the mind and keep hold of the memory. To these belong in an especial degree *Gabriel Varden* and his household, on whom are lavished all the writer's fondness and not a little of his keenest humor. The honest locksmith with his jovial jug, and the tink-tink-tink of his pleasant nature making cheerful music out

of steel and iron; the buxom wife, with her plaguy tongue that makes every one wretched whom her kindly disposition would desire to make happy; the good-hearted plump little Dolly, coquettish minx of a daughter, with all she suffers and inflicts by her fickle winning ways and her small self-admiring vanities; and Miggs the vicious and slippery, acid, amatory, and of uncomfortable figure, sower of family discontents and discords, who swears all the while she wouldn't make or meddle with 'em "not for a annual gold-mine and found in tea and sugar:" there is not much social painting anywhere with a better domestic moral than in all these; and a nice propriety of feeling and thought regulates the use of such satire throughout. No one knows more exactly how far to go with that formidable weapon, or understands better that what satirizes everything, in effect satirizes nothing.

Another excellent group is that which the story opens with, in the quaint old kitchen of the Maypole; John Willett and his friends, genuinely comic creations all of them. Then we have Barnaby and his raven: the light-hearted idiot, as unconscious of guilt as of suffering, and happy with no sense but of the influences of nature; and the grave sly bird, with sufficient sense to make himself as unhappy as rascally habits will make the human animal. There is poor brutish Hugh, too, loitering lazily outside the Maypole door, with a storm of passions in him raging to be let loose; already the scaffold's withered fruit, as he is doomed to be its ripe offering; and though with all the worst instincts of the savage, yet not without also some of the best. Still farther out of kindly nature's pitying reach lurks the worst villain of the scene: with this sole claim to consideration, that it was by constant contact with the filthiest instrument of law and state he had become the mass of moral filth he is. Mr. Dennis the hangman is a portrait that Hogarth would have painted with the same wholesome severity of satire which is employed upon it in Barnaby Rudge.

FOOTNOTES:

[36] See ante, pp. 125 and 183.

CHAPTER XV.

PUBLIC DINNER IN EDINBURGH.

1841.

His Son Walter Landor--Dies in Calcutta
(1863)--C. D. and the New Poor-Law--Moore and
Rogers--Jeffrey's Praise of Little
Nell--Resolve to visit Scotland--Edinburgh
Dinner proposed--Sir David Wilkie's
Death--Peter Robertson--Professor Wilson--A
Fancy of Scott--Lionization made
tolerable--Thoughts of Home--The Dinner and
Speeches--His Reception--Wilson's Eulogy--Home

Yearnings--Freedom of City voted to
him--Speakers at the Dinner--Politics and Party
Influences--Whig Jealousies--At the
Theatre--Hospitalities--Moral of it
all--Proposed Visit to the Highlands--Maclise
and Macready--Guide to the Highlands--Mr. Angus
Fletcher (Kindheart).

AMONG the occurrences of the year, apart from the tale he was writing, the birth of his fourth child and second son has been briefly mentioned. "I mean to call the boy Edgar," he wrote, the day after he was born (9th February), "a good honest Saxon name, I think." He changed his mind in a few days, however, on resolving to ask Landor to be godfather. This intention, as soon as formed, he announced to our excellent old friend, telling him it would give the child something to boast of, to be called Walter Landor, and that to call him so would do his own heart good. For, as to himself, whatever realities had gone out of the ceremony of christening, the meaning still remained in it of enabling him to form a relationship with friends he most loved; and as to the boy, he held that to give him a name to be proud of was to give him also another reason for doing nothing unworthy or untrue when he came to be a man. Walter, alas! only lived to manhood. He obtained a military cadetship through the kindness of Miss Coutts, and died at Calcutta on the last day of 1863, in his twenty-third year.

The interest taken by this distinguished lady in him and in his had begun, as I have said, at an earlier date than even this; and I remember, while Oliver Twist was going on, his pleasure because of her father's mention of him in a speech at Birmingham, for his advocacy of the cause of the poor. Whether to the new poor-law Sir Francis Burdett objected as strongly as we have seen that Dickens did, as well as many other excellent men, who forgot the atrocities of the system it displaced in their indignation at the needless and cruel harshness with which it was worked at the outset, I have not at hand the means of knowing. But certainly this continued to be strongly the feeling of Dickens, who exulted in nothing so much as at any misadventure to the Whigs in connection with it. "How often used Black and I," he wrote to me in April, "to quarrel about the effect of the poor-law bill! Walter comes in upon the cry. See whether the Whigs go out upon it." It was the strong desire he had to make himself heard upon it, even in Parliament, that led him not immediately to turn aside from a proposal, now privately made by some of the magnates of Reading, to bring him in for that borough; but the notion was soon dismissed, as, on its revival more than once in later times, it continued very wisely to be. His opinions otherwise were extremely radical at present, as will be apparent shortly; and he did not at all relish Peel's majority of one when it came soon after, and unseated the Whigs. It was just now, I may add, he greatly enjoyed a quiet setting-down of Moore by Rogers at Sir Francis Burdett's table, for talking exaggerated toryism. So debased was the House of Commons by reform, said Moore, that a Burke, if you could find him, would not be listened to. "No such thing, Tommy," said Rogers; "find yourself, and they'd listen even to you."

This was not many days before he hinted to me an intention soon to be carried out in a rather memorable manner: "I have done nothing to-day" (18th March: we had bought books together, the day before, at Tom Hill's sale) "but cut the _Swift_, looking into it with a delicious laziness in all manner of delightful places, and put poor Tom's books away. I had a letter from Edinburgh this morning, announcing that Jeffrey's visit to London will be the week after next; telling me that he drives about Edinburgh declaring there has been 'nothing so good as Nell since Cordelia,' which he writes also to all manner of people; and informing me of a desire in that romantic town to give me greeting and welcome. For this and other reasons I am disposed to make Scotland my destination in June rather than Ireland. Think, _do_ think, meantime (here are ten good weeks), whether you couldn't, by some effort worthy of the owner of the gigantic helmet, go with us. Think of such a fortnight,--York, Carlisle, Berwick, your own Borders, Edinburgh, Rob Roy's country, railroads, cathedrals, country inns, Arthur's Seat, lochs, glens, and home by sea. DO think of this, seriously, at leisure." It was very tempting, but not to be.

Early in April Jeffrey came, many feasts and entertainments welcoming him, of which he very sparingly partook; and before he left, the visit to Scotland in June was all duly arranged, to be initiated by the splendid welcome of a public dinner in Edinburgh, with Lord Jeffrey himself in the chair. Allan the painter had come up meanwhile, with increasing note of preparation; and it was while we were all regretting Wilkie's absence abroad, and Dickens with warrantable pride was saying how surely the great painter would have gone to this dinner, that the shock of his sudden death[37] came, and there was left but the sorrowful satisfaction of honoring his memory. There was one other change before the day. "I heard from Edinburgh this morning," he wrote on the 15th of June. "Jeffrey is not well enough to take the chair, so Wilson does. I think under all circumstances of politics, acquaintance, and _Edinburgh Review_, that it's much better as it is--Don't you?"

His first letter from Edinburgh, where he and Mrs. Dickens had taken up quarters at the Royal Hotel on their arrival the previous night, is dated the 23d of June: "I have been this morning to the Parliament House, and am now introduced (I hope) to everybody in Edinburgh. The hotel is perfectly besieged, and I have been forced to take refuge in a sequestered apartment at the end of a long passage, wherein I write this letter. They talk of 300 at the dinner. We are very well off in point of rooms, having a handsome sitting-room, another next to it for _Clock_ purposes, a spacious bedroom, and large dressing-room adjoining. The castle is in front of the windows, and the view noble. There was a supper ready last night which would have been a dinner anywhere." This was his first practical experience of the honors his fame had won for him, and it found him as eager to receive as all were eager to give. Very interesting still, too, are those who took leading part in the celebration; and in his pleasant sketches of them there are some once famous and familiar figures not so well known to the present generation. Here, among the first, are Wilson and Robertson.

"The renowned Peter Robertson is a large, portly, full-faced man, with a merry eye, and a queer way of looking under his spectacles which is

characteristic and pleasant. He seems a very warm-hearted earnest man too, and I felt quite at home with him forthwith. Walking up and down the hall of the courts of law (which was full of advocates, writers to the signet, clerks, and idlers) was a tall, burly, handsome man of eight-and-fifty, with a gait like O'Connell's, the bluest eye you can imagine, and long hair--longer than mine--falling down in a wild way under the broad brim of his hat. He had on a surtout coat, a blue checked shirt; the collar standing up, and kept in its place with a wisp of black neckerchief; no waistcoat; and a large pocket-handkerchief thrust into his breast, which was all broad and open. At his heels followed a wiry, sharp-eyed, shaggy devil of a terrier, dogging his steps as he went slashing up and down, now with one man beside him, now with another, and now quite alone, but always at a fast, rolling pace, with his head in the air, and his eyes as wide open as he could get them. I guessed it was Wilson, and it was. A bright, clear-complexioned, mountain-looking fellow, he looks as though he had just come down from the Highlands, and had never in his life taken pen in hand. But he has had an attack of paralysis in his right arm, within this month. He winced when I shook hands with him; and once or twice, when we were walking up and down, slipped as if he had stumbled on a piece of orange-peel. He is a great fellow to look at, and to talk to; and, if you could divest your mind of the actual Scott, is just the figure you would put in his place."

Nor have the most ordinary incidents of the visit any lack of interest for us now, in so far as they help to complete the picture of himself: "Allan has been squiring me about, all the morning. He and Fletcher have gone to a meeting of the dinner-stewards, and I take the opportunity of writing to you. They dine with us to-day, and we are going to-night to the theatre. M'Ian is playing there. I mean to leave a card for him before evening. We are engaged for every day of our stay, already; but the people I have seen are so very hearty and warm in their manner that much of the horrors of lionization gives way before it. I am glad to find that they propose giving me for a toast on Friday the Memory of Wilkie. I should have liked it better than anything, if I could have made my choice. Communicate all particulars to Mac. I would to God you were both here. Do dine together at the Gray's Inn on Friday, and think of me. If I don't drink my first glass of wine to you, may my pistols miss fire, and my mare slip her shoulder. All sorts of regard from Kate. She has gone with Miss Allan to see the house she was born in, etc. Write me soon, and long, etc."

His next letter was written the morning after the dinner, on Saturday, the 26th June: "The great event is over; and, being gone, I am a man again. It was the most brilliant affair you can conceive; the completest success possible, from first to last. The room was crammed, and more than seventy applicants for tickets were of necessity refused yesterday. Wilson was ill, but plucked up like a lion, and spoke famously.[38] I send you a paper herewith, but the report is dismal in the extreme. They say there will be a better one--I don't know where or when. Should there be, I will send it to you. I think (ahem!) that I spoke rather well. It was an excellent room, and both the subjects (Wilson and Scottish Literature, and the Memory of Wilkie) were good to go upon. There were nearly two hundred ladies present. The place is so contrived that the

cross table is raised enormously: much above the heads of people sitting below: and the effect on first coming in (on me, I mean) was rather tremendous. I was quite self-possessed, however, and, notwithstanding the enthooosemoosy, which was very startling, as cool as a cucumber. I wish to God you had been there, as it is impossible for the 'distinguished guest' to describe the scene. It beat all natur.". . .

Here was the close of his letter: "I have been expecting every day to hear from you, and not hearing mean to make this the briefest epistle possible. We start next Sunday (that's to-morrow week). We are going out to Jeffrey's to-day (he is very unwell), and return here to-morrow evening. If I don't find a letter from you when I come back, expect no Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life from your indignant correspondent. Murray the manager made very excellent, tasteful, and gentlemanly mention of Macready, about whom Wilson had been asking me divers questions during dinner." "A hundred thanks for your letter," he writes four days later. "I read it this morning with the greatest pleasure and delight, and answer it with ditto, ditto. Where shall I begin--about my darlings? I am delighted with Charley's precocity. He takes arter his father, he does. God bless them, you can't imagine (_you!_ how can you?) how much I long to see them. It makes me quite sorrowful to think of them. . . . Yesterday, sir, the lord provost, council, and magistrates voted me by acclamation the freedom of the city, in testimony (I quote the letter just received from 'James Forrest, lord provost') 'of the sense entertained by them of your distinguished abilities as an author.' I acknowledged this morning in appropriate terms the honor they had done me, and through me the pursuit to which I was devoted. It _is_ handsome, is it not?"

The parchment scroll of the city-freedom, recording the grounds on which it was voted, hung framed in his study to the last, and was one of his valued possessions. Answering some question of mine, he told me further as to the speakers, and gave some amusing glimpses of the party-spirit which still at that time ran high in the capital of the north.

"The men who spoke at the dinner were all the most rising men here, and chiefly at the Bar. They were all, alternately, Whigs and Tories; with some few Radicals, such as Gordon, who gave the memory of Burns. He is Wilson's son-in-law and the lord-advocate's nephew--a very masterly speaker indeed, who ought to become a distinguished man. Neaves, who gave the other poets, a _little_ too lawyer-like for my taste, is a great gun in the courts. Mr. Primrose is Lord Rosebery's son. Adam Black, the publisher as you know. Dr. Alison, a very popular friend of the poor. Robertson you know. Allan you know. Colquhoun is an advocate. All these men were selected for the toasts as being crack speakers, known men, and opposed to each other very strongly in politics. For this reason, the professors and so forth who sat upon the platform about me made no speeches and had none assigned them. I felt it was very remarkable to see such a number of gray-headed men gathered about my brown flowing locks; and it struck most of those who were present very forcibly. The judges, solicitor-general, lord-advocate, and so forth, were all here to call, the day after our arrival. The judges never go to public dinners in Scotland. Lord Meadowbank alone broke through the custom, and none of his successors have imitated him. It will give you a

good notion of _party_ to hear that the solicitor-general and lord-advocate refused to go, though they had previously engaged, _unless_ the croupier or the chairman were a Whig. Both (Wilson and Robertson) were Tories, simply because, Jeffrey excepted, no Whig could be found who was adapted to the office. The solicitor laid strict injunctions on Napier not to go if a Whig were not in office. No Whig was, and he stayed away. I think this is good?--bearing in mind that all the old Whigs of Edinburgh were cracking their throats in the room. They gave out that they were ill, and the lord-advocate did actually lie in bed all the afternoon; but this is the real truth, and one of the judges told it me with great glee. It seems they couldn't quite trust Wilson or Robertson, as they thought; and feared some Tory demonstration. Nothing of the kind took place; and ever since, these men have been the loudest in their praises of the whole affair."

The close of his letter tells us all his engagements, and completes his graceful picture of the hearty Scottish welcome given him. It has also some personal touches that may be thought worth preserving. "A threat reached me last night (they have been hammering at it in their papers, it seems, for some time) of a dinner at Glasgow. But I hope, having circulated false rumors of my movements, to get away before they send to me; and only to stop there on my way home, to change horses and send to the post-office. . . . You will like to know how we have been living. Here's a list of engagements, past and present. Wednesday, we dined at home, and went incog. to the theatre at night, to Murray's box; the pieces admirably done, and M'Ian in the _Two Drovers_ quite wonderful and most affecting. Thursday, to Lord Murray's; dinner and evening party. Friday, _the_ dinner. Saturday, to Jeffrey's, a beautiful place about three miles off" (Craigcrook, which at Lord Jeffrey's invitation I afterwards visited with him), "stop there all night, dine on Sunday, and home at eleven. Monday, dine at Dr. Alison's, four miles off. Tuesday, dinner and evening party at Allan's. Wednesday, breakfast with Napier, dine with Blackwood's seven miles off, evening party at the treasurer's of the town-council, supper with all the artists (!!). Thursday, lunch at the solicitor-general's, dine at Lord Gillies's, evening party at Joseph Gordon's, one of Brougham's earliest supporters. Friday, dinner and evening party at Robertson's. Saturday, dine again at Jeffrey's; back to the theatre, at half-past nine to the moment, for public appearance;[39] places all let, etc. etc. etc. Sunday, off at seven o'clock in the morning to Stirling, and then to Callender, a stage further. Next day, to Loch Earn, and pull up there for three days, to rest and work. The moral of all this is, that there is no place like home; and that I thank God most heartily for having given me a quiet spirit, and a heart that won't hold many people. I sigh for Devonshire Terrace and Broadstairs, for battledoor and shuttlecock; I want to dine in a blouse with you and Mac; and I feel Topping's merits more acutely than I have ever done in my life. On Sunday evening, the 17th of July, I shall revisit my household gods, please Heaven. I wish the day were here. For God's sake be in waiting. I wish you and Mac would dine in Devonshire Terrace that day with Fred. He has the key of the cellar. _Do._ We shall be at Inverary in the Highlands on Tuesday week, getting to it through the Pass of Glencoe, of which you may have heard! On Thursday following we shall be at Glasgow, where I shall hope to receive your last letter before we meet. At Inverary, too, I shall make sure of

finding at least one, at the post-office. . . . Little Allan is trying hard for the post of queen's limner for Scotland, vacant by poor Wilkie's death. Every one is in his favor but ----, who is jobbing for some one else. Appoint him, will you, and I'll give up the premiership.--How I breakfasted to-day in the house where Scott lived seven-and-twenty years; how I have made solemn pledges to write about missing children in the Edinburgh Review, and will do my best to keep them; how I have declined to be brought in, free gratis for nothing and qualified to boot, for a Scotch county that's going a-begging, lest I should be thought to have dined on Friday under false pretenses; these, with other marvels, shall be yours anon. . . . I must leave off sharp, to get dressed and off upon the seven miles' dinner-trip. Kate's affectionate regards. My hearty loves to Mac and Grim." Grim was another great artist having the same beginning to his name, whose tragic studies had suggested an epithet quite inapplicable to any of his personal qualities.

The narrative of the trip to the Highlands must have a chapter to itself and its incidents of adventure and comedy. The latter chiefly were due to the guide who accompanied him, a quasi-Highlander himself, named a few pages back as Mr. Kindheart, whose real name was Mr. Angus Fletcher, and to whom it hardly needs that I should give other mention than will be supplied by such future notices of him as my friend's letters may contain. He had a wayward kind of talent, which he could never concentrate on a settled pursuit; and though at the time we knew him first he had taken up the profession of a sculptor, he abandoned it soon afterwards. His mother, a woman distinguished by many remarkable qualities, lived now in the English lake-country; and it was no fault of hers that this home was no longer her son's. But what mainly had closed it to him was undoubtedly not less the secret of such liking for him as Dickens had. Fletcher's eccentricities and absurdities, often divided by the thinnest partition from the most foolish extravagance, but occasionally clever, and always the genuine though whimsical outgrowth of the life he led, had a curious sort of charm for Dickens. He enjoyed the oddity and humor; tolerated all the rest; and to none more freely than to Kindheart during the next few years, both in Italy and in England, opened his house and hospitality. The close of the poor fellow's life, alas! was in only too sad agreement with all the previous course of it; but this will have mention hereafter. He is waiting now to introduce Dickens to the Highlands.

FOOTNOTES:

[37] Dickens refused to believe it at first. "My heart assures me Wilkie liveth," he wrote. "He is the sort of man who will be VERY old when he dies"--and certainly one would have said so.

[38] The speeches generally were good, but the descriptions in the text by himself will here be thought sufficient. One or two sentences ought, however, to be given to show the tone of Wilson's praise, and I will only preface them by the remark that Dickens's acknowledgments, as well as his tribute to Wilkie, were expressed with great felicity, and that Peter Robertson seems to have thrown the company into convulsions of laughter by his imitation of Dominie Sampson's PRO-DI-GI-OUS, in a supposed interview between that worthy schoolmaster and Mr. Squeers of

Dotheboys. I now quote from Professor Wilson's speech:

"Our friend has mingled in the common walks of life; he has made himself familiar with the lower orders of society. He has not been deterred by the aspect of vice and wickedness, and misery and guilt, from seeking a spirit of good in things evil, but has endeavored by the might of genius to transmute what was base into what is precious as the beaten gold. . . . But I shall be betrayed, if I go on much longer,--which it would be improper for me to do,--into something like a critical delineation of the genius of our illustrious guest. I shall not attempt that; but I cannot but express, in a few ineffectual words, the delight which every human bosom feels in the benign spirit which pervades all his creations. How kind and good a man he is, I need not say; nor what strength of genius he has acquired by that profound sympathy with his fellow-creatures, whether in prosperity and happiness, or overwhelmed with unfortunate circumstances, but who yet do not sink under their miseries, but trust to their own strength of endurance, to that principle of truth and honor and integrity which is no stranger to the uncultivated bosom, and which is found in the lowest abodes in as great strength as in the halls of nobles and the palaces of kings. Mr. Dickens is also a satirist. He satirizes human life, but he does not satirize it to degrade it. He does not wish to pull down what is high into the neighborhood of what is low. He does not seek to represent all virtue as a hollow thing, in which no confidence can be placed. He satirizes only the selfish, and the hard-hearted, and the cruel. Our distinguished guest may not have given us, as yet, a full and complete delineation of the female character. But this he has done: he has not endeavored to represent women as charming merely by the aid of accomplishments, however elegant and graceful. He has not depicted those accomplishments as their essentials, but has spoken of them rather as always inspired by a love of domesticity, by fidelity, by purity, by innocence, by charity, and by hope, which makes them discharge, under the most difficult circumstances, their duties, and which brings over their path in this world some glimpses of the light of heaven. Mr. Dickens may be assured that there is felt for him all over Scotland a sentiment of kindness, affection, admiration, and love; and I know for certain that the knowledge of these sentiments must make him happy."

[39] On this occasion, as he told me afterwards, the orchestra did a double stroke of business, much to the amazement of himself and his friends, by improvising at his entrance _Charley is my Darling_, amid tumultuous shouts of delight.

CHAPTER XVI.

ADVENTURES IN THE HIGHLANDS.

1841.

A Fright--Fletcher's Eccentricities--The
Trossachs--The Travelers' Guide--A Comical

Picture--Highland Accommodation--Grand
Scenery--Changes in Route--A
Waterfall--Entrance to Glencoe--The Pass of
Glencoe--Loch Leven--A July Evening--Postal
Service at Loch Earn Head--The Maid of the
Inn--Impressions of Glencoe--An
Adventure--Torrents swollen with
Rain--Dangerous Traveling--Incidents and
Accidents--Broken-down Bridge--A Fortunate
Resolve--Post-boy in Danger--The Rescue--Narrow
Escape--A Highland Inn and Inmates--English
Comfort at Dalmally--Dinner at Glasgow
proposed--Eagerness for Home.

FROM Loch Earn Head Dickens wrote on Monday, the 5th of July, having reached it, "wet through," at four that afternoon: "Having had a great deal to do in a crowded house on Saturday night at the theatre, we left Edinburgh yesterday morning at half-past seven, and traveled, with Fletcher for our guide, to a place called Stewart's Hotel, nine miles further than Callender. We had neglected to order rooms, and were obliged to make a sitting-room of our own bed-chamber; in which my genius for stowing furniture away was of the very greatest service. Fletcher slept in a kennel with three panes of glass in it, which formed part and parcel of a window; the other three panes whereof belonged to a man who slept on the other side of the partition. He told me this morning that he had had a nightmare all night, and had screamed horribly, he knew. The stranger, as you may suppose, hired a gig and went off at full gallop with the first glimpse of daylight.[40] Being very tired (for we had not had more than three hours' sleep on the previous night) we lay till ten this morning, and at half-past eleven went through the Trossachs to Loch Katrine, where I walked from the hotel after tea last night. It is impossible to say what a glorious scene it was. It rained as it never does rain anywhere but here. We conveyed Kate up a rocky pass to go and see the island of the Lady of the Lake, but she gave in after the first five minutes, and we left her, very picturesque and uncomfortable, with Tom" (the servant they had brought with them from Devonshire Terrace) "holding an umbrella over her head, while we climbed on. When we came back, she had gone into the carriage. We were wet through to the skin, and came on in that state four-and-twenty miles. Fletcher is very good-natured, and of extraordinary use in these outlandish parts. His habit of going into kitchens and bars, disconcerting at Broadstairs, is here of great service. Not expecting us till six, they hadn't lighted our fires when we arrived here; and if you had seen him (with whom the responsibility of the omission rested) running in and out of the sitting-room and the two bedrooms with a great pair of bellows, with which he distractedly blew each of the fires out in turn, you would have died of laughing. He had on his head a great Highland cap, on his back a white coat, and cut such a figure as even the inimitable can't depicter. . . .

"The inns, inside and out, are the queerest places imaginable. From the road, this one," at Loch Earn Head, "looks like a white wall, with windows in it by mistake. We have a good sitting-room, though, on the

first floor: as large (but not as lofty) as my study. The bedrooms are of that size which renders it impossible for you to move, after you have taken your boots off, without chipping pieces out of your legs. There isn't a basin in the Highlands which will hold my face; not a drawer which will open, after you have put your clothes in it; not a water-bottle capacious enough to wet your toothbrush. The huts are wretched and miserable beyond all description. The food (for those who can pay for it) 'not bad,' as M. would say: oat-cake, mutton, hotch-potch, trout from the loch, small beer bottled, marmalade, and whiskey. Of the last-named article I have taken about a pint to-day. The weather is what they call 'soft'--which means that the sky is a vast water-spout that never leaves off emptying itself; and the liquor has no more effect than water. . . . I am going to work to-morrow, and hope before leaving here to write you again. The elections have been sad work indeed. That they should return Sibthorp and reject Bulwer, is, by Heaven, a national disgrace. . . . I don't wonder the devil flew over Lincoln. The people were far too addle-headed, even for him. . . . I don't bore you with accounts of Ben this and that, and Lochs of all sorts of names, but this is a wonderful region. The way the mists were stalking about to-day, and the clouds lying down upon the hills; the deep glens, the high rocks, the rushing waterfalls, and the roaring rivers down in deep gulfs below; were all stupendous. This house is wedged round by great heights that are lost in the clouds; and the loch, twelve miles long, stretches out its dreary length before the windows. In my next I shall soar to the sublime, perhaps; in this here present writing I confine myself to the ridiculous. But I am always," etc. etc.

His next letter bore the date of "Ballechelish, Friday evening, ninth July, 1841, half-past nine, P.M.," and described what we had often longed to see together, the Pass of Glencoe. . . . "I can't go to bed without writing to you from here, though the post will not leave this place until we have left it and arrived at another. On looking over the route which Lord Murray made out for me, I found he had put down Thursday next for Abbotsford and Dryburgh Abbey, and a journey of seventy miles besides! Therefore, and as I was happily able to steal a march upon myself at Loch Earn Head, and to finish in two days what I thought would take me three, we shall leave here to-morrow morning; and, by being a day earlier than we intended at all the places between this and Melrose (which we propose to reach by Wednesday night), we shall have a whole day for Scott's house and tomb, and still be at York on Saturday evening, and home, God willing, on Sunday. . . . We left Loch Earn Head last night, and went to a place called Killin, eight miles from it, where we slept. I walked some six miles with Fletcher after we got there, to see a waterfall; and truly it was a magnificent sight, foaming and crashing down three great steepes of riven rock; leaping over the first as far off as you could carry your eye, and rumbling and foaming down into a dizzy pool below you, with a deafening roar. To-day we have had a journey of between 50 and 60 miles, through the bleakest and most desolate part of Scotland, where the hill-tops are still covered with great patches of snow, and the road winds over steep mountain-passes, and on the brink of deep brooks and precipices. The cold all day has been _intense_, and the rain sometimes most violent. It has been impossible to keep warm, by any means; even whiskey failed; the wind was too piercing even for that. One stage of ten miles, over a place called

the Black Mount, took us two hours and a half to do; and when we came to a lone public called the King's House, at the entrance to Glencoe,--this was about three o'clock,--we were wellnigh frozen. We got a fire directly, and in twenty minutes they served us up some famous kippered salmon, broiled; a broiled fowl; hot mutton ham and poached eggs; pancakes; oat-cake; wheaten bread; butter; bottled porter; hot water, lump sugar, and whiskey; of which we made a very hearty meal. All the way, the road had been among moors and mountains, with huge masses of rock, which fell down God knows where, sprinkling the ground in every direction, and giving it the aspect of the burial-place of a race of giants. Now and then we passed a hut or two, with neither window nor chimney, and the smoke of the peat fire rolling out at the door. But there were not six of these dwellings in a dozen miles; and anything so bleak and wild, and mighty in its loneliness, as the whole country, it is impossible to conceive. Glencoe itself is perfectly _terrible_. The pass is an awful place. It is shut in on each side by enormous rocks from which great torrents come rushing down in all directions. In amongst these rocks on one side of the pass (the left as we came) there are scores of glens, high up, which form such haunts as you might imagine yourself wandering in, in the very height and madness of a fever. They will live in my dreams for years--I was going to say as long as I live, and I seriously think so. The very recollection of them makes me shudder. . . . Well, I will not bore you with my impressions of these tremendous wilds, but they really are fearful in their grandeur and amazing solitude. Wales is a mere toy compared with them."

The further mention of his guide's whimsical ways may stand, for it cannot now be the possible occasion of pain or annoyance, or of anything but very innocent laughter:

"We are now in a bare white house on the banks of Loch Leven, but in a comfortably-furnished room on the top of the house,--that is, on the first floor,--with the rain pattering against the window as though it were December, the wind howling dismally, a cold damp mist on everything without, a blazing fire within half way up the chimney, and a most infernal Piper practicing under the window for a competition of pipers which is to come off shortly. . . . The store of anecdotes of Fletcher with which we shall return will last a long time. It seems that the F.'s are an extensive clan, and that his father was a Highlander. Accordingly, wherever he goes, he finds out some cotter or small farmer who is his cousin. I wish you could see him walking into his cousins' curds and cream, and into their dairies generally! Yesterday morning, between eight and nine, I was sitting writing at the open window, when the postman came to the inn (which at Loch Earn Head is the post-office) for the letters. He is going away, when Fletcher, who has been writing somewhere below-stairs, rushes out, and cries, 'Halloa there! Is that the Post?' 'Yes!' somebody answers. 'Call him back!' says Fletcher: 'Just sit down till I've done, _and don't go away till I tell you_.'--Fancy! The General Post, with the letters of forty villages in a leathern bag! . . . To-morrow at Oban. Sunday at Inverary. Monday at Tarbet. Tuesday at Glasgow (and that night at Hamilton). Wednesday at Melrose. Thursday at ditto. Friday I don't know where. Saturday at York. Sunday--how glad I shall be to shake hands with you! My love to Mac. I thought he'd have written once. Ditto to Macready. I had a very nice and

welcome letter from him, and a most hearty one from Elliotson. . . . P.S. Half asleep. So excuse drowsiness of matter and composition. I shall be full of joy to meet another letter from you! . . . P.P.S. They speak Gaelic here, of course, and many of the common people understand very little English. Since I wrote this letter, I rang the girl up-stairs, and gave elaborate directions (you know my way) for a pint of sherry to be made into boiling negus; mentioning all the ingredients one by one, and particularly nutmeg. When I had quite finished, seeing her obviously bewildered, I said, with great gravity, 'Now you know what you're going to order?' 'Oh, yes. Sure.' 'What?'--a pause--'Just'--another pause--'Just plenty of _nutbergs_!'"

