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PICKWICKIAN STUDIES

BY

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CHAPTER I. IPSWICH

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I.—The Great White Horse

This ancient Inn is associated with some pleasant and diverting Pickwickian memories. We think of the adventure with "the lady in the yellow curl papers" and the double-bedded room, just as we would recall some "side splitting" farce in which Buckstone or Toole once made our jaws ache. As all the world knows, the "Great White Horse" is found in the good old town of Ipswich, still flourishes, and is scarcely altered from the days when Mr. Pickwick put up there. Had it not been thus associated, Ipswich would have remained a place obscure and scarcely known, for it has little to attract save one curious old house and some old churches; and for the theatrical antiquary, the remnant of the old theatre in Tacket Street, where Garrick first appeared as an amateur under the name of Lyddal, about a hundred and sixty years ago, and where now the Salvation Army "performs" in his stead. [1] The touch of "Boz" kindled the old bones into life, it peopled the narrow, winding streets with the Grummers, Nupkins, Jingles, Pickwick and his followers; with the immortal lady aforesaid in her yellow curl papers, to say nothing of Mr. Peter Magnus. From afar off even, we look at Ipswich with a singular interest; some of us go down there to enjoy the peculiar feeling—and it *is* a peculiar and piquant one—of staying at Mr. Pickwick's Inn—of sleeping even in his room. This relish, however, is only given to your true "follower," not to his German-metal counterfeit—though, strange to say, at this moment, Pickwick is chiefly "made in Germany," and comes to us from that country in highly-coloured almanacks—and pictures of all kinds. About Ipswich there is a very appropriate old-fashioned tone, and much of the proper country town air. The streets seem dingy enough—the hay waggon is encountered often. The "Great White Horse," which is at the corner of several streets, is a low, longish building—with a rather seedy air. But to read "Boz's" description of it, we see at once that he was somewhat overpowered by its grandeur and immense size—which, to us in these days of huge hotels, seems odd. It was no doubt a large posting house of many small chambers—and when crowded, as "Boz" saw it at Election time in 1835, swarming with committeemen, agents, and voters, must have impressed more than it would now. The Ball-room at "The Bull," in Rochester, affected him in much the same way; and there is a curious sensation in looking round us there, on its modest proportions—its little hutch of a gallery which would hold about half-a-

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dozen musicians, and the small contracted space at the top where the "swells" of the dockyard stood together. "Boz," as he himself once told me, took away from Rochester the idea that its old, red brick Guildhall was one of the most imposing edifices in Europe, and described his astonishment on his return at seeing how small it was.

Apropos of Rochester and the Pickwick feeling, it may be said that to pass that place by on the London, Chatham, and Dover line rouses the most curious sensation. Above is the Castle, seen a long time before, with the glistening river at its feet; then one skirts the town passing by the backs of the very old-fashioned houses, and you can recognise those of the Guildhall and of the Watts' Charity, and the gilt vanes of other quaint, old buildings; you see a glimpse of the road rising and falling, with its pathways raised on each side, with all sorts of faded tints—mellow, subdued reds, sombre greys, a patch of green here and there, and all more or less dingy, and "quite out of fashion." There is a rather forlorn tone over it all, especially when we have a glimpse of Ordnance Terrace, at Chatham, that abandoned, dilapidated row where the boy Dickens was brought up dismally enough. At that moment the images of the Pickwickians recur as of persons who had lived and had come down there on this pleasant adventure. And how well we know every stone and corner of the place, and the tone of the place! We might have lived there ourselves. Positively, as we walk through it, we seem to recognise localities like old friends.

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"Boz," when he came to Ipswich, was no more than a humble reporter, on special duty, living in a homely way enough. The "White Horse" was not likely to put itself out for him, and he criticises it in his story, after a fashion that seems rather bold. His description is certainly unflattering:

"In the main street, on the left-hand side of the way"—observe how minute Boz is in his topography—"a short distance after you have passed through the open space fronting the Town Hall, stands an Inn known far and wide by the appellation of 'The Great White Horse,' rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal, with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart horse, which is elevated above the principal door. The 'Great White Horse' is famous in the neighbourhood in the same degree as a prize ox or county paper-chronicled turnip, or unwieldy pig—for its *enormous size*. Never were there such labyrinths of *uncarpeted passages*, such clusters of *mouldy, badly-lighted rooms*, such huge numbers of small dens for eating or sleeping in, beneath any other roof, as are collected between the four walls of this overgrown Tavern."

Boz cannot give the accommodation a good word, for he calls the Pickwickian room "a large, badly furnished apartment, with a *dirty grate* in which a small fire was making a wretched attempt to be cheerful, but was fast sinking beneath the dispiriting influence of the place." The dinner, too, seems to have been as bad, for a *bit of fish* and a steak took one hour to get ready, with "a *bottle of the worst possible port, at the highest possible price*." Depreciation of a hostelry could not be more damaging. Again, Mr. Pickwick's bedroom is described as a sort of surprise, being "a more comfortable-looking apartment that his short experience of the accommodation of the Great White House had led him to expect."

Now this was bad enough, but his sketch of the waiter who received the arriving party is worse:

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"A corpulent man, with a fortnight's napkin under his arm and coeval stockings."

There is something so hostile in all this that it certainly must have come from a sense of bad reception. As we said, the young reporter was likely enough to have been treated with haughty contempt by the corpulent waiter so admirably described, with his "coeval stockings."

Even the poor horse is not spared, "Rampacious" he is styled; the stone animal that still stands over the porch. It must be said that the steed in question is a very mild animal indeed, and far from ramping, is trotting placidly along. "Rampacious," however, scarcely seems correct—"Rampagious" is the proper form—particularly as "Boz" uses the words "On the rampage." We find ourselves ever looking at the animal with interest—as he effects his trot, one leg bent. The porch, and horse above it, have a sort of sacred character. I confess when I saw it for the first time I looked at it with an almost absurd reverence and curiosity. The thing is so much in keeping, one would expect to see the coach laden with Pickwickians drive up.

Mr. Pickwick's adventure, his losing his way in the passages, &c., might occur to anyone. It is an odd feeling, the staying at this old hostelry, and, as it draws on towards midnight, seeking your room, through endless windings, turns, and short flights. There is even now to be seen the niche where Mr. Pickwick sat down for the night; so minute are the directions we can trace the various rooms. Mr. Pickwick asked for a private room and was taken down a "long dark passage." It turned out later that Miss Witherfield's sitting-room was actually next door, so Mr. Magnus had not far to go. These rooms were on the ground floor, so Mr. Pickwick had to "descend" from his bedroom.

There is a tradition indeed that Mr. Pickwick's adventure with a lady really occurred to "Boz" himself, who had lost his way in the mazes of the passages. I have a theory that his uncomfortable night in the passages, and the possible displeasure of the authorities, may have jaundiced his views.

II.—Eatanswill and Ipswich

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It is not “generally known” that Ipswich is introduced twice in the book: as Eatanswill, as well as under its own proper name. As “Boz” was dealing with the corrupt practices at Elections, and severely ridiculing them, he was naturally afraid of being made responsible. Further, he had been despatched by the proprietors of the *Chronicle* to report the speeches at the election, and he did not care to take advantage of his mission for literary purposes. The father of the late Mr. Alfred Morrison, the well-known, amiable virtuoso, was one of the candidates for Ipswich at the election in 1835, and he used to tell how young “Boz” was introduced into one of the rooms at the “Great White Horse,” where the head-quarters of the candidate was. Sir Fitzroy Kelly was the other candidate, a name that seems pointed at in Fizkin.

This high and mighty point of the locality of Eatanswill has given rise to much discussion, and there are those who urge the claims of other towns, such as Yarmouth and Norwich. It has been ingeniously urged that, in his examination before Nupkins, Mr. Pickwick stated that he was a perfect stranger in the town, and had no knowledge of any householders there who could be bail for him. Now if Eatanswill were Ipswich, he must have known many—the Pott family for instance—and he had resided there for some time. But the author did not intend that the reader should believe that the two places were the same, and wished them to be considered different towns, though *he* considered them as one. It has been urged, too, that Ipswich is not on the direct road to Norwich as stated by the author; but on consulting an old road book (Mogg’s) I find that it is one of the important stages on the coach line.

But what is conclusive is the question of distance. On hurrying away so abruptly from Mrs. Leo Hunter’s, Mr. Pickwick was told by that lady that the adventurer was at Bury St. Edmunds, “*not many miles from here,*” that is a short way off. Now Bury is no more than about four-and-twenty miles from Ipswich, a matter of about four hours’ coach travelling. Great Yarmouth is fully seventy by roundabout roads, which could not be described as being “a short way from here.” It would have taken eight or nine hours—a day’s journey. Mr. Pickwick left Eatanswill about one or two, for the lunch was going on, and got to Bury in time for dinner, which, had he left Yarmouth, would have taken him to the small hours of the morning.

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No one was such a thorough “Pressman” as was “Boz,” or threw himself with such ardour into his profession. To his zeal and knowledge in this respect we have the warmest testimonies. When he was at Ipswich for the election, he, beyond doubt, entered with zest and enjoyment into all the humours. No one could have written so minute and hearty an account without having been “behind the scenes” and in the confidence of one or other of the parties. And no wonder, for he represented one of the most important of the London “dailies.”

The fact is, Ipswich was a sort of a tempestuous borough, the scene of many a desperate conflict in which one individual, Mr. Fitzroy Kelly—later Chief Baron—made the most persevering efforts, again and again renewed, to secure his footing. Thus, in December, 1832, there was a fierce struggle with other candidates, Messrs. Morrison, Dundas, and Rigby Wason, in which he was worsted—for the moment. But, in January, 1835, when he stood again, he was successful. This must have been the one in Pickwick, when the excesses there described may have taken place. There were four candidates: one of whom, Mr. Dundas—no doubt depicted as the Honourable Mr. Slumkey—being of the noble family of Zetland. We find that the successful candidate was unseated on petition, and his place taken by another candidate. In 1837, he stood once more, and was defeated by a very narrow majority. On a scrutiny, he was restored to Parliament. Finally, in 1847, he lost the seat and gave up this very uncertain borough. Now all this shows what forces were at work, and that, with such determined candidates, electoral purity was not likely to stand in the way. All which makes for Ipswich.

It must be said, however, that a fair case can be made for Norwich. In introducing Eatanswill, Boz says that “an anxious desire to abstain from giving offence” prompted Mr. Pickwick, *i.e.*, Boz, to conceal the real name of the place. He adds that he travelled by the Norwich coach, “but this entry (in Mr. Pickwick’s notes) was afterwards lined through as if for the purpose of concealing even the direction.” Some might think that this was a veiled indication, but it seems too broad and obvious a method, that is, by crossing out a name to reveal the name. It is much more likely he meant that the town was somewhere between Norwich and London, and on that line. There are arguments, too, from the distances. There are two journeys in the book from Eatanswill to Bury, which seem to furnish data for both theories—the Ipswich and the Norwich ones. But if we have to take the *déjeûner* in its literal sense, and put it early in the day, say, at eleven, and Mr. Pickwick’s arrival at Bury, “very late,” as Sam had it, we have some six hours, or, say, forty miles, covered by the journey. But the events at Mrs. Leo Hunter’s were certainly at mid-day—between one and three o’clock. It was, in fact, a grand lunch. So with Winkle’s journey. He left Eatanswill half-an-hour after breakfast, and must have travelled by the same coach as Mr. Pickwick had done, and reached Bury just in time for dinner, or in six or seven hours. Now it will not be said that he would not be a whole day going four-and-twenty miles.

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A fair answer to these pleas might be that Boz was not too scrupulous as to times or distances when he was contriving incidents or events; and numberless specimens could be given of his inaccuracies. Here, “panting time toiled after him in vain.” It was enough to talk of breakfast and dinner without accurately computing the space between. But a close admeasurement of the distance will disprove the Norwich theory. Bury was twenty-four miles from Ipswich, and Ipswich forty miles from Norwich—a total of seventy-four miles, to accomplish which would have taken ten, eleven or twelve hours, to say nothing of the chance of missing the “correspondance” with the Northern Norwich coach. Then again, Boz is careful to state that Eatanswill was “one of the smaller towns.” In this class we would not place Norwich, a large Cathedral City, with its

innumerable churches, and population, even then, of over 60,000, whereas Ipswich was certainly one of these "smaller towns," having only 20,000. It must be also considered, too, that this was a cross road, when the pace would be slower than on the great main lines, say, at five miles an hour, which, with stoppages, &c., would occupy a period for the twenty-four miles of some four hours, that is, say, from two to six o'clock. Boz, by his arrangement of the traffic, would seem to assume that a conveyance could be secured at any time of the day, for Mr. Pickwick conveniently found one the instant he so abruptly quitted Mrs. Leo Hunter's, while Winkle and his friends just as conveniently found one immediately after breakfast. He appears to have been seven hours on the road. But the strong point on which all Ipswichians may rest secure is Mr. Pickwick's statement to Mrs. Leo Hunter that Bury was "not many miles from here."

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But an even more convincing proof can be found in Jingle's relation to Eatanswill. He came over from Bury to Mrs. Leo Hunter's party, leaving his servant there, at the Hotel, and returned the same evening. The place must have been but a short way off, when he could go and return in the same day. Then what brought him to Eatanswill? We are told that at the time he was courting Miss Nupkins, the Mayor's daughter; of course, he rushed over in the hope of meeting her at Mrs. Leo Hunter's *déjeûner*. Everything, therefore, fits well together.

I thought of consulting the report of the House of Commons Committee on the Election Petition, and this confirmed my view. There great stress is laid on the Blue and Buff colours: in both the report and the novel it is mentioned that the constables' staves were painted Blue. Boz makes Bob Sawyer say, in answer to Potts' horrified enquiry "Not Buff, sir?" "Well I'm a kind of plaid at present—mixed colours"—something very like this he must have noticed in the Report. A constable, asked was his comrade, one Seagrave, Buff, answered, "*well, half and half, I believe.*" In the Report, voters were captured and put to bed at the White Horse; and Sam tells how he "pumped over" a number of voters at the same house. The very waiter, who received Mr. Pickwick so contemptuously, was examined by the Committee—his name was Henry Cowey—and he answered exactly like the waiter with the "fortnight's napkin and the coeval stockings." When asked "was not so-and-so's appearance that of an intoxicated person?" the language seemed too much for him, rather, he took it to himself: "If I *had* been intoxicated, I could not have done my business." This is quite in character.

Boz calls the inn at Eatanswill, "The Town Arms." There was no such sign in all England at the time, as the Road Book shows. Why then would he call the White Horse by that name? The Town Arms of Ipswich have two white *Sea Horses* as supporters. This had certainly something to do with the matter.

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Mr. Pott was surely a real personage: for "Boz," who presently did not scruple to "takeoff" a living Yorkshire schoolmaster in a fashion that all his neighbours and friends recognised the original, would not draw back in the case of an editor. Indeed, it is plain that in all points Pott is truly an admirable figure, perfect in every point of view, and finished. In fact, Pott and Pell, in their way, are the two best pieces of work in the book. How admirable is the description; "a tall, thin man with a sandy-coloured head, inclined to baldness, and a face in which solemn importance was blended with a look of unfathomable profundity. He was dressed in a long, brown surtout, with a black cloth waistcoat and drab trousers. A double eye-glass dangled at his waistcoat, and on his head he wore a very low-crowned hat with a broad rim." Every touch is delightful—although all is literal the literalness is all humour. As when Pott, to recreate his guest, Mr. Pickwick, told Jane to "go down into the office and bring me up the file of the Gazette for 1828. I'll read you just a few of the leaders I wrote at that time upon the Buff job of appointing a new tollman to the turnpike here. I rather think they'll amuse you." This was rich enough, and he came back to the same topic towards the end of the book.

It will be remembered Mr. Pott went to Mrs. Leo Hunter's *Fête* in the character of a Russian with a knout in his hand. No doubt the Gazette had its "eye on Russia" and like the famous *Skibbereen Eagle* had solemnly warned the Autocrat to that effect. It is, by the way, amusing to find that this organ, *The Eagle* to wit, which so increased the gaiety of the nation, has once more been warning the Autocrat, and in a vein that proves that "our filthy contemporary," *The Eatanswill Gazette*, was no exaggerated picture. This is how *The Eagle*, in a late issue, speaks of the Russian occupation of Port Arthur:—"And once again that keen, fierce glance is cast in the direction of the grasping Muscovite; again, one of the foulest, one of the vilest dynasties that has impiously trampled on the laws of God, and has violated every progressive aspiration the Almighty implanted in the human heart when He fashioned man in His own image, and breathed into his soul the breath of life, threatens, for the moment at least, to put back the hands of the clock that tells the progress of civilisation. The Emperor of all the Russias, this wicked enemy of the human race, has succeeded in raising his hideous flag on Port Arthur, and planting his iron heel and cloven hoof on the heathen Chinese—filthy, degenerate creatures, who, it must be admitted, are fitting companions for the tallow-eating, 'knouting' barbarian."

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III.—Nupkins and Magnus.

Who was intended by Nupkins, the intolerable Mayor of Ipswich? An odious being. We may wonder at "Boz's" courage, for, of course, the existing Mayor of Ipswich might think that the satire was pointed at *him*. There can be little doubt, however, that Nupkins was drawn from a London Police Magistrate, and is, in fact, another portrait of the functionary whom he sketched specially for "Oliver Twist" under the name of Mr. Fang. Nupkins, however, is more in the comedy vein—ridiculed rather than gibbeted—than was Mr. Fang. We have only to compare the

touches in both descriptions:

"I beg your pardon for interrupting you," said Mr. Pickwick, "but before you proceed to act upon any opinion you may have formed, I must claim my right to be heard."

"Hold your tongue," said the magistrate, peremptorily.

"I must submit to you, sir—" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hold your tongue, or I shall order an officer to remove you."

"You may order your officers to do whatever you please, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

Compare with this "Oliver Twist":

"Who are you?" said Mr. Fang.

"Before I am sworn, I must beg to say one word, and that is I really never, without actual experience, could have believed—"

"Hold your tongue, sir," said Mr. Fang, peremptorily.

"I will not, sir."

"Hold your tongue this instant, or I'll have you turned out of the office."

Mr. Pickwick, it will be remembered, made a communication to Mr. Nupkins which changed the whole state of affairs. Mr. Nupkins, with all his insolent despotism, was held in check by conference with his clerk, Jinks, who kept him from making mistakes by judicious hints.

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Fang's clerk, like Mr. Jinks, interposed:

"How do you propose to deal with the case, sir?" inquired the clerk, in a low voice.

Mr. Jinks pulled him by the sleeve and whispered something. He was evidently remonstrating. At length the magistrate, gulping down with a very bad grace his disinclination to hear anything more, said sharply, "What do you want to say?"