The impression made upon him by the Pass of Glencoe was not overstated in this letter. It continued with him as he there expressed it; and as we shall see hereafter, even where he expected to find Nature in her most desolate grandeur on the dreary waste of an American prairie, his imagination went back with a higher satisfaction to Glencoe. But his experience of it is not yet completely told. The sequel was in a letter of two days' later date, from "Dalmally, Sunday, July the eleventh, 1841:"

"As there was no place of this name in our route, you will be surprised to see it at the head of this present writing. But our being here is a part of such moving accidents by flood and field as will astonish you. If you should happen to have your hat on, take it off, that your hair may stand on end without any interruption. To get from Ballyhoolish (as I am obliged to spell it when Fletcher is not in the way; and he is out at this moment) to Oban, it is necessary to cross two ferries, one of which is an arm of the sea, eight or ten miles broad. Into this ferry-boat, passengers, carriages, horses, and all, get bodily, and are got across by hook or by crook if the weather be reasonably fine. Yesterday morning, however, it blew such a strong gale that the landlord of the inn, where we had paid for horses all the way to Oban (thirty miles), honestly came up-stairs just as we were starting, with the money in his hand, and told us it would be impossible to cross. There was nothing to be done but to come back five-and-thirty miles, through Glencoe and Inverouran, to a place called Tyndrum, whence a road twelve miles long crosses to Dalmally, which is sixteen miles from Inverary. Accordingly we turned back, and in a great storm of wind and rain began to retrace the dreary road we had come the day before. . . . I was not at all ill pleased to have to come again through that awful Glencoe. If it had been tremendous on the previous day, yesterday it was perfectly horrific. It had rained all night, and was raining then, as it only does in these parts. Through the whole glen, which is ten miles long, torrents were boiling and foaming, and sending up in every direction spray like the smoke of great fires. They were rushing down every hill and mountain side, and tearing like devils across the path, and down into the depths of the rocks. Some of the hills looked as if they were full of silver, and had cracked in a hundred places. Others as if they were frightened, and had broken out into a deadly sweat. In others there was no compromise or division of streams, but one great torrent came roaring down with a deafening noise, and a rushing of water that was quite appalling. Such a _spaet_, in short (that's the country word), has not been known for many years, and the sights and sounds were beyond

description. The post-boy was not at all at his ease, and the horses were very much frightened (as well they might be) by the perpetual raging and roaring; one of them started as we came down a steep place, and we were within that much (----) of tumbling over a precipice; just then, too, the drag broke, and we were obliged to go on as we best could, without it: getting out every now and then, and hanging on at the back of the carriage to prevent its rolling down too fast, and going Heaven knows where. Well, in this pleasant state of things we came to King's House again, having been four hours doing the sixteen miles. The rumble where Tom sat was by this time so full of water that he was obliged to borrow a gimlet and bore holes in the bottom to let it run out. The horses that were to take us on were out upon the hills, somewhere within ten miles round; and three or four bare-legged fellows went out to look for 'em, while we sat by the fire and tried to dry ourselves. At last we got off again (without the drag and with a broken spring, no smith living within ten miles), and went limping on to Inverouran. In the first three miles we were in a ditch and out again, and lost a horse's shoe. All this time it never once left off raining; and was very windy, very cold, very misty, and most intensely dismal. So we crossed the Black Mount, and came to a place we had passed the day before, where a rapid river runs over a bed of broken rock. Now, this river, sir, had a bridge last winter, but the bridge broke down when the thaw came, and has never since been mended; so travelers cross upon a little platform, made of rough deal planks stretching from rock to rock; and carriages and horses ford the water, at a certain point. As the platform is the reverse of steady (we had proved this the day before), is very slippery, and affords anything but a pleasant footing, having only a trembling little rail on one side, and on the other nothing between it and the foaming stream, Kate decided to remain in the carriage, and trust herself to the wheels rather than to her feet. Fletcher and I had got out, and it was going away, when I advised her, as I had done several times before, to come with us; for I saw that the water was very high, the current being greatly swollen by the rain, and that the post-boy had been eyeing it in a very disconcerted manner for the last half-hour. This decided her to come out; and Fletcher, she, Tom, and I, began to cross, while the carriage went about a quarter of a mile down the bank, in search of a shallow place. The platform shook so much that we could only come across two at a time, and then it felt as if it were hung on springs. As to the wind and rain! . . . well, put into one gust all the wind and rain you ever saw and heard, and you'll have some faint notion of it! When we got safely to the opposite bank, there came riding up a wild Highlander, in a great plaid, whom we recognized as the landlord of the inn, and who, without taking the least notice of us, went dashing on,--with the plaid he was wrapped in, streaming in the wind,--screeching in Gaelic to the post-boy on the opposite bank, and making the most frantic gestures you ever saw, in which he was joined by some other wild man on foot, who had come across by a short cut, knee-deep in mire and water. As we began to see what this meant, we (that is, Fletcher and I) scrambled on after them, while the boy, horses, and carriage were plunging in the water, which left only the horses' heads and the boy's body visible. By the time we got up to them, the man on horseback and the men on foot were perfectly mad with pantomime; for as to any of their shouts being heard by the boy, the water made such a great noise that they might as well have been dumb. It

made me quite sick to think how I should have felt if Kate had been inside. The carriage went round and round like a great stone, the boy was as pale as death, the horses were struggling and plashing and snorting like sea-animals, and we were all roaring to the driver to throw himself off and let them and the coach go to the devil, when suddenly it came all right (having got into shallow water), and, all tumbling and dripping and jogging from side to side, climbed up to the dry land. I assure you we looked rather queer, as we wiped our faces and stared at each other in a little cluster round about it. It seemed that the man on horseback had been looking at us through a telescope as we came to the track, and knowing that the place was very dangerous, and seeing that we meant to bring the carriage, had come on at a great gallop to show the driver the only place where he could cross. By the time he came up, the man had taken the water at a wrong place, and in a word was as nearly drowned (with carriage, horses, luggage, and all) as ever man was. Was this a good adventure?

"We all went on to the inn,--the wild man galloping on first, to get a fire lighted,--and there we dined on eggs and bacon, oat-cake, and whiskey; and changed and dried ourselves. The place was a mere knot of little outhouses, and in one of these there were fifty Highlanders all drunk. . . . Some were drovers, some pipers, and some workmen engaged to build a hunting-lodge for Lord Breadalbane hard by, who had been driven in by stress of weather. One was a paper-hanger. He had come out three days before to paper the inn's best room, a chamber almost large enough to keep a Newfoundland dog in, and, from the first half-hour after his arrival to that moment, had been hopelessly and irreclaimably drunk. They were lying about in all directions: on forms, on the ground, about a loft overhead, round the turf-fire wrapped in plaids, on the tables, and under them. We paid our bill, thanked our host very heartily, gave some money to his children, and after an hour's rest came on again. At ten o'clock at night we reached this place, and were overjoyed to find quite an English inn, with good beds (those we have slept on, yet, have always been of straw), and every possible comfort. We breakfasted this morning at half-past ten, and at three go on to Inverary to dinner. I believe the very rough part of the journey is over, and I am really glad of it. Kate sends all kind of regards. I shall hope to find a letter from you at Inverary when the post reaches there, to-morrow. I wrote to Oban yesterday, desiring the post-office keeper to send any he might have for us, over to that place. Love to Mac."

One more letter, brief, but overflowing at every word with his generous nature, must close the delightful series written from Scotland. It was dated from Inverary the day following his exciting adventure; promised me another from Melrose (which has unfortunately not been kept with the rest); and inclosed the invitation to a public dinner at Glasgow. "I have returned for answer that I am on my way home, on pressing business connected with my weekly publication, and can't stop. But I have offered to come down any day in September or October, and accept the honor then. Now, I shall come and return per mail; and, if this suits them, enter into a solemn league and covenant to come with me. Do. You must. I am sure you will. . . . Till my next, and always afterwards, God bless you. I got your welcome letter this morning, and have read it a hundred times. What a pleasure it is! Kate's best regards. I am dying for Sunday, and

wouldn't stop now for twenty dinners of twenty thousand each.

[Illustration: 'Always your affectionate friend

'Doz.]

"Will Lord John meet the Parliament, or resign first?" I agreed to accompany him to Glasgow; but illness intercepted that celebration.

FOOTNOTES:

[40] Poor good Mr. Fletcher had, among his other peculiarities, a habit of venting any particular emotion in a wildness of cry that went beyond even the descriptive power of his friend, who referred to it frequently in his Broadstairs letters. Here is an instance (20th Sept, 1840): "Mrs. M. being in the next machine the other day heard him howl like a wolf (as he does) when he first touched the cold water. I am glad to have my former story in that respect confirmed. There is no sound on earth like it. In the infernal regions there may be, but elsewhere there is no compound addition of wild beasts that could produce its like for their total. The description of the wolves in _Robinson Crusoe_ is the nearest thing; but it's feeble--very feeble--in comparison." Of the generally amiable side to all his eccentricities I am tempted to give an illustration from the same letter: "An alarming report being brought to me the other day that he was preaching, I betook myself to the spot, and found he was reading Wordsworth to a family on the terrace, outside the house, in the open air and public way. The whole town were out. When he had given them a taste of Wordsworth, he sent home for Mrs. Norton's book, and entertained them with selections from that. He concluded with an imitation of Mrs. Hemans reading her own poetry, which he performed with a pocket-handkerchief over his head to imitate her veil--all this in public, before everybody."

CHAPTER XVII.

AGAIN AT BROADSTAIRS.

1841.

Peel and his Party--Getting very
Radical--Thoughts of colonizing--Political
Squib by C. D.--Fine Old English Tory
Times--Mesmerism--Metropolitan Prisons--Book by
a Workman--An August Day by the Sea--Another
Story in Prospect--_Clock_ Discontents--New
Adventure--Agreement for it signed--The Book
that proved to be _Chuzzlewit_--Peel and Lord
Ashley--Visions of America.

SOON after his return, at the opening of August, he went to Broadstairs;

and the direction in which that last question shows his thoughts to have been busy was that to which he turned his first holiday leisure. He sent me some rhymed squibs as his anonymous contribution to the fight the Liberals were then making against what was believed to be intended by the return to office of the Tories; ignorant as we were how much wiser than his party the statesman then at the head of it was, or how greatly what we all most desired would be advanced by the very success that had been most disheartening. There will be no harm now in giving one of these pieces, which will sufficiently show the tone of all of them, and with what a hearty relish they were written. I doubt indeed if he ever enjoyed anything more than the power of thus taking part occasionally, unknown to outsiders, in the sharp conflict the press was waging at the time. "By Jove, how radical I am getting!" he wrote to me (13th August). "I wax stronger and stronger in the true principles every day. I don't know whether it's the sea, or no, but so it is." He would at times even talk, in moments of sudden indignation at the political outlook, of carrying off himself and his household gods, like Coriolanus, to a world elsewhere! "Thank God there is a Van Diemen's Land. That's my comfort. Now, I wonder if I should make a good settler! I wonder, if I went to a new colony with my head, hands, legs, and health, I should force myself to the top of the social milk-pot and live upon the cream! What do you think? Upon my word, I believe I should."

His political squibs during the Tory interregnum comprised some capital subjects for pictures after the manner of Peter Pindar; but that which I select has no touch of personal satire in it, and he would himself, for that reason, have least objected to its revival. Thus ran his new version of "The Fine Old English Gentleman, to be said or sung at all conservative dinners:"

I'll sing you a new ballad, and I'll warrant it first-rate,
Of the days of that old gentleman who had that old estate;
When they spent the public money at a bountiful old rate
On ev'ry mistress, pimp, and scamp, at ev'ry noble gate.
In the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

The good old laws were garnished well with gibbets, whips, and chains,
With fine old English penalties, and fine old English pains,
With rebel heads and seas of blood once hot in rebel veins;
For all these things were requisite to guard the rich old gains
Of the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

This brave old code, like Argus, had a hundred watchful eyes,
And ev'ry English peasant had his good old English spies,
To tempt his starving discontent with fine old English lies,
Then call the good old Yeomanry to stop his peevish cries,
In the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again!

The good old times for cutting throats that cried out in their need,
The good old times for hunting men who held their fathers' creed,
The good old times when William Pitt, as all good men agreed,

Came down direct from Paradise at more than railroad speed. . . .
Oh, the fine old English Tory times;
When will they come again?

In those rare days, the press was seldom known to snarl or bark,
But sweetly sang of men in pow'r, like any tuneful lark;
Grave judges, too, to all their evil deeds were in the dark;
And not a man in twenty score knew how to make his mark.
Oh, the fine old English Tory times;
Soon may they come again! . . .

But tolerance, though slow in flight, is strong-wing'd in the main;
That night must come on these fine days, in course of time was plain;
The pure old spirit struggled, but its struggles were in vain;
A nation's grip was on it, and it died in choking pain,
With the fine old English Tory days,
All of the olden time.

The bright old day now dawns again; the cry runs through the land,
In England there shall be--dear bread! in Ireland--sword and brand!
And poverty, and ignorance, shall swell the rich and grand,
So, rally round the rulers with the gentle iron hand
Of the fine old English Tory days;
Hail to the coming time!

Of matters in which he had been specially interested before he quitted London, one or two may properly be named. He had always sympathized, almost as strongly as Archbishop Whately did, with Dr. Elliotson's mesmeric investigations; and, reinforced as these were in the present year by the displays of a Belgian youth whom another friend, Mr. Chauncy Hare Townshend, brought over to England, the subject, which to the last had an attraction for him, was for the time rather ardently followed up. The improvement during the last few years in the London prisons was another matter of eager and pleased inquiry with him; and he took frequent means of stating what in this respect had been done, since even the date when his Sketches were written, by two most efficient public officers at Clerkenwell and Tothill Fields, Mr. Chesterton and Lieutenant Tracey, whom the course of these inquiries turned into private friends. His last letter to me before he quitted town sufficiently explains itself. "Slow rises worth by poverty deprest" was the thought in his mind at every part of his career, and he never for a moment was unmindful of the duty it imposed upon him: "I subscribed for a couple of copies" (31st July) "of this little book. I knew nothing of the man, but he wrote me a very modest letter of two lines, some weeks ago. I have been much affected by the little biography at the beginning, and I thought you would like to share the emotion it had raised in me. I wish we were all in Eden again--for the sake of these toiling creatures."

In the middle of August (Monday, 16th) I had announcement that he was coming up for special purposes: "I sit down to write to you without an atom of news to communicate. Yes, I have,--something that will surprise you, who are pent up in dark and dismal Lincoln's Inn Fields. It is the brightest day you ever saw. The sun is sparkling on the water so that I

can hardly bear to look at it. The tide is in, and the fishing-boats are dancing like mad. Upon the green-topped cliffs the corn is cut and piled in shocks; and thousands of butterflies are fluttering about, taking the bright little red flags at the mast-heads for flowers, and panting with delight accordingly. [Here the Inimitable, unable to resist the brilliancy out of doors, breaketh off, rusheth to the machines, and plungeth into the sea. Returning, he proceedeth:] Jeffrey is just as he was when he wrote the letter I sent you. No better, and no worse. I had a letter from Napier on Saturday, urging the children's-labor subject upon me. But, as I hear from Southwood Smith that the report cannot be printed until the new Parliament has sat at the least six weeks, it will be impossible to produce it before the January number. I shall be in town on Saturday morning and go straight to you. A letter has come from little Hall begging that when I _do_ come to town I will dine there, as they wish to talk about the new story. I have written to say that I will do so on Saturday, and we will go together; but I shall be by no means good company. . . . I have more than half a mind to start a bookseller of my own. I could; with good capital too, as you know; and ready to spend it. _G. Varden beware!_"

Small causes of displeasure had been growing out of the _Clock_, and were almost unavoidably incident to the position in which he found himself respecting it. Its discontinuance had become necessary, the strain upon himself being too great without the help from others which experience had shown to be impracticable; but I thought he had not met the difficulty wisely by undertaking, which already he had done, to begin a new story so early as the following March. On his arrival, therefore, we decided on another plan, with which we went armed that Saturday afternoon to his publishers, and of which the result will be best told by himself. He had returned to Broadstairs the following morning, and next day (Monday, the 23d of August) he wrote to me in very enthusiastic terms of the share I had taken in what he calls "the development on Saturday afternoon; when I thought Chapman very manly and sensible, Hall morally and physically feeble though perfectly well intentioned, and both the statement and reception of the project quite triumphant. Didn't you think so too?" A fortnight later, Tuesday, the 7th of September, the agreement was signed in my chambers, and its terms were to the effect following. The _Clock_ was to cease with the close of _Barnaby Rudge_, the respective ownerships continuing as provided; and the new work in twenty numbers, similar to those of _Pickwick_ and _Nickleby_, was not to begin until after an interval of twelve months, in November, 1842. During its publication he was to receive two hundred pounds monthly, to be accounted as part of the expenses; for all which, and all risks incident, the publishers made themselves responsible, under conditions the same as in the _Clock_ agreement; except that out of the profits of each number they were to have only a fourth, three-fourths going to him, and this arrangement was to hold good until the termination of six months from the completed book, when, upon payment to him of a fourth of the value of all existing stock, they were to have half the future interest. During the twelve months' interval before the book began, he was to be paid one hundred and fifty pounds each month; but this was to be drawn from his three-fourths of the profits, and in no way to interfere with the monthly payments of two hundred pounds while the publication was going on.[41] Such was the

"project," excepting only a provision to be mentioned hereafter against the improbable event of the profits being inadequate to the repayment; and my only drawback from the satisfaction of my own share in it arose from my fear of the use he was likely to make of the leisure it afforded him.

That this fear was not ill founded appeared at the close of the next note I had from him: "There's no news" (13th September) "since my last. We are going to dine with Rogers to-day, and with Lady Essex, who is also here. Rogers is much pleased with Lord Ashley, who was offered by Peel a post in the government, but resolutely refused to take office unless Peel pledged himself to factory-improvement. Peel 'hadn't made up his mind,' and Lord Ashley was deaf to all other inducements, though they must have been very tempting. Much do I honor him for it. I am in an exquisitely lazy state, bathing, walking, reading, lying in the sun, doing everything but working. This frame of mind is superinduced by the prospect of rest, and the promising arrangements which I owe to you. I am still haunted by visions of America night and day. To miss this opportunity would be a sad thing. Kate cries dismally if I mention the subject. But, God willing, I think it must be managed somehow!"

FOOTNOTES:

[41] "M. was quite aghast last night (9th of September) at the brilliancy of the C. & H. arrangement: which is worth noting perhaps."

CHAPTER XVIII.

EVE OF THE VISIT TO AMERICA.

1841.

Greetings from America--Reply to Washington
Irving--Difficulties in the Way--Resolve to
go--Wish to revisit Scenes of Boyhood--Proposed
Book of Travel--Arrangements for the
Journey--Impatience of Suspense--Resolve to
leave the Children--Mrs. Dickens reconciled--A
Grave Illness--Domestic Grievances--The Old
Sorrow--At Windsor--Son Walter's
Christening--At Liverpool with the Travelers.

THE notion of America was in his mind, as we have seen, when he first projected the Clock; and a very hearty letter from Washington Irving about Little Nell and the Curiosity Shop, expressing the delight with his writings and the yearnings to himself which had indeed been pouring in upon him for some time from every part of the States, had very strongly revived it. He answered Irving with more than his own warmth: unable to thank him enough for his cordial and generous praise, or to tell him what lasting gratification it had given. "I wish I could find

in your welcome letter," he added, "some hint of an intention to visit England. I should love to go with you, as I have gone, God knows how often, into Little Britain, and Eastcheap, and Green Arbor Court, and Westminster Abbey. . . . It would gladden my heart to compare notes with you about all those delightful places and people that I used to walk about and dream of in the daytime, when a very small and not-over-particularly-taken-care-of boy." After interchange of these letters the subject was frequently revived; upon his return from Scotland it began to take shape as a thing that somehow or other, at no very distant date, _must be_; and at last, near the end of a letter filled with many unimportant things, the announcement, doubly underlined, came to me.

The decision once taken, he was in his usual fever until its difficulties were disposed of. The objections to separation from the children led at first to the notion of taking them, but this was as quickly abandoned; and what remained to be overcome yielded readily to the kind offices of Macready, the offer of whose home to the little ones during the time of absence, though not accepted to the full extent, gave yet the assurance needed to quiet natural apprehensions. All this, including an arrangement for publication of such notes as might occur to him on the journey, took but a few days; and I was reading in my chambers a letter he had written the previous day from Broadstairs, when a note from him reached me, written that morning in London, to tell me he was on his way to take share of my breakfast. He had come overland by Canterbury after posting his first letter, had seen Macready the previous night, and had completed some part of the arrangements. This mode of rapid procedure was characteristic of him at all similar times, and will appear in the few following extracts from his letters:

"Now" (19th September) "to astonish you. After balancing, considering, and weighing the matter in every point of view, I HAVE MADE UP MY MIND (WITH GOD'S LEAVE) TO GO TO AMERICA--AND TO START AS SOON AFTER CHRISTMAS AS IT WILL BE SAFE TO GO." Further information was promised immediately; and a request followed, characteristic as any he could have added to his design of traveling so far away, that we should visit once more together the scenes of his boyhood. "On the ninth of October we leave here. It's a Saturday. If it should be fine dry weather, or anything like it, will you meet us at Rochester, and stop there two or three days to see all the lions in the surrounding country? Think of this. . . . If you'll arrange to come, I'll have the carriage down, and Topping; and, supposing news from Glasgow don't interfere with us, which I fervently hope it will not, I will insure that we have much enjoyment."

Three days later than that which announced his resolve, the subject was resumed: "I wrote to Chapman & Hall asking them what they thought of it, and saying I meant to keep a note-book, and publish it for half a guinea or thereabouts, on my return. They instantly sent the warmest possible reply, and said they had taken it for granted I would go, and had been speaking of it only the day before. I have begged them to make every inquiry about the fares, cabins, berths, and times of sailing; and I shall make a great effort to take Kate _and_ the children. In that case I shall try to let the house furnished, for six months (for I shall

remain that time in America); and if I succeed, the rent will nearly pay the expenses out, and home. I have heard of family cabins at £100; and I think one of these is large enough to hold us all. A single fare, I think, is forty guineas. I fear I could not be happy if we had the Atlantic between us; but leaving them in New York while I ran off a thousand miles or so, would be quite another thing. If I can arrange all my plans before publishing the Clock address, I shall state therein that I am going: which will be no unimportant consideration, as affording the best possible reason for a long delay. How I am to get on without you for seven or eight months, I cannot, upon my soul, conceive. I dread to think of breaking up all our old happy habits for so long a time. The advantages of going, however, appear by steady looking-at so great, that I have come to persuade myself it is a matter of imperative necessity. Kate weeps whenever it is spoken of. Washington Irving has got a nasty low fever. I heard from him a day or two ago."

His next letter was the unexpected arrival which came by hand from Devonshire Terrace, when I thought him still by the sea: "This is to give you notice that I am coming to breakfast with you this morning on my way to Broadstairs. I repeat it, sir,--on my way to Broadstairs. For, directly I got Macready's note yesterday I went to Canterbury, and came on by day-coach for the express purpose of talking with him; which I did between 11 and 12 last night in Clarence Terrace. The American preliminaries are necessarily startling, and, to a gentleman of my temperament, destroy rest, sleep, appetite, and work, unless definitely arranged.[42] Macready has quite decided me in respect of time and so forth. The instant I have wrung a reluctant consent from Kate, I shall take our joint passage in the mail-packet for next January. I never loved my friends so well as now." We had all discountenanced his first thought of taking the children; and, upon this and other points, the experience of our friend who had himself traveled over the States was very valuable. His next letter, two days later from Broadstairs, informed me of the result of the Macready conference: "Only a word. Kate is quite reconciled. 'Anne' (her maid) goes, and is amazingly cheerful and light of heart upon it. And I think, at present, that it's a greater trial to me than anybody. The 4th of January is the day. Macready's note to Kate was received and acted upon with a perfect response. She talks about it quite gayly, and is satisfied to have nobody in the house but Fred, of whom, as you know, they are all fond. He has got his promotion, and they give him the increased salary from the day on which the minute was made by Baring, I feel so amiable, so meek, so fond of people, so full of gratitudes and reliances, that I am like a sick man. And I am already counting the days between this and coming home again."

He was soon, alas! to be what he compared himself to. I met him at Rochester at the end of September, as arranged; we passed a day and night there; a day and night in Cobham and its neighborhood, sleeping at the Leather Bottle; and a day and night at Gravesend. But we were hardly returned when some slight symptoms of bodily trouble took suddenly graver form, and an illness followed involving the necessity of surgical attendance. This, which with mention of the helpful courage displayed by him has before been alluded to,[43] put off necessarily the Glasgow dinner; and he had scarcely left his bedroom when a trouble arose near home which touched him to the depths of the greatest sorrow of his life,

and, in the need of exerting himself for others, what remained of his own illness seemed to pass away.

His wife's younger brother had died with the same unexpected suddenness that attended her younger sister's death; and the event had followed close upon the decease of Mrs. Hogarth's mother while on a visit to her daughter and Mr. Hogarth. "As no steps had been taken towards the funeral," he wrote (25th October) in reply to my offer of such service as I could render, "I thought it best at once to bestir myself; and not even you could have saved my going to the cemetery. It is a great trial to me to give up Mary's grave; greater than I can possibly express. I thought of moving her to the catacombs and saying nothing about it; but then I remembered that the poor old lady is buried next her at her own desire, and could not find it in my heart, directly she is laid in the earth, to take her grandchild away. The desire to be buried next her is as strong upon me now as it was five years ago; and I know (for I don't think there ever was love like that I bear her) that it will never diminish. I fear I can do nothing. Do you think I can? They would move her on Wednesday, if I resolved to have it done. I cannot bear the thought of being excluded from her dust; and yet I feel that her brothers and sisters, and her mother, have a better right than I to be placed beside her. It is but an idea. I neither think nor hope (God forbid) that our spirits would ever mingle there. I ought to get the better of it, but it is very hard. I never contemplated this--and coming so suddenly, and after being ill, it disturbs me more than it ought. It seems like losing her a second time. . . ." "No," he wrote the morning after, "I tried that. No, there is no ground on either side to be had. I must give it up. I shall drive over there, please God, on Thursday morning, before they get there; and look at her coffin."

He suffered more than he let any one perceive, and was obliged again to keep his room for some days. On the 2d of November he reported himself as progressing and ordered to Richmond, which, after a week or so, he changed to the White Hart at Windsor, where I passed some days with him, Mrs. Dickens, and her younger sister Georgina; but it was not till near the close of that month he could describe himself as thoroughly on his legs again, in the ordinary state on which he was wont to pride himself, bolt upright, staunch at the knees, a deep sleeper, a hearty eater, a good laugh, and nowhere a bit the worse, "bating a little weakness now and then, and a slight nervousness at times."

We had some days of much enjoyment at the end of the year, when Landor came up from Bath for the christening of his godson; and the "Britannia," which was to take the travelers from us in January, brought over to them in December all sorts of cordialities, anticipations, and stretchings-forth of palms, in token of the welcome awaiting them. On New Year's Eve they dined with me, and I with them on New Year's Day; when (his house having been taken for the period of his absence by General Sir John Wilson) we sealed up his wine-cellar, after opening therein some sparkling Moselle in honor of the ceremony, and drinking it then and there to his happy return. Next morning (it was a Sunday) I accompanied them to Liverpool, Maclise having been suddenly stayed by his mother's death; the intervening day and its occupations have been humorously sketched in his American book; and on the 4th they sailed. I

never saw the Britannia after I stepped from her deck back to the small steamer that had taken us to her. "How little I thought" (were the last lines of his first American letter), "the first time you mounted the shapeless coat, that I should have such a sad association with its back as when I saw it by the paddle-box of that small steamer!"

FOOTNOTES:

[42] See _ante_, p. 123.

[43] See _ante_, p. 244.

CHAPTER XIX.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA.

1842.

Rough Passage--A Steamer in a Storm--Resigned to the Worst--Of Himself and Fellow-travelers--The Atlantic from Deck--The Ladies' Cabin--Its Occupants--Card-playing on the Atlantic--Ship-news--A Wager--Halifax Harbor--Ship aground--Captain Hewitt--Speaker of House of Assembly--Ovation to C. D.--Arrival at Boston--Incursion of Editors--At Tremont House--The Welcome--Deputations--Dr. Channing to C. D.--Public Appearances--A Secretary engaged--Bostonians--General Characteristics--Personal Notices--Perils of Steamers--A Home-thought--American Institutions--How first impressed--Reasons for the Greeting--What was welcomed in C. D.--Old World and New World--Daniel Webster as to C. D.--Channing as to C. D.--Subsequent Disappointments--New York Invitation to Dinner--Fac-similes of Signatures--Additional Fac-similes--New York Invitation to Ball--Fac-similes of Signatures--Additional Fac-similes.

THE first lines of that letter were written as soon as he got sight of earth again, from the banks of Newfoundland, on Monday, the 17th of January, the fourteenth day from their departure: even then so far from Halifax that they could not expect to make it before Wednesday night, or to reach Boston until Saturday or Sunday. They had not been fortunate in the passage. During the whole voyage the weather had been unprecedentedly bad, the wind for the most part dead against them, the wet intolerable, the sea horribly disturbed, the days dark, and the nights fearful. On the previous Monday night it had blown a hurricane,

beginning at five in the afternoon and raging all night. His description of the storm is published, and the peculiarities of a steamer's behavior in such circumstances are hit off as if he had been all his life a sailor. Any but so extraordinary an observer would have described a steamer in a storm as he would have described a sailing-ship in a storm. But any description of the latter would be as inapplicable to my friend's account of the other as the ways of a jackass to those of a mad bull. In the letter from which it was taken, however, there were some things addressed to myself alone: "For two or three hours we gave it up as a lost thing; and with many thoughts of you, and the children, and those others who are dearest to us, waited quietly for the worst. I never expected to see the day again, and resigned myself to God as well as I could. It was a great comfort to think of the earnest and devoted friends we had left behind, and to know that the darlings would not want."