When Mr. Fang was about to commit Oliver, the Bookstall-keeper rushed in, and insisted on being heard, and, like Mr. Nupkins, Mr. Fang had to listen:

"I demand to be sworn," said the man, "I will not be put down."

"Swear the man," growled Mr. Fang, with a very ill grace. "Now, what have you got to say?"

Again, Mr. Nupkins said of Sam:

"He is evidently a desperate ruffian."

"He is my servant, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, angrily.

"Oh, he is your servant, is he. A conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice."

Compare Fang and the Bookseller:

"That book, is it paid for? No, it is not."

"Dear me, I forgot all about it," exclaimed the old gentleman.

"A nice person to prepare a charge against a poor boy," said Fang; "the law will overtake you yet, &c."

and so on.

In short, Nupkins is a softened edition of Fang. It was curious that he turned out at the end not altogether so badly, and there is certainly a little inconsistency in the character. After Mr. Pickwick's disclosures, he becomes very rational and amiable. We may wonder, too, how the latter could have accepted hospitality from, or have sat down at the board of, the man who treated him in so gross a fashion, and, further, that after accepting this entertainment, Mr. Pickwick should take an heroic and injured tone, recalling his injuries as he withdrew, but *after* his dinner.

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This magistrate was despotic enough, but we might have expected that he would have had Mr. Peter Magnus brought before him also, and have issued a warrant. The lady, however, was silent as to her admirer, and this difficulty appears to have occurred to the author for he makes Mr. Nupkins remark: "The other principal *you say* has absconded," she having said nothing whatever. Being at the "White Horse," too, he was accessible. He may, however, have gone off to secure "a friend."

In Ipswich there is controversy as to the exact whereabouts of his mansion. But there can be little doubt as to the matter, as the directions given are minute. The guide books take care to point it out. "Bending his steps towards St. Clement's Church"—that is leaving the "White

Horse” and following the street on the right, “he found himself in a retired spot, a kind of courtyard of venerable appearance, which he discovered had no other outlet than the turning by which he had entered.” I believe it is the house at the far end of the lane—now Mr. Bennett’s. The street has been cut through the lawn. There are here, as there were then, “old red brick houses” and “the green gate of a garden at the bottom of the yard.” Nothing could be more precise, allowing of course for the changes, demolitions, re-buildings, &c., of sixty years.

What became of Mr. Peter Magnus and his lady? Did they “make it up”? or was Mr. Pickwick enabled to make such explanations as would clear away all suspicions. Did the two angry gentlemen meet again after Mr. Pickwick’s return to the “White Horse?” These are interesting questions, and one at least can be answered. Owing to an indiscretion of the foolish Winkle’s, during the famous action of Bardell v. Pickwick, we learn that Mr. Pickwick “being found in a lady’s apartment at midnight had led to the *breaking off of the projected marriage* of the lady in question.” Now this seems a serious result of Mr. Pickwick’s indiscretion, and very unfortunate for the poor lady, and ought to have caused him some remorse. No doubt he explained the incident, which he had better have done at first, for *now* it had the air of attempting to shield the lady. It was odd that Mr. Pickwick should thus have interfered with the marriage of *two* elderly spinster ladies.

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There is, by the way, a droll inconsistency on the part of the author in his description of a scene between Mr. Magnus and Mr. Pickwick. When the former was about to propose to the middle-aged lady, he told Mr. Pickwick that he arranged to see her at eleven. “It only wants a quarter now.” Breakfast was waiting, and the pair sat down to it. Mr. Magnus was looking at the clock every other second. Presently he announced, “It only wants *two minutes*.” Notwithstanding this feverish impatience, he asks Mr. Pickwick for his advice in proposing, which the latter gave at great length. Mr. Magnus listened, now without any impatience. The clock hand was “verging on the five minutes past;” not until it was *ten* minutes past did he rise.

IV.—Had Mr. Pickwick ever Loved?

Mr. Pickwick’s early history is obscure enough, and we know no details save that he had been “in business.” But had he ever an affair of the heart? Just as in real life, when a stray allusion will occasionally escape from a person betraying something of his past history, so once or twice a casual remark of Mr. Pickwick’s furnishes a hint. Thus Mr. Magnus, pressing him for his advice in this delicate matter of proposing, asked him had he ever done this sort of thing in his time. “You mean proposing?” said the great man. “Yes.” “Never,” said Mr. Pickwick, *with great energy*, and then repeated the word “Never.” His friend then assumed that he did not know how it was best to begin. “Why,” said the other, cautiously, “I may have formed some ideas on the subject,” but then added that he had “never submitted them to the test of experience.” This is distinct enough, but it does all the same hint at some *affaire de cœur*, else why would he “have formed some ideas upon the subject.” Of course, it may be that he was thinking of Mrs. Bardell and her cruel charges. Still, it was strange that a man should have reached to fifty, have grown round and stout, without ever offering his hand. The first picture in the book, however, helps us to speculate a little. Over his head in the room at Dulwich hangs the portrait of an old lady in spectacles, the image of the great Samuel; his mother certainly. He evidently regarded her with deep affection, he had brought the picture to Dulwich and placed it where it should always be before his eyes. Could it not be, and is it not natural that in addition to his other amiabilities he was the best of sons—that she “ruled the roast”—that in the old Mrs. Wardle, to whom he so filially attended, he saw his mother’s image, that she was with him to the day of her death, and that while she lived, he resolved that no one else should be mistress there! After her death he found himself a confirmed old bachelor. There’s a speculation for you on the German lines.

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We might go on. This self denial must have been the more meritorious as he was by nature of an affectionate, even amorous, cast. He seized every opportunity of kissing the young ladies. He would certainly have liked to have had some fair being at home whom he could thus distinguish. How good this description of the rogue—

“Mr. Pickwick kissed the young ladies—we were going to say as if they were his own daughters, only, as he might possibly have infused *a little more warmth into the salutation*, the comparison would not be quite appropriate.”

He never lost a chance. In the same spirit, when the blushing Arabella came to tell of her marriage, “can you forgive my imprudence?” He returned “no verbal response”—not he—“but *took off his spectacles in great haste*, and seizing both the young lady’s hands in his, kissed her a great many times—perhaps a greater number of times than was absolutely necessary.” Observe the artfulness of all this—the deliberation—taking off the spectacles so that they should not be in the way—seizing her hands—and then setting to work! Oh, he knew more of “this sort of thing” than he had credit for. He had never proposed—true—but he had been near it a precious sight more than he said.

Miss Witherfield is a rather mysterious personage, yet we take an interest in her and speculate on her history. She lived some twenty miles from Ipswich—no doubt at a family place of her own. She had come in to stay at the White Horse for the night and the morning. She was, no doubt, a person of property—otherwise Mr. Magnus would not have been so eager, and he must have been a fortune hunter, for he confided to Mr. Pickwick, that he had been jilted “three or four times.” What a quaint notion by the way that of his: “I think an Inn is a good sort of place to

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propose to a single woman in, Mr. Pickwick. She is more likely to feel the loneliness of her situation in travelling, perhaps than she would be, at home."

We find here some of the always amusing bits of confusion that recur in the book. Here might be a Calverley question, "When was it, and where was it, that the Pickwickians had *two* dinners in the one day?" Answer: At the Great White Horse on this very visit. When Mr. Nupkins retired to lunch, after his interview with Miss Witherfield, the Pickwickians sat down to their dinner "quietly," and were in the midst of that meal, when Grummer arrived to arrest them. They were taken to Nupkins', and there dined with him. This dinner would have brought them to five o'clock:—we are told of candles—so that it was dark—yet this was the month of May, when it would be light enough till eight o'clock. Mrs. Nupkins' dress, on coming in from lunch, is worth noting. "A blue gauze turban and a light brown wig."

Again, it was to Mr. Pickwick's watch, that we owe the diverting and farcical incident of the double bedded bedroom—and indeed we have here all the licensed improbabilities of a Farce. To forget his watch on a hotel table was the last thing a staid man of business would do. How could he be made to forget it? "By winding it up," said the author. "Winding up his watch, and *laying it on the table.*" This was of course in the *Fob* days, when the watch had to be drawn from the deep pocket; not as now when it is secured with a "guard chain." Naturally, he might in an abstracted moment have so laid it down.

As an instance of the natural, every-day sort of tone prevailing through the book, it may be noted that it is mentioned as a matter of history, that the breakfast next day was at eleven o'clock—a late hour. But we know, though it is not pointed out, that Mr. Magnus and Mr. Pickwick had sat till morning drinking brandy and water, and that Mr. Pickwick had spent a portion of the night wandering about the Hotel. Naturally he came down late.

We are also minutely told that Mr. Magnus left the room at ten minutes past eleven. Mr. Pickwick "took a few strides to and fro," when it became half past eleven! But this is a rather mysterious passage, for we next learn that "the *small hand* of the clock, following the *latter part* of his example, had arrived at the figure which indicates the half hour." The "latter part," would refer to "fro." Perhaps it is a fresh gibe at the unlucky White Horse and its administration. The "small hand," in any case, could not, and would not, point to the half hour, save that it had got loosened, and had jumped down, as hands will do, to seek the centre of gravity.

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How natural, too, is the appearance of Jingle. With Wardles' £120 in his pocket, he was flush of cash, and could make a new appearance—in a new district—as an officer—Captain FitzMarshall. He was "picked up," we are told, at some neighbouring races. Sudbury and Stowmarket are not far off.

Some years ago, the late Lady Quain was staying at Ipswich and took so deep an interest in the "Great White Horse" and its traditions that she had it with all its apartments photographed on a large scale, forming a regular series. Her husband, the amiable physician whose loss we have to deplore, gave them to me. The "White Horse" was decidedly wrong in having Mr. Pickwick's double-bedded room fitted up with brass Birmingham bedsteads. Were I the proprietor I would assuredly have the room arranged exactly as in Phiz's picture—the two old-fashioned four-posts with the dimity curtains, the rush light and shade on the floor, the old glass on the dressing-table. To be even more realistic still there might be added Mr. Pickwick's night-capped head peeping out, and the lean presentment of the lady herself, all, say, in wax, *à la Tussaud*. What a show and attraction that would be!

The author's ingenuity was never at fault in the face of a difficulty. Mr. Pickwick was to be got to Nupkins' in a sedan chair, a grotesque incident; but then, what to do with Tupman, also arrested? As both would not fit in an ordinary sedan, the sedan was made to fit *them*, and thus it was done. "It was recollected that there stood in the Inn yard an old sedan chair, which, having been originally built for a gouty gentleman with funded property, would hold Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman at least as conveniently as a modern postchaise."

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Nothing is more remarkable than the ingenious and striking fashion in which "*Boz*" has handled the episode of the double-bedded room and the yellow curl papers. The subject was an awkward one and required skilful management, or it might have repelled. The problem was how to make the situation amusing and yet not too realistic? It will be seen that all the *appearances* of a most embarrassing situation are produced, and yet really neither the lady nor Mr. Pickwick have taken off their garments. To produce this result, much elaborate machinery was requisite. The beds were arranged as if on the stage, one on each side of the door with a sort of little lane between the wall and each bed. Mr. Pickwick, we are told, actually crept into this lane, got to the end where there was a chair, and in this straight, confined situation proceeded to take off his coat and vest and to fold them up. It was thus artfully brought about that he appeared to have gone to bed, and could look out from the dimity curtains without having done so. It does not strike every one that Mr. Pickwick, under ordinary circumstances, would have taken off his "things" before the fire just as the lady did, in the free and open space, and not huddled up in a dark corner. However, as Mr. Weller says: "It wos to be, and—it wos," or we should have had no story and no laugh.

There is a pleasant story—quite akin to Mr. Pickwick's adventure—of what befell Thackeray when travelling in America. Going up to bed, he mistook the floor, and entered a room the very counterpart of his own. He had begun to take off his clothes, when a soft voice came from within—"Is that you, George?" In a panic, he bundled up his things, like Mr. Pickwick, and hurriedly

rushed out, thinking what would be the confusion should he encounter "George" at the door. Anthony Trollope, my old, pleasant friend and sponsor at the Garrick Club, used to relate another of these hotel misadventures which, he protested, was the most "side-splitting" thing ever he heard of. A gentleman who was staying at one of the monster Paris hotels with his lady, was seized with some violent cold or pulmonary attack. She went down to try and get him a mustard plaster, which, with much difficulty, she contrived. Returning in triumph, as Mr. Pickwick did with his recovered watch, she found that he had fallen into a gentle sleep, and was lying with his head buried in the pillows. With much softness and deftness, she quickly drew away the coverings, and, without disturbing him, managed to insinuate the plaster into its proper place. Having done her duty, she then proceeded to lie down, when the sleeping man, moving uneasily, awoke and showed his face. It was *not* her husband! She fled from the room. The humour of the thing—as described by Trollope—was the bewilderment of the man on discovering the damp and burning mass that had been applied to him, and the amazing disappearance of his visitant. What did it all mean? The mystery probably remained unsolved to the day of his death.

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But the Great White Horse received an important cosmopolitan compliment from across the seas—at the Chicago Exhibition—when a large and complete model was prepared and set up in the building. This was an elaborate as well as important tribute to the Book which it was assumed that every one knew by heart.

V.—Ipswich Theatre

Boz, on his travels, with his strong theatrical taste, was sure to have gone to the little theatre in Tacket Street, now a Salvation Army meeting-house. It is the same building, though much altered and pulled about, as that in which David Garrick made his first appearance on the stage, as Mr. Lyddal, about 150 years ago. I have before me now a number of Ipswich play bills, dated in the year 1838, just after the conclusion of "Pickwick," and which, most appropriately, seem to record little but Boz's own work. Pickwick, Oliver, Nickleby, and others, are the Bill of Fare, and it may be conceived that audiences would attend to see their own Great White Horse, and the spinster lady in her curl papers, and Mr. Nupkins, the Mayor, brought on the boards. These old strips of tissue paper have a strange interest; they reflect the old-fashioned theatre and audiences; and the Pickwickian names of the characters, so close after the original appearance, have a greater reality. Here, for instance, is a programme for Mr. Gill's benefit, on January 19, 1839, when we had "The Pickwickians at half-price." This was "a comic drama, in three acts, exhibiting the life and manners of the present day, entitled—

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*"PICKWICK, or the sayings and doings of Sam Weller!"
Adapted expressly for this Theatre from the celebrated Pickwick Papers,
by Boz!*

"The present drama of Pickwick has been honoured by crowded houses, and greeted by shouts of laughter and reiterated peals of applause upon every representation, and has been acknowledged by the public Press to be the only successful adaptation.

The ILLUSTRATIONS designed and executed by popular PHIZ-ES.

The new music by Mr. Pindar. The quadrilles under the direction of Mr. Harrison."

All the characters are given.

"Mr. Pickwick," founder of the Club, and travelling the counties of Essex and Suffolk in pursuit of knowledge.

"Snodgrass," a leetle bit of a poet.

"Winkle," a corresponding member also; and a something of a sportsman.

"Job Trotter," thin plant o' ooman natur; something between a servant and a friend to Jingle; a kind of perambulating hydraulic.

"Joe," a fat boy, addicted to cold pudding and snoring.

"Miss Rachel Wardle," in love with Jingle or anybody else that will have her.

"Emily" was appropriately represented in such a Theatre, by Miss Garrick.

The scenes are laid at first at the Red Lion, Colchester, close by which is Manor Farm, where a ball is given, and, of course, "the Pickwickian Quadrilles!" are danced "as performed at the Nobility's Balls." (I have these quadrilles, with Mr. Pickwick, on the title.) Then comes the White Hart, and "How they make sausages!" displayed in large type. The scene is then shifted to the Angel, at Bury, and the double-bedded room with its "horrible dilemma," and

"SCENE OF NIGHT CAPS!"

It will be noticed that there is nothing of the Great White Horse in the very town. The reason was that the proprietor was disgusted by the unflattering account given of his Inn and must have objected. It winds up with the Fleet scenes, where Mr. Weller, senr.,

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"ARRESTS HIS OWN OFFSPRING."

That this notion of the Great White Horse being sulky and hostile is the true one is patent from

another bill, December 10, 1843, some four years later, when the proprietor allowed his Inn to be introduced. The piece was called—

“BOOTS AT THE WHITE HORSE.”

“Now acting in London with extraordinary success.” This was, of course, our old friend “Boots at the Swan,” which Frank Robson, later, made his own. As Boz had nothing to do with it, there could be no objection. Barnaby Rudge, however, was the piece of resistance. On another occasion, January, 1840, came Mr. J. Russell, with his vocal entertainment, “Russell’s Recollections” and “A Portrait from the Pickwick Gallery.” “Have you seen him? Alphabetical Distinctions. A sample of MISTER SAM WELLER’S Descriptive Powers.”

Some adaptation or other of Dickens seems to have been always the standing dish. The old Ipswich Theatre is certainly an interesting one, and Garrick and Boz are names to conjure with.

VI.—Who was Pott?

There have been abundant speculations as to the originals of the Pickwickian characters—some Utopian enough, but I do not think that any have been offered in the case of Mr. Pott, the redoubtable editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette*. I am inclined to believe that the notorious and brilliant Dr. Maginn was intended. He and Pott were both distinguished for their “slogging” or bludgeoning articles, and both were High Tories, or “Blue,” as Mr. Pott had it. But what is most significant is that in the very year Pickwick was coming out, to wit, 1836, Maginn had attracted general attention and reprobation by the scandal of his duel with Grantley Berkely, arising out of a most scurrilous review of the latter’s novel. To this meeting he had been brought with some difficulty—just as Pott—the “Pot-valiant,” declined to “serve him so,” *i.e.*, Slurk; being restrained by the laws of his country. He was an assistant editor to the “Standard,” and had furnished scurrilites to the “John Bull.” He had about this time also obtained an influence over the interesting “L. E. L.,” whom John Forster, it is known, was “courting,” and by some rumours and machinations succeeded in breaking off the business. Now Forster and Boz, at the time, were bosom friends—Forster could be unsparing enough where he was injured: and how natural that his new friend should share his enmities. Boz was always glad to gibbet a notorious public abuse, and here was an opportunity. Maginn’s friend, Kenealey, wrote to an American, who was about to edit Maginn’s writings, “You have a glorious opportunity, where you have no fear of libel before your eyes. *Maginn’s best things can never be published till his victims have passed from the scene.*” How significant is this! Then Pott’s “combining his information,” his “cramming” critic, his using the lore of the Encyclopedia Britannica for his articles suggest Maginn’s classical lucubrations. A well-known eminent *Littérateur*, to whom I suggested this view, objected that Pott is not shown to be such a blackguard as Maginn, and that Maginn was not such an ass as Pott. But Boz generalised his borrowed originals. Skimpole was taken from Leigh Hunt, yet was represented as a sort of scoundrel; and Boz confessed that he only adapted his lighter manner and airy characteristics.