This was not the exaggerated apprehension of a landsman merely. The head engineer, who had been in one or other of the Cunard vessels since they began running, had never seen such stress of weather; and I heard Captain Hewitt himself say afterwards that nothing but a steamer, and one of that strength, could have kept her course and stood it out. A sailing-vessel must have beaten off and driven where she could; while through all the fury of that gale they actually made fifty-four miles headlong through the tempest, straight on end, not varying their track in the least.

He stood out against sickness only for the day following that on which they sailed. For the three following days he kept his bed, miserable enough, and had not, until the eighth day of the voyage, six days before the date of his letter, been able to get to work at the dinner-table. What he then observed of his fellow-travelers, and had to tell of their life on board, has been set forth in his Notes with delightful humor; but in its first freshness I received it in this letter, and some whimsical passages, then suppressed, there will be no harm in printing now:

"We have 86 passengers; and such a strange collection of beasts never was got together upon the sea, since the days of the Ark. I have never been in the saloon since the first day; the noise, the smell, and the closeness being quite intolerable. I have only been on deck once!--and then I was surprised and disappointed at the smallness of the panorama. The sea, running as it does and has done, is very stupendous, and viewed from the air or some great height would be grand no doubt. But seen from the wet and rolling decks, in this weather and these circumstances, it only impresses one giddily and painfully. I was very glad to turn away, and come below again.

"I have established myself, from the first, in the ladies' cabin--you remember it? I'll describe its other occupants, and our way of passing the time, to you.

"First, for the occupants. Kate and I, and Anne--when she is out of bed, which is not often. A queer little Scotch body, a Mrs. P--,[44] whose husband is a silversmith in New York. He married her at Glasgow three

years ago, and bolted the day after the wedding; being (which he had not told her) heavily in debt. Since then she has been living with her mother; and she is now going out under the protection of a male cousin, to give him a year's trial. If she is not comfortable at the expiration of that time, she means to go back to Scotland again. A Mrs. B--, about 20 years old, whose husband is on board with her. He is a young Englishman domiciled in New York, and by trade (as well as I can make out) a woollen-draper. They have been married a fortnight. A Mr. and Mrs. C--, marvelously fond of each other, complete the catalogue. Mrs. C--, I have settled, is a publican's daughter, and Mr. C-- is running away with her, the till, the time-piece off the bar mantel-shelf, the mother's gold watch from the pocket at the head of the bed; and other miscellaneous property. The women are all pretty; unusually pretty. I never saw such good faces together, anywhere."

Their "way of passing the time" will be found in the _Notes_ much as it was written to me; except that there was one point connected with the card-playing which he feared might overtax the credulity of his readers, but which he protested had occurred more than once: "Apropos of rolling, I have forgotten to mention that in playing whist we are obliged to put the tricks in our pockets, to keep them from disappearing altogether; and that five or six times in the course of every rubber we are all flung from our seats, roll out at different doors, and keep on rolling until we are picked up by stewards. This has become such a matter of course, that we go through it with perfect gravity, and, when we are bolstered up on our sofas again, resume our conversation or our game at the point where it was interrupted." The news that excited them from day to day, too, of which little more than a hint appears in the _Notes_, is worth giving as originally written:

"As for news, we have more of that than you would think for. One man lost fourteen pounds at vingt-un in the saloon yesterday, or another got drunk before dinner was over, or another was blinded with lobster-sauce spilt over him by the steward, or another had a fall on deck and fainted. The ship's cook was drunk yesterday morning (having got at some salt-water-damaged whiskey), and the captain ordered the boatswain to play upon him with the hose of the fire-engine until he roared for mercy--which he didn't get: for he was sentenced to look out, for four hours at a stretch for four nights running, without a great-coat, and to have his grog stopped. Four dozen plates were broken at dinner. One steward fell down the cabin stairs with a round of beef, and injured his foot severely. Another steward fell down after him and cut his eye open. The baker's taken ill; so is the pastry-cook. A new man, sick to death, has been required to fill the place of the latter officer, and has been dragged out of bed and propped up in a little house upon deck, between two casks, and ordered (the captain standing over him) to make and roll out pie-crust; which he protests, with tears in his eyes, it is death to him in his bilious state to look at. Twelve dozen of bottled porter has got loose upon deck, and the bottles are rolling about distractedly, overhead. Lord Mulgrave (a handsome fellow, by-the-by, to look at, and nothing but a good 'un to go) laid a wager with twenty-five other men last night, whose berths, like his, are in the fore-cabin, which can only be got at by crossing the deck, that he would reach his cabin first. Watches were set by the captain's, and they sallied forth,

wrapped up in coats and storm caps. The sea broke over the ship so violently, that they were _five-and-twenty minutes_ holding on by the handrail at the starboard paddle-box, drenched to the skin by every wave, and not daring to go on or come back, lest they should be washed overboard. News! A dozen murders in town wouldn't interest us half as much."

Nevertheless their excitements were not over. At the very end of the voyage came an incident very lightly touched in the _Notes_, but more freely told to me under date of the 21st January: "We were running into Halifax harbor on Wednesday night, with little wind and a bright moon; had made the light at its outer entrance, and given the ship in charge to the pilot; were playing our rubber, all in good spirits (for it had been comparatively smooth for some days, with tolerably dry decks and other unusual comforts), when suddenly the ship STRUCK! A rush upon deck followed, of course. The men (I mean the crew! think of this) were kicking off their shoes and throwing off their jackets preparatory to swimming ashore; the pilot was beside himself; the passengers dismayed; and everything in the most intolerable confusion and hurry. Breakers were roaring ahead; the land within a couple of hundred yards; and the vessel driving upon the surf, although her paddles were worked backwards, and everything done to stay her course. It is not the custom of steamers, it seems, to have an anchor ready. An accident occurred in getting ours over the side; and for half an hour we were throwing up rockets, burning blue-lights, and firing signals of distress, all of which remained unanswered, though we were so close to the shore that we could see the waving branches of the trees. All this time, as we veered about, a man was heaving the lead every two minutes; the depths of water constantly decreasing; and nobody self-possessed but Hewitt. They let go the anchor at last, got out a boat, and sent her ashore with the fourth officer, the pilot, and four men aboard, to try and find out where we were. The pilot had no idea; but Hewitt put his little finger upon a certain part of the chart, and was as confident of the exact spot (though he had never been there in his life) as if he had lived there from infancy. The boat's return about an hour afterwards proved him to be quite right. We had got into a place called the Eastern Passage, in a sudden fog and through the pilot's folly. We had struck upon a mud-bank, and driven into a perfect little pond, surrounded by banks and rocks and shoals of all kinds: the only safe speck in the place. Eased by this report, and the assurance that the tide was past the ebb, we turned in at three o'clock in the morning, to lie there all night."

The next day's landing at Halifax, and delivery of the mails, are sketched in the _Notes_; but not his personal part in what followed: "Then, sir, comes a breathless man who has been already into the ship and out again, shouting my name as he tears along. I stop, arm in arm with the little doctor whom I have taken ashore for oysters. The breathless man introduces himself as The Speaker of the House of Assembly; _will_ drag me away to his house; and _will_ have a carriage and his wife sent down for Kate, who is laid up with a hideously swollen face. Then he drags me up to the Governor's house (Lord Falkland is the governor), and then Heaven knows where; concluding with both houses of parliament, which happen to meet for the session that very day, and are opened by a mock speech from the throne delivered by the governor, with

one of Lord Grey's sons for his aide-de-camp, and a great host of officers about him. I wish you could have seen the crowds cheering the inimitable[45] in the streets. I wish you could have seen judges, law-officers, bishops, and law-makers welcoming the inimitable. I wish you could have seen the inimitable shown to a great elbow-chair by the Speaker's throne, and sitting alone in the middle of the floor of the House of Commons, the observed of all observers, listening with exemplary gravity to the queerest speaking possible, and breaking in spite of himself into a smile as he thought of this commencement to the Thousand and One stories in reserve for home and Lincoln's Inn Fields and Jack Straw's Castle.--Ah, Forster! when I _do_ come back again!----"

He resumed his letter at Tremont House on Saturday, the 28th of January, having reached Boston that day week at five in the afternoon; and, as his first American experience is very lightly glanced at in the _Notes_, a fuller picture will perhaps be welcome. "As the Cunard boats have a wharf of their own at the custom-house, and that a narrow one, we were a long time (an hour at least) working in. I was standing in full fig on the paddle-box beside the captain, staring about me, when suddenly, long before we were moored to the wharf, a dozen men came leaping on board at the peril of their lives, with great bundles of newspapers under their arms; worsted comforters (very much the worse for wear) round their necks; and so forth. 'Aha!' says I, 'this is like our London Bridge;' believing of course that these visitors were news-boys. But what do you think of their being EDITORS? And what do you think of their tearing violently up to me and beginning to shake hands like madmen? Oh! if you could have seen how I wrung their wrists! And if you could but know how I hated one man in very dirty gaiters, and with very protruding upper teeth, who said to all comers after him, 'So you've been introduced to our friend Dickens--eh?' There was one among them, though, who really was of use; a Doctor S., editor of the ----. He ran off here (two miles at least), and ordered rooms and dinner. And in course of time Kate, and I, and Lord Mulgrave (who was going back to his regiment at Montreal on Monday, and had agreed to live with us in the mean while) sat down in a spacious and handsome room to a very handsome dinner, bating peculiarities of putting on table, and had forgotten the ship entirely. A Mr. Alexander, to whom I had written from England promising to sit for a portrait, was on board directly we touched the land, and brought us here in his carriage. Then, after sending a present of most beautiful flowers, he left us to ourselves, and we thanked him for it."

What further he had to say of that week's experience finds its first public utterance here. "How can I tell you," he continues, "what has happened since that first day? How can I give you the faintest notion of my reception here; of the crowds that pour in and out the whole day; of the people that line the streets when I go out; of the cheering when I went to the theatre; of the copies of verses, letters of congratulation, welcomes of all kinds, balls, dinners, assemblies without end? There is to be a public dinner to me here in Boston, next Tuesday, and great dissatisfaction has been given to the many by the high price (three pounds sterling each) of the tickets. There is to be a ball next Monday week at New York, and 150 names appear on the list of the committee. There is to be a dinner in the same place, in the same week, to which I have had an invitation with every known name in America appended to it.

But what can I tell you about any of these things which will give you the slightest notion of the enthusiastic greeting they give me, or the cry that runs through the whole country? I have had deputations from the Far West, who have come from more than two thousand miles' distance: from the lakes, the rivers, the back-woods, the log houses, the cities, factories, villages, and towns. Authorities from nearly all the States have written to me. I have heard from the universities, Congress, Senate, and bodies, public and private, of every sort and kind. 'It is no-nonsense, and no common feeling,' wrote Dr. Channing to me yesterday. 'It is all heart. There never was, and never will be, such a triumph.' And it is a good thing, is it not, . . . to find those fancies it has given me and you the greatest satisfaction to think of, at the core of it all? It makes my heart quieter, and me a more retiring, sober, tranquil man, to watch the effect of those thoughts in all this noise and hurry, even than if I sat, pen in hand, to put them down for the first time. I feel, in the best aspects of this welcome, something of the presence and influence of that spirit which directs my life, and through a heavy sorrow has pointed upwards with unchanging finger for more than four years past. And if I know my heart, not twenty times this praise would move me to an act of folly." . . .

There were but two days more before the post left for England, and the close of this part of his letter sketched the engagements that awaited him on leaving Boston: "We leave here next Saturday. We go to a place called Worcester, about 75 miles off, to the house of the governor of this place; and stay with him all Sunday. On Monday we go on by railroad about 50 miles further to a town called Springfield, where I am met by a 'reception committee' from Hartford 20 miles further, and carried on by the multitude: I am sure I don't know how, but I shouldn't wonder if they appear with a triumphal car. On Wednesday I have a public dinner there. On Friday I shall be obliged to present myself in public again, at a place called New Haven, about 30 miles further. On Saturday evening I hope to be at New York; and there I shall stay ten days or a fortnight. You will suppose that I have enough to do. I am sitting for a portrait and for a bust. I have the correspondence of a secretary of state, and the engagements of a fashionable physician. I have a secretary whom I take on with me. He is a young man of the name of Q.; was strongly recommended to me; is most modest, obliging, silent, and willing; and does his work well. He boards and lodges at my expense when we travel; and his salary is ten dollars per month--about two pounds five of our English money. There will be dinners and balls at Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and I believe everywhere. In Canada, I have promised to play at the theatre with the officers, for the benefit of a charity. We are already weary, at times, past all expression; and I finish this by means of a pious fraud. We were engaged to a party, and have written to say we are both desperately ill. . . . 'Well,' I can fancy you saying, 'but about his impressions of Boston and the Americans?'--Of the latter, I will not say a word until I have seen more of them, and have gone into the interior. I will only say, now, that we have never yet been required to dine at a table-d'hôte; that, thus far, our rooms are as much our own here as they would be at the Clarendon; that but for an odd phrase now and then--such as Snap of cold weather; a tongue-y man for a talkative fellow; Possible? as a solitary interrogation; and Yes? for indeed--I should have marked, so

far, no difference whatever between the parties here and those I have left behind. The women are very beautiful, but they soon fade; the general breeding is neither stiff nor forward; the good nature, universal. If you ask the way to a place--of some common water-side man, who don't know you from Adam--he turns and goes with you. Universal deference is paid to ladies; and they walk about at all seasons, wholly unprotected. . . . This hotel is a trifle smaller than Finsbury Square; and is made so infernally hot (I use the expression advisedly) by means of a furnace with pipes running through the passages, that we can hardly bear it. There are no curtains to the beds, or to the bedroom windows. I am told there never are, hardly, all through America. The bedrooms are indeed very bare of furniture. Ours is nearly as large as your great room, and has a wardrobe in it of painted wood not larger (I appeal to K.) than an English watch-box. I slept in this room for two nights, quite satisfied with the belief that it was a shower-bath."

The last addition made to this letter, from which many vividest pages of the _Notes_ (among them the bright quaint picture of Boston streets) were taken with small alteration, bore date the 29th of January: "I hardly know what to add to all this long and unconnected history. Dana, the author of that _Two Years before the Mast_ " (a book which I had praised much to him, thinking it like De Foe), "is a very nice fellow indeed; and in appearance not at all the man you would expect. He is short, mild-looking, and has a care-worn face. His father is exactly like George Cruikshank after a night's jollity--only shorter. The professors at the Cambridge university, Longfellow, Felton, Jared Sparks, are noble fellows. So is Kenyon's friend, Ticknor. Bancroft is a famous man; a straightforward, manly, earnest heart; and talks much of you, which is a great comfort. Doctor Channing I will tell you more of, after I have breakfasted alone with him next Wednesday. . . . Sumner is of great service to me. . . . The president of the Senate here presides at my dinner on Tuesday. Lord Mulgrave lingered with us till last Tuesday (we had our little captain to dinner on the Monday), and then went on to Canada. Kate is quite well, and so is Anne, whose smartness surpasses belief. They yearn for home, and so do I.

"Of course you will not see in the papers any true account of our voyage, for they keep the dangers of the passage, when there are any, very quiet. I observed so many perils peculiar to steamers that I am still undecided whether we shall not return by one of the New York liners. On the night of the storm, I was wondering within myself where we should be, if the chimney were blown overboard; in which case, it needs no great observation to discover that the vessel must be instantly on fire from stem to stern. When I went on deck next day, I saw that it was held up by a perfect forest of chains and ropes, which had been rigged in the night. Hewitt told me (when we were on shore, not before) that they had men lashed, hoisted up, and swinging there, all through the gale, getting these stays about it. This is not agreeable--is it?

"I wonder whether you will remember that next Tuesday is my birthday! This letter will leave here that morning.

"On looking back through these sheets, I am astonished to find how little I have told you, and how much I have, even now, in store which

shall be yours by word of mouth. The American poor, the American factories, the institutions of all kinds--I have a book, already. There is no man in this town, or in this State of New England, who has not a blazing fire and a meat dinner every day of his life. A flaming sword in the air would not attract so much attention as a beggar in the streets. There are no charity uniforms, no wearisome repetition of the same dull ugly dress, in that blind school.[46] All are attired after their own tastes, and every boy and girl has his or her individuality as distinct and unimpaired as you would find it in their own homes. At the theatres, all the ladies sit in the fronts of the boxes. The gallery are as quiet as the dress circle at dear Drury Lane. A man with seven heads would be no sight at all, compared with one who couldn't read and write.

"I won't speak (I say 'speak'! I wish I could) about the dear precious children, because I know how much we shall hear about them when we receive those letters from home for which we long so ardently."

* * * * *

Unmistakably to be seen, in this earliest of his letters, is the quite fresh and unalloyed impression first received by him at this memorable visit; and it is due, as well to himself as to the great country which welcomed him, that this should be considered independently of any modification it afterwards underwent. Of the fervency and universality of the welcome there could indeed be no doubt, and as little that it sprang from feelings honorable both to giver and receiver. The sources of Dickens's popularity in England were in truth multiplied many-fold in America. The hearty, cordial, and humane side of his genius had fascinated them quite as much; but there was also something beyond this. The cheerful temper that had given new beauty to the commonest forms of life, the abounding humor which had added largely to all innocent enjoyment, the honorable and in those days rare distinction of America which left no home in the Union inaccessible to such advantages, had made Dickens the object everywhere of grateful admiration, for the most part of personal affection. But even this was not all. I do not say it either to lessen or to increase the value of the tribute, but to express simply what it was; and there cannot be a question that the young English author, whom by his language they claimed equally for their own, was almost universally regarded by the Americans as a kind of embodied protest against what they believed to be worst in the institutions of England, depressing and overshadowing in a social sense, and adverse to purely intellectual influences. In all the papers of every grade in the Union, of which many were sent to me at the time, the feeling of triumph over the mother-country in this particular is everywhere predominant. You worship titles, they said, and military heroes, and millionaires, and we of the New World want to show you, by extending the kind of homage that the Old World reserves for kings and conquerors, to a young man with nothing to distinguish him but his heart and his genius, what it is we think in these parts worthier of honor, than birth, or wealth, a title, or a sword. Well, there was something in this too, apart from a mere crowing over the mother-country. The Americans had honestly more than a common share in the triumphs of a genius which in more than one sense had made the deserts and wildernesses of life to blossom like the rose. They were entitled to select for a welcome, as emphatic as they

might please to render it, the writer who pre-eminently in his generation had busied himself to "detect and save," in human creatures, such sparks of virtue as misery or vice had not availed to extinguish; to discover what is beautiful and comely under what commonly passes for the ungainly and the deformed; to draw happiness and hopefulness from despair itself; and, above all, so to have made known to his own countrymen the wants and sufferings of the poor, the ignorant, and the neglected, that they could be left in absolute neglect no more. "A triumph has been prepared for him," wrote Mr. Ticknor to our dear friend Kenyon, "in which the whole country will join. He will have a progress through the States unequaled since Lafayette's." Daniel Webster told the Americans that Dickens had done more already to ameliorate the condition of the English poor than all the statesmen Great Britain had sent into Parliament. His sympathies are such, exclaimed Dr. Channing, as to recommend him in an especial manner to us. He seeks out that class, in order to benefit them, with whom American institutions and laws sympathize most strongly; and it is in the passions, sufferings, and virtues of the mass that he has found his subjects of most thrilling interest. "He shows that life in its rudest form may wear a tragic grandeur; that amidst follies and excesses, provoking laughter or scorn, the moral feelings do not wholly die; and that the haunts of the blackest crime are sometimes lighted up by the presence and influence of the noblest souls. His pictures have a tendency to awaken sympathy with our race, and to change the unfeeling indifference which has prevailed towards the depressed multitude, into a sorrowful and indignant sensibility to their wrongs and woes."

Whatever may be the turn which we are to see the welcome take, by dissatisfaction that arose on both sides, it is well that we should thus understand what in its first manifestations was honorable to both. Dickens had his disappointments, and the Americans had theirs; but what was really genuine in the first enthusiasm remained without grave alloy from either; and the letters, as I proceed to give them, will so naturally explain and illustrate the misunderstanding as to require little further comment. I am happy to be able here to place on record fac-similes of the invitations to the public entertainments in New York which reached him before he quitted Boston. The mere signatures suffice to show how universal the welcome was from that great city of the Union.

FOOTNOTES:

[44] The initials used here are in no case those of the real names, being employed in every case for the express purpose of disguising the names. Generally the remark is applicable to all initials used in the letters printed in the course of this work.

[45] This word, applied to him by his old master; Mr. Giles (_ante_, p. 33), was for a long time the epithet we called him by.

[46] His descriptions of this school, and of the case of Laura Bridgeman, will be found in the _Notes_, and have therefore been, of course, omitted here.

CHAPTER XX.

SECOND IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA.

1842.

Second Letter--International Copyright--Third Letter--The Dinner at Boston--Worcester, Springfield, and Hartford--Queer Traveling--Levees at Hartford and New Haven--At Wallingford--Serenades--Cornelius C. Felton--Payment of Personal Expenses declined--At New York--Irving and Colden--Description of the Ball--Newspaper Accounts--A Phase of Character--Opinion in America--International Copyright--American Authors in regard to it--Outcry against the Nation's Guest--Declines to be silent on Copyright--Speech at Dinner--Irving in the Chair--Chairman's Breakdown--An Incident afterwards in London--Results of Copyright Speeches--A Bookseller's Demand for Help--Suggestion for Copyright Memorial--Henry Clay's Opinion--Life in New York--Distresses of Popularity--Intentions for Future--Refusal of Invitations--Going South and West--As to Return--Dangers incident to Steamers--Slavery--Ladies of America--Party Conflicts--Non-arrival of Cunard Steamer--Copyright Petition for Congress--No Hope of the Caledonia--Substitute for her--Anxiety as to Letters--Of Distinguished Americans--Hotel Bills--Thoughts of the Children--Acadia takes Caledonia's Place--Letter to C. D. from Carlyle--Carlyle on Copyright--Argument against Stealing--Rob Roy's Plan worth bettering--C. D. as to Carlyle.

HIS second letter, radiant with the same kindly warmth that gave always pre-eminent charm to his genius, was dated from the Carlton Hotel, New York, on the 14th February, but its only allusion of any public interest was to the beginning of his agitation of the question of international copyright. He went to America with no express intention of starting this question in any way, and certainly with no belief that such remark upon it as a person in his position could alone be expected to make would be resented strongly by any sections of the American people. But he was not long left in doubt on this head. He had spoken upon it twice publicly, "to the great indignation of some of the editors here, who are attacking me for so doing, right and left." On the other hand, all the best men had assured him that, if only at once followed up in England,

the blow struck might bring about a change in the law; and, yielding to the pleasant hope that the best men could be a match for the worst, he urged me to enlist on his side what force I could, and in particular, as he had made Scott's claim his war-cry, to bring Lockhart into the field. I could not do much, but I did what I could.

Three days later he began another letter; and, as this will be entirely new to the reader, I shall print it as it reached me, with only such omission of matter concerning myself as I think it my duty, however reluctantly, to make throughout these extracts. There was nothing in its personal details, or in those relating to international copyright, available for his Notes; from which they were excluded by the two rules he observed in that book,--the first to be altogether silent as to the copyright discussion, and the second to abstain from all mention of individuals. But there can be no harm here in violating either rule, for, as Sydney Smith said with his humorous sadness, "We are all dead now."

"Carlton House, New York: Thursday, February Seventeenth, 1842. . . . As there is a sailing-packet from here to England to-morrow which is warranted (by the owners) to be a marvelous fast sailer, and as it appears most probable that she will reach home (I write the word with a pang) before the Cunard steamer of next month, I indite this letter. And lest this letter should reach you before another letter which I dispatched from here last Monday, let me say in the first place that I did dispatch a brief epistle to you on that day, together with a newspaper, and a pamphlet touching the Boz ball; and that I put in the post-office at Boston another newspaper for you containing an account of the dinner, which was just about to come off, you remember, when I wrote to you from that city.

"It was a most superb affair; and the speaking admirable. Indeed, the general talent for public speaking here is one of the most striking of the things that force themselves upon an Englishman's notice. As every man looks on to being a member of Congress, every man prepares himself for it; and the result is quite surprising. You will observe one odd custom,--the drinking of sentiments. It is quite extinct with us, but here everybody is expected to be prepared with an epigram as a matter of course.

"We left Boston on the fifth, and went away with the governor of the city to stay till Monday at his house at Worcester. He married a sister of Bancroft's, and another sister of Bancroft's went down with us. The village of Worcester is one of the prettiest in New England. . . . On Monday morning at nine o'clock we started again by railroad and went on to Springfield, where a deputation of two were waiting, and everything was in readiness that the utmost attention could suggest. Owing to the mildness of the weather, the Connecticut river was 'open,' videlicet not frozen, and they had a steamboat ready to carry us on to Hartford; thus saving a land-journey of only twenty-five miles, but on such roads at this time of year that it takes nearly twelve hours to accomplish! The boat was very small, the river full of floating blocks of ice, and the depth where we went (to avoid the ice and the current) not more than a few inches. After two hours and a half of this queer traveling, we got

to Hartford. There, there was quite an English inn; except in respect of the bedrooms, which are always uncomfortable; and the best committee of management that has yet presented itself. They kept us more quiet, and were more considerate and thoughtful, even to their own exclusion, than any I have yet had to deal with. Kate's face being horribly bad, I determined to give her a rest here; and accordingly wrote to get rid of my engagement at New Haven, on that plea. We remained in this town until the eleventh: holding a formal levee every day for two hours, and receiving on each from two hundred to three hundred people. At five o'clock on the afternoon of the eleventh, we set off (still by railroad) for New Haven, which we reached about eight o'clock. The moment we had had tea, we were forced to open another levee for the students and professors of the college (the largest in the States), and the townspeople. I suppose we shook hands, before going to bed, with considerably more than five hundred people; and I stood, as a matter of course, the whole time. . . .

"Now, the deputation of two had come on with us from Hartford; and at New Haven there was another committee; and the immense fatigue and worry of all this, no words can exaggerate. We had been in the morning over jails and deaf and dumb asylums; had stopped on the journey at a place called Wallingford, where a whole town had turned out to see me, and to gratify whose curiosity the train stopped expressly; had had a day of great excitement and exertion on the Thursday (this being Friday); and were inexpressibly worn out. And when at last we got to bed and were 'going' to fall asleep, the choristers of the college turned out in a body, under the window, and serenaded us! We had had, by-the-by, another serenade at Hartford, from a Mr. Adams (a nephew of John Quincy Adams) and a German friend. They were most beautiful singers: and when they began, in the dead of the night, in a long, musical, echoing passage outside our chamber door; singing, in low voices to guitars, about home and absent friends and other topics that they knew would interest us; we were more moved than I can tell you. In the midst of my sentimentality, though, a thought occurred to me which made me laugh so immoderately that I was obliged to cover my face with the bedclothes. 'Good Heavens!' I said to Kate, 'what a monstrously ridiculous and commonplace appearance my boots must have, outside the door!' I never was so impressed with a sense of the absurdity of boots, in all my life.

"The New Haven serenade was not so good; though there were a great many voices, and a 'reg'lar' band. It hadn't the heart of the other. Before it was six hours old, we were dressing with might and main, and making ready for our departure; it being a drive of twenty minutes to the steamboat, and the hour of sailing nine o'clock. After a hasty breakfast we started off; and after another levee on the deck (actually on the deck), and 'three times three for Dickens,' moved towards New York.

"I was delighted to find on board a Mr. Felton whom I had known at Boston. He is the Greek professor at Cambridge, and was going on to the ball and dinner. Like most men of his class whom I have seen, he is a most delightful fellow,--unaffected, hearty, genial, jolly; quite an Englishman of the best sort. We drank all the porter on board, ate all the cold pork and cheese, and were very merry indeed. I should have told

you, in its proper place, that both at Hartford and New Haven a regular bank was subscribed, by these committees, for _all_ my expenses. No bill was to be got at the bar, and everything was paid for. But as I would on no account suffer this to be done, I stoutly and positively refused to budge an inch until Mr. Q. should have received the bills from the landlord's own hands, and paid them to the last farthing. Finding it impossible to move me, they suffered me, most unwillingly, to carry the point.

"About half-past 2 we arrived here. In half an hour more, we reached this hotel, where a very splendid suite of rooms was prepared for us; and where everything is very comfortable, and no doubt (as at Boston) _enormously_ dear. Just as we sat down to dinner, David Colden made his appearance; and when he had gone, and we were taking our wine, Washington Irving came in alone, with open arms. And here he stopped, until ten o'clock at night." (Through Lord Jeffrey, with whom he was connected by marriage, and Macready, of whom he was the cordial friend, we already knew Mr. Colden; and his subsequent visits to Europe led to many years' intimate intercourse, greatly enjoyed by us both.) "Having got so far, I shall divide my discourse into four points. First, the ball. Secondly, some slight specimens of a certain phase of character in the Americans. Thirdly, international copyright. Fourthly, my life here, and projects to be carried out while I remain.

"Firstly, the ball. It came off last Monday (vide pamphlet.) 'At a quarter-past 9, exactly' (I quote the printed order of proceeding), we were waited upon by 'David Colden, Esquire, and General George Morris;' habited, the former in full ball costume, the latter in the full dress uniform of Heaven knows what regiment of militia. The general took Kate, Colden gave his arm to me, and we proceeded downstairs to a carriage at the door, which took us to the stage-door of the theatre, greatly to the disappointment of an enormous crowd who were besetting the main door and making a most tremendous hullabaloo. The scene on our entrance was very striking. There were three thousand people present in full dress; from the roof to the floor, the theatre was decorated magnificently; and the light, glitter, glare, show, noise, and cheering, baffle my descriptive powers. We were walked in through the centre of the centre dress-box, the front whereof was taken out for the occasion; so to the back of the stage, where the mayor and other dignitaries received us; and we were then paraded all round the enormous ball-room, twice, for the gratification of the many-headed. That done, we began to dance--Heaven knows how we did it, for there was no room. And we continued dancing until, being no longer able even to stand, we slipped away quietly, and came back to the hotel. All the documents connected with this extraordinary festival (quite unparalleled here) we have preserved; so you may suppose that on this head alone we shall have enough to show you when we come home. The bill of fare for supper is, in its amount and extent, quite a curiosity.

"Now, the phase of character in the Americans which amuses me most was put before me in its most amusing shape by the circumstances attending this affair. I had noticed it before, and have since; but I cannot better illustrate it than by reference to this theme. Of course I can do nothing but in some shape or other it gets into the newspapers. All

manner of lies get there, and occasionally a truth so twisted and distorted that it has as much resemblance to the real fact as Quilp's leg to Taglioni's. But with this ball to come off, the newspapers were if possible unusually loquacious; and in their accounts of me, and my seeings, sayings, and doings on the Saturday night and Sunday before, they describe my manner, mode of speaking, dressing, and so forth. In doing this, they report that I am a very charming fellow (of course), and have a very free and easy way with me; 'which,' say they, 'at first amused a few fashionables;' but soon pleased them exceedingly. Another paper, coming after the ball, dwells upon its splendor and brilliancy; hugs itself and its readers upon all that Dickens saw, and winds up by gravely expressing its conviction that Dickens was never in such society in England as he has seen in New York, and that its high and striking tone cannot fail to make an indelible impression on his mind! For the same reason I am always represented, whenever I appear in public, as being 'very pale;' 'apparently thunderstruck;' and utterly confounded by all I see. . . . You recognize the queer vanity which is at the root of all this? I have plenty of stories in connection with it to amuse you with when I return."

"_Twenty-fourth February._"

"It is unnecessary to say . . . that this letter _didn't_ come by the sailing packet, and _will_ come by the Cunard boat. After the ball I was laid up with a very bad sore throat, which confined me to the house four whole days; and as I was unable to write, or indeed to do anything but doze and drink lemonade, I missed the ship. . . . I have still a horrible cold, and so has Kate, but in other respects we are all right. I proceed to my third head: the international copyright question.

"I believe there is no country on the face of the earth where there is less freedom of opinion on any subject in reference to which there is a broad difference of opinion, than in this.--There!--I write the words with reluctance, disappointment, and sorrow; but I believe it from the bottom of my soul. I spoke, as you know, of international copyright, at Boston; and I spoke of it again at Hartford. My friends were paralyzed with wonder at such audacious daring. The notion that I, a man alone by himself, in America, should venture to suggest to the Americans that there was one point on which they were neither just to their own countrymen nor to us, actually struck the boldest dumb! Washington Irving, Prescott, Hoffman, Bryant, Halleck, Dana, Washington Allston--every man who writes in this country is devoted to the question, and not one of them _dares_ to raise his voice and complain of the atrocious state of the law. It is nothing that of all men living I am the greatest loser by it. It is nothing that I have a claim to speak and be heard. The wonder is that a breathing man can be found with temerity enough to suggest to the Americans the possibility of their having done wrong. I wish you could have seen the faces that I saw, down both sides of the table at Hartford, when I began to talk about Scott. I wish you could have heard how I gave it out. My blood so boiled as I thought of the monstrous injustice that I felt as if I were twelve feet high when I thrust it down their throats.

"I had no sooner made that second speech than such an outcry began (for the purpose of deterring me from doing the like in this city) as an Englishman can form no notion of. Anonymous letters, verbal dissuasions; newspaper attacks making Colt (a murderer who is attracting great attention here) an angel by comparison with me; assertions that I was no gentleman, but a mere mercenary scoundrel; coupled with the most monstrous misrepresentations relative to my design and purpose in visiting the United States; came pouring in upon me every day. The dinner committee here (composed of the first gentlemen in America, remember that) were so dismayed, that they besought me not to pursue the subject, _although they every one agreed with me_. I answered that I would. That nothing should deter me. . . . That the shame was theirs, not mine; and that as I would not spare them when I got home, I would not be silenced here. Accordingly, when the night came, I asserted my right, with all the means I could command to give it dignity, in face, manner, or words; and I believe that if you could have seen and heard me, you would have loved me better for it than ever you did in your life.

"The _New York Herald_, which you will receive with this, is the _Satirist_ of America; but having a great circulation (on account of its commercial intelligence and early news) it can afford to secure the best reporters. . . . My speech is done, upon the whole, with remarkable accuracy. There are a great many typographical errors in it; and by the omission of one or two words, or the substitution of one word for another, it is often materially weakened. Thus, I did not say that I 'claimed' my right, but that I 'asserted' it; and I did not say that I had 'some claim,' but that I had 'a most righteous claim,' to speak. But altogether it is very correct."

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Washington Irving was chairman of this dinner, and, having from the first a dread that he should break down in his speech, the catastrophe came accordingly. Near him sat the Cambridge professor who had come with Dickens by boat from New Haven, with whom already a warm friendship had been formed that lasted for life, and who has pleasantly sketched what happened. Mr. Felton saw Irving constantly in the interval of preparation, and could not but despond at his daily iterated foreboding of _I shall certainly break down_; though besides the real dread there was a sly humor which heightened its whimsical horror with an irresistible drollery. But the professor plucked up hope a little when the night came and he saw that Irving had laid under his plate the manuscript of his speech. During dinner, nevertheless, his old foreboding cry was still heard, and "at last the moment arrived; Mr. Irving rose; and the deafening and long-continued applause by no means lessened his apprehension. He began in his pleasant voice; got through two or three sentences pretty easily, but in the next hesitated; and, after one or two attempts to go on, gave it up, with a graceful allusion to the tournament and the troop of knights all armed and eager for the fray; and ended with the toast CHARLES DICKENS, THE GUEST OF THE NATION. _There!_ said he, as he resumed his seat amid applause as great as had greeted his rising, _There! I told you I should break down, and I've done it!_" He was in London a few months later, on his way to Spain; and

I heard Thomas Moore describe^[47] at Rogers's table the difficulty there had been to overcome his reluctance, because of this break-down, to go to the dinner of the Literary Fund on the occasion of Prince Albert's presiding. "However," said Moore, "I told him only to attempt a few words, and I suggested what they should be, and he said he'd never thought of anything so easy, and he went, and did famously." I knew very well, as I listened, that this had not been the result; but as the distinguished American had found himself, on this second occasion, not among orators as in New York, but among men as unable as himself to speak in public, and equally able to do better things,^[48] he was doubtless more reconciled to his own failure. I have been led to this digression by Dickens's silence on his friend's break-down. He had so great a love for Irving that it was painful to speak of him as at any disadvantage, and of the New York dinner he wrote only in its connection with his own copyright speeches.

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"The effect of all this copyright agitation at least has been to awaken a great sensation on both sides of the subject; the respectable newspapers and reviews taking up the cudgels as strongly in my favor, as the others have done against me. Some of the vagabonds take great credit to themselves (grant us patience!) for having made me popular by publishing my books in newspapers: as if there were no England, no Scotland, no Germany, no place but America in the whole world. A splendid satire upon this kind of trash has just occurred. A man came here yesterday, and demanded, not besought but demanded, pecuniary assistance; and fairly bullied Mr. Q. for money. When I came home, I dictated a letter to this effect,--that such applications reached me in vast numbers every day; that if I were a man of fortune, I could not render assistance to all who sought it; and that, depending on my own exertion for all the help I could give, I regretted to say I could afford him none. Upon this, my gentleman sits down and writes me that he is an itinerant bookseller; that he is the first man who sold my books in New York; that he is distressed in the city where I am reveling in luxury; that he thinks it rather strange that the man who wrote Nickleby should be utterly destitute of feeling; and that he would have me 'take care I don't repent it.' What do you think of that?--as Mac would say. I thought it such a good commentary, that I dispatched the letter to the editor of the only English newspaper here, and told him he might print it if he liked.

"I will tell you what I should like, my dear friend, always supposing that your judgment concurs with mine, and that you would take the trouble to get such a document. I should like to have a short letter addressed to me by the principal English authors who signed the international copyright petition, expressive of their sense that I have done my duty to the cause. I am sure I deserve it, but I don't wish it on that ground. It is because its publication in the best journals here would unquestionably do great good. As the gauntlet is down, let us go on. Clay has already sent a gentleman to me express from Washington (where I shall be on the 6th or 7th of next month) to declare his strong interest in the matter, his cordial approval of the 'manly' course I have held in reference to it, and his desire to stir in it if possible.

I have lighted up such a blaze that a meeting of the foremost people on the other side (very respectfully and properly conducted in reference to me, personally, I am bound to say) was held in this town t'other night. And it would be a thousand pities if we did not strike as hard as we can, now that the iron is so hot.

"I have come at last, and it is time I did, to my life here, and intentions for the future. I can do nothing that I want to do, go nowhere where I want to go, and see nothing that I want to see. If I turn into the street, I am followed by a multitude. If I stay at home, the house becomes, with callers, like a fair. If I visit a public institution, with only one friend, the directors come down incontinently, waylay me in the yard, and address me in a long speech. I go to a party in the evening, and am so inclosed and hemmed about by people, stand where I will, that I am exhausted for want of air. I dine out, and have to talk about everything, to everybody. I go to church for quiet, and there is a violent rush to the neighborhood of the pew I sit in, and the clergyman preaches at me. I take my seat in a railroad-car, and the very conductor won't leave me alone. I get out at a station, and can't drink a glass of water, without having a hundred people looking down my throat when I open my mouth to swallow. Conceive what all this is! Then by every post, letters on letters arrive, all about nothing, and all demanding an immediate answer. This man is offended because I won't live in his house; and that man is thoroughly disgusted because I won't go out more than four times in one evening. I have no rest or peace, and am in a perpetual worry.

"Under these febrile circumstances, which this climate especially favors, I have come to the resolution that I will not (so far as my will has anything to do with the matter) accept any more public entertainments or public recognitions of any kind, during my stay in the United States; and in pursuance of this determination I have refused invitations from Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Virginia, Albany, and Providence. Heaven knows whether this will be effectual, but I shall soon see, for on Monday morning, the 28th, we leave for Philadelphia. There I shall only stay three days. Thence we go to Baltimore, and there I shall only stay three days. Thence to Washington, where we may stay perhaps ten days; perhaps not so long. Thence to Virginia, where we may halt for one day; and thence to Charleston, where we may pass a week perhaps, and where we shall very likely remain until your March letters reach us, through David Colden. I had a design of going from Charleston to Columbia in South Carolina, and there engaging a carriage, a baggage-tender and negro boy to guard the same, and a saddle-horse for myself,--with which caravan I intended going 'right away,' as they say here, into the West, through the wilds of Kentucky and Tennessee, across the Alleghany Mountains, and so on until we should strike the lakes and could get to Canada. But it has been represented to me that this is a track only known to traveling merchants; that the roads are bad, the country a tremendous waste, the inns log houses, and the journey one that would play the very devil with Kate. I am staggered, but not deterred. If I find it possible to be done in the time, I mean to do it; being quite satisfied that without some such dash I can never be a free agent, or see anything worth the telling.

"We mean to return home in a packet-ship,--not a steamer. Her name is the George Washington, and she will sail from here, for Liverpool, on the seventh of June. At that season of the year they are seldom more than three weeks making the voyage; and I never will trust myself upon the wide ocean, if it please Heaven, in a steamer again. When I tell you all that I observed on board that Britannia, I shall astonish you. Meanwhile, consider two of their dangers. First, that if the funnel were blown overboard the vessel must instantly be on fire, from stem to stern; to comprehend which consequence, you have only to understand that the funnel is more than 40 feet high, and that at night you see the solid fire two or three feet above its top. Imagine this swept down by a strong wind, and picture to yourself the amount of flame on deck; and that a strong wind is likely to sweep it down you soon learn, from the precautions taken to keep it up in a storm, when it is the first thing thought of. Secondly, each of these boats consumes between London and Halifax 700 tons of coals; and it is pretty clear, from this enormous difference of weight in a ship of only 1200 tons burden in all, that she must either be too heavy when she comes out of port, or too light when she goes in. The daily difference in her rolling, as she burns the coals out, is something absolutely fearful. Add to all this, that by day and night she is full of fire and people, that she has no boats, and that the struggling of that enormous machinery in a heavy sea seems as though it would rend her into fragments--and you may have a pretty considerable damned good sort of a feeble notion that it don't fit nohow; and that it a'n't calculated to make you smart, overmuch; and that you don't feel 'special bright; and by no means first-rate; and not at all tonguey (or disposed for conversation); and that however rowdy you may be by natur', it does use you up complete, and that's a fact; and makes you quake considerable, and disposed toe damn the [e]ngin[e]!--All of which phrases, I beg to add, are pure Americanisms of the first water.

"When we reach Baltimore, we are in the regions of slavery. It exists there, in its least shocking and most mitigated form; but there it is. They whisper, here (they dare only whisper, you know, and that below their breaths), that on that place, and all through the South, there is a dull gloomy cloud on which the very word seems written. I shall be able to say, one of these days, that I accepted no public mark of respect in any place where slavery was;--and that's something.

"The ladies of America are decidedly and unquestionably beautiful. Their complexions are not so good as those of Englishwomen; their beauty does not last so long; and their figures are very inferior. But they are most beautiful. I still reserve my opinion of the national character,--just whispering that I tremble for a radical coming here, unless he is a radical on principle, by reason and reflection, and from the sense of right. I fear that if he were anything else, he would return home a Tory. . . . I say no more on that head for two months from this time, save that I do fear that the heaviest blow ever dealt at liberty will be dealt by this country, in the failure of its example to the earth. The scenes that are passing in Congress now, all tending to the separation of the States, fill one with such a deep disgust that I dislike the very name of Washington (meaning the place, not the man), and am repelled by the mere thought of approaching it."

"_Twenty-seventh February. Sunday._

"There begins to be great consternation here, in reference to the Cunard packet which (we suppose) left Liverpool on the fourth. She has not yet arrived. We scarcely know what to do with ourselves in our extreme anxiety to get letters from home. I have really had serious thoughts of going back to Boston, alone, to be nearer news. We have determined to remain here until Tuesday afternoon, if she should not arrive before, and to send Mr. Q. and the luggage on to Philadelphia to-morrow morning. God grant she may not have gone down! but every ship that comes in brings intelligence of a terrible gale (which indeed was felt ashore here) on the night of the fourteenth; and the sea-captains swear (not without some prejudice, of course) that no steamer could have lived through it, supposing her to have been in its full fury. As there is no steam-packet to go to England, supposing the Caledonia not to arrive, we are obliged to send our letters by the Garrick ship, which sails early to-morrow morning. Consequently I must huddle this up, and dispatch it to the post-office with all speed. I have so much to say that I could fill quires of paper, which renders this sudden pull-up the more provoking.

"I have in my portmanteau a petition for an international copyright law, signed by all the best American writers, with Washington Irving at their head. They have requested me to hand it to Clay for presentation, and to back it with any remarks I may think proper to offer. So 'Hoo-roar for the principle, as the money-lender said ven he wouldn't renoo the bill.'

"God bless you. . . . You know what I would say about home and the darlings. A hundred times God bless you. . . . Fears are entertained for Lord Ashburton also. Nothing has been heard of him."

A brief letter, sent me next day by the minister's bag, was in effect a postscript to the foregoing, and expressed still more strongly the doubts and apprehensions his voyage out had impressed him with, and which, though he afterwards saw reason greatly to modify his misgivings, were not so strange at that time as they appear to us now:

"Carlton House, New York, February twenty-eighth, 1842. . . . The Caledonia, I grieve and regret to say, has not arrived. If she left England to her time, she has been four-and-twenty days at sea. There is no news of her; and on the nights of the fourteenth and eighteenth it blew a terrible gale, which almost justifies the worst suspicions. For myself, I have hardly any hope of her; having seen enough, in our passage out, to convince me that steaming across the ocean in heavy weather is as yet an experiment of the utmost hazard.

"As it was supposed that there would be no steamer whatever for England this month (since in ordinary course the Caledonia would have returned with the mails on the 2d of March), I hastily got the letters ready yesterday and sent them by the Garrick; which may perhaps be three weeks out, but is not very likely to be longer. But belonging to the Cunard company is a boat called the Unicorn, which in the summertime

plies up the St. Lawrence, and brings passengers from Canada to join the British and North American steamers at Halifax. In the winter she lies at the last-mentioned place; from which news has come this morning that they have sent her on to Boston for the mails, and, rather than interrupt the communication, mean to dispatch her to England in lieu of the poor Caledonia. This in itself, by the way, is a daring deed; for she was originally built to run between Liverpool and Glasgow, and is no more designed for the Atlantic than a Calais packet-boat; though she once crossed it, in the summer season.

"You may judge, therefore, what the owners think of the probability of the Caledonia's arrival. How slight an alteration in our plans would have made us passengers on board of her!

"It would be difficult to tell you, my dear fellow, what an impression this has made upon our minds, or with what intense anxiety and suspense we have been waiting for your letters from home. We were to have gone South to-day, but linger here until to-morrow afternoon (having sent the secretary and luggage forward) for one more chance of news. Love to dear Macready, and to dear Mac, and every one we care for. It's useless to speak of the dear children. It seems now as though we should never hear of them. . . .

"P.S. Washington Irving is a great fellow. We have laughed most heartily together. He is just the man he ought to be. So is Doctor Channing, with whom I have had an interesting correspondence since I saw him last at Boston. Halleck is a merry little man. Bryant a sad one, and very reserved. Washington Allston the painter (who wrote Monaldi) is a fine specimen of a glorious old genius. Longfellow, whose volume of poems I have got for you, is a frank accomplished man as well as a fine writer, and will be in town 'next fall.' Tell Macready that I suspect prices here must have rather altered since his time. I paid our fortnight's bill here, last night. We have dined out every day (except when I was laid up with a sore throat), and only had in all four bottles of wine. The bill was 70_l._ English!!!

"You will see, by my other letter, how we have been fêted and feasted; and how there is war to the knife about the international copyright; and how I will speak about it, and decline to be put down. . . .

"Oh for news from home! I think of your letters so full of heart and friendship, with perhaps a little scrawl of Charley's or Mamey's, lying at the bottom of the deep sea; and am as full of sorrow as if they had once been living creatures.--Well! they may come, yet."

* * * * *

They did reach him, but not by the Caledonia. His fears as to that vessel were but too well founded. On the very day when she was due in Boston (the 18th of February) it was learned in London that she had undergone misadventure; that, her decks having been swept and her rudder torn away, though happily no lives were lost, she had returned disabled to Cork; and that the Acadia, having received her passengers and mails, was to sail with them from Liverpool next day.

Of the main subject of that letter written on the day preceding,--of the quite unpremeditated impulse, out of which sprang his advocacy of claims which he felt to be represented in his person,--of the injustice done by his entertainers to their guest in ascribing such advocacy to selfishness,--and of the graver wrong done by them to their own highest interests, nay, even to their commonest and most vulgar interests, in continuing to reject those claims, I will add nothing now to what all those years ago I labored very hard to lay before many readers. It will be enough if I here print, from the authors' letters I sent out to him by the next following mail, in compliance with his wish, this which follows from a very dear friend of his and mine. I fortunately had it transcribed before I posted it to him; Mr. Carlyle having in some haste written from "Templand, 26 March, 1842," and taken no copy.

"We learn by the newspapers that you everywhere in America stir up the question of international copyright, and thereby awaken huge dissonance where all else were triumphant unison for you. I am asked my opinion of the matter, and requested to write it down in words.

"Several years ago, if memory err not, I was one of many English writers who, under the auspices of Miss Martineau, did already sign a petition to congress praying for an international copyright between the two Nations,--which properly are not two Nations, but one; indivisible by parliament, congress, or any kind of human law or diplomacy, being already united by Heaven's Act of Parliament, and the everlasting law of Nature and Fact. To that opinion I still adhere, and am like to continue adhering.

"In discussion of the matter before any congress or parliament, manifold considerations and argumentations will necessarily arise; which to me are not interesting, nor essential for helping me to a decision. They respect the time and manner in which the thing should be; not at all whether the thing should be or not. In an ancient book, revered I should hope on both sides of the Ocean, it was thousands of years ago written down in the most decisive and explicit manner, 'Thou shalt not steal.' That thou belongest to a different 'Nation,' and canst steal without being certainly hanged for it, gives thee no permission to steal! Thou shalt not in anywise steal at all! So it is written down, for Nations and for Men, in the Law-Book of the Maker of this Universe. Nay, poor Jeremy Bentham and others step in here, and will demonstrate that it is actually our true convenience and expediency not to steal; which I for my share, on the great scale and on the small, and in all conceivable scales and shapes, do also firmly believe it to be. For example, if Nations abstained from stealing, what need were there of fighting,--with its butcherings and burnings, decidedly the most expensive thing in this world? How much more two Nations, which, as I said, are but one Nation; knit in a thousand ways by Nature and Practical Intercourse; indivisible brother elements of the same great SAXONDOM, to which in all honorable ways be long life!

"When Mr. Robert Roy M'Gregor lived in the district of Menteith on the Highland border two centuries ago, he for his part found it more convenient to supply himself with beef by stealing it alive from the

adjacent glens, than by buying it killed in the Stirling butchers' market. It was Mr. Roy's plan of supplying himself with beef in those days, this of stealing it. In many a little 'Congress' in the district of Menteith, there was debating, doubt it not, and much specious argumentation this way and that, before they could ascertain that, really and truly, buying was the best way to get your beef; which, however, in the long run they did with one assent find it indisputably to be: and accordingly they hold by it to this day."

This brave letter was an important service rendered at a critical time, and Dickens was very grateful for it. But, as time went on, he had other and higher causes for gratitude to its writer. Admiration of Carlyle increased in him with his years; and there was no one whom in later life he honored so much, or had a more profound regard for.

FOOTNOTES:

[47] On the 22d of May, 1842.

[48] The dinner was on the 10th of May, and early the following morning I had a letter about it from Mr. Blanchard, containing these words: "Washington Irving couldn't utter a word for trembling, and Moore was as little as usual. But, poor Tom Campbell--great Heavens! what a spectacle! Amid roars of laughter he began a sentence three times about something that Dugald Stewart or Lord Bacon had said, and never could get beyond those words. The Prince was capital, though deucedly frightened. He seems unaffected and amiable, as well as very clever."

CHAPTER XXI.

PHILADELPHIA, WASHINGTON, AND THE SOUTH.

1842.

At Philadelphia--Rule in Printing
Letters--Promise as to Railroads--Experience of
them--Railway-cars--Charcoal Stoves--Ladies'
Cars--Spittoons--Massachusetts and New
York--Police-cells and Prisons--House of
Detention and Inmates--Women and Boy
Prisoners--Capital Punishment--A House of
Correction--Four Hundred Single
Cells--Comparison with English Prisons--Inns
and Landlords--At Washington--Hotel
Extortion--Philadelphia Penitentiary--The
Solitary System--Solitary Prisoners--Talk with
Inspectors--Bookseller Carey--Changes of
Temperature--Henry Clay--Proposed
Journeyings--Letters from England--Congress and
Senate--Leading American Statesmen--The People
of America--Englishmen "located" there--"Surgit

amari aliquid"--The Copyright Petition--At
Richmond--Irving appointed to Spain--Experience
of a Slave City--Incidents of Slave
Life--Discussion with a Slaveholder--Feeling of
South to England--Levees at Richmond--One more
Banquet accepted--My Gift of _Shakspeare_--Home
Letters and Fancies--Self-reproach of a Noble
Nature--Washington Irving's Leave-taking.

DICKENS'S next letter was begun in the "United States Hotel, Philadelphia," and bore date "Sunday, sixth March, 1842." It treated of much dealt with afterwards at greater length in the _Notes_, but the freshness and vivacity of the first impressions in it have surprised me. I do not, however, print any passage here which has not its own interest independently of anything contained in that book. The rule will be continued, as in the portions of letters already given, of not transcribing anything before printed, or anything having even but a near resemblance to descriptions that appear in the _Notes_.

". As this is likely to be the only quiet day I shall have for a long time, I devote it to writing to you. We have heard nothing from you[49] yet, and only have for our consolation the reflection that the Columbia[50] is now on her way out. No news had been heard of the Caledonia yesterday afternoon, when we left New York. We _were_ to have quitted that place last Tuesday, but have been detained there all the week by Kate having so bad a sore throat that she was obliged to keep her bed. We left yesterday afternoon at five o'clock, and arrived here at eleven last night. Let me say, by the way, that this is a very trying climate.

"I have often asked Americans in London which were the better railroads,--ours or theirs? They have taken time for reflection, and generally replied on mature consideration that they rather thought we excelled; in respect of the punctuality with which we arrived at our stations, and the smoothness of our traveling. I wish you could see what an American railroad is, in some parts where I now have seen them. I won't say I wish you could feel what it is, because that would be an unchristian and savage aspiration. It is never inclosed, or warded off. You walk down the main street of a large town; and, slap-dash, headlong, pell-mell, down the middle of the street, with pigs burrowing, and boys flying kites and playing marbles, and men smoking, and women talking, and children crawling, close to the very rails, there comes tearing along a mad locomotive with its train of cars, scattering a red-hot shower of sparks (from its _wood_ fire) in all directions; screeching, hissing, yelling, and panting; and nobody one atom more concerned than if it were a hundred miles away. You cross a turnpike-road; and there is no gate, no policeman, no signal--nothing to keep the wayfarer or quiet traveler out of the way, but a wooden arch on which is written, in great letters, 'Look out for the locomotive.' And if any man, woman, or child don't look out, why, it's his or her fault, and there's an end of it.

"The cars are like very shabby omnibuses,--only larger; holding sixty or

seventy people. The seats, instead of being placed long ways, are put cross-wise, back to front. Each holds two. There is a long row of these on each side of the caravan, and a narrow passage up the centre. The windows are usually all closed, and there is very often, in addition, a hot, close, most intolerable charcoal stove in a red-hot glow. The heat and closeness are quite insupportable. But this is the characteristic of all American houses, of all the public institutions, chapels, theatres, and prisons. From the constant use of the hard anthracite coal in these beastly furnaces, a perfectly new class of diseases is springing up in the country. Their effect upon an Englishman is briefly told. He is always very sick and very faint; and has an intolerable headache, morning, noon, and night.

"In the ladies' car, there is no smoking of tobacco allowed. All gentlemen who have ladies with them sit in this car; and it is usually very full. Before it, is the gentlemen's car; which is something narrower. As I had a window close to me yesterday which commanded this gentlemen's car, I looked at it pretty often, perforce. The flashes of saliva flew so perpetually and incessantly out of the windows all the way, that it looked as though they were ripping open feather-beds inside, and letting the wind dispose of the feathers.[51] But this spitting is universal. In the courts of law, the judge has his spittoon on the bench, the counsel have theirs, the witness has his, the prisoner his, and the crier his. The jury are accommodated at the rate of three men to a spittoon (or spit-box as they call it here); and the spectators in the gallery are provided for, as so many men who in the course of nature expectorate without cessation. There are spit-boxes in every steamboat, bar-room, public dining-room, house of office, and place of general resort, no matter what it be. In the hospitals, the students are requested, by placard, to use the boxes provided for them, and not to spit upon the stairs. I have twice seen gentlemen, at evening parties in New York, turn aside when they were not engaged in conversation, and spit upon the drawing-room carpet. And in every bar-room and hotel passage the stone floor looks as if it were paved with open oysters--from the quantity of this kind of deposit which tessellates it all over. . . .

"The institutions at Boston, and at Hartford, are most admirable. It would be very difficult indeed to improve upon them. But this is not so at New York; where there is an ill-managed lunatic asylum, a bad jail, a dismal workhouse, and a perfectly intolerable place of police-imprisonment. A man is found drunk in the streets, and is thrown into a cell below the surface of the earth; profoundly dark; so full of noisome vapors that when you enter it with a candle you see a ring about the light, like that which surrounds the moon in wet and cloudy weather; and so offensive and disgusting in its filthy odors that you _cannot bear_ its stench. He is shut up within an iron door, in a series of vaulted passages where no one stays; has no drop of water, or ray of light, or visitor, or help of any kind; and there he remains until the magistrate's arrival. If he die (as one man did not long ago), he is half eaten by the rats in an hour's time (as this man was). I expressed, on seeing these places the other night, the disgust I felt, and which it would be impossible to repress. 'Well, I don't know,' said the night constable--that's a national answer, by-the-by,--'well, I don't know.

I've had six-and-twenty young women locked up here together, and beautiful ones too, and that's a fact.' The cell was certainly no larger than the wine-cellar in Devonshire Terrace; at least three feet lower; and stunk like a common sewer. There was one woman in it then. The magistrate begins his examinations at five o'clock in the morning; the watch is set at seven at night; if the prisoners have been given in charge by an officer, they are not taken out before nine or ten; and in the interval they remain in these places, where they could no more be heard to cry for help, in case of a fit or swoon among them, than a man's voice could be heard after he was confined up in his grave.

"There is a prison in this same city, and indeed in the same building, where prisoners for grave offenses await their trial, and to which they are sent back when under remand. It sometimes happens that a man or woman will remain here for twelve months, waiting the result of motions for new trial, and in arrest of judgment, and what not. I went into it the other day: without any notice or preparation, otherwise I find it difficult to catch them in their work-a-day aspect. I stood in a long, high, narrow building, consisting of four galleries one above the other, with a bridge across each, on which sat a turnkey, sleeping or reading as the case might be. From the roof, a couple of wind-sails dangled and drooped, limp and useless; the sky-light being fast closed, and they only designed for summer use. In the centre of the building was the eternal stove; and along both sides of every gallery was a long row of iron doors--looking like furnace-doors, being very small, but black and cold as if the fires within had gone out.

"A man with keys appears, to show us round. A good-looking fellow, and, in his way, civil and obliging." (I omit a dialogue of which the substance has been printed,[52] and give only that which appears for the first time here.)

"Suppose a man's here for twelve months. Do you mean to say he never comes out at that little iron door?"

"He _may_ walk some, perhaps--not much."

"Will you show me a few of them?"

"Ah! All, if you like."

"He threw open a door, and I looked in. An old man was sitting on his bed, reading. The light came in through a small chink, very high up in the wall. Across the room ran a thick iron pipe to carry off filth; this was bored for the reception of something like a big funnel in shape; and over the funnel was a watercock. This was his washing apparatus and water-closet. It was not savory, but not very offensive. He looked up at me; gave himself an odd, dogged kind of shake; and fixed his eyes on his book again. I came out, and the door was shut and locked. He had been there a month, and would have to wait another month for his trial. 'Has he ever walked out now, for instance?' 'No.' . .

"In England, if a man is under sentence of death even, he has a yard to walk in at certain times."

"Possible?"