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In these latter days, people have been somewhat astonished by the strange “freak” of our leading journal in so persistently offering and pressing on the public their venture of a new edition of the Encyclopedia. Every ingenious variation of bold advertisement is used to tempt the purchaser—a sovereign down and time for the rest; actual pictures of the whole series of volumes; impassioned arguments, pleadings, and an appeal to take it at the most wonderfully low price. Then we have desirable information, dealing with topics of varied kind, and assurances that material would here be found for dealing conveniently with every known subject. Still, what a surprise that use was not made of “the immortal Pickwick” in whose pages these peculiar advantages were more successfully and permanently set forth and illustrated by one most telling example furnished by no other than Mr. Pott himself, the redoubtable editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette*. To him and to no other is due the credit of being the first to show practically *how to use* the Encyclopedia. He has furnished a *principle* which is worth all the lengthy exhortations of the *Times* itself.

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Pott seems to have kept the work in his office, and to have used it for his articles in a highly ingenious fashion. For three months had he been supplying a series of papers, which he assures us “appeared at intervals,” and which excited “such general—I may say, such universal attention and admiration.” A fine tribute surely to the Encyclopedia. For recollect Pott’s was a newspaper. The *Times* folk say nothing of this important view. Poor, simple Mr. Pickwick had not seen the articles because he was busy travelling about and had no time for reading. (Probably Pott would have put him on the “free list” of his paper, but for the awkward Winkle flirtation which broke up the intimacy). Nay, he might have had “the revolving book case,” which would handily contain *all* the volumes.

And what were these articles? “They appeared in the form of a *copious*”—mark the word! —“review of a work on Chinese Metaphysics.” It had need to be copious therefor, for it is a very large subject. Mr. Pickwick himself must have been very familiar with the Encyclopedia, for he at once objected that he was not aware that so abstruse a topic was dealt with in its pages. He had perhaps consulted the book, say, at Garraway’s Coffee House, for, alas! the good man was not able to have a library of his own, living, as he did, in lodgings or at the “George and Vulture.” Mr. Pott, however, who also knew the work well, had then to confess that there was no such subject treated separately in it. But the articles were from the pen of his critic (not from his own), “who *crammed* for it, to use a technical but expressive term; he read up for the subject, at my desire, in the Encyclopedia.”

Now, as the subject was *not* treated in the work, how could this “cramming” help him? Here comes in the system, so unaccountably overlooked by the *Times*, *i.e.*, the Combination Method. “He read, sir,” rejoined Pott, laying his hand on Mr. Pickwick’s knee and looking round with a smile of intellectual superiority, “he read for metaphysics under the letter *M*, and for China under the letter *C*, and *combined his information, sir.*” There we have it! We find separate articles *De omni scribili*, and many topics unavoidably passed over; but we see how this can be cured by the ingenious Pott system. Combine your information! There you are! Here for instance—under “Metaphysics” we do find something about Confucius and the other Pundits; we then turn to China and get local colour, Chinese writers. &c., and then proceed “to combine our information.” And so with hundreds of other instances and other topics. Pott, therefore, has been overlooked by the managers of the *Times*, but it is not yet too late for them to call attention to his system. It is of interest to all at Eatanswill.

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Pott was in advance of his time. His paper was not wholly the sort of scurrilous organ it has been shown to be. To weight its columns with “Chinese Metaphysics,” was a bold, reforming step—then the going on for three months, *i.e.*, *twelve* articles—and all read with avidity. And what are we to think of the Eatanswill readers—surely in advance, too. And here we have him, nearly seventy years ago, giving a well-deserved puff to the Encyclopedia, which is really worth the innumerable columns the leading journal has devoted to the book. Its last effort was to show an ingenious connection between the British Association and the Encyclopedia, on the ground of its various Presidents. “It stimulates, in fact creates, the necessity for a good working Library of Science. It is here that the Encyclopedia comes in as of especial service.”

CHAPTER II. BATH

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I.—The Old City

Bath, which already owed so much to famous writers, was destined to owe even more to Boz, the genial author of “Pickwick”—a book which has so much increased the gaiety of the nation. The scenes at the old city are more minute and vivid than any yet offered. But, if it owe much to Boz, it repaid him by furnishing him with a name for his book which has gone over the world. Everything about this name will be interesting; and it is not generally known when and how Boz obtained it.

There is a small hamlet some few miles from Bath and 97 from London—which is 106 miles away from Bath—bearing the name of “Pickwick.” The Bath coach, by the way, started from the White Horse Cellars, Piccadilly, at half-past seven in the morning, and took just twelve hours for the journey. Now it is made by the Great Western in two! Here, many years ago, at the time of the story, was “Pickwick House, the seat of C. N. Loscombe, Esq.,” and also “Pickwick Lodge,” where dwelt Captain Fenton. Boz had never seen or heard of such places, but all the same they indirectly furnished him with the name. A mail-coach guard found an infant on the road in this place, and gave it the name of “Pickwick.” The word “Pickwick” contains the common terminal “wick,” as in “Warwick,” and which means a village or hamlet of some kind. Pickwick, however, has long since disappeared from the face of the map. Probably, after the year 1837, folk did not relish dating their letters from a spot of such humorous memories.

This Moses Pickwick was taken into the service of the coaching hotel, the White Hart, gradually devoted himself to the horse and coaching business, and, at the time of Boz’s or Mr. Pickwick’s visit, was the actual proprietor of the coaches on the road. “The name,” said Sam, “is not only down on the vay-bill, sir, but they’ve painted vun on ’em on the door of the coach.” As Sam spoke he pointed to that part of the door on which the proprietor’s name usually appears, and there, sure enough, in gilt letters of a goodly size, was the magic name of PICKWICK. “Dear me,” said Mr. Pickwick, quite staggered by the coincidence, “what a very extraordinary thing!” “Yes; but that ain’t all,” said Sam, again directing his master’s attention to the coach-door. “Not content with writin’ up ‘Pickwick,’ they put ‘Moses’ afore it, which I calls adding insult to injury.” “It’s odd enough, certainly,” said Mr. Pickwick. When he was casting about for a good name for his venture, it recurred to him as having a quaint oddity and uncanniness. And thus it is that we owe to Bath, and to Bath only, this celebrated name. It is said that he rushed into the publisher’s office, exultingly proclaiming his selection.

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Few cities have had their society and manners sketched by such eminent pens as Bath—Smollett, Miss Burney, Miss Austen, and Boz. The old walls and houses are thus made to live. Boz has given one of the most vivid and vivacious pictures of its expiring glories in the thirties, when there were still “M.C.s,” routs, assemblies, and sedans. His own connection with the place is a personal, and a very interesting one. He was there in 1835 on election business hurrying after Lord John Russell, all over the country, to report his speeches—a young fellow of three and twenty, full of “dash,” “go,” and readiness of resource, of immense energy and carelessness of fatigue, ready to go anywhere and do anything. While thus engaged on serious business, he kept his eyes wide open, took in all the humours of Bath, and noted them in his memory, though he made no use of this till more than two years later, when he was well on into “Pickwick.”

The entering an old city by night always leaves a curious romantic impression, and few old cities gain so much as Bath by this mode of approach. The shadowy houses have a monumental air; the

fine streets which we mostly ascend show a mystery, especially as we flit by the open square, under the great, black Abbey, which seems a beetling rock. This old Bath mysteriousness seems haunted by the ghosts of Burney, Johnson, Goldsmith, Wilkes, Quin, Thrale, Mr. Pickwick, and dozens more. Fashion and gentility hover round its stately homes. Nothing rouses such ideas of state and dignity as the Palladian Circus. There is a tone of mournful grandeur about it—something forlorn. Had it, in some freak of fashion, been abandoned, and suffered, for a time at least, to go to neglect and be somewhat overgrown with moss and foliage, it would pass for some grand Roman ruin. There is a solemn, greyish gloom about it; the grass in the enclosure is rank, long, and very green. Pulteney Street, too: what a state and nobility there is about it! So wide and so spacious; the houses with an air of grand solidity, with no carvings or frittering work, but relying on their fine lines and proportion. To lodge there is an education, and the impression remains with one as of a sense of personal dignity from dwelling in such large and lofty chambers, grandly laid out with noble stairs and the like. The builders in this fine city would seem to have been born architects; nearly all the houses have claims to distinction: each an expression and feeling of its own. The fine blackened or browned tint adds to the effect. The mouldings are full of reserve and chastened, suited exactly to the material. There is something, too, very stately about the octagon Laura Place, which opens on to Pulteney Street.

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In this point of view Bath is a more interesting city than Edinburgh. Mr. Peach has written two most interesting little quartos on the "Historic Houses of Bath;" and Mr. T. Sturge Cotterell has prepared a singularly interesting map of Bath, in which all the spots honoured by the residence of famous visitors are marked down. It is very extraordinary the number and distinction of these personages.

I don't know anything more strange and agreeable than the feeling of promenading the Parades, North and South—a feeling compounded of awe, reverence, and exciting interest. The tranquil repose and dignity of these low, solid houses, the broad flagged Promenade, the unmistakable air of old fashion, the sort of reality and self-persuasion that they might in a moment be re-peopled with all these eminent persons—much as Boz called up the ghosts of the old mail-coach passengers in his telling ghost story—the sombre grey of the walls, the brightness of the windows: these elements join to leave an extraordinary impression. The houses on these Parades are charming from their solid proportions, adapted, as it were, to the breadth of the Parade. Execrable, by the way, are the modern attempts seen side by side; feeble and incapable, not attempting any expression at all. There is a row of meagre tenements beside the Abbey—attempts at pinnacled gables—which it is a sorrowful thing to look on, so cheap and starved is it. Even the newer shops, in places like Milsom Street, with nothing to do but to copy what is before them, show the same *platitudo*. Here and there you are constantly coming upon one of these beautifully designed old mansions piteously disguised, cut up in two or three it may be, or the lower portion fashioned into a shop.

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II.—The Pump Room and Assembly Rooms

No group of architectural objects is more effective or touches one more nearly than the buildings gathered about the Baths. There is something quaint and old-fashioned in the arrangement, and I am never tired of coming back to the pretty, open colonnade, the faded yet dignified Pump-room, with the ambitious hotel and the solemn Abbey rising solemnly behind. Then there is the delightful Promenade opposite, under the arcades—a genuine bit of old fashion—under whose shadow the capricious Fanny Burney had often strolled. Everything about this latter conglomeration—the shape of the ground, the knowledge that the marvellous Roman baths are below, and even the older portion of the municipal buildings whose elegant decorations, sculptured garlands, &c., bespeak the influence of the graceful Adam, whose pupil or imitator Mr. Baldwin may have been.

Boz's description of the tarnished Pump-room answers to what is seen now, save as to the tone of the decorations. I say "Boz's," for Pickwick, it should be recollected, was not actually acknowledged by the author, under his proper name. It was thought that the well-known and popular "Boz" of the "Sketches" would attract far more than the obscure C. Dickens. Now Boz and the Sketches have receded and are little thought of. Boz and Pickwick go far better together than do Pickwick and Dickens. There is an old-fashioned solemnity over this Pump-room which speaks of the old classical taste over a hundred years ago. How quaint and suitable the inscription, "Ἀριστον γεν ὕδωρ," in faded gilt characters. Within it is one stately chamber, not altered a bit since the day, sixty-three years ago, that Boz strolled in and wrote this inscription: As I sat with a friend beside me in the newly finished concert-room, which is in *happy* keeping, I called up the old genial Pickwick promenading about under the direction of Bantam, M.C., and the genial tone of the old gaiety and good spirits.

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The "Tompion Clock," which is carefully noted by Boz, seems to have been always regarded as a sort of monument. It is like an overgrown eight-day clock, without any adornment and plain to a degree—no doubt relying upon its Tompion works. It is in exactly the same place as it was over sixty years ago, and goes with the old regularity. Nay, for that matter, it stands where it did a hundred years ago—in the old recess by Nash's statue and inscription, and was no doubt ordered at the opening of the rooms. In an old account of Bath, at the opening of the century, attention is called to the Tompion clock with a sort of pride. The steep and shadowy Gay Street, which leads up to the inviting Crescent and the more sombre Queen's Square, affects one curiously. Then we come to the old Assembly Rooms close by the Circus, between Alfred Street and Bennell Street—a stately, dignified pile—in the good old classical style of Bath. One looks on it with a mysterious

reverence: it seems charged with all sorts of memories of old, bygone state. For here all the rank and fashion of Bath used to make its way of Assembly nights. Many years ago, there was here given a morning concert to which I found my way, mainly for the purpose of calling up ghostly memories of the Thrals, and Doctor Johnson, and Miss Burney, and, above all, of Mr. Pickwick. Though the music was the immortal "Passion" of Bach, my eyes were travelling all the while from one piece of faded *rococo* work and decoration. Boz never fails to secure the *tone* of any strange place he is describing. We all, for instance, have that pleased, elated feeling on the first morning after our arrival over night at a new place—the general brightness, surprise, and air of novelty. We are willing to be pleased with everything, and pass from object to object with enjoyment. Now all this is difficult to seize or to describe. Boz does not do the latter, but he conveys it perfectly. We see the new arrivals seated at breakfast, and the entrance of the Dowlers with the M.C., and the party setting off to see the "Lions," the securing tickets for the Assembly, the writing down their names in "the book," Sam sent specially up to Queen's Square, and so on. All which is very exhilarating, and reveals one's own feeling on such an occasion. The "Pump-room books" are formally mentioned in the regulations. We can see the interior of the Assembly Rooms in Phiz's plate, with its huge and elaborately framed oval mirrors and chandeliers—the dancing-room set round with raised benches. After the pattern of Ridotto rooms abroad, there were the card-rooms and tea-rooms, where Mr. Pickwick played whist with Miss Bolo. We note the sort of Adam or Chippendale chair on which the whist Dowager is sitting with her back to us.

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Considering that the rules of dress were so strict, pumps and silk stockings being of necessity, we may wonder how it was that the President of the Pickwick Club was admitted in his morning dress, his kerseymere tights, white waistcoat, and black gaiters. It is clear that he never changed his dress for evening parties, save on one occasion. Mr. Pickwick's costume was certainly in defiance of all rules and regulations. It is *laid* in the regulations of Mr. Tyson, M.C., who directed that "no gentleman in boots or half-boots be admitted into the rooms on ball nights or card nights." Half-boots might certainly cover Mr. Pickwick's gaiters. So accurate is the picture that speculation arises whether Phiz went specially to Bath to make his sketches; for he has caught in the most perfect way the whole *tone* of a Bath Assembly, and he could not have obtained this from descriptions by others. So, too, with this picture of the Circus in Mr. Winkle's *escapade*. It will be remembered that Boz was rather particular about this picture, and suggested some minute alterations. Bantam, the M.C., or "the Grand Master" as Boz oddly calls him, was drawn from life from an eccentric functionary named Jervoise. I have never been quite able to understand his odd hypothesis about Mr. Pickwick being "the gentleman who had the waters bottled and sent to Clapham." But how characteristic the dialogue on the occasion! It will be seen that this M.C. cannot credit the notion of anyone of such importance as Mr. Pickwick "never having been in *Ba-ath*." His ludicrous and absurd, "Not bad—not bad! Good—good. He, he, remarkable!" showed how it struck him. A man of such a position, too; it was incredible. With a delightful sense of this theory, he began: "It is long—*very long*, Mr. Pickwick, *since you drank the waters*—it appears an age." Mr. Pickwick protested that it was certainly long since he had drunk the waters, and his proof was that he had never been in Bath in his life. After a moment's reflection the M.C. saw the solution. "Oh, I see; yes, yes; good, good; better and better. You are the gentleman residing on Clapham Green who lost the use of your limbs from imprudently taking cold *after port wine*, who could not be moved in consequence of acute suffering, and who had the water from the King's Bath bottled at 103 degrees and sent by waggon to his bed-room in town, where he bathed, sneezed, and same day recovered." This amusing concatenation is, besides, an admirable and very minute stroke of character, and the frivolous M.C. is brought before us perfectly. While a capital touch is that when he saw young Mr. Mutanhead approaching. "Hush! draw a little nearer, Mr. Pickwick. You see that splendidly dressed young man coming this way—the richest young man in Bath!"

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"You don't say so," said Mr. Pickwick.

"*Yes, you'll hear his voice in a moment, Mr. Pickwick. He'll speak to me.*" Particular awe and reverence could not be better expressed.

It is curious how accurate the young fellow was in all his details. He describes the ball as beginning at "precisely twenty minutes before eight o'clock;" and according to the old rules it had to begin as soon after seven as possible. "Stay in the tea room and take your sixpennorths." Mr. Dowler's advice was after a regulation "that everyone admitted to the tea-rooms on dress nights shall pay *6d.* for tea." The M.C.'s visit to Mr. Pickwick was a real carrying out of the spirit of the regulations, in which it was requested that "all strangers will give the M.C. an opportunity of being introduced to them before they themselves are entitled to that attention and respect."

Nothing is more gratifying to the genuine Pickwickians than to find how all these old memories of the book are fondly cherished in the good city. All the Pickwickian localities are identified, and the inhabitants are eager in every way to maintain that Mr. Pickwick belongs to them, and had been with them. We should have had his room in the White Hart pointed out, and "slept in" by Americans and others, had it still been left to stand. Not long since, the writer went down to the good old city for the pleasant duty of "preaching Pickwick," as he had done in a good many places. There is an antique building or temple not far from where an old society of the place—the Bath Literary and Scientific Institute—holds its meetings, and here, to a crowded gathering under the presidency of Mr. Austen King, the subject was gone into. It was delightful for the Pickwickian stranger to meet so appreciative a response, and many curious details were mentioned. At the close—such is the force of the delusion—we were all discussing Mr. Pickwick and his movements here and there, with the same *conviction* as we would have had in the case of

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Miss Burney, or Mrs. Thrale or Dr. Johnson. The whole atmosphere was congenial, and there was an old-world, old-fashioned air over the rooms. It was delightful to be talking of Mr. Pickwick's Bath adventures in Bath.

Nor was there anything unreasonably fantastical in making such speculations all but realities. Bantam lived, as we know, in St. James's Square—that very effective enclosure, with its solemn house and rich deep greenery, that recall our own Fitzroy. No. 14 was his house, and this, it was ascertained, was the actual residence of the living M.C. How bold, therefore, of Boz to send up Sam to the very Square! Everyone, too, knew Mrs. Craddock's house in the Circus—at least it was one of two. It was No. 15 or 16, because at the time there were only a couple in the middle which were let in lodgings, the rest being private houses. This was fairly reasonable. But how accurate was Boz! No doubt he had some friends who were quartered in lodgings there.