". . . Making me this answer with a coolness which is perfectly untranslatable and inexpressible, and which is quite peculiar to the soil, he took me to the women's side, telling me, upon the way, all about this man, who, it seems, murdered his wife, and will certainly be hanged. The women's doors have a small square aperture in them; I looked through one, and saw a pretty boy about ten or twelve years old, who seemed lonely and miserable enough--as well he might. 'What's he been doing?' says I. 'Nothing,' says my friend. 'Nothing!' says I. 'No,' says he. 'He's here for safe keeping. He saw his father kill his mother, and is detained to give evidence against him--that was his father you saw just now.' 'But that's rather hard treatment for a witness, isn't it?' 'Well, I don't know. It a'n't a very rowdy life, and that's a fact.' So my friend, who was an excellent fellow in his way, and very obliging, and a handsome young man to boot, took me off to show me some more curiosities; and I was very much obliged to him, for the place was so hot, and I so giddy, that I could scarcely stand. . . .

"When a man is hanged in New York, he is walked out of one of these cells, without any condemned sermon or other religious formalities, straight into the narrow jail-yard, which may be about the width of Cranbourn Alley. There, a gibbet is erected, which is of curious construction; for the culprit stands on the earth with the rope about his neck, which passes through a pulley in the top of the 'Tree' (see Newgate Calendar passim), and is attached to a weight something heavier than the man. This weight, being suddenly let go, drags the rope down with it, and sends the criminal flying up fourteen feet into the air; while the judge, and jury, and five-and-twenty citizens (whose presence is required by the law), stand by, that they may afterwards certify to the fact. This yard is a very dismal place; and when I looked at it, I thought the practice infinitely superior to ours: much more solemn, and far less degrading and indecent.

[Illustration]

"There is another prison near New York which is a house of correction. The convicts labor in stone-quarries near at hand, but the jail has no covered yards or shops, so that when the weather is wet (as it was when I was there) each man is shut up in his own little cell, all the live-long day. These cells, in all the correction-houses I have seen, are on one uniform plan,--thus: A, B, C, and D, are the walls of the building with windows in them, high up in the wall. The shaded place in the centre represents four tiers of cells, one above the other, with doors of grated iron, and a light grated gallery to each tier. Four tiers front to B, and four to D, so that by this means you may be said, in walking round, to see eight tiers in all. The intermediate blank space you walk in, looking up at these galleries; so that, coming in at the door E, and going either to the right or left till you come back to the door again, you see all the cells under one roof and in one high room. Imagine them in number 400, and in every one a man locked up; this one with his hands through the bars of his grate, this one in bed (in the middle of the day, remember), and this one flung down in a heap upon

the ground with his head against the bars like a wild beast. Make the rain pour down in torrents outside. Put the everlasting stove in the midst; hot, suffocating, and vaporous, as a witch's cauldron. Add a smell like that of a thousand old mildewed umbrellas wet through, and a thousand dirty-clothes-bags musty, moist, and fusty, and you will have some idea--a very feeble one, my dear friend, on my word--of this place yesterday week. You know of course that we adopted our improvements in prison-discipline from the American pattern; but I am confident that the writers who have the most lustily lauded the American prisons have never seen Chesterton's domain or Tracey's.[53] There is no more comparison between these two prisons of ours, and any I have seen here YET, than there is between the keepers here, and those two gentlemen. Putting out of sight the difficulty we have in England of finding useful labor for the prisoners (which of course arises from our being an older country and having vast numbers of artisans unemployed), our system is more complete, more impressive, and more satisfactory in every respect. It is very possible that I have not come to the best, not having yet seen Mount Auburn. I will tell you when I have. And also when I have come to those inns, mentioned--vaguely rather--by Miss Martineau, where they undercharge literary people for the love the landlords bear them. My experience, so far, has been of establishments where (perhaps for the same reason) they very monstrously and violently overcharge a man whose position forbids remonstrance.

"WASHINGTON, Sunday, March the Thirteenth, 1842.

"In allusion to the last sentence, my dear friend, I must tell you a slight experience I had in Philadelphia. My rooms had been ordered for a week, but, in consequence of Kate's illness, only Mr. Q. and the luggage had gone on. Mr. Q. always lives at the table-d'hôte, so that while we were in New York our rooms were empty. The landlord not only charged me half the full rent for the time during which the rooms were reserved for us (which was quite right), but charged me also for board for myself and Kate and Anne, at the rate of nine dollars per day_ for the same period, when we were actually living, at the same expense, in New York!!! I _did_ remonstrate upon this head, but was coolly told it was the custom (which I have since been assured is a lie), and had nothing for it but to pay the amount. What else could I do? I was going away by the steamboat at five o'clock in the morning; and the landlord knew perfectly well that my disputing an item of his bill would draw down upon me the sacred wrath of the newspapers, which would one and all demand in capitals if THIS was the gratitude of the man whom America had received as she had never received any other man but La Fayette?

"I went last Tuesday to the Eastern Penitentiary near Philadelphia, which is the only prison in the States, or I believe in the world, on the principle of hopeless, strict, and unrelaxed solitary confinement, during the whole term of the sentence. It is wonderfully kept, but a most dreadful, fearful place. The inspectors, immediately on my arrival in Philadelphia, invited me to pass the day in the jail, and to dine with them when I had finished my inspection, that they might hear my opinion of the system. Accordingly I passed the whole day in going from cell to cell, and conversing with the prisoners. Every facility was

given me, and no constraint whatever imposed upon any man's free speech. If I were to write you a letter of twenty sheets, I could not tell you this one day's work; so I will reserve it until that happy time when we shall sit round the table a Jack Straw's--you, and I, and Mac--and go over my diary. I never shall be able to dismiss from my mind the impressions of that day. Making notes of them, as I have done, is an absurdity, for they are written, beyond all power of erasure, in my brain. I saw men who had been there, five years, six years, eleven years, two years, two months, two days; some whose term was nearly over, and some whose term had only just begun. Women too, under the same variety of circumstances. Every prisoner who comes into the jail comes at night; is put into a bath, and dressed in the prison-garb; and then a black hood is drawn over his face and head, and he is led to the cell from which he never stirs again until his whole period of confinement has expired. I looked at some of them with the same awe as I should have looked at men who had been buried alive and dug up again.

"We dined in the jail: and I told them after dinner how much the sight had affected me, and what an awful punishment it was. I dwelt upon this; for, although the inspectors are extremely kind and benevolent men, I question whether they are sufficiently acquainted with the human mind to know what it is they are doing. Indeed, I am sure they do not know. I bore testimony, as every one who sees it must, to the admirable government of the institution (Stanfield is the keeper: grown a little younger, that's all); but added that nothing could justify such a punishment but its working a reformation in the prisoners. That for short terms--say two years for the maximum--I conceived, especially after what they had told me of its good effects in certain cases, it might perhaps be highly beneficial; but that, carried to so great an extent, I thought it cruel and unjustifiable; and, further, that their sentences for small offenses were very rigorous, not to say savage. All this they took like men who were really anxious to have one's free opinion and to do right. And we were very much pleased with each other, and parted in the friendliest way.

"They sent me back to Philadelphia in a carriage they had sent for me in the morning; and then I had to dress in a hurry, and follow Kate to Carey's the bookseller's, where there was a party. He married a sister of Leslie's. There are three Miss Leslies here, very accomplished; and one of them has copied all her brother's principal pictures. These copies hang about the room. We got away from this as soon as we could; and next morning had to turn out at five. In the morning I had received and shaken hands with five hundred people, so you may suppose that I was pretty well tired. Indeed, I am obliged to be very careful of myself; to avoid smoking and drinking; to get to bed soon; and to be particular in respect of what I eat. . . . You cannot think how bilious and trying the climate is. One day it is hot summer, without a breath of air; the next, twenty degrees below freezing, with a wind blowing that cuts your skin like steel. These changes have occurred here several times since last Wednesday night.

"I have altered my route, and don't mean to go to Charleston. The country, all the way from here, is nothing but a dismal swamp; there is a bad night of sea-coasting in the journey; the equinoctial gales are

blowing hard; and Clay (a most _charming_ fellow, by-the-by), whom I have consulted, strongly dissuades me. The weather is intensely hot there; the spring fever is coming on; and there is very little to see, after all. We therefore go next Wednesday night to Richmond, which we shall reach on Thursday. There we shall stop three days; my object being to see some tobacco-plantations. Then we shall go by James River back to Baltimore, which we have already passed through, and where we shall stay two days. Then we shall go West at once, straight through the most gigantic part of this continent: across the Alleghany Mountains, and over a prairie.

"STILL AT WASHINGTON, Fifteenth March, 1842. . . . It is impossible, my dear friend, to tell you what we felt when Mr. Q. (who is a fearfully sentimental genius, but heartily interested in all that concerns us) came to where we were dining last Sunday, and sent in a note to the effect that the Caledonia[54] had arrived! Being really assured of her safety, we felt as if the distance between us and home were diminished by at least one-half. There was great joy everywhere here, for she had been quite despaired of, but our joy was beyond all telling. This news came on by express. Last night your letters reached us. I was dining with a club (for I can't avoid a dinner of that sort, now and then), and Kate sent me a note about nine o'clock to say they were here. But she didn't open them--which I consider heroic--until I came home. That was about half-past ten; and we read them until nearly two in the morning.

"I won't say a word about your letters; except that Kate and I have come to a conclusion which makes me tremble in my shoes, for we decide that humorous narrative is your forte, and not statesmen of the commonwealth. I won't say a word about your news; for how could I in that case, while you want to hear what we are doing, resist the temptation of expending pages on those darling children? . . .

"I have the privilege of appearing on the floor of both Houses here, and go to them every day. They are very handsome and commodious. There is a great deal of bad speaking, but there are a great many very remarkable men, in the legislature: such as John Quincy Adams, Clay, Preston, Calhoun, and others: with whom I need scarcely add I have been placed in the friendliest relations. Adams is a fine old fellow--seventy-six years old, but with most surprising vigor, memory, readiness, and pluck. Clay is perfectly enchanting; an irresistible man. There are some very notable specimens, too, out of the West. Splendid men to look at, hard to deceive, prompt to act, lions in energy, Crichtons in varied accomplishments, Indians in quickness of eye and gesture, Americans in affectionate and generous impulse. It would be difficult to exaggerate the nobility of some of these glorious fellows.

"When Clay retires, as he does this month, Preston will become the leader of the Whig party. He so solemnly assures me that the international copyright shall and will be passed, that I almost begin to hope; and I shall be entitled to say, if it be, that I have brought it about. You have no idea how universal the discussion of its merits and demerits has become, or how eager for the change I have made a portion of the people.

"You remember what ---- was, in England. If you _could_ but see him here! If you could only have seen him when he called on us the other day,--feigning abstraction in the dreadful pressure of affairs of state; rubbing his forehead as one who was aweary of the world; and exhibiting a sublime caricature of Lord Burleigh. He is the only thoroughly unreal man I have seen on this side the ocean. Heaven help the President! All parties are against him, and he appears truly wretched. We go to a levee at his house to-night. He has invited me to dinner on Friday, but I am obliged to decline; for we leave, per steamboat, to-morrow night.

"I said I wouldn't write anything more concerning the American people, for two months. Second thoughts are best. I shall not change, and may as well speak out--to _you_. They are friendly, earnest, hospitable, kind, frank, very often accomplished, far less prejudiced than you would suppose, warm-hearted, fervent, and enthusiastic. They are chivalrous in their universal politeness to women, courteous, obliging, disinterested; and, when they conceive a perfect affection for a man (as I may venture to say of myself), entirely devoted to him. I have received thousands of people of all ranks and grades, and have never once been asked an offensive or unpolite question,--except by Englishmen, who, when they have been 'located' here for some years, are worse than the devil in his blackest painting. The State is a parent to its people; has a parental care and watch over all poor children, women laboring of child, sick persons, and captives. The common men render you assistance in the streets, and would revolt from the offer of a piece of money. The desire to oblige is universal; and I have never once traveled in a public conveyance without making some generous acquaintance whom I have been sorry to part from, and who has in many cases come on miles, to see us again. But I don't like the country. I would not live here, on any consideration. It goes against the grain with me. It would with you. I think it impossible, utterly impossible, for any Englishman to live here and be happy. I have a confidence that I must be right, because I have everything, God knows, to lead me to the opposite conclusion; and yet I cannot resist coming to this one. As to the causes, they are too many to enter upon here. . . .

"One of two petitions for an international copyright which I brought here from American authors, with Irving at their head, has been presented to the House of Representatives. Clay retains the other for presentation to the Senate after I have left Washington. The presented one has been referred to a committee; the Speaker has nominated as its chairman Mr. Kennedy, member for Baltimore, who is himself an author and notoriously favorable to such a law; and I am going to assist him in his report.

"RICHMOND, IN VIRGINIA. Thursday Night, March 17.

"Irving was with me at Washington yesterday, and _wept heartily_ at parting. He is a fine fellow, when you know him well; and you would relish him, my dear friend, of all things. We have laughed together at some absurdities we have encountered in company, quite in my vociferous Devonshire-Terrace style. The 'Merrikin' government has treated him, he says, most liberally and handsomely in every respect. He thinks of

sailing for Liverpool on the 7th of April, passing a short time in London, and then going to Paris. Perhaps you may meet him. If you do, he will know that you are my dearest friend, and will open his whole heart to you at once. His secretary of legation, Mr. Coggleswell, is a man of very remarkable information, a great traveler, a good talker, and a scholar.

"I am going to sketch you our trip here from Washington, as it involves nine miles of a 'Virginny Road.' That done, I must be brief, good brother." . . .

The reader of the American Notes will remember the admirable and most humorous description of the night steamer on the Potomac, and of the black driver over the Virginia road. Both were in this letter; which, after three days, he resumed "At Washington again, Monday, March the twenty-first:

"We had intended to go to Baltimore from Richmond, by a place called Norfolk; but, one of the boats being under repair, I found we should probably be detained at this Norfolk two days. Therefore we came back here yesterday, by the road we had traveled before; lay here last night; and go on to Baltimore this afternoon, at four o'clock. It is a journey of only two hours and a half. Richmond is a prettily situated town, but, like other towns in slave districts (as the planters themselves admit), has an aspect of decay and gloom which to an unaccustomed eye is most distressing. In the black car (for they don't let them sit with the whites), on the railroad as we went there, were a mother and family, whom the steamer was conveying away, to sell; retaining the man (the husband and father, I mean) on his plantation. The children cried the whole way. Yesterday, on board the boat, a slave-owner and two constables were our fellow-passengers. They were coming here in search of two negroes who had run away on the previous day. On the bridge at Richmond there is a notice against fast driving over it, as it is rotten and crazy: penalty--for whites, five dollars; for slaves, fifteen stripes. My heart is lightened as if a great load had been taken from it, when I think that we are turning our backs on this accursed and detested system. I really don't think I could have borne it any longer. It is all very well to say 'be silent on the subject.' They won't let you be silent. They will ask you what you think of it; and will expatiate on slavery as if it were one of the greatest blessings of mankind. 'It's not,' said a hard, bad-looking fellow to me the other day, 'it's not the interest of a man to use his slaves ill. It's damned nonsense that you hear in England.'--I told him quietly that it was not a man's interest to get drunk, or to steal, or to game, or to indulge in any other vice, but he did indulge in it for all that; that cruelty, and the abuse of irresponsible power, were two of the bad passions of human nature, with the gratification of which, considerations of interest or of ruin, had nothing whatever to do; and that, while every candid man must admit that even a slave might be happy enough with a good master, all human beings knew that bad masters, cruel masters, and masters who disgraced the form they bore, were matters of experience and history, whose existence was as undisputed as that of slaves themselves. He was a little taken aback by this, and asked me if I believed in the Bible. Yes, I said, but if any man could prove to me that it sanctioned

slavery, I would place no further credence in it. 'Well then,' he said, 'by God, sir, the niggers must be kept down, and the whites have put down the colored people wherever they have found them.' 'That's the whole question,' said I. 'Yes, and by God,' says he, 'the British had better not stand out on that point when Lord Ashburton comes over, for I never felt so warlike as I do now,--and that's a fact.' I was obliged to accept a public supper in this Richmond, and I saw plainly enough there that the hatred which these Southern States bear to us as a nation has been fanned up and revived again by this Creole business, and can scarcely be exaggerated.

. . . . "We were desperately tired at Richmond, as we went to a great many places and received a very great number of visitors. We appoint usually two hours in every day for this latter purpose, and have our room so full at that period that it is difficult to move or breathe. Before we left Richmond, a gentleman told me, when I really was so exhausted that I could hardly stand, that 'three people of great fashion' were much offended by having been told, when they called last evening, that I was tired and not visible, then, but would be 'at home' from twelve to two next day! Another gentleman (no doubt of great fashion also) sent a letter to me two hours after I had gone to bed, preparatory to rising at four next morning, with instructions to the slave who brought it to knock me up and wait for an answer!

"I am going to break my resolution of accepting no more public entertainments, in favor of the originators of the printed document overleaf. They live upon the confines of the Indian territory, some two thousand miles or more west of New York! Think of my dining there! And yet, please God, the festival will come off--I should say about the 12th or 15th of next month." . . .

The printed document was a series of resolutions, moved at a public meeting attended by all the principal citizens, judges, professors, and doctors of St. Louis, urgently inviting to that city of the Far West the distinguished writer then the guest of America, eulogizing his genius, and tendering to him their warmest hospitalities. He was at Baltimore when he closed his letter.

"BALTIMORE, _Tuesday, March 22d._

"I have a great diffidence in running counter to any impression formed by a man of Maclise's genius, on a subject he has fully considered." (Referring, apparently, to some remark by myself on the picture of the Play-scene in _Hamlet_, exhibited this year.) "But I quite agree with you about the King in _Hamlet_. Talking of Hamlet, I constantly carry in my great-coat pocket the _Shakspeare_ you bought for me in Liverpool. What an unspeakable source of delight that book is to me!

"Your Ontario letter I found here to-night: sent on by the vigilant and faithful Colden, who makes every thing having reference to us or our affairs a labor of the heartiest love. We devoured its contents, greedily. Good Heaven, my dear fellow, how I miss you! and how I count the time 'twixt this and coming home again! Shall I ever forget the day

of our parting at Liverpool! when even ---- became jolly and radiant in his sympathy with our separation! Never, never shall I forget that time. Ah! how seriously I thought then, and how seriously I have thought many, many times since, of the terrible folly of ever quarreling with a true friend, on good-for-nothing trifles! Every little hasty word that has ever passed between us rose up before me like a reproachful ghost. At this great distance, I seem to look back upon any miserable small interruption of our affectionate intercourse, though only for the instant it has never outlived, with a sort of pity for myself as if I were another creature.

"I have bought another accordion. The steward lent me one, on the passage out, and I regaled the ladies' cabin with my performances. You can't think with what feeling I play _Home Sweet Home_ every night, or how pleasantly sad it makes us. . . . And so God bless you. . . . I leave space for a short postscript before sealing this, but it will probably contain nothing. The dear, dear children! what a happiness it is to know that they are in such hands!

* * * * *

"P.S. Twenty-third March, 1842. Nothing new. And all well. I have not heard that the Columbia is in, but she is hourly expected. Washington Irving has come on for another leave-taking,[55] and dines with me to-day. We start for the West, at half-after eight to-morrow morning. I send you a newspaper, the most respectable in the States, with a very just copyright article."

FOOTNOTES:

[49] At the top of the sheet, above the address and date, are the words "Read on. We _have_ your precious letters, but you'll think at first we have not. C. D."

[50] The ship next in rotation to the Caledonia from Liverpool.

[51] This comparison is employed in another descriptive passage to be found in the _Notes_ (p. 57).

[52] _Notes_, p. 49.

[53] See _ante_, p. 280.

[54] This was the Acadia with the Caledonia mails.

[55] At his second visit to America, when in Washington in February, 1868, Dickens, replying to a letter in which Irving was named, thus describes the last meeting and leave-taking to which he alludes above: "Your reference to my dear friend Washington Irving renews the vivid impressions reawakened in my mind at Baltimore but the other day. I saw his fine face for the last time in that city. He came there from New York to pass a day or two with me before I went westward; and they were made among the most memorable of my life by his delightful fancy and genial humor. Some unknown admirer of his books and mine sent to the

hotel a most enormous mint-julep, wreathed with flowers. We sat, one on either side of it, with great solemnity (it filled a respectably-sized round table), but the solemnity was of very short duration. It was quite an enchanted julep, and carried us among innumerable people and places that we both knew. The julep held out far into the night, and my memory never saw him afterwards otherwise than as bending over it, with his straw, with an attempted air of gravity (after some anecdote involving some wonderfully droll and delicate observation of character), and then, as his eye caught mine, melting into that captivating laugh of his, which was the brightest and best I have ever heard."

CHAPTER XXII.

CANAL-BOAT JOURNEYS: BOUND FAR WEST.

1842.

Character in the Letters--The _Notes_ less satisfactory--Personal Narrative in Letters--The Copyright Differences--Social Dissatisfactions--A Fact to be remembered--Literary Merits of the Letters--Personal Character portrayed--On Board for Pittsburgh--Choicest Passages of _Notes_--Queer Stage-coach--Something revealed on the Top--At Harrisburg--Treaties with Indians--Local Legislatures--A Levee--Morning and Night in Canal-boat--At and after Breakfast--Making the best of it--Hardy Habits--By Rail across Mountain--Mountain Scenery--New Settlements--Original of Eden in _Chuzzlewit_--A Useful Word--Party in America--Home News--Meets an Early Acquaintance--"Smallness of the World"--Queer Customers at Levees--Our Anniversary--The Cincinnati Steamer--Frugality in Water and Linen--Magnetic Experiments--Life-preservers--Bores--Habits of Neatness--Wearying for Home--Another Solitary Prison--New Terror to Loneliness--Arrival at Cincinnati--Two Judges in Attendance--The City described--On the Pavement.

It would not be possible that a more vivid or exact impression than that which is derivable from these letters could be given of either the genius or the character of the writer. The whole man is here in the supreme hour of his life, and in all the enjoyment of its highest sensations. Inexpressibly sad to me has been the task of going over them, but the surprise has equaled the sadness. I had forgotten what was in them. That they contained, in their first vividness, all the most

prominent descriptions of his published book, I knew. But the reproduction of any part of these was not permissible here; and, believing that the substance of them had been thus almost wholly embodied in the *“American Notes”*, when they were lent to assist in its composition, I turned to them with very small expectation of finding anything available for present use. Yet the difficulty has been, not to find, but to reject; and the rejection when most unavoidable has not been most easy. Even where the subjects recur that are in the printed volume, there is a freshness of first impressions in the letters that renders it no small trial to act strictly on the rule adhered to in these extracts from them. In the *“Notes”* there is of course very much, masterly in observation and description, of which there is elsewhere no trace; but the passages amplified from the letters have not been improved, and the manly force and directness of some of their views and reflections, conveyed by touches of a picturesque completeness that no elaboration could give, have here and there not been strengthened by rhetorical additions in the printed work. There is also a charm in the letters which the plan adopted in the book necessarily excluded from it. It will always, of course, have value as a deliberate expression of the results gathered from the American experiences, but the *“personal narrative”* of this famous visit to America is in the letters alone. In what way his experiences arose, the desire at the outset to see nothing that was not favorable, the slowness with which adverse impressions were formed, and the eager recognition of every truthful and noble quality that arose and remained above the fault-finding, are discoverable only in the letters.

Already it is manifest from them that the before-mentioned disappointments, as well of the guest in his entertainers as of the entertainers in their guest, had their beginning in the copyright differences; but it is not less plain that the social dissatisfactions on his side were of even earlier date, and with the country itself had certainly nothing to do. It was objected to him, I well remember, that in making such unfavorable remarks as his published book did on many points, he was assailing the democratic institutions that had formed the character of the nation; but the answer is obvious, that, democratic institutions being universal in America, they were as fairly entitled to share in the good as in the bad; and in what he praised, of which there is here abundant testimony, he must be held to have exalted those institutions as much, as in what he blamed he could be held to depreciate them. He never sets himself up in judgment on the entire people. As we see, from the way the letters show us that the opinions he afterwards published were formed, he does not draw conclusions while his observation is only half concluded; and he refrains throughout from the example too strongly set him, even in the very terms of his welcome by the writers of America,[56] of flinging one nation in the other's face. He leaves each upon its own ground. His great business in his publication, as in the first impressions recorded here, is to exhibit social influences at work as he saw them himself; and it would surely have been of all bad compliments the worst, when resolving, in the tone and with the purpose of a friend, to make public what he had observed in America, if he had supposed that such a country would take truth amiss.

There is, however, one thing to be especially remembered, as well in

reading the letters as in judging of the book which was founded on them. It is a point to which I believe Mr. Emerson directed the attention of his countrymen. Everything of an objectionable kind, whether the author would have it so or not, stands out more prominently and distinctly than matter of the opposite description. The social sin is a more tangible thing than the social virtue. Pertinaciously to insist upon the charities and graces of life, is to outrage their quiet and unobtrusive character; but we incur the danger of extending the vulgarities and indecencies if we seem to countenance by omitting to expose them. And if this is only kept in view in reading what is here given, the proportion of censure will be found not to overbalance the just admiration and unexaggerated praise.

Apart from such considerations, it is to be also said, the letters, from which I am now printing exactly as they were written, have claims, as mere literature, of an unusual kind. Unrivalled quickness of observation, the rare faculty of seizing out of a multitude of things the thing only that is essential, the irresistible play of humor, such pathos as only humorists of this high order possess, and the unwearied unforced vivacity of ever fresh, buoyant, bounding animal spirits, never found more natural, variously easy, or picturesque expression. Written amid such distraction, fatigue, and weariness as they describe, amid the jarring noises of hotels and streets, aboard steamers, on canal-boats, and in log huts, there is not an erasure in them. Not external objects only, but feelings, reflections, and thoughts, are photographed into visible forms with the same unexampled ease. They borrow no help from the matters of which they treat. They would have given, to the subjects described, old acquaintance and engrossing interest if they had been about a people in the moon. Of the personal character at the same time self-portrayed, others, whose emotions it less vividly awakens, will judge more calmly and clearly than myself. Yet to myself only can it be known how small were the services of friendship that sufficed to rouse all the sensibilities of this beautiful and noble nature. Throughout our life-long intercourse it was the same. His keenness of discrimination failed him never excepting here, when it was lost in the limitless extent of his appreciation of all kindly things; and never did he receive what was meant for a benefit that he was not eager to return it a hundredfold. No man more truly generous ever lived.

His next letter was begun from "on board the canal-boat. Going to Pittsburgh. Monday, March twenty-eighth, 1842;" and the difficulties of rejection, to which reference has just been made, have been nowhere felt by me so much. Several of the descriptive masterpieces of the book are in it, with such touches of original freshness as might fairly have justified a reproduction of them in their first form. Among these are the Harrisburg coach on its way through the Susquehanna valley; the railroad across the mountain; the brown-forester of the Mississippi, the interrogative man in pepper-and-salt, and the affecting scene of the emigrants put ashore as the steamer passes up the Ohio. But all that I may here give, bearing any resemblance to what is given in the _Notes_, are the opening sketch of the small creature on the top of the queer stage-coach, to which the printed version fails to do adequate justice, and an experience to which the interest belongs of having suggested the settlement of Eden in _Martin Chuzzlewit_. . . . "We left Baltimore last

Thursday, the twenty-fourth, at half-past eight in the morning, by railroad; and got to a place called York, about twelve. There we dined, and took a stage-coach for Harrisburg; twenty-five miles further. This stage-coach was like nothing so much as the body of one of the swings you see at a fair set upon four wheels and roofed and covered at the sides with painted canvas. There were twelve _inside_! I, thank my stars, was on the box. The luggage was on the roof; among it, a good-sized dining-table, and a big rocking-chair. We also took up an intoxicated gentleman, who sat for ten miles between me and the coachman; and another intoxicated gentleman who got up behind, but in the course of a mile or two fell off without hurting himself, and was seen in the distant perspective reeling back to the grog-shop where we had found him. There were four horses to this land-ark, of course; but we did not perform the journey until after half-past six o'clock that night. . . . The first half of the journey was tame enough, but the second lay through the valley of the Susquehanah (I think I spell it right, but I haven't that American Geography at hand), which is very beautiful. . . .

"I think I formerly made a casual remark to you touching the precocity of the youth of this country. When we changed horses on this journey I got down to stretch my legs, refresh myself with a glass of whiskey-and-water, and shake the wet off my great-coat,--for it was raining very heavily, and continued to do so, all night. Mounting to my seat again, I observed something lying on the roof of the coach, which I took to be a rather large fiddle in a brown bag. In the course of ten miles or so, however, I discovered that it had a pair of dirty shoes at one end, and a glazed cap at the other; and further observation demonstrated it to be a small boy, in a snuff-colored coat, with his arms quite pinioned to his sides by deep forcing into his pockets. He was, I presume, a relative or friend of the coachman's, as he lay atop of the luggage, with his face towards the rain; and, except when a change of position brought his shoes in contact with my hat, he appeared to be asleep. Sir, when we stopped to water the horses, about two miles from Harrisburg, this thing slowly upreared itself to the height of three foot eight, and, fixing its eyes on me with a mingled expression of complacency, patronage, national independence, and sympathy for all outer barbarians and foreigners, said, in shrill piping accents, 'Well now, stranger, I guess you find this a'most like an English a'ternoon,--hey?' It is unnecessary to add that I thirsted for his blood. . . .

"We had all next morning in Harrisburg, as the canal-boat was not to start until three o'clock in the afternoon. The officials called upon me before I had finished breakfast; and, as the town is the seat of the Pennsylvanian legislature, I went up to the Capitol. I was very much interested in looking over a number of treaties made with the poor Indians, their signatures being rough drawings of the creatures or weapons they are called after; and the extraordinary drawing of these emblems, showing the queer, unused, shaky manner in which each man has held the pen, struck me very much.

"You know my small respect for our House of Commons. These local legislatures are too insufferably apish of mighty legislation, to be seen without bile; for which reason, and because a great crowd of

senators and ladies had assembled in both houses to behold the inimitable, and had already begun to pour in upon him even in the secretary's private room, I went back to the hotel, with all speed. The members of both branches of the legislature followed me there, however, so we had to hold the usual levee before our half-past one o'clock dinner. We received a great number of them. Pretty nearly every man spat upon the carpet, as usual; and one blew his nose with his fingers,--also on the carpet, which was a very neat one, the room given up to us being the private parlor of the landlord's wife. This has become so common since, however, that it scarcely seems worth mentioning. Please to observe that the gentleman in question was a member of the senate, which answers (as they very often tell me) to our House of Lords.

"The innkeeper was the most attentive, civil, and obliging person I ever saw in my life. On being asked for his bill, he said there was no bill: the honor and pleasure, etc. being more than sufficient.[57] I did not permit this, of course, and begged Mr. Q. to explain to him that, traveling four strong, I could not hear of it on any account.