I scarcely hoped to find the scene of the footmen's "swarry" tracked out, but so it was. On leaving Queen Square in company with Mr. Smauker to repair to the scene of the festivity, Sam and his friend set off walking "towards High Street," then "turned down a bye-street," and would "soon be there." This bye-street was one turning out of Queen Square at the corner next Bantam's house; and a few doors down we find a rather shabby-looking "public" with a swinging sign, on which is inscribed "The Beaufort Arms"—a two-storied, three-windowed house. This, in the book, is called a "greengrocer's shop," and is firmly believed to be the scene of "the Swarry" on the substantial ground that the Bath footmen used to assemble here regularly as at their club. The change from a public to a greengrocer's scarcely affects the point. The uniforms of these gentlemen's gentlemen were really splendid, as we learn from the text—rich plushes, velvets, gold lace, canes, &c. There is no exaggeration in this, for natives of Bath have assured me they can recall similar displays at the fashionable church—of Sundays—when these noble creatures, arrayed gorgeously as "generals," were ranged in lines outside "waiting their missuses," *pace* Mr. John Smauker. At the greengrocer's, where the Bath footmen had their "swarry," the favourite drink was "cold srub and water," or "gin and water sweet;" also "S'rub punch," a West Indian, drink, has now altogether disappeared. It sounds strange to learn that a fashionable footman should consult "a copper timepiece which dwelt at the bottom of a deep watch-pocket, and was raised to the surface by means of a black string with a copper key." A *copper* watch seems extraordinary, though we have now those of gun metal.

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The Royal Crescent, with its fine air and fine view, always strikes one with admiration as a unique and original monument: the size and proportions are so truly grand. The whole scene of Mr. Winkle's escapade here is extraordinarily vivid, and so protracted, while Mrs. Dowler was waiting in her sedan for the door to be opened, that it has the effect of imprinting the very air, look, and tone of the Royal Crescent on us. We seem to be waiting with her and the chair-man. It seems the most *natural* thing in the world. The houses correspond almost exactly with Phiz's drawing.

Pickwick, it has been often pointed out, is full of amusing "oversights," which are pardonable enough, and almost add to the "fun" of the piece. At the opening, Mr. Pickwick is described as carrying his portmanteau—in the picture it is a carpet-bag. The story opens in 1827, but at once Mr. Jingle begins to talk of being present at the late Revolution of 1830. The "George and Vulture" is placed in two different streets. Old Weller is called Samuel. During the scene at the Royal Crescent we are told that Mrs. Craddock threw up the drawing-room window "just as Mr. Winkle was rushing into the chair." She ran and called Mr. Dowler, who rushed in just as Mr. Pickwick threw up the other window, "when the first object that met the gaze of both was Mr. Winkle bolting into the sedan chair" into which he had bolted a minute before. The late Charles Dickens the younger, in the notes to his father's writings, affects to have discovered an oversight in the account of the scene in the Circus. It is described how he "took to his heels and tore *round* the Crescent, hotly pursued by Dowler and the coachman. He kept ahead; the door was open as he came *round* the second time, &c." Now, objects the son, the Crescent is only a half circle; there is no going round it, you must turn back when you come to the end. Boz must have been thinking of the Circus. Hardly—for he knew both well—and Circus and Crescent are things not to be confused. The phrase was a little loose, but, as the Circus was curved "round," is not inappropriate, and he meant that Winkle turned when he got to the end, and ran back.

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It must have been an awkward thing for Winkle to present himself once more at Mrs. Craddock's in the Crescent. How was the incident to be explained save either at his own expense or at that of Mr. Dowler? If Dowler were supposed to have gone in pursuit of him, then Mr. Winkle must have fled, and if he were supposed to have gone to seek a friend, then Dowler was rather compromised. No doubt both gentlemen agreed to support the one story that they had gone away for mutual satisfaction, and had made it up.

Then, we are told, if it were theatre night perhaps the visitors met at the theatre. Did Mr. Pickwick ever go? This is an open question. Is the chronicler here a little obscure, as he is speaking of "the gentlemen" *en bloc*? Perhaps he did, perhaps he did'nt, as Boz might say. On his visit to Rochester, it does not appear that he went to see his "picked-up" friend, Jingle, perform. The Bath Theatre is in the Saw Close, next door to Beau Nash's picturesque old house. The old grey front, with its blackened mouldings and sunk windows, is still there; but a deep vestibule, or entrance, with offices has been built out in front, which, as it were, thrusts the old wall back—an uncongenial mixture. Within, the house has been reconstructed, as it is called, so that Mr. Palmer or Dimond, or any of the old Bath lights, to say nothing of Mr. and Mrs. Siddons, would not recognise it. Attending it one night, I could not but recall the old Bath stories, when this modest little house supplied the London houses regularly with the best talent, and "From the

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III.—Boz and Bath

After his brilliant, genial view of the old watering-place, it is a surprise to find Boz speaking of it with a certain acerbity and even disgust. Over thirty years later, in 1869, he was there, and wrote to Forster: "The place looks to me like a cemetery which the dead have succeeded in rising and taking. Having built streets of their old gravestones, they wander about scantily, trying to look alive—a dead failure." And yet, what ghostly recollections must have come back on him as he walked those streets, or as he passed by into Walcot, the Saracen's Head, where he had put up in those old days, full of brightness, ardour, and enthusiasm; but not yet the famous Boz! Bath folk set down this jaundiced view of their town to a sort of pique at the comparative failure of the Guild dramatic performance at the Old Assembly Rooms, where, owing to the faulty arrangement of the stage, hardly a word could be heard, to the dissatisfaction of the audience. The stage, it seems, was put too far behind the proscenium, "owing to the headstrong perversity of Dickens, who never forgave the Bath people." Charles Knight, it was said, remonstrated, but in vain. Boz, however, was not a man to indulge in such feelings. In "Bleak House" he calls it "dreary."

There had been, however, a previous visit to Bath, in company with Maclise and Forster, to see Landor, who was then living at No. 35 St. James's Square—a house become memorable because it was there that the image of his "Little Nell" first suggested itself. The enthusiastic Landor used, in his "tumultuous" fashion, to proclaim that he would set fire to the house and burn it to the ground to prevent its being profaned by less sacred associations. He had done things even more extravagant than this, and would take boisterous roars of laughter as his odd compliment was discussed.

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The minuteness of his record of the gaieties shows how amused and interested Boz was in all that he saw. Nothing escaped him of the routine, day, hour, and place; all is given, even the different rooms at the Assembly House. "In the ball-room, the long card-room, the octagon card-room, the staircases, the passages, the hum of many voices and the sound of many feet were perfectly bewildering; dresses rustled, feathers waved, lights shone, and jewels sparkled. There was the music, not of the quadrille band, for it had not yet commenced," &c. Here Bantam, M.C., arrived at precisely twenty minutes before eight, "to receive the company." And such company! "Brilliant eyes, lighted up with pleasurable expectation, gleamed from every side, and, look where you would, some exquisite form glided gracefully through the throng, and was no sooner lost than it was replaced by another as dainty and bewitching"; the warmth of which description showing how delighted was the young man with all he saw. But how did he secure admission? For it was a highly fashionable company; there were vouchers and tickets to be secured. But these were slight difficulties for our brilliant "pushful" young man. He could make his way, and his mission found him interest. He certainly saw as much of Bath as anyone could in the time. Yet, gay and sprightly as was his account of Bath, there may have been a reason why Boz may have not recalled the place with pleasurable feelings. It will be recollected that, after giving a few lines to the account of Mr. Pickwick and friends being set down at the White Hart, he carries them off at once to lodgings in the Crescent. That first-class hotel was, alas! not open to the poor, over-worked reporter; and he could tell of nothing that went on within its portals. Hotel life on a handsome scale was not for *him*, and he was obliged to put up at far humbler quarters, a sort of common inn.

There is nothing more quaint or interesting than this genuine antique—the Saracen's Head in Walcot. It may pair off with the old White Horse in Canongate, where "Great Sam" put up for a night. It is surely the most effective of all the old inns one could see. It has two faces, and looks into two different streets, with its double gables, and date (1713) inscribed on a tablet outside. It is a yellow, well-worn little building. And you enter through darkened tunnels, as it were, cut through the house, coming into a strange yard of evident antiquity, with a steep, ladder-like flight of stone steps that leads up to a window much like the old Canongate houses. Here, then, it was that Boz put up, and here are preserved traditions and relics of his stay. One of the tales is that, after some exuberant night *in the election time*, he would get his candle and, having to cross the court, would have it blown out half a dozen times, when he would go back patiently to relight it. They show his chair, and a jug out of which he drank, but one has not much faith in these chairs and jugs; they always seem to be supplied to demand, and must be found to gratify the pilgrims.

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One of the examination queries which might have found a place in Mr. Calverley's paper of questions is this: "When did Mr. Pickwick sit down *to make entries in his journal*, and spend half an hour in so doing?" At Bath on the night of Mr. Winkle's race round the Crescent. What was this journal? Or why did he keep it? Or why are so few allusions made to it? Mr. Snodgrass was the appointed historiographer of the party, and his "notes" are often spoken of and appealed to as the basis of the chronicle. But half an hour, as I say, was the time the great man seems to have allotted to his posting up the day's register: "Mr. Pickwick shut up the book, wiped his pen *on the bottom of the inside of his coat-tail*, and opened the drawer of the inkstand to put it carefully away." How particular—how real all this is! This it is that gives the *living* force to the book, and a persuasion—irresistible almost—that it is all about *some living person*. I have often wondered how it is that this book of Boz's has such an astounding power of development, such a fertility in engendering other books, and what is the secret of it. Scott's astonishing Waverley series, Thackeray's "Vanity Fair," Boz's own "Nicholas Nickleby," "Oliver Twist," in fact, not one of the whole series save "the immortal 'Pickwick'" has produced anything in the way of books or commentaries. I believe it is really owing to this. Boz was a great admirer of Boswell's equally

immortal book. I have heard him speak of it. He attempted parodies of it even. He knew all the turns, the Johnsonian twists, "Why, sirs," &c., and used them in his letters. He was permeated with the Johnsonian ether; that detail, that description of trifling things which was in Boswell, attracted him, and he felt it; and the fact remains that *Pickwick* is written on *the principles*—no copy—of the great biography, and that Boz applied to a mere fictional story what was related in the account of a living man. And it is really curious that Boswell's "Life of Johnson" should be the only other book that tempts people to the same rage for commentary, illustrations, and speculations. These are of exactly the same character in both books.

The MS. that Mr. Pickwick so oddly found in the drawer of his inkstand at Mrs. Craddock's, Royal Crescent, Bath, offered another instance of Boz's ingenious methods of introducing episodic tales into his narrative. He was often hard put to it to find an occasion: they were highly useful to fill a space when he was pressed for matter. He had the strongest *penchant* for this sort of thing, and it clung to him through his life. Those in "*Pickwick*" are exceedingly good, full of spirit and "go," save one, the "Martha Lobbs" story, which is a poorish thing. So good are the others, they have been taken out and published separately. They were no doubt written for magazines, and were lying by him, but his Bath story—"The True Legend of Prince Bladud"—was written specially. It is quite in the vein of Elia's Roast Pig story, and very gaily told. He had probably been reading some local guide-book, with the mythical account of Prince Bladud, and this suggested to him his own humorous version. At the close, he sets Mr. Pickwick a-yawning several times, who, when he had arrived at the end of this little manuscript—which certainly could not have been compressed into "a couple of sheets of writing-paper," but would have covered at least ten pages—replaced it in the drawer, and "then, with a *countenance of the utmost weariness*, lighted his chamber candle and went upstairs to bed." And here, by the way, is one of the amusing oversights which give such a piquancy to "*Pickwick*." Before he began to read his paper, we are carefully told that Mr. Pickwick "unfolded it, lighted his bedroom candle that it might burn up to the time he had finished." It was Mr. C. Kent who pointed this out to him, when Boz seized the volume and humorously made as though he would hurl it at his friend.

Anyone interested in Bath must of necessity be interested in Bristol, to which, as all know, Mr. Winkle fled after the unhappy business in the Circus. He found a coach at the Royal Hotel—which no longer exists—a vehicle which, we are told, went the whole distance "twice a day and more" with a single pair of horses. There he put up at the Bush, where Mr. Pickwick was to follow him presently. The Bush—a genuine *Pickwick* inn—where Mr. Pickwick first heard the news of the action that was to be brought against him, stood in Corn Street, near to the Guildhall, the most busy street in Bristol; but it was taken down in 1864, and the present Wiltshire Bank erected on the site. Mr. Pickwick broke off his stay at Bath somewhat too abruptly; he left it and all its festivities on this sudden chase after Winkle. But he may have had a reason. Nothing is more wonderful than Boz's propriety in dealing with his incidents, a propriety that is really instinctive. Everything falls out in the correct, natural way. For instance, Mr. Pickwick having received such a shock at the Bush—the announcement of the Bardell action—was scarcely in heart to resume his jollity and gaieties at Bath. We might naturally expect a resumption of the frolics there. He accordingly returned there; but we are told curtly, "The remainder of the period which Mr. Pickwick had assigned as the duration of his stay at Bath passed over without an occurrence of anything material. Trinity term commenced on the expiration of the first week. Mr. Pickwick and his friends returned to London; and the former gentleman, attended of course by Sam, straightway repaired to his old quarters at the George and Vulture."

And now in these simple sentences have we not the secret of the great attraction of the book? Who would not suppose that this was a passage from a biography of some one that had lived? How carefully *minute* and yet how naturally the time is accounted for—"passed over without the occurrence of anything material." It is impossible to resist this air of *vraisemblance*.

CHAPTER III. OLD ROCHESTER

I.—Jingle and the Theatre

The little Theatre here must be interesting to us from the fact of Jingle's having been engaged to play there with the officers of the 52nd Regiment on the night of May 15th, 1827. Jingle was described as "a strolling actor," and belonged to the "Kent circuit," that is, to the towns of Canterbury, Rochester, Maidstone, &c. To this circuit also belonged "Dismal Jemmy," who was "no actor," yet did the "heavy business." It does not appear that he, also, was engaged for the officers' performance. We often wonder whether Jingle *did* perform on the night in question; or did Dr. Payne and Lieutenant Tappleton tell the story of his behaviour to their brethren: of his passing himself off as a gentleman, his wearing another gentleman's clothes, and his insults to Dr. Slammer. Tappleton scornfully recommended Mr. Pickwick to be more nice in the selection of his companions. No doubt Jingle was suggested to the officers by the manager: "knew a really smart chap who will just do for the part." On the whole, I think they must have had his services, as it was too late to get a substitute. Jingle, as we know, was played successfully by Sir Henry Irving in the early 'seventies, *tempore* Bateman. His extraordinary likeness to the Phiz portrait struck every one, and it was marked, not only in face, but in figure, manner, &c. The adaptation of "*Pickwick*," however, was very roughly done by the late James Albery, who merely *tacked*

together the Jingle scenes. Those, where there is much genial comedy, such as the Ball scene at Rochester, were left out. It is likely that the boy, Boz, noticed Dismal Jemmy among the strollers, and possibly may have seen a Jingle himself. But the characters of Jingle and his confederate, Job, were certainly suggested by Robert Macaire and Jacques Strop, which, a little before the appearance of Pickwick, were being played in London—in "*L'Auberge des Adrets*."

Mr. Pickwick had discovered in the morning that Jingle was "connected with the Theatre in that place, *though he is not desirous to have it generally known.*"

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Now considering generally the different "games" he was pursuing, his passing himself off as an officer, an amateur of cricket, &c., it was not altogether desirable to have his profession known. Knowing also that Mr. Pickwick intended staying at Rochester, and that the gay Tupman or Snodgrass would find out his engagement and witness his performance, he likely enough confided his secret to Mr. Pickwick. "Dismal Jemmy," the odd being who appears at Rochester for a short time, had promised Mr. Pickwick a tale which he never gave him. At the end of the story, *Boz*, having forgotten the engagement, is driven to supply a far-fetched reason. He was Job's brother, and went to America "in consequence of being too much sought after here." It will be recollected he was of a depressed and gloomy cast, and on the Bridge at Rochester talked of suicide. He also told the dismal "stroller's tale." Now, it is plain that Boz drew him as a genuine character, and his behaviour to the stroller was of a charitable kind. Boz, in fact, meant him to be a suitable person to relate so dismal an incident. However, all this was forgotten or put aside at the end, and having become Job's brother, he had to be in keeping. The reformed Jingle declared he was "merely acting—clever rascal—hoaxing fellow." His brother Job added that he himself was the serious one, "while Jemmy never was." Mr. Pickwick then presumed that his talk of suicide was all flam, and that his dismals were all assumed. "He could assume anything," said Job. Boz, too, forgot that his name was James Hutley, whereas the brothers' was Trotter—though this may have been an assumed one.

The condition of the Rochester stage must have been rather low, when we find two such persons as Jingle and Dismal Jemmy members of the corps. Jingle's jerky system of elocution would seem a complete disqualification. From sheer habit, it would have been impossible for him to say his lines in any other fashion—which in all the round of light "touch and go" comedy, would have been a drawback.

The little Theatre is at the farther end of the town, where the road turns off to the fields, a low, unpretending building with a small portico. I recall it in the old days, on a walk from Gads Hill, when I paused to examine the bills of the benefit of a certain theatrical family of the Crummles sort—father, mother, sons, and daughters, who supplied everything. The head founded his claims to support on being a fellow townsman, winding up with Goldsmith's lines:

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And as the hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the spot from whence at first it flew;
I still had hopes, my lengthened wanderings past,
Here to return, and die at home at last.

Boz was hugely amused when I rehearsed this to him at lunch.

He himself, on his later visit, noted the strange encroachments that were being made on the Theatre. A wine merchant had begun on the cellars, and was gradually squeezing himself into the box-office, and would no doubt go on till he secured the auditorium, the lobbies, etc. When I last passed by that way, it had become the Conservative Club, or some such institution.

The wonderful picture, given in "*Nickleby*," of the Portsmouth playhouse, with all its characters and accessories and inner life, shows the most intimate familiarity with all the ways and fashions of the old Provincial Theatre. Every touch—Crummles, Folair, Lenville, Snivelicci—proves clearly that he knew perfectly the life behind the scenes, and that he wrote of it *con amore*. There was a firm belief at the Theatre Royal, Portsmouth, that all the performers in "*Nickleby*" were personal sketches of this corps. One actor told my friend, Mr. Walter Pollock, that they could even identify Folair, Lenville & Co., and