"And now I come to the Canal-Boat. Bless your heart and soul, my dear fellow,--if you could only see us on board the canal-boat! Let me think, for a moment, at what time of the day or night I should best like you to see us. In the morning? Between five and six in the morning, shall I say? Well! you would like to see me, standing on the deck, fishing the dirty water out of the canal with a tin ladle chained to the boat by a long chain; pouring the same into a tin basin (also chained up in like manner); and scrubbing my face with the jack towel. At night, shall I say? I don't know that you would like to look into the cabin at night, only to see me lying on a temporary shelf exactly the width of this sheet of paper when it's open (I measured it this morning),[58] with one man above me, and another below; and, in all, eight-and-twenty in a low cabin, which you can't stand upright in with your hat on. I don't think you would like to look in at breakfast-time either, for then these shelves have only just been taken down and put away, and the atmosphere of the place is, as you may suppose, by no means fresh; though there are upon the table tea and coffee, and bread and butter, and salmon, and shad, and liver, and steak, and potatoes, and pickles, and ham, and pudding, and sausages; and three-and-thirty people sitting round it, eating and drinking; and savory bottles of gin, and whiskey, and brandy, and rum, in the bar hard by; and seven-and-twenty out of the eight-and-twenty men, in foul linen, with yellow streams from half-chewed tobacco trickling down their chins. Perhaps the best time for you to take a peep would be the present: eleven o'clock in the forenoon: when the barber is at his shaving, and the gentlemen are lounging about the stove waiting for their turns, and not more than seventeen are spitting in concert, and two or three are walking overhead (lying down on the luggage every time the man at the helm calls 'Bridge!'), and I am writing this in the ladies' cabin, which is a part of the gentlemen's, and only screened off by a red curtain. Indeed, it exactly resembles the dwarf's private apartment in a caravan at a fair; and the gentlemen, generally, represent the spectators at a penny a head. The place is just as clean and just as large as that caravan you and I were in at Greenwich Fair last past. Outside, it is exactly like any canal-boat you have seen near the Regent's Park, or elsewhere.

"You never can conceive what the hawking and spitting is, the whole night through. Last night was the worst. _Upon my honor and word_ I was obliged, this morning, to lay my fur coat on the deck, and wipe the half-dried flakes of spittle from it with my handkerchief; and the only surprise seemed to be that I should consider it necessary to do so. When I turned in last night, I put it on a stool beside me, and there it lay, under a cross-fire from five men,--three opposite, one above, and one below. I make no complaints, and show no disgust. I am looked upon as highly facetious at night, for I crack jokes with everybody near me until we fall asleep. I am considered very hardy in the morning, for I run up, bare-necked, and plunge my head into the half-frozen water, by half-past five o'clock. I am respected for my activity, inasmuch as I jump from the boat to the towing-path, and walk five or six miles before breakfast; keeping up with the horses all the time. In a word, they are quite astonished to find a sedentary Englishman roughing it so well, and taking so much exercise; and question me very much on that head. The greater part of the men will sit and shiver round the stove all day, rather than put one foot before the other. As to having a window open, that's not to be thought of.

"We expect to reach Pittsburgh to-night, between eight and nine o'clock; and there we ardently hope to find your March letters awaiting us. We have had, with the exception of Friday afternoon, exquisite weather, but cold. Clear starlight and moonlight nights. The canal has run, for the most part, by the side of the Susquehanah and Iwanata rivers; and has been carried through tremendous obstacles. Yesterday we crossed the mountain. This is done _by railroad_. . . . You dine at an inn upon the mountain; and, including the half-hour allowed for the meal, are rather more than five hours performing this strange part of the journey. The people north and 'down east' have terrible legends of its danger; but they appear to be exceedingly careful, and don't go to work at all wildly. There are some queer precipices close to the rails, certainly; but every precaution is taken, I am inclined to think, that such difficulties, and such a vast work, will admit of.

"The scenery, before you reach the mountains, and when you are on them, and after you have left them, is very grand and fine; and the canal winds its way through some deep, sullen gorges, which, seen by moonlight, are very impressive: though immeasurably inferior to Glencoe, to whose terrors I have not seen the smallest _approach_. We have passed, both in the mountains and elsewhere, a great number of new settlements and detached log houses. Their utterly forlorn and miserable appearance baffles all description. I have not seen six cabins out of six hundred, where the windows have been whole. Old hats, old clothes, old boards, old fragments of blanket and paper, are stuffed into the broken glass; and their air is misery and desolation. It pains the eye to see the stumps of great trees thickly strewn in every field of wheat; and never to lose the eternal swamp and dull morass, with hundreds of rotten trunks, of elm and pine and sycamore and logwood, steeped in its unwholesome water; where the frogs so croak at night that after dark there is an incessant sound as if millions of phantom teams, with bells, were traveling through the upper air, at an enormous distance off. It is quite an oppressive circumstance, too, to _come_ upon great tracks,

where settlers have been burning down the trees; and where their wounded bodies lie about, like those of murdered creatures; while here and there some charred and blackened giant rears two bare arms aloft, and seems to curse his enemies. The prettiest sight I have seen was yesterday, when we--on the heights of the mountain, and in a keen wind--looked down into a valley full of light and softness; catching glimpses of scattered cabins; children running to the doors; dogs bursting out to bark; pigs scampering home, like so many prodigal sons; families sitting out in their gardens; cows gazing upward, with a stupid indifference; men in their shirt-sleeves, looking on at their unfinished houses, and planning work for to-morrow;--and the train riding on, high above them, like a storm. But I know this is beautiful--very--very beautiful!

"I wonder whether you and Mac mean to go to Greenwich Fair! Perhaps you dine at the Crown and Sceptre to-day, for it's Easter-Monday--who knows! I wish you drank punch, dear Forster. It's a shabby thing, not to be able to picture you with that cool green glass. . . .

"I told you of the many uses of the word 'fix.' I ask Mr. Q. on board a steamboat if breakfast be nearly ready, and he tells me yes he should think so, for when he was last below the steward was 'fixing the tables'--in other words, laying the cloth. When we have been writing, and I beg him (do you remember anything of my love of order, at this distance of time?) to collect our papers, he answers that he'll 'fix 'em presently.' So when a man's dressing he's 'fixing' himself, and when you put yourself under a doctor he 'fixes' you in no time. T'other night, before we came on board here, when I had ordered a bottle of mulled claret and waited some time for it, it was put on table with an apology from the landlord (a lieutenant-colonel) that 'he feared it wasn't fixed properly.' And here, on Saturday morning, a Western man, handing the potatoes to Mr. Q. at breakfast, inquired if he wouldn't take some of 'these fixings' with his meat. I remained as grave as a judge. I catch them looking at me sometimes, and feel that they think I don't take any notice. Politics are very high here; dreadfully strong; handbills, denunciations, invectives, threats, and quarrels. The question is, who shall be the next President. The election comes off in _three years and a half_ from this time."

He resumed his letter, "on board the steamboat from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati, April the 1st, 1842. A very tremulous steamboat, which makes my hand shake. This morning, my dear friend, this very morning, which, passing by without bringing news from England, would have seen us on our way to St. Louis (viâ Cincinnati and Louisville) with sad hearts and dejected countenances, and the prospect of remaining for at least three weeks longer without any intelligence of those so inexpressibly dear to us--this very morning, bright and lucky morning that it was, a great packet was brought to our bedroom door, from HOME. How I have read and re-read your affectionate, hearty, interesting, funny, serious, delightful, and thoroughly Forsterian Columbia letter, I will not attempt to tell you; or how glad I am that you liked my first; or how afraid I am that my second was not written in such good spirits as it should have been; or how glad I am again to think that my third _was_; or how I hope you will find some amusement from my fourth: this present missive. All this, and more affectionate and earnest words than the

post-office would convey at any price, though they have no sharp edges to hurt the stamping-clerk--you will understand, I know, without expression, or attempt at expression. So, having got over the first agitation of so much pleasure; and having walked the deck; and being now in the cabin, where one party are playing at chess, and another party are asleep, and another are talking round the stove, and all are spitting; and a persevering bore of a horrible New Englander with a droning voice like a gigantic bee _will_ sit down beside me, though I am writing, and talk incessantly, in my very ear, to Kate; here goes again.

"Let me see. I should tell you, first, that we got to Pittsburgh between eight and nine o'clock of the evening of the day on which I left off at the top of this sheet; and were there received by a little man (a very little man) whom I knew years ago in London. He rejoiceth in the name of D. G.; and, when I knew him, was in partnership with his father on the Stock-Exchange, and lived handsomely at Dalston. They failed in business soon afterwards, and then this little man began to turn to account what had previously been his amusement and accomplishment, by painting little subjects for the fancy shops. So I lost sight of him, nearly ten years ago; and here he turned up t'other day, as a portrait-painter in Pittsburgh! He had previously written me a letter which moved me a good deal, by a kind of quiet independence and contentment it breathed, and still a painful sense of being alone, so very far from home. I received it in Philadelphia, and answered it. He dined with us every day of our stay in Pittsburgh (they were only three), and was truly gratified and delighted to find me unchanged,--more so than I can tell you. I am very glad to-night to think how much happiness we have fortunately been able to give him.

"Pittsburgh is like Birmingham--at least its townfolks say so; and I didn't contradict them. It is, in one respect. There is a great deal of smoke in it. I quite offended a man at our yesterday's levee, who supposed I was 'now quite at home,' by telling him that the notion of London being so dark a place was a popular mistake. We had very queer customers at our receptions, I do assure you. Not least among them, a gentleman with his inexpressibles imperfectly buttoned and his waistband resting on his thighs, who stood behind the half-opened door, and could by no temptation or inducement be prevailed upon to come out. There was also another gentleman, with one eye and one fixed gooseberry, who stood in a corner, motionless like an eight-day clock, and glared upon me, as I courteously received the Pittsburgians. There were also two red-headed brothers--boys--young dragons rather--who hovered about Kate, and wouldn't go. A great crowd they were, for three days; and a very queer one."

"STILL IN THE SAME BOAT. _April the Second, 1842._

"Many, many happy returns of the day. It's only eight o'clock in the morning now, but we mean to drink your health after dinner, in a bumper; and scores of Richmond dinners to us! We have some wine (a present sent on board by our Pittsburgh landlord) in our own cabin; and we shall tap it to good purpose, I assure you; wishing you all manner and kinds of happiness, and a long life to ourselves that we may be partakers of it.

We have wondered a hundred times already, whether you and Mac will dine anywhere together, in honor of the day. I say yes, but Kate says no. She predicts that you'll ask Mac, and he won't go. I have not yet heard from him.

"We have a better cabin here than we had on board the Britannia; the berths being much wider, and the den having two doors: one opening on the ladies' cabin, and one upon a little gallery in the stern of the boat. We expect to be at Cincinnati some time on Monday morning, and we carry about fifty passengers. The cabin for meals goes right through the boat, from the prow to the stern, and is very long; only a small portion of it being divided off, by a partition of wood and ground glass, for the ladies. We breakfast at half-after seven, dine at one, and sup at six. Nobody will sit down to any one of these meals, though the dishes are smoking on the board, until the ladies have appeared and taken their chairs. It was the same in the canal-boat.

"The washing department is a little more civilized than it was on the canal, but bad is the best. Indeed, the Americans when they are traveling, as Miss Martineau seems disposed to admit, are exceedingly negligent; not to say dirty. To the best of my making out, the ladies, under most circumstances, are content with smearing their hands and faces in a very small quantity of water. So are the men; who superadd to that mode of ablution a hasty use of the common brush and comb. It is quite a practice, too, to wear but one cotton shirt a week, and three or four fine linen _fronts_. Anne reports that this is Mr. Q.'s course of proceeding; and my portrait-painting friend told me that it was the case with pretty nearly all his sitters; so that when he bought a piece of cloth not long ago, and instructed the sempstress to make it _all_ into shirts, not fronts, she thought him deranged.

"My friend the New Englander, of whom I wrote last night, is perhaps the most intolerable bore on this vast continent. He drones, and snuffles, and writes poems, and talks small philosophy and metaphysics, and never _will_ be quiet, under any circumstances. He is going to a great temperance convention at Cincinnati; along with a doctor of whom I saw something at Pittsburgh. The doctor, in addition to being everything that the New Englander is, is a phrenologist besides. I dodge them about the boat. Whenever I appear on deck, I see them bearing down upon me--and fly. The New Englander was very anxious last night that he and I should 'form a magnetic chain,' and magnetize the doctor, for the benefit of all incredulous passengers; but I declined on the plea of tremendous occupation in the way of letter-writing.

"And, speaking of magnetism, let me tell you that the other night at Pittsburgh, there being present only Mr. Q. and the portrait-painter, Kate sat down, laughing, for me to try my hand upon her. I had been holding forth upon the subject rather luminously, and asserting that I thought I could exercise the influence, but had never tried. In six minutes, I magnetized her into hysterics, and then into the magnetic sleep. I tried again next night, and she fell into the slumber in little more than two minutes. . . . I can wake her with perfect ease; but I confess (not being prepared for anything so sudden and complete) I was on the first occasion rather alarmed. . . . The Western parts being

sometimes hazardous, I have fitted out the whole of my little company with LIFE-PRESERVERS, which I inflate with great solemnity when we get aboard any boat, and keep, as Mrs. Cluppins did her umbrella in the court of common pleas, ready for use upon a moment's notice." . . .

He resumed his letter, on "Sunday, April the third," with allusion to a general who had called upon him in Washington with two literary ladies, and had written to him next day for an immediate interview, as "the two LL's" were ambitious of the honor of a personal introduction. "Besides the doctor and the dread New Englander, we have on board that valiant general who wrote to me about the 'two LL's.' He is an old, old man with a weazen face, and the remains of a pigeon-breast in his military surtout. He is acutely gentlemanly and officer-like. The breast has so subsided, and the face has become so strongly marked, that he seems, like a pigeon-pie, to show only the feet of the bird outside, and to keep the rest to himself. He is perhaps _the_ most horrible bore in this country. And I am quite serious when I say that I do not believe there are, on the whole earth besides, so many intensified bores as in these United States. No man can form an adequate idea of the real meaning of the word, without coming here. There are no particular characters on board, with these three exceptions. Indeed, I seldom see the passengers but at meal-times, as I read and write in our own little state-room. . . . I have smuggled two chairs into our crib, and write this on a book upon my knee. Everything is in the neatest order, of course; and my shaving-tackle, dressing-case, brushes, books, and papers, are arranged with as much precision as if we were going to remain here a month. Thank God we are not.

"The average width of the river rather exceeds that of the Thames at Greenwich. In parts it is much broader; and then there is usually a green island, covered with trees, dividing it into two streams. Occasionally we stop for a few minutes at a small town, or village (I ought to say city, everything is a city here); but the banks are for the most part deep solitudes, overgrown with trees, which, in these western latitudes, are already in leaf, and very green. . . .

"All this I see, as I write, from the little door into the stern-gallery which I mentioned just now. It don't happen six times in a day that any other passenger comes near it; and, as the weather is amply warm enough to admit of our sitting with it open, here we remain from morning until night: reading, writing, talking. What our theme of conversation is, I need not tell you. No beauty or variety makes us weary less for home. We count the days, and say, 'When May comes, and we can say--_next month_--the time will seem almost gone.' We are never tired of imagining what you are all about. I allow of no calculation for the difference of clocks, but insist on a corresponding minute in London. It is much the shortest way, and best. . . . Yesterday, we drank your health and many happy returns--in wine, after dinner; in a small milk-pot jug of gin-punch, at night. And when I made a temporary table, to hold the little candlestick, of one of my dressing-case trays; cunningly inserted under the mattress of my berth with a weight atop of it to keep it in its place, so that it made a perfectly exquisite bracket; we agreed, that, please God, this should be a joke at the Star and Garter on the second of April eighteen hundred and forty-three. If your blank _can_ be

surpassed, . . . believe me ours transcends it. My heart gets, sometimes, SORE for home.

"At Pittsburgh I saw another solitary confinement prison: Pittsburgh being also in Pennsylvania. A horrible thought occurred to me when I was recalling all I had seen, that night. _What if ghosts be one of the terrors of these jails?_ I have pondered on it often, since then. The utter solitude by day and night; the many hours of darkness; the silence of death; the mind forever brooding on melancholy themes, and having no relief; sometimes an evil conscience very busy; imagine a prisoner covering up his head in the bedclothes and looking out from time to time, with a ghastly dread of some inexplicable silent figure that always sits upon his bed, or stands (if a thing can be said to stand, that never walks as men do) in the same corner of his cell. The more I think of it, the more certain I feel that not a few of these men (during a portion of their imprisonment at least) are nightly visited by spectres. I did ask one man in this last jail, if he dreamed much. He gave me a most extraordinary look, and said--under his breath--in a whisper, 'No.'"

"CINCINNATI. _Fourth April, 1842._

"We arrived here this morning: about three o'clock, I believe, but I was fast asleep in my berth. I turned out soon after six, dressed, and breakfasted on board. About half-after eight, we came ashore and drove to the hotel, to which we had written on from Pittsburgh ordering rooms; and which is within a stone's throw of the boat-wharf. Before I had issued an official notification that we were 'not at home,' two Judges called, on the part of the inhabitants, to know when we would receive the townspeople. We appointed to-morrow morning, from half-past eleven to one; arranged to go out, with these two gentlemen, to see the town, _at_ one; and were fixed for an evening party to-morrow night at the house of one of them. On Wednesday morning we go on by the mail-boat to Louisville, a trip of fourteen hours; and from that place proceed in the next good boat to St. Louis, which is a voyage of four days. Finding from my judicial friends (well-informed and most agreeable gentlemen) this morning that the prairie travel to Chicago is a very fatiguing one, and that the lakes are stormy, sea-sicky, and not over safe at this season, I wrote by our captain to St. Louis (for the boat that brought us here goes on there) to the effect, that I should not take the lake route, but should come back here; and should visit the prairies, which are within thirty miles of St. Louis, immediately on my arrival there. . . .

"I have walked to the window, since I turned this page, to see what aspect the town wears. We are in a wide street: paved in the carriage-way with small white stones, and in the footway with small red tiles. The houses are for the most part one story high; some are of wood; others of a clean white brick. Nearly all have green blinds outside every window. The principal shops over the way are, according to the inscriptions over them, a Large Bread Bakery; a Book Bindery; a Dry Goods Store; and a Carriage Repository; the last-named establishment looking very like an exceedingly small retail coal-shed. On the pavement

under our window, a black man is chopping wood; and another black man is talking (confidentially) to a pig. The public table, at this hotel and at the hotel opposite, has just now finished dinner. The diners are collected on the pavement, on both sides of the way, picking their teeth, and talking. The day being warm, some of them have brought chairs into the street. Some are on three chairs; some on two; and some, in defiance of all known laws of gravity, are sitting quite comfortably on one: with three of the chair's legs, and their own two, high up in the air. The loungers, underneath our window, are talking of a great Temperance convention which comes off here to-morrow. Others, about me. Others, about England. Sir Robert Peel is popular here, with everybody. . . ."

FOOTNOTES:

[56] See *_ante_*, pp. 307, 308.

[57] Miss Martineau was perhaps partly right, then? *_Ante_*, p. 344.

[58] Sixteen inches exactly.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FAR WEST: TO NIAGARA FALLS.

1842.

Descriptions in Letters and in *_Notes_*--Outline of Westward Travel--An Arabian Night City--A Temperance Festival--A Party at Judge Walker's--The Party from another View--Mournful Results of Boredom--Young Lady's Description of C. D.--Down the Mississippi--Listening and Watching--A Levee at St. Louis--Compliments--Lord Ashburton's Arrival--Talk with a Judge on Slavery--A Negro burnt alive--Feeling of Slaves themselves--American Testimony--Pretty Little Scene--A Mother and her Husband--The Baby--St. Louis in Sight--Meeting of Wife and Husband--Trip to a Prairie--On the Prairie at Sunset--General Character of Scenery--The Prairie described--Disappointment and Enjoyment--Soirée at Planter's House Inn--Good Fare--No Gray Heads in St. Louis--Duelling--Mrs. Dickens as a Traveler--From Cincinnati to Columbus--What a Levee is like--From Columbus to Sandusky--The Travelers alone--A Log House Inn--Making tidy--A Momentary Crisis--Americans not a Humorous People--The Only Recreations--From Sandusky to Buffalo--On Lake

Erie--Reception and Consolation of a
Mayor--From Buffalo to Niagara--Nearing the
Falls--The Horse-shoe--Effect upon him of
Niagara--The Old Recollection--Looking forward.

THE next letter described his experiences in the Far West, his stay in St. Louis, his visit to a prairie, the return to Cincinnati, and, after a stage-coach ride from that city to Columbus, the travel thence to Sandusky, and so, by Lake Erie, to the Falls of Niagara. All these subjects appear in the _Notes_, but nothing printed there is repeated in the extracts now to be given. Of the closing passages of his journey, when he turned from Columbus in the direction of home, the story, here for the first time told, is in his most characteristic vein; the account that will be found of the prairie will probably be preferred to what is given in the _Notes_; the Cincinnati sketches are very pleasant; and even such a description as that of the Niagara Falls, of which so much is made in the book, has here an independent novelty and freshness. The first vividness is in his letter. The naturalness of associating no image or sense but of repose, with a grandeur so mighty and resistless, is best presented suddenly; and, in a few words, we have the material as well as moral beauty of a scene unrivaled in its kind upon the earth. The instant impression we find to be worth more than the eloquent recollection.

The captain of the boat that had dropped them at Cincinnati and gone to St. Louis had stayed in the latter place until they were able to join and return with him; this letter bears date accordingly, "On board the Messenger again. Going from St. Louis back to Cincinnati. Friday, fifteenth April, 1842;" and its first paragraph is an outline of the movements which it afterwards describes in detail. "We remained in Cincinnati one whole day after the date of my last, and left on Wednesday morning, the 6th. We reached Louisville soon after midnight on the same night; and slept there. Next day at one o'clock we put ourselves on board another steamer, and traveled on until Sunday evening, the tenth; when we reached St. Louis at about nine o'clock. The next day we devoted to seeing the city. Next day, Tuesday, the twelfth, I started off with a party of men (we were fourteen in all) to see a prairie; returned to St. Louis about noon on the thirteenth; attended a soirée and ball--not a dinner--given in my honor that night; and yesterday afternoon at four o'clock we turned our faces homewards. Thank Heaven!

"Cincinnati is only fifty years old, but is a very beautiful city; I think the prettiest place I have seen here, except Boston. It has risen out of the forest like an Arabian-Night city; is well laid out; ornamented in the suburbs with pretty villas; and above all, for this is a very rare feature in America, has smooth turf-plots and well-kept gardens. There happened to be a great temperance festival; and the procession mustered under, and passed, our windows early in the morning. I suppose they were twenty thousand strong, at least. Some of the banners were quaint and odd enough. The ship-carpenters, for instance, displayed on one side of their flag the good Ship Temperance in full sail; on the other, the Steamer Alcohol blowing up sky-high. The

Irishmen had a portrait of Father Mathew, you may be sure. And Washington's broad lower jaw (by-the-by, Washington had not a pleasant face) figured in all parts of the ranks. In a kind of square at one outskirt of the city they divided into bodies, and were addressed by different speakers. Drier speaking I never heard. I own that I felt quite uncomfortable to think they could take the taste of it out of their mouths with nothing better than water.

"In the evening we went to a party at Judge Walker's, and were introduced to at least one hundred and fifty first-rate bores, separately and singly. I was required to sit down by the greater part of them, and talk!^[59] In the night we were serenaded (as we usually are in every place we come to), and very well serenaded, I assure you. But we were very much knocked up. I really think my face has acquired a fixed expression of sadness from the constant and unmitigated boring I endure. The LL's have carried away all my cheerfulness. There is a line in my chin (on the right side of the under lip), indelibly fixed there by the New Englander I told you of in my last. I have the print of a crow's foot on the outside of my left eye, which I attribute to the literary characters of small towns. A dimple has vanished from my cheek, which I felt myself robbed of at the time by a wise legislator. But on the other hand I am really indebted for a good broad grin to P. . E. . , literary critic of Philadelphia, and sole proprietor of the English language in its grammatical and idiomatical purity; to P. . E. . , with the shiny straight hair and turned-down shirt-collar, who taketh all of us English men of letters to task in print, roundly and uncompromisingly, but told me, at the same time, that I had 'awakened a new era' in his mind. . . .

"The last 200 miles of the voyage from Cincinnati to St. Louis are upon the Mississippi, for you come down the Ohio to its mouth. It is well for society that this Mississippi, the renowned father of waters, had no children who take after him. It is the beastliest river in the world." . . . (His description is in the _Notes_.)

"Conceive the pleasure of rushing down this stream by night (as we did last night) at the rate of fifteen miles an hour; striking against floating blocks of timber every instant; and dreading some infernal blow at every bump. The helmsman in these boats is in a little glass house upon the roof. In the Mississippi, another man stands in the very head of the vessel, listening and watching intently; listening, because they can tell in dark nights by the noise when any great obstruction is at hand. This man holds the rope of a large bell which hangs close to the wheel-house, and whenever he pulls it the engine is to stop directly, and not to stir until he rings again. Last night, this bell rang at least once in every five minutes; and at each alarm there was a concussion which nearly flung one out of bed. . . . While I have been writing this account, we have shot out of that hideous river, thanks be to God; never to see it again, I hope, but in a nightmare. We are now on the smooth Ohio, and the change is like the transition from pain to perfect ease.

"We had a very crowded levee in St. Louis. Of course the paper had an account of it. If I were to drop a letter in the street, it would be in

the newspaper next day, and nobody would think its publication an outrage. The editor objected to my hair, as not curling sufficiently. He admitted an eye; but objected again to dress, as being somewhat foppish, 'and indeed perhaps rather flash.' 'But such,' he benevolently adds, 'are the differences between American and English taste--rendered more apparent, perhaps, by all the other gentlemen present being dressed in black.' Oh that you could have seen the other gentlemen! . . .

"A St. Louis lady complimented Kate upon her voice and manner of speaking, assuring her that she should never have suspected her of being Scotch, or even English. She was so obliging as to add that she would have taken her for an American, anywhere: which she (Kate) was no doubt aware was a very great compliment, as the Americans were admitted on all hands to have greatly refined upon the English language! I need not tell you that out of Boston and New York a nasal drawl is universal, but I may as well hint that the prevailing grammar is also more than doubtful; that the oddest vulgarisms are received idioms; that all the women who have been bred in slave-States speak more or less like negroes, from having been constantly in their childhood with black nurses; and that the most fashionable and aristocratic (these are two words in great use), instead of asking you in what place you were born, inquire where you 'hail from.' ! !

"Lord Ashburton arrived at Annapolis t'other day, after a voyage of forty odd days in heavy weather. Straightway the newspapers state, on the authority of a correspondent who 'rowed round the ship' (I leave you to fancy her condition), that America need fear no superiority from England, in respect of her wooden walls. The same correspondent is 'quite pleased' with the frank manner of the English officers; and patronizes them as being, for John Bulls, quite refined. My face, like Haji Baba's, turns upside down, and my liver is changed to water, when I come upon such things, and think who writes and who read them. . . .

"They won't let me alone about slavery. A certain judge in St. Louis went so far yesterday that I fell upon him (to the indescribable horror of the man who brought him) and told him a piece of my mind. I said that I was very averse to speaking on the subject here, and always forbore, if possible; but when he pitied our national ignorance of the truths of slavery, I must remind him that we went upon indisputable records, obtained after many years of careful investigation, and at all sorts of self-sacrifice, and that I believed we were much more competent to judge of its atrocity and horror than he who had been brought up in the midst of it. I told him that I could sympathize with men who admitted it to be a dreadful evil, but frankly confessed their inability to devise a means of getting rid of it; but that men who spoke of it as a blessing, as a matter of course, as a state of things to be desired, were out of the pale of reason; and that for them to speak of ignorance or prejudice was an absurdity too ridiculous to be combated. . . .

"It is not six years ago, since a slave in this very same St. Louis, being arrested (I forget for what), and knowing he had no chance of a fair trial, be his offense what it might, drew his bowie-knife and ripped the constable across the body. A scuffle ensuing, the desperate negro stabbed two others with the same weapon. The mob who gathered

round (among whom were men of mark, wealth, and influence in the place) overpowered him by numbers; carried him away to a piece of open ground beyond the city; _and burned him alive_. This, I say, was done within six years, in broad day; in a city with its courts, lawyers, tipstiffs, judges, jails, and hangman; and not a hair on the head of one of those men has been hurt to this day. And it is, believe me, it is the miserable, wretched independence in small things, the paltry republicanism which recoils from honest service to an honest man, but does not shrink from every trick, artifice, and knavery in business, that makes these slaves necessary, and will render them so, until the indignation of other countries sets them free.

"They say the slaves are fond of their masters. Look at this pretty vignette[60] (part of the stock in trade of a newspaper), and judge how you would feel, when men, looking in your face, told you such tales with the newspaper lying on the table. In all the slave-districts, advertisements for runaways are as much matters of course as the announcement of the play for the evening with us. The poor creatures themselves fairly worship English people: they would do anything for them. They are perfectly acquainted with all that takes place in reference to emancipation; and _of course_ their attachment to us grows out of their deep devotion to their owners. I cut this illustration out of a newspaper which had a leader in reference to _the abominable and hellish doctrine of Abolition--repugnant alike to every law of God and Nature_. 'I know something,' said a Dr. Bartlett (a very accomplished man), late a fellow-passenger of ours,--'I know something of their fondness for their masters. I live in Kentucky; and I can assert upon my honor that, in my neighborhood, it is as common for a runaway slave, retaken, to draw his bowie-knife and rip his owner's bowels open, as it is for you to see a drunken fight in London.'

"SAME BOAT, _Saturday, Sixteenth April, 1842._

"Let me tell you, my dear Forster, before I forget it, a pretty little scene we had on board the boat between Louisville and St. Louis, as we were going to the latter place. It is not much to tell, but it was very pleasant and interesting to witness."

What follows has been printed in the _Notes_, and ought not, by the rule I have laid down, to be given here. But, beautiful as the printed description is, it has not profited by the alteration of some touches and the omission of others in the first fresh version of it, which, for that reason, I here preserve,--one of the most charming soul-felt pictures of character and emotion that ever warmed the heart in fact or fiction. It was, I think, Jeffrey's favorite passage in all the writings of Dickens; and certainly, if any one would learn the secret of their popularity, it is to be read in the observation and description of this little incident.

"There was a little woman on board, with a little baby; and both little woman and little child were cheerful, good-looking, bright-eyed, and fair to see. The little woman had been passing a long time with a sick mother in New York, and had left her home in St. Louis in that condition

in which ladies who truly love their lords desire to be. The baby had been born in her mother's house, and she had not seen her husband (to whom she was now returning) for twelve months: having left him a month or two after their marriage. Well, to be sure, there never was a little woman so full of hope, and tenderness, and love, and anxiety, as this little woman was: and there she was, all the livelong day, wondering whether 'he' would be at the wharf; and whether 'he' had got her letter; and whether, if she sent the baby on shore by somebody else, _'he' would know it, meeting it in the street_: which, seeing that he had never set eyes upon it in his life, was not very likely in the abstract, but was probable enough to the young mother. She was such an artless little creature; and was in such a sunny, beaming, hopeful state; and let out all this matter, clinging close about her heart, so freely; that all the other lady passengers entered into the spirit of it as much as she: and the captain (who heard all about it from his wife) was wondrous sly, I promise you: inquiring, every time we met at table, whether she expected anybody to meet her at St. Louis, and supposing she wouldn't want to go ashore the night we reached it, and cutting many other dry jokes which convulsed all his hearers, but especially the ladies. There was one little, weazen, dried-apple old woman among them, who took occasion to doubt the constancy of husbands under such circumstances of bereavement; and there was another lady (with a lap-dog), old enough to moralize on the lightness of human affections, and yet not so old that she could help nursing the baby now and then, or laughing with the rest when the little woman called it by its father's name, and asked it all manner of fantastic questions concerning him, in the joy of her heart. It was something of a blow to the little woman that when we were within twenty miles of our destination it became clearly necessary to put the baby to bed; but she got over that with the same good humor, tied a little handkerchief over her little head, and came out into the gallery with the rest. Then, such an oracle as she became in reference to the localities! and such facetiousness as was displayed by the married ladies! and such sympathy as was shown by the single ones! and such peals of laughter as the little woman herself (who would just as soon have cried) greeted every jest with! At last, there were the lights of St. Louis--and here was the wharf--and those were the steps--and the little woman, covering her face with her hands, and laughing, or seeming to laugh, more than ever, ran into her own cabin, and shut herself up tight. I have no doubt that, in the charming inconsistency of such excitement, she stopped her ears lest she should hear 'him' asking for her; but I didn't see her do it. Then a great crowd of people rushed on board, though the boat was not yet made fast, and was staggering about among the other boats to find a landing-place; and everybody looked for the husband, and nobody saw him; when all of a sudden, right in the midst of them,--God knows how she ever got there,--there was the little woman hugging with both arms round the neck of a fine, good-looking, sturdy fellow! And in a moment afterwards, there she was again, dragging him through the small door of her small cabin, to look at the baby as he lay asleep!--What a good thing it is to know that so many of us would have been quite down-hearted and sorry if that husband had failed to come!"

He then resumes; but in what follows nothing is repeated that will be found in his printed description of the jaunt to the looking-glass

prairie:

"But about the prairie--it is not, I must confess, so good in its way as this; but I'll tell you all about that too, and leave you to judge for yourself. Tuesday the 12th was the day fixed; and we were to start at five in the morning--sharp. I turned out at four; shaved and dressed; got some bread and milk; and, throwing up the window, looked down into the street. Deuce a coach was there, nor did anybody seem to be stirring in the house. I waited until half-past five; but no preparations being visible even then, I left Mr. Q. to look out, and lay down upon the bed again. There I slept until nearly seven, when I was called. . . . Exclusive of Mr. Q. and myself, there were twelve of my committee in the party: all lawyers except one. He was an intelligent, mild, well-informed gentleman of my own age,--the Unitarian minister of the place. With him, and two other companions, I got into the first coach. . . .

"We halted at so good an inn at Lebanon that we resolved to return there at night, if possible. One would scarcely find a better village alehouse of a homely kind in England. During our halt I walked into the village, and met a dwelling-house coming down-hill at a good round trot, drawn by some twenty oxen! We resumed our journey as soon as possible, and got upon the looking-glass prairie at sunset. We halted near a solitary log house for the sake of its water; unpacked the baskets; formed an encampment with the carriages; and dined.

"Now, a prairie is undoubtedly worth seeing--but more, that one may say one has seen it, than for any sublimity it possesses in itself. Like most things, great or small, in this country, you hear of it with considerable exaggerations. Basil Hall was really quite right in depreciating the general character of the scenery. The widely-famed Far West is not to be compared with even the tamest portions of Scotland or Wales. You stand upon the prairie, and see the unbroken horizon all round you. You are on a great plain, which is like a sea without water. I am exceedingly fond of wild and lonely scenery, and believe that I have the faculty of being as much impressed by it as any man living. But the prairie fell, by far, short of my preconceived idea. I felt no such emotions as I do in crossing Salisbury Plain. The excessive flatness of the scene makes it dreary, but tame. Grandeur is certainly not its characteristic. I retired from the rest of the party, to understand my own feelings the better; and looked all round, again and again. It was fine. It was worth the ride. The sun was going down, very red and bright; and the prospect looked like that ruddy sketch of Catlin's, which attracted our attention (you remember?); except that there was not so much ground as he represents, between the spectator and the horizon. But to say (as the fashion is here) that the sight is a landmark in one's existence, and awakens a new set of sensations, is sheer gammon. I would say to every man who can't see a prairie--go to Salisbury Plain, Marlborough Downs, or any of the broad, high, open lands near the sea. Many of them are fully as impressive, and Salisbury Plain is decidedly more so.

"We had brought roast fowls, buffalo's tongue, ham, bread, cheese, butter, biscuits, sherry, champagne, lemons and sugar for punch, and abundance of ice. It was a delicious meal; and, as they were most

anxious that I should be pleased, I warmed myself into a state of surpassing jollity; proposed toasts from the coach-box (which was the chair); ate and drank with the best; and made, I believe, an excellent companion to a very friendly companionable party. In an hour or so we packed up, and drove back to the inn at Lebanon. While supper was preparing, I took a pleasant walk with my Unitarian friend; and when it was over (we drank nothing with it but tea and coffee) we went to bed. The clergyman and I had an exquisitely clean little chamber of our own; and the rest of the party were quartered overhead. . . .

"We got back to St. Louis soon after twelve at noon; and I rested during the remainder of the day. The soirée came off at night, in a very good ball-room at our inn,--the Planter's House. The whole of the guests were introduced to us, singly. We were glad enough, you may believe, to come away at midnight; and were very tired. Yesterday, I wore a blouse. To-day, a fur coat. Trying changes!

"IN THE SAME BOAT,
"_Sunday, Sixteenth April, 1842._"

"The inns in these outlandish corners of the world would astonish you by their goodness. The Planter's House is as large as the Middlesex Hospital, and built very much on our hospital plan, with long wards abundantly ventilated, and plain whitewashed walls. They had a famous notion of sending up at breakfast-time large glasses of new milk with blocks of ice in them as clear as crystal. Our table was abundantly supplied indeed at every meal. One day when Kate and I were dining alone together, in our own room, we counted sixteen dishes on the table at the same time.

"The society is pretty rough, and intolerably conceited. All the inhabitants are young. _I didn't see one gray head in St. Louis._ There is an island close by, called Bloody Island. It is the dueling-ground of St. Louis; and is so called from the last fatal duel which was fought there. It was a pistol duel, breast to breast, and both parties fell dead at the same time. One of our prairie party (a young man) had acted as second there, in several encounters. The last occasion was a duel with rifles, at forty paces; and coming home he told us how he had bought his man a coat of green linen to fight in, woolen being usually fatal to rifle-wounds. Prairie is variously called (on the refinement principle, I suppose) Para_a_rer; par_e_arer; and paro_a_rer. I am afraid, my dear fellow, you will have had great difficulty in reading all the foregoing text. I have written it, very laboriously, on my knee; and the engine throbs and starts as if the boat were possessed with a devil.

"SANDUSKY,
"_Sunday, Twenty-fourth April, 1842._"

"We went ashore at Louisville this night week, where I left off, two lines above; and slept at the hotel, in which we had put up before. The Messenger being abominably slow, we got our luggage out next morning,

and started on again at eleven o'clock in the Benjamin Franklin mail-boat: a splendid vessel, with a cabin more than two hundred feet long, and little state-rooms affording proportionate conveniences. She got in at Cincinnati by one o'clock next morning, when we landed in the dark and went back to our old hotel. As we made our way on foot over the broken pavement, Anne measured her length upon the ground, but didn't hurt herself. I say nothing of Kate's troubles--but you recollect her propensity? She falls into, or out of, every coach or boat we enter; scrapes the skin off her legs; brings great sores and swellings on her feet; chips large fragments out of her ankle-bones; and makes herself blue with bruises. She really has, however, since we got over the first trial of being among circumstances so new and so fatiguing, made a _most admirable_ traveler in every respect. She has never screamed or expressed alarm under circumstances that would have fully justified her in doing so, even in my eyes; has never given way to despondency or fatigue, though we have now been traveling incessantly, through a very rough country, for more than a month, and have been at times, as you may readily suppose, most thoroughly tired; has always accommodated herself, well and cheerfully, to everything; and has pleased me very much, and proved herself perfectly game.

"We remained at Cincinnati all Tuesday the nineteenth, and all that night. At eight o'clock on Wednesday morning the twentieth, we left in the mail-stage for Columbus: Anne, Kate, and Mr. Q. inside; I on the box. The distance is a hundred and twenty miles; the road macadamized; and, for an American road, very good. We were three-and-twenty hours performing the journey. We traveled all night; reached Columbus at seven in the morning; breakfasted; and went to bed until dinner-time. At night we held a levee for half an hour, and the people poured in as they always do: each gentleman with a lady on each arm, exactly like the Chorus to God Save the Queen. I wish you could see them, that you might know what a splendid comparison this is. They wear their clothes precisely as the chorus people do; and stand--supposing Kate and me to be in the centre of the stage, with our backs to the footlights--just as the company would, on the first night of the season. They shake hands exactly after the manner of the guests at a ball at the Adelphi or the Haymarket; receive any facetiousness on my part as if there were a stage direction 'all laugh;' and have rather more difficulty in 'getting off' than the last gentlemen, in white pantaloons, polished boots, and berlins, usually display, under the most trying circumstances.

"Next morning, that is to say, on Friday, the 22d, at seven o'clock exactly, we resumed our journey. The stage from Columbus to this place only running thrice a week, and not on that day, I bargained for an 'exclusive extra' with four horses; for which I paid forty dollars, or eight pounds English: the horses changing, as they would if it were the regular stage. To insure our getting on properly, the proprietors sent an agent on the box; and, with no other company but him and a hamper full of eatables and drinkables, we went upon our way. It is impossible to convey an adequate idea to you of the kind of road over which we traveled. I can only say that it was, at the best, but a track through the wild forest, and among the swamps, bogs, and morasses of the withered bush. A great portion of it was what is called a 'corduroy road:' which is made by throwing round logs or whole trees into a swamp,

and leaving them to settle there. Good Heaven! if you only felt one of the least of the jolts with which the coach falls from log to log! It is like nothing but going up a steep flight of stairs in an omnibus. Now the coach flung us in a heap on its floor, and now crushed our heads against its roof. Now one side of it was deep in the mire, and we were holding on to the other. Now it was lying on the horses' tails, and now again upon its back. But it never, never was in any position, attitude, or kind of motion, to which we are accustomed in coaches; or made the smallest approach to our experience of the proceedings of any sort of vehicle that goes on wheels. Still, the day was beautiful, the air delicious, and we were _alone_; with no tobacco-spittle, or eternal prosy conversation about dollars and politics (the only two subjects they ever converse about, or can converse upon), to bore us. We really enjoyed it; made a joke of the being knocked about; and were quite merry. At two o'clock we stopped in the wood to open our hamper and dine; and we drank to our darlings and all friends at home. Then we started again and went on until ten o'clock at night: when we reached a place called Lower Sandusky, sixty-two miles from our starting-point. The last three hours of the journey were not very pleasant; for it lightened--awfully: every flash very vivid, very blue, and very long; and, the wood being so dense that the branches on _either_ side of the track rattled and broke _against_ the coach, it was rather a dangerous neighborhood for a thunder-storm.

"The inn at which we halted was a rough log house. The people were all abed, and we had to knock them up. We had the queerest sleeping-room, with two doors, one opposite the other; both opening directly on the wild black country, and neither having any lock or bolt. The effect of these opposite doors was, that one was always blowing the other open: an ingenuity in the art of building, which I don't remember to have met with before. You should have seen me, in my shirt, blockading them with portmanteaus, and desperately endeavoring to make the room tidy! But the blockading was really needful, for in my dressing-case I have about 250 I. in gold; and for the amount of the middle figure in that scarce metal there are not a few men in the West who would murder their fathers. Apropos of this golden store, consider at your leisure the strange state of things in this country. It has no money; really no money. The bank-paper won't pass; the newspapers are full of advertisements from tradesmen who sell by barter; and American gold is not to be had, or purchased. I bought sovereigns, English sovereigns, at first; but as I could get none of them at Cincinnati, to this day, I have had to purchase French gold; 20-franc pieces; with which I am traveling as if I were in Paris!

"But let's go back to Lower Sandusky. Mr. Q. went to bed up in the roof of the log house somewhere, but was so beset by bugs that he got up after an hour and lay in the coach, . . . where he was obliged to wait till breakfast-time. We breakfasted, driver and all, in the one common room. It was papered with newspapers, and was as rough a place as need be. At half-past seven we started again, and we reached Sandusky at six o'clock yesterday afternoon. It is on Lake Erie, twenty-four hours' journey by steamboat from Buffalo. We found no boat here, nor has there been one, since. We are waiting, with every thing packed up, ready to start on the shortest notice; and are anxiously looking out for smoke in

the distance.

"There was an old gentleman in the log inn at Lower Sandusky who treats with the Indians on the part of the American government, and has just concluded a treaty with the Wyandot Indians at that place to remove next year to some land provided for them west of the Mississippi, a little way beyond St. Louis. He described his negotiation to me, and their reluctance to go, exceedingly well. They are a fine people, but degraded and broken down. If you could see any of their men and women on a race-course in England, you would not know them from gipsies.

"We are in a small house here, but a very comfortable one, and the people are exceedingly obliging. Their demeanor in these country parts is invariably morose, sullen, clownish, and repulsive. I should think there is not, on the face of the earth, a people so entirely destitute of humor, vivacity, or the capacity of enjoyment. It is most remarkable. I am quite serious when I say that I have not heard a hearty laugh these six weeks, except my own; nor have I seen a merry face on any shoulders but a black man's. Lounging listlessly about; idling in bar-rooms; smoking; spitting; and lolling on the pavement in rocking-chairs, outside the shop-doors; are the only recreations. I don't think the national shrewdness extends beyond the Yankees; that is, the Eastern men. The rest are heavy, dull, and ignorant. Our landlord here is from the East. He is a handsome, obliging, civil fellow. He comes into the room with his hat on; spits in the fireplace as he talks; sits down on the sofa with his hat on; pulls out his newspaper, and reads; but to all this I am accustomed. He is anxious to please--and that is enough.

"We are wishing very much for a boat; for we hope to find our letters at Buffalo. It is half-past one; and, as there is no boat in sight, we are fain (sorely against our wills) to order an early dinner.

"_Tuesday, April Twenty-sixth, 1842._

"NIAGARA FALLS!!! (UPON THE ENGLISH[61] SIDE.)

"I don't know at what length I might have written you from Sandusky, my beloved friend, if a steamer had not come in sight just as I finished the last unintelligible sheet! (oh! the ink in these parts!): whereupon I was obliged to pack up bag and baggage, to swallow a hasty apology for a dinner, and to hurry my train on board with all the speed I might. She was a fine steamship, four hundred tons burden, name the Constitution, had very few passengers on board, and had bountiful and handsome accommodation. It's all very fine talking about Lake Erie, but it won't do for persons who are liable to sea-sickness. We were all sick. It's almost as bad in that respect as the Atlantic. The waves are very short, and horribly constant. We reached Buffalo at six this morning; went ashore to breakfast; sent to the post-office forthwith; and received--oh! who or what can say with how much pleasure and what unspeakable delight!--our English letters!

"We lay all Sunday night at a town (and a beautiful town too) called Cleveland; on Lake Erie. The people poured on board, in crowds, by six on Monday morning, to see me; and a party of 'gentlemen' actually

planted themselves before our little cabin, and stared in at the door and windows _while I was washing, and Kate lay in bed_. I was so incensed at this, and at a certain newspaper published in that town which I had accidentally seen in Sandusky (advocating war with England to the death, saying that Britain must be 'whipped again,' and promising all true Americans that within two years they should sing Yankee Doodle in Hyde Park and Hail Columbia in the courts of Westminster), that when the mayor came on board to present himself to me, according to custom, I refused to see him, and bade Mr. Q. tell him why and wherefore. His honor took it very coolly, and retired to the top of the wharf, with a big stick and a whittling knife, with which he worked so lustily (staring at the closed door of our cabin all the time) that long before the boat left, the big stick was no bigger than a cribbage-peg!

"I never in my life was in such a state of excitement as coming from Buffalo here, this morning. You come by railroad, and are nigh two hours upon the way. I looked out for the spray, and listened for the roar, as far beyond the bounds of possibility as though, landing in Liverpool, I were to listen for the music of your pleasant voice in Lincoln's Inn Fields. At last, when the train stopped, I saw two great white clouds rising up from the depths of the earth,--nothing more. They rose up slowly, gently, majestically, into the air. I dragged Kate down a deep and slippery path leading to the ferry-boat; bullied Anne for not coming fast enough; perspired at every pore; and felt, it is impossible to say how, as the sound grew louder and louder in my ears, and yet nothing could be seen for the mist.

"There were two English officers with us (ah! what _gentlemen_, what noblemen of nature they seemed), and they hurried off with me; leaving Kate and Anne on a crag of ice; and clambered after me over the rocks at the foot of the small Fall, while the ferryman was getting the boat ready. I was not disappointed--but I could make out nothing. In an instant I was blinded by the spray, and wet to the skin. I saw the water tearing madly down from some immense height, but could get no idea of shape, or situation, or anything but vague immensity. But when we were seated in the boat, and crossing at the very foot of the cataract--then I began to feel what it was. Directly I had changed my clothes at the inn I went out again, taking Kate with me, and hurried to the Horse-shoe Fall. I went down alone, into the very basin. It would be hard for a man to stand nearer God than he does there. There was a bright rainbow at my feet; and from that I looked up to--great Heaven! to _what_ a fall of bright green water! The broad, deep, mighty stream seems to die in the act of falling; and from its unfathomable grave arises that tremendous ghost of spray and mist which is never laid, and has been haunting this place with the same dread solemnity--perhaps from the creation of the world.

"We purpose remaining here a week. In my next I will try to give you some idea of my impressions, and to tell you how they change with every day. At present it is impossible. I can only say that the first effect of this tremendous spectacle on me was peace of mind--tranquillity--great thoughts of eternal rest and happiness--nothing of terror. I can shudder at the recollection of Glencoe (dear friend, with Heaven's leave we must see Glencoe together), but whenever I think of Niagara I shall think of

its beauty.

"If you could hear the roar that is in my ears as I write this. Both Falls are under our windows. From our sitting-room and bedroom we look down straight upon them. There is not a soul in the house but ourselves. What would I give if you and Mac were here to share the sensations of this time! I was going to add, what would I give if the dear girl whose ashes lie in Kensal Green had lived to come so far along with us--but she has been here many times, I doubt not, since her sweet face faded from my earthly sight.

* * * * *

"One word on the precious letters before I close. You are right, my dear fellow, about the papers; and you are right (I grieve to say) about the people. _Am I right?_ quoth the conjurer. _Yes!_ from gallery, pit, and boxes. I _did_ let out those things, at first, against my will, but when I come to tell you all--well; only wait--only wait--till the end of July. I say no more.

"I do perceive a perplexingly divided and subdivided duty, in the matter of the book of travels. Oh! the sublimated essence of comicality that I _could_ distil, from the materials I have! . . . You are a part, and an essential part, of our home, dear friend, and I exhaust my imagination in picturing the circumstances under which I shall surprise you by walking into 58, Lincoln's Inn Fields. We are truly grateful to God for the health and happiness of our inexpressibly dear children and all our friends. But one letter more--only one. . . . I don't seem to have been half affectionate enough, but there _are_ thoughts, you know, that lie too deep for words."

FOOTNOTES:

[59] A young lady's account of this party, written next morning, and quoted in one of the American memoirs of Dickens, enables us to contemplate his suffering from the point of view of those who inflicted it: "I went last evening to a party at Judge Walker's, given to the hero of the day. . . . When we reached the house, Mr. Dickens had left the crowded rooms, and was in the hall with his wife, about taking his departure when we entered the door. We were introduced to him in our wrapping; and in the flurry and embarrassment of the meeting, one of the party dropped a parcel, containing shoes, gloves, etc. Mr. Dickens, stooping, gathered them up and restored them with a laughing remark, and we bounded up-stairs to get our things off. Hastening down again, we found him with Mrs. Dickens seated upon a sofa, surrounded by a group of ladies; Judge Walker having requested him to delay his departure for a few moments, for the gratification of some tardy friends who had just arrived, ourselves among the number. Declining to re-enter the rooms where he had already taken leave of the guests, he had seated himself in the hall. He is young and handsome, has a mellow, beautiful eye, fine brow, and abundant hair. His mouth is large, and his smile so bright it seemed to shed light and happiness all about him. His manner is easy, negligent, but not elegant. His dress was foppish; in fact, he was overdressed, yet his garments were worn so easily they appeared to be a

necessary part of him. (!) He had a dark coat, with lighter pantaloons; a black waistcoat, embroidered with colored flowers; and about his neck, covering his white shirt-front, was a black neckcloth, also embroidered in colors, in which were placed two large diamond pins connected by a chain. A gold watch-chain, and a large red rose in his button-hole, completed his toilet. He appeared a little weary, but answered the remarks made to him--for he originated none--in an agreeable manner. Mr. Beard's portrait of Fagin was so placed in the room that we could see it from where we stood surrounding him. One of the ladies asked him if it was his idea of the Jew. He replied, 'Very nearly.' Another, laughingly, requested that he would give her the rose he wore, as a memento. He shook his head and said, 'That will not do; he could not give it to one; the others would be jealous.' A half-dozen then insisted on having it, whereupon he proposed to divide the leaves among them. In taking the rose from his coat, either by design or accident, the leaves loosened and fell upon the floor, and amid considerable laughter the ladies stooped and gathered them. He remained some twenty minutes, perhaps, in the hall, and then took his leave. I must confess to considerable disappointment in the personal of my idol. I felt that his throne was shaken, although it never could be destroyed." This appalling picture supplements and very sufficiently explains the mournful passage in the text.

[60] "RUNAWAY NEGRO IN JAIL" was the heading of the advertisement inclosed, which had a woodcut of master and slave in its corner, and announced that Wilford Garner, sheriff and jailer of Chicot County, Arkansas, requested owner to come and prove property--or----

[61] Ten dashes underneath the word.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NIAGARA AND MONTREAL.

1842.

Last Two Letters--Dickens vanquished--Obstacles
to Copyright--Two described--Value of Literary
Popularity--Substitute for Literature--The
Secretary described--His Paintings--The Lion
and ---- --Toryism of Toronto--Canadian
Attentions--Proposed Theatricals--Last
Letter--The Private Play--Stage Manager's
Report--The Lady Performers--Bill of the
Performance--A Touch of Crummles--HOME.

MY friend was better than his word, and two more letters reached me before his return. The opening of the first was written from Niagara on the 3d, and its close from Montreal on the 12th, of May; from which latter city also, on the 26th of that month, the last of all was

written.

Much of the first of these letters had reference to the international copyright agitation, and gave strong expression to the indignation awakened in him (nor less in some of the best men of America) by the adoption, at a public meeting in Boston itself, of a memorial against any change of the law, in the course of which it was stated that, if English authors were invested with any control over the republication of their own books, it would be no longer possible for American editors to alter and adapt them to the American taste. This deliberate declaration, however, unsparing as Dickens's anger at it was, in effect vanquished him. He saw the hopelessness of pursuing further any present effort to bring about the change desired; and he took the determination not only to drop any allusion to it in his proposed book, but to try what effect might be produced, when he should again be in England, by a league of English authors to suspend further intercourse with American publishers while the law should remain as it is. On his return he made accordingly a public appeal to this effect, stating his own intention for the future to forego all profit derivable from the authorized transmission of early proofs across the Atlantic; but his hopes in this particular also were doomed to disappointment. I now leave the subject, quoting only from his present letter the general remarks with which it is dismissed by himself.

"NIAGARA FALLS,
" _Tuesday, Third May, 1842._

"I'll tell you what the two obstacles to the passing of an international copyright law with England are: firstly, the national love of 'doing' a man in any bargain or matter of business; secondly, the national vanity. Both these characteristics prevail to an extent which no stranger can possibly estimate.

"With regard to the first, I seriously believe that it is an essential part of the pleasure derived from the perusal of a popular English book, that the author gets nothing for it. It is so dar-nation 'cute--so knowing in Jonathan to get his reading on those terms. He has the Englishman so regularly on the hip that his eye twinkles with slyness, cunning, and delight; and he chuckles over the humor of the page with an appreciation of it quite inconsistent with, and apart from, its honest purchase. The raven hasn't more joy in eating a stolen piece of meat, than the American has in reading the English book which he gets for nothing.

"With regard to the second, it reconciles that better and more elevated class who are above this sort of satisfaction, with surprising ease. The man's read in America! The Americans like him! They are glad to see him when he comes here! They flock about him, and tell him that they are grateful to him for spirits in sickness; for many hours of delight in health; for a hundred fanciful associations which are constantly interchanged between themselves and their wives and children at home! It is nothing that all this takes place in countries where he is _paid_; it is nothing that he has won fame for himself elsewhere, and profit too.

The Americans read him; the free, enlightened, independent Americans; and what more _would_ he have? Here's reward enough for any man. The national vanity swallows up all other countries on the face of the earth, and leaves but this above the ocean. Now, mark what the real value of this American reading is. Find me in the whole range of literature one single solitary English book which becomes popular with them before, by going through the ordeal at home and becoming popular there, it has forced itself on their attention--and I am content that the law should remain as it is, forever and a day. I must make one exception. There _are_ some mawkish tales of fashionable life before which crowds fall down as they were gilded calves, which have been snugly enshrined in circulating libraries at home, from the date of their publication.

"As to telling them they will have no literature of their own, the universal answer (out of Boston) is, 'We don't want one. Why should we pay for one when we can get it for nothing? Our people don't think of poetry, sir. Dollars, banks, and cotton are _our_ books, sir.' And they certainly are in one sense; for a lower average of general information than exists in this country on all other topics, it would be very hard to find. So much, at present, for international copyright."

The same letter kept the promise made in its predecessor that one or two more sketches of character should be sent: "One of the most amusing phrases in use all through the country, for its constant repetition, and adaptation to every emergency, is 'Yes, Sir.' Let me give you a specimen." (The specimen was the dialogue, in the _Notes_, of straw-hat and brown-hat, during the stage-coach ride to Sandusky.) "I am not joking, upon my word. This is exactly the dialogue. Nothing else occurring to me at this moment, let me give you the secretary's portrait. Shall I?

"He is of a sentimental turn--strongly sentimental; and tells Anne as June approaches that he hopes 'we shall sometimes think of him' in our own country. He wears a cloak, like Hamlet; and a very tall, big, limp, dusty black hat, which he exchanges on long journeys for a cap like Harlequin's. . . . He sings; and in some of our quarters, when his bedroom has been near ours, we have heard him grunting bass notes through the keyhole of his door, to attract our attention. His desire that I should formally ask him to sing, and his devices to make me do so, are irresistibly absurd. There was a piano in our room at Hartford (you recollect our being there, early in February?)--and he asked me one night, when we were alone, if 'Mrs. D.' played. 'Yes, Mr. Q.' 'Oh, indeed, Sir! _I_ sing: so whenever you want _a little soothing_--' You may imagine how hastily I left the room, on some false pretense, without hearing more.

"He paints. . . . An enormous box of oil-colors is the main part of his luggage: and with these he blazes away, in his own room, for hours together. Anne got hold of some big-headed, pot-bellied sketches he made of the passengers on board the canal-boat (including me in my fur coat), the recollection of which brings the tears into my eyes at this minute. He painted the Falls, at Niagara, superbly; and is supposed now to be engaged on a full-length representation of me: waiters having reported

that chamber-maids have said that there is a picture in his room which has a great deal of hair. One girl opined that it was 'the beginning of the King's Arms;' but I am pretty sure that the Lion is myself. . . .

"Sometimes, but not often, he commences a conversation. That usually occurs when we are walking the deck after dark; or when we are alone together in a coach. It is his practice at such times to relate the most notorious and patriarchal Joe Miller, as something that occurred in his own family. When traveling by coach, he is particularly fond of imitating cows and pigs; and nearly challenged a fellow-passenger the other day, who had been moved by the display of this accomplishment into telling him that he was 'a Perfect Calf.' He thinks it an indispensable act of politeness and attention to inquire constantly whether we're not sleepy, or, to use his own words, whether we don't 'suffer for sleep.' If we have taken a long nap of fourteen hours or so, after a long journey, he is sure to meet me at the bedroom door when I turn out in the morning, with this inquiry. But, apart from the amusement he gives us, I could not by possibility have lighted on any one who would have suited my purpose so well. I have raised his ten dollars per month to twenty; and mean to make it up for six months."

The conclusion of this letter was dated from "Montreal, Thursday, twelfth May," and was little more than an eager yearning for home: "This will be a very short and stupid letter, my dear friend; for the post leaves here much earlier than I expected, and all my grand designs for being unusually brilliant fall to the ground. I will write you _one line_ by the next Cunard boat,--reserving all else until our happy and long long looked-for meeting.

"We have been to Toronto and Kingston; experiencing attentions at each which I should have difficulty in describing. The wild and rabid toryism of Toronto is, I speak seriously, _appalling_. English kindness is very different from American. People send their horses and carriages for your use, but they don't exact as payment the right of being always under your nose. We had no less than _five_ carriages at Kingston waiting our pleasure at one time; not to mention the commodore's barge and crew, and a beautiful government steamer. We dined with Sir Charles Bagot last Sunday. Lord Mulgrave was to have met us yesterday at Lachine; but, as he was wind-bound in his yacht and couldn't get in, Sir Richard Jackson sent his drag four-in-hand, with two other young fellows who are also his aides, and in we came in grand style.

"The Theatricals (I think I told you[62] I had been invited to play with the officers of the Coldstream Guards here) are _A Roland for an Oliver_; _Two o'Clock in the Morning_; and either the _Young Widow_, or _Deaf as a Post_. Ladies (unprofessional) are going to play, for the first time. I wrote to Mitchell at New York for a wig for Mr. Snobbington, which has arrived, and is brilliant. If they had done _Love, Law, and Physick_, as at first proposed, I was already 'up' in Flexible, having played it of old, before my authorship days; but if it should be Splash in the _Young Widow_, you will have to do me the favor to imagine me in a smart livery-coat, shiny black hat and cockade, white knee-cords, white top-boots, blue stock, small whip, red cheeks, and dark eyebrows. Conceive Topping's state of mind if I bring this dress

home and put it on unexpectedly! . . . God bless you, dear friend. I can say nothing about the seventh, the day on which we sail. It is impossible. Words cannot express what we feel, now that the time is so near. . . ."

His last letter, dated from "Peasco's Hotel, Montreal, Canada, twenty-sixth of May," described the private theatricals, and inclosed me a bill of the play.

"This, like my last, will be a stupid letter, because both Kate and I are thrown into such a state of excitement by the near approach of the seventh of June that we can do nothing, and think of nothing.

"The play came off last night. The audience, between five and six hundred strong, were invited as to a party; a regular table with refreshments being spread in the lobby and saloon. We had the band of the twenty-third (one of the finest in the service) in the orchestra, the theatre was lighted with gas, the scenery was excellent, and the properties were all brought from private houses. Sir Charles Bagot, Sir Richard Jackson, and their staffs were present; and as the military portion of the audience were all in full uniform, it was really a splendid scene.

"We 'went' also splendidly; though with nothing very remarkable in the acting way. We had for Sir Mark Chase a genuine odd fish, with plenty of humor; but our Tristram Sappy was not up to the marvelous reputation he has somehow or other acquired here. I am not however, let me tell you, placarded as stage-manager for nothing. Everybody was told they would have to submit to the most iron despotism; and didn't I come Macready over them? Oh, no. By no means. Certainly not. The pains I have taken with them, and the perspiration I have expended, during the last ten days, exceed in amount anything you can imagine. I had regular plots of the scenery made out, and lists of the properties wanted; and had them nailed up by the prompter's chair. Every letter that was to be delivered, was written; every piece of money that had to be given, provided; and not a single thing lost sight of. I prompted, myself, when I was not on; when I was, I made the regular prompter of the theatre my deputy; and I never saw anything so perfectly touch and go, as the first two pieces. The bedroom scene in the interlude was as well furnished as Vestris had it; with a 'practicable' fireplace blazing away like mad, and everything in a concatenation accordingly. I really do believe that I was very funny: at least I know that I laughed heartily at myself, and made the part a character, such as you and I know very well: a mixture of T----, Harley, Yates, Keeley, and Jerry Sneak. It went with a roar, all through; and, as I am closing this, they have told me I was so well made up that Sir Charles Bagot, who sat in the stage-box, had no idea who played Mr. Snobbington, until the piece was over.

[Illustration: Private Theatricals.]

* * * * *

=COMMITTEE.=

* * * * *

Mrs. TORRENS.
W. C. ERMATINGER, Esq.
Mrs. PERRY.
Captain TORRENS.
THE EARL OF MULGRAVE.

* * * * *

STAGE MANAGER--MR. CHARLES DICKENS.

* * * * *

QUEEN'S THEATRE, MONTREAL

* * * * *

ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY 25TH, 1842,
WILL BE PERFORMED,

=ROLAND FOR AN OLIVER.=

* * * * *

MRS. SELBORNE. [Handwritten: Mrs. Torrens]
MARIA DARLINGTON. [Handwritten: Miss Griffin]
MRS. FIXTURE. [Handwritten: Miss Ermatinger.]

MR. SELBORNE. [Handwritten: Lord Mulgrave.]
ALFRED HIGHFLYER. [Handwritten: Mr. Charles Dickens]
SIR MARK CHASE. [Handwritten: Honourable Mr. Methuen]
FIXTURE. [Handwritten: Captain Willoughby.]
GAMEKEEPER. [Handwritten: Captain Granville]

* * * * *

AFTER WHICH, AN INTERLUDE IN ONE SCENE, (FROM THE FRENCH,) CALLED

=Past Two o'Clock in the Morning.=

* * * * *

THE STRANGER. [Handwritten: Captain Granville]
MR. SNOBBINGTON. [Handwritten: Mr. Charles Dickens]

* * * * *

TO CONCLUDE WITH THE FARCE, IN ONE ACT, ENTITLED

=DEAF AS A POST.=

* * * * *

MRS. PLUMPLEY. [Handwritten: Mrs. Torrens]

AMY TEMPLETON. [Handwritten: Mrs. Charles Dickens!!!!!!!]

SOPHY WALTON. [Handwritten: Mrs. Perry.]

SALLY MAGGS. [Handwritten: Miss Griffin]

CAPTAIN TEMPLETON. [Handwritten: Captain Torrens]

MR. WALTON. [Handwritten: Captain Willoughby.]

TRISTRAM SAPPY. [Handwritten: Doctor Griffin]

CRUPPER. [Handwritten: Lord Mulgrave]

GALLOP. [Handwritten: Mr. Charles Dickens.]

MONTREAL, May 24, 1842. GAZETTE OFFICE.

"But only think of Kate playing! and playing devilish well, I assure you! All the ladies were capital, and we had no wait or hitch for an instant. You may suppose this, when I tell you that we began at eight, and had the curtain down at eleven. It is their custom here, to prevent heart-burnings in a very heart-burning town, whenever they have played in private, to repeat the performances in public. So, on Saturday (substituting, of course, real actresses for the ladies), we repeat the two first pieces to a paying audience, for the manager's benefit. . . .

"I send you a bill, to which I have appended a key.

"I have not told you half enough. But I promise you I shall make you shake your sides about this play. Wasn't it worthy of Crummles that when Lord Mulgrave and I went out to the door to receive the Governor-general, the regular prompter followed us in agony with four tall candlesticks with wax candles in them, and besought us with a bleeding heart to carry two apiece, in accordance with all the precedents? . . .

* * * * *

"I have hardly spoken of our letters, which reached us yesterday, shortly before the play began. A hundred thousand thanks for your delightful mainsail of that gallant little packet. I read it again and again; and had it all over again at breakfast-time this morning. I heard also, by the same ship, from Talfourd, Miss Coutts, Brougham, Rogers, and others. A delicious letter from Mac too, as good as his painting, I swear. Give my hearty love to him. . . . God bless you, my dear friend. As the time draws nearer, we get FEVERED with anxiety for home. . . . Kiss our darlings for us. We shall soon meet, please God, and be happier and merrier than ever we were, in all our lives. . . . Oh, home--home--home--home--home--home--HOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

=END OF VOL. I.=

FOOTNOTES:

[62] See _ante_, p. 303.

* * * * *

Transcriber's Notes:

Obvious punctuation errors repaired.

Page viii, "recoltions" changed to "recollections" (Another schoolfellow's recollections)

Page ix, extraneous page number removed Original text read:

Writing Pickwick, Nos. 14 127
and 15 127

Page 59, "t" changed to "it" (it as early as)

Page 117, "reisssue" changed to "reissue" (Scheme to reissue)

Page 224, "s" changed to "is" (there is little further)

Page 224, "hab" changed to "habit" (his invariable habit)

Page 242, "axing" changed to "taxing" (taxing ingenuity to)

Page 242, "f" chagned to "of" (of sheer insanity)

Page 286, word "I" inserted into text. (I have heard of)

To retain the integrity of the original text, varied hyphenations, capitalizations, and, at times, spellings were retained.

For example:

Varied hyphenation and capitalization of Devonshire Terrace was retained. Also fac-simile and facsimile. Varied spelling of A'Beckett/A'Becket was retained.

Transcriber's Note:

For the reader: Italic text is surrounded by underscores, bold text is surrounded by =equal signs= and underlined text is surrounded by ~tildes~. Two breves above the letter e are indicated by [e] in the text.

THE LIFE

OF

[Illustration: Signature: Charles Dickens]

[Illustration]

THE LIFE

OF

CHARLES DICKENS

BY

JOHN FORSTER.

VOL. II.

1842-1852.

CORRECTIONS MADE IN THE LATER EDITIONS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

* * * * *

A NOTICE written under date of the 23rd December, 1871, appeared with the Tenth Edition. "Such has been the rapidity of the demand for successive impressions of this book, that I have found it impossible, until now, to correct at pages 31, 87, and 97 three errors of statement made in the former editions; and some few other mistakes, not in themselves important, at pages 96, 101, and 102. I take the opportunity of adding, that the mention at p. 83 is not an allusion to the well-known 'Penny' and 'Saturday' magazines, but to weekly periodicals of some years' earlier date resembling them in form. One of them, I have since found from a later mention by Dickens himself, was presumably of a less wholesome and instructive character. 'I used,' he says, 'when I was at school, to take in the _Terrific Register_, making myself unspeakably miserable, and frightening my very wits out of my head, for the small charge of a penny weekly; which, considering that there was an illustration to every number in which there was always a pool of blood, and at least one body, was cheap.' An obliging correspondent writes to me upon my reference to the Fox-under-the-hill, at p. 62: 'Will you permit me to say, that the house, shut up and almost ruinous, is still to be found at the bottom of a curious and most precipitous court, the

entrance of which is just past Salisbury-street. . . . It was once, I think, the approach to the halfpenny boats. The house is now shut out from the water-side by the Embankment." I proceed to state in detail what the changes thus referred to were.

The passage about James Lamert, beginning at the thirteenth line of p. 31, now stands: "His chief ally and encourager in these displays was a youth of some ability, much older than himself, named James Lamert, stepson to his mother's sister and therefore a sort of cousin, who was his great patron and friend in his childish days. Mary, the eldest daughter of Charles Barrow, himself a lieutenant in the navy, had for her first husband a commander in the navy called Allen; on whose death by drowning at Rio Janeiro she had joined her sister, the navy-pay clerk's wife, at Chatham; in which place she subsequently took for her second husband Doctor Lamert, an army surgeon, whose son James, even after he had been sent to Sandhurst for his education, continued still to visit Chatham from time to time. He had a turn for private theatricals; and as his father's quarters were in the ordnance-hospital there, a great rambling place otherwise at that time almost uninhabited, he had plenty of room in which to get up his entertainments." Two other corrections were consequent on this change. At the 21st line of page 38, for "the elder cousin" read "the cousin by marriage;" and at the 31st line of p. 49, "cousin by his mother's side" should be "cousin by his aunt's marriage."

At the 15th line of the 41st page, "his bachelor-uncle, fellow-clerk," &c. should be "the uncle who was at this time fellow-clerk," &c. At the 11th line of page 54, "Charles-court" should be "Clare-court." The allusion to one of his favourite localities at the 23d line of page 62 should stand thus: "a little public-house by the water-side called the Fox-under-the-hill, approached by an underground passage which we once missed in looking for it together."

The passage at p. 87, having reference to an early friend who had been with him, as I supposed, at his first school, should run thus: "In this however I have since discovered my own mistake: the truth being that it was this gentleman's connection, not with the Wellington-academy, but with a school kept by Mr. Dawson in Hunter-street, Brunswick-square, where the brothers of Dickens were subsequently placed, which led to their early knowledge of each other. I fancy that they were together also, for a short time, at Mr. Molloy's in New-square, Lincoln's-inn; but, whether or not this was so, Dickens certainly had not quitted school many months before his father had made sufficient interest with an attorney of Gray's-inn, Mr. Edward Blackmore, to obtain him regular employment in his office." There is subsequent allusion to the same gentleman (at p. 182) as his "school-companion at Mr. Dawson's in Henrietta-street," which ought to stand as "having known him when himself a law-clerk in Lincoln's-inn."

At p. 96 I had stated that Mr. John Dickens reported for the Morning Chronicle; and at p. 101 that Mr. Thomas Beard reported for the Morning Herald; whereas Mr. Dickens, though in the gallery for other papers, did not report for the Chronicle, and Mr. Beard did report for that journal; and where (at p. 102) Dickens was spoken of as associated

with Mr. Beard in a reporting party which represented respectively the _Chronicle_ and _Herald_, the passage ought simply to have described him as "connected with a reporting party, being Lord John Russell's Devonshire contest above-named, and his associate chief being Mr. Beard, entrusted with command for the _Chronicle_ in this particular express."

At p. 97 I had made a mistake about his "first published piece of writing," in too hastily assuming that he had himself forgotten what the particular piece was. It struck an intelligent and kind correspondent as very unlikely that Dickens should have fallen into error on such a point; and, making personal search for himself (as I ought to have done), discovered that what I supposed to be another piece was merely the same under another title. The description of his first printed sketch should therefore be "(Mr. Minns and his Cousin, as he afterwards entitled it, but which appeared in the magazine as A Dinner at Poplar Walk)." There is another mistake at p. 159, of "bandy-legged" instead of "bulky-legged" and, at p. 177, of "fresh fields" for "fresh woods."

Those several corrections were made in the Tenth Edition. To the Eleventh these words were prefixed (under date of the 23rd of January, 1872): "Since the above mentioned edition went to press, a published letter has rendered necessary a brief additional note to the remarks made at pp. 155-6." The remark occurs in my notice of the silly story of Mr. Cruikshank having originated _Oliver Twist_, and, with the note referred to, now stands in the form subjoined. "Whether all Sir Benjamin's laurels however should fall to the person by whom the tale is told,* or whether any part belongs to the authority alleged for it, is unfortunately not quite clear. There would hardly have been a doubt, if the fable had been confined to the other side of the Atlantic; but it has been reproduced and widely circulated on this side also; and the distinguished artist whom it calumniates by attributing the invention to him has been left undefended from its slander. Dickens's letter spares me the necessity of characterizing, by the only word which would have been applicable to it, a tale of such incredible and monstrous absurdity as that one of the masterpieces of its author's genius had been merely an illustration of etchings by Mr. Cruikshank!" Note to the words "person by whom the tale is told:" "*This question has been partly solved, since my last edition, by Mr. Cruikshank's announcement in the _Times_, that, though Dr. Mackenzie had 'confused some circumstances with respect to Mr. Dickens looking over some drawings and sketches,' the substance of his information as to who it was that originated _Oliver Twist_, and all its characters, had been derived from Mr. Cruikshank himself. The worst part of the foregoing fable, therefore, has not Dr. Mackenzie for its author; and Mr. Cruikshank is to be congratulated on the prudence of his rigid silence respecting it as long as Mr. Dickens lived."

In the Twelfth Edition I mentioned, in the note at p. 149, a little work of which all notice had been previously omitted; and the close of that note now runs: "He had before written for them, without his name, _Sunday under Three Heads_; and he added subsequently a volume of _Young Couples_." At p. 157, "parish abuses" is corrected in the same edition to "parish practices;" and at p. 173, "in his later works" to "in his latest works."

I have received letters from several obliging correspondents, among them three or four who were scholars at the Wellington-house Academy before or after Dickens's time, and one who attended the school with him; but such remark as they suggest will more properly accompany my third and closing volume.

PALACE GATE HOUSE, KENSINGTON,
29th of October, 1872.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

* * * * *

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THE LIFE

OF

CHARLES DICKENS.

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Notes--Dickens's Experience of America in
1868.

THE reality did not fall short of the anticipation of home. His return was the occasion of unbounded enjoyment; and what he had planned before sailing as the way we should meet, received literal fulfilment. By the sound of his cheery voice I first knew that he was come; and from my house we went together to Maclise, also "without a moment's warning." A Greenwich dinner in which several friends (Talfourd, Milnes, Procter, Maclise, Stanfield, Marryat, Barham, Hood, and Cruikshank among them) took part, and other immediate greetings, followed; but the most special

celebration was reserved for autumn, when, by way of challenge to what he had seen while abroad, a home-journey was arranged with Stanfield, Maclise, and myself for his companions, into such of the most striking scenes of a picturesque English county as the majority of us might not before have visited: Cornwall being ultimately chosen.

Before our departure he was occupied by his preparation of the American Notes; and to the same interval belongs the arrival in London of Mr. Longfellow, who became his guest, and (for both of us I am privileged to add) our attached friend. Longfellow's name was not then the pleasant and familiar word it has since been in England; but he had already written several of his most felicitous pieces, and he possessed all the qualities of delightful companionship, the culture and the charm, which have no higher type or example than the accomplished and genial American. He reminded me, when lately again in England, of two experiences out of many we had enjoyed together this quarter of a century before. One of them was a day at Rochester, when, met by one of those prohibitions which are the wonder of visitors and the shame of Englishmen, we overleapt gates and barriers, and, setting at defiance repeated threats of all the terrors of law coarsely expressed to us by the custodian of the place, explored minutely the castle ruins. The other was a night among those portions of the population which outrage law and defy its terrors all the days of their lives, the tramps and thieves of London; when, under guidance and protection of the most trusted officers of the two great metropolitan prisons afforded to us by Mr. Chesterton and Lieut. Tracey, we went over the worst haunts of the most dangerous classes. Nor will it be unworthy of remark, in proof that attention is not drawn vainly to such scenes, that, upon Dickens going over them a dozen years later when he wrote a paper about them for his Household Words, he found important changes effected whereby these human dens, if not less dangerous, were become certainly more decent. On the night of our earlier visit, Maclise, who accompanied us, was struck with such sickness on entering the first of the Mint lodging-houses in the borough, that he had to remain, for the time we were in them, under guardianship of the police outside. Longfellow returned home by the Great Western from Bristol on the 21st of October, enjoying as he passed through Bath the hospitality of Landor; and at the end of the following week we started on our Cornish travel.

But what before this had occupied Dickens in the writing way must now be told. Not long after his reappearance amongst us, his house being still in the occupation of Sir John Wilson, he went to Broadstairs, taking with him the letters from which I have quoted so largely to help him in preparing his American Notes; and one of his first announcements to me (18th of July) shows not only this labour in progress, but the story he was under engagement to begin in November working in his mind. "The subjects at the beginning of the book are of that kind that I can't dash at them, and now and then they fret me in consequence. When I come to Washington, I am all right. The solitary prison at Philadelphia is a good subject, though; I forgot that for the moment. Have you seen the Boston chapter yet? . . . I have never been in Cornwall either. A mine certainly; and a letter for that purpose shall be got from Southwood Smith. I have some notion of opening the new book in the lantern of a lighthouse!" A letter a couple of months later (16th of Sept.) recurs to

that proposed opening of his story which after all he laid aside; and shows how rapidly he was getting his American Notes into shape. "At the Isle of Thanet races yesterday I saw--oh! who shall say what an immense amount of character in the way of inconceivable villainy and blackguardism! I even got some new wrinkles in the way of showmen, conjurors, pea-and-thimblers, and trampers generally. I think of opening my new book on the coast of Cornwall, in some terribly dreary iron-bound spot. I hope to have finished the American book before the end of next month; and we will then together fly down into that desolate region." Our friends having Academy engagements to detain them, we had to delay a little; and I meanwhile turn back to his letters to observe his progress with his Notes, and other employments or enjoyments of the interval. They require no illustration that they will not themselves supply: but I may remark that the then collected Poems of Tennyson had become very favourite reading with him; and that while in America Mr. Mitchell the comedian had given him a small white shaggy terrier, who bore at first the imposing name of Timber Doodle, and became a great domestic pet and companion.

"I have been reading" (7th of August) "Tennyson all this morning on the seashore. Among other trifling effects, the waters have dried up as they did of old, and shown me all the mermen and mermaids, at the bottom of the ocean; together with millions of queer creatures, half-fish and half-fungus, looking down into all manner of coral caves and seaweed conservatories; and staring in with their great dull eyes at every open nook and loop-hole. Who else, too, could conjure up such a close to the extraordinary and as Landor would say 'most wonderful' series of pictures in the 'dream of fair women,' as--

"Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hushed seraglios!"

"I am getting on pretty well, but it was so glittering and sunshiny yesterday that I was forced to make holiday." Four days later: "I have not written a word this blessed day. I got to New York yesterday, and think it goes as it should . . . Little doggy improves rapidly, and now jumps over my stick at the word of command. I have changed his name to Snittle Timbery, as more sonorous and expressive. He unites with the rest of the family in cordial regards and loves. Nota Bene. The Margate theatre is open every evening, and the Four Patagonians (see Goldsmith's Essays) are performing thrice a week at Ranelagh . . ."

A visit from me was at this time due, to which these were held out as inducements; and there followed what it was supposed I could not resist, a transformation into the broadest farce of a deep tragedy by a dear friend of ours. "Now you really must come. Seeing only is believing, very often isn't that, and even Being the thing falls a long way short of believing it. Mrs. Nickleby herself once asked me, as you know, if I really believed there ever was such a woman; but there'll be no more belief, either in me or my descriptions, after what I have to tell of our excellent friend's tragedy, if you don't come and have it played again for yourself 'by particular desire.' We saw it last night, and oh!

if you had but been with us! Young Betty, doing what the mind of man without my help never _can_ conceive, with his legs like padded boot-trees wrapped up in faded yellow drawers, was the hero. The comic man of the company enveloped in a white sheet, with his head tied with red tape like a brief and greeted with yells of laughter whenever he appeared, was the venerable priest. A poor toothless old idiot at whom the very gallery roared with contempt when he was called a tyrant, was the remorseless and aged Creon. And Ismene being arrayed in spangled muslin trowsers very loose in the legs and very tight in the ankles, such as Fatima would wear in _Blue Beard_, was at her appearance immediately called upon for a song. After this, can you longer. . . ?"

With the opening of September I had renewed report of his book, and of other matters. "The Philadelphia chapter I think very good, but I am sorry to say it has not made as much in print as I hoped . . . In America they have forged a letter with my signature, which they coolly declare appeared in the _Chronicle_ with the copyright circular; and in which I express myself in such terms as you may imagine, in reference to the dinners and so forth. It has been widely distributed all over the States; and the felon who invented it is a 'smart man' of course. You are to understand that it is not done as a joke, and is scurrilously reviewed. Mr. Park Benjamin begins a lucubration upon it with these capitals, DICKENS IS A FOOL, AND A LIAR. . . . I have a new protégé, in the person of a wretched deaf and dumb boy whom I found upon the sands the other day, half dead, and have got (for the present) into the union infirmary at Minster. A most deplorable case."

On the 14th he told me: "I have pleased myself very much to-day in the matter of Niagara. I have made the description very brief (as it should be), but I fancy it is good. I am beginning to think over the introductory chapter, and it has meanwhile occurred to me that I should like, at the beginning of the volumes, to put what follows on a blank page. _I dedicate this Book to those friends of mine in America, who, loving their country, can bear the truth, when it is written good humouredly and in a kind spirit._ What do you think? Do you see any objection?"

My reply is to be inferred from what he sent back on the 20th. "I don't quite see my way towards an expression in the dedication of any feeling in reference to the American reception. Of course I have always intended to glance at it, gratefully, in the end of the book; and it will have its place in the introductory chapter, if we decide for that. Would it do to put in, after 'friends in America,' _who giving me a welcome I must ever gratefully and proudly remember, left my judgment free, and_ who, loving, &c. If so, so be it."

Before the end of the month he wrote: "For the last two or three days I have been rather slack in point of work; not being in the vein. To-day I had not written twenty lines before I rushed out (the weather being gorgeous) to bathe. And when I have done that, it is all up with me in the way of authorship until to-morrow. The little dog is in the highest spirits; and jumps, as Mr. Kenwigs would say, perpetually. I have had letters by the Britannia from Felton, Prescott, Mr. Q, and others, all very earnest and kind. I think you will like what I have written on the

poor emigrants and their ways as I literally and truly saw them on the boat from Quebec to Montreal."

This was a passage, which, besides being in itself as attractive as any in his writings, gives such perfect expression to a feeling that underlies them all, that I subjoin it in a note.[63] On board this Canadian steamboat he encountered crowds of poor emigrants and their children; and such was their patient kindness and cheerful endurance, in circumstances where the easy-living rich could hardly fail to be monsters of impatience and selfishness, that it suggested to him a reflection than which it was not possible to have written anything more worthy of observation, or more absolutely true. Jeremy Taylor has the same philosophy in his lesson on opportunities, but here it was beautified by the example with all its fine touches. It made us read Rich and Poor by new translation.

The printers were now hard at work, and in the last week of September he wrote: "I send you proofs as far as Niagara . . . I am rather holiday-making this week . . . taking principal part in a regatta here yesterday, very pretty and gay indeed. We think of coming up in time for Macready's opening, when perhaps you will give us a chop; and of course you and Mac will dine with _us_ the next day? I shall leave nothing of the book to do after coming home, please God, but the two chapters on slavery and the people which I could manage easily in a week, if need were . . . The policeman who supposed the Duke of Brunswick to be one of the swell mob, ought instantly to be made an inspector. The suspicion reflects the highest credit (I seriously think) on his penetration and judgment." Three days later: "For the last two days we have had gales blowing from the north-east, and seas rolling on us that drown the pier. To-day it is tremendous. Such a sea was never known here at this season, and it is running in at this moment in waves of twelve feet high. You would hardly know the place. But we shall be punctual to your dinner hour on Saturday. If the wind should hold in the same quarter, we may be obliged to come up by land; and in that case I should start the caravan at six in the morning. . . . What do you think of this for my title--_American Notes for General Circulation_ ; and of this motto?

"In reply to a question from the Bench, the Solicitor for the Bank observed, that this kind of notes circulated the most extensively, in those parts of the world where they were stolen and forged. _Old Bailey Report._"

The motto was omitted, objection being made to it; and on the last day of the month I had the last of his letters during this Broadstairs visit. "Strange as it may appear to you" (25th of September), "the sea is running so high that we have no choice but to return by land. No steamer can come out of Ramsgate, and the Margate boat lay out all night on Wednesday with all her passengers on board. You may be sure of us therefore on Saturday at 5, for I have determined to leave here to-morrow, as we could not otherwise manage it in time; and have engaged an omnibus to bring the whole caravan by the overland route. . . . We cannot open a window, or a door; legs are of no use on the terrace; and the Margate boats can only take people aboard at Herne Bay!" He brought

with him all that remained to be done of his second volume except the last two chapters, including that to which he has referred as "introductory;" and on the following Wednesday (5th of October) he told me that the first of these was done. "I want you very much to come and dine to-day that we may repair to Drury-lane together; and let us say half-past four, or there is no time to be comfortable. I am going out to Tottenham this morning, on a cheerless mission I would willingly have avoided. Hone, of the Every Day Book, is dying; and sent Cruikshank yesterday to beg me to go and see him, as, having read no books but mine of late, he wanted to see and shake hands with me before (as George said) 'he went.' There is no help for it, of course; so to Tottenham I repair, this morning. I worked all day, and till midnight; and finished the slavery chapter yesterday."

The cheerless visit had its mournful sequel before the next month closed, when he went with the same companion to poor Hone's funeral; and one of his letters written at the time to Mr. Felton has so vividly recalled to me the tragi-comedy of an incident of that day, as for long after he used to describe it, and as I have heard the other principal actor in it good-naturedly admit to be perfectly true, that two or three sentences may be given here. The wonderful neighbourhood in this life of ours, of serious and humorous things, constitutes in itself very much of the genius of Dickens's writing; the laughter close to the pathos, but never touching it with ridicule; and this small occurrence may be taken in farther evidence of its reality.

"We went into a little parlour where the funeral party was, and God knows it was miserable enough, for the widow and children were crying bitterly in one corner, and the other mourners (mere people of ceremony, who cared no more for the dead man than the hearse did) were talking quite coolly and carelessly together in another; and the contrast was as painful and distressing as anything I ever saw. There was an independent clergyman present, with his bands on and a bible under his arm, who, as soon as we were seated, addressed C thus, in a loud emphatic voice. 'Mr. C, have you seen a paragraph respecting our departed friend, which has gone the round of the morning papers?' 'Yes, sir,' says C, 'I have:' looking very hard at me the while, for he had told me with some pride coming down that it was his composition. 'Oh!' said the clergyman. 'Then you will agree with me, Mr. C, that it is not only an insult to me, who am the servant of the Almighty, but an insult to the Almighty, whose servant I am.' 'How is that, sir?' says C. 'It is stated, Mr. C, in that paragraph,' says the minister, 'that when Mr. Hone failed in business as a bookseller, he was persuaded by me to try the pulpit; which is false, incorrect, unchristian, in a manner blasphemous, and in all respects contemptible. Let us pray.' With which, and in the same breath, I give you my word, he knelt down, as we all did, and began a very miserable jumble of an extemporary prayer. I was really penetrated with sorrow for the family" (he exerted himself zealously for them afterwards, as the kind-hearted C also did), "but when C, upon his knees and sobbing for the loss of an old friend, whispered me 'that if that wasn't a clergyman, and it wasn't a funeral, he'd have punched his head,' I felt as if nothing but convulsions could possibly relieve me."

On the 10th of October I heard from him that the chapter intended to be

introductory to the _Notes_ was written, and waiting our conference whether or not it should be printed. We decided against it; on his part so reluctantly, that I had to undertake for its publication when a more fitting time should come. This in my judgment has arrived, and the chapter first sees the light on this page. There is no danger at present, as there would have been when it was written, that its proper self-assertion should be mistaken for an apprehension of hostile judgments which he was anxious to deprecate or avoid. He is out of reach of all that now; and reveals to us here, as one whom fear or censure can touch no more, his honest purpose in the use of satire even where his humorous temptations were strongest. What he says will on other grounds also be read with unusual interest, for it will be found to connect itself impressively not with his first experiences only, but with his second visit to America at the close of his life. He held always the same high opinion of what was best in that country, and always the same contempt for what was worst in it.

"INTRODUCTORY. AND NECESSARY TO BE READ.

"I have placed the foregoing title at the head of this page, because I challenge and deny the right of any person to pass judgment on this book, or to arrive at any reasonable conclusion in reference to it, without first being at the trouble of becoming acquainted with its design and purpose.

"It is not statistical. Figures of arithmetic have already been heaped upon America's devoted head, almost as lavishly as figures of speech have been piled above Shakespeare's grave.

"It comprehends no small talk concerning individuals, and no violation of the social confidences of private life. The very prevalent practice of kidnapping live ladies and gentlemen, forcing them into cabinets, and labelling and ticketing them whether they will or no, for the gratification

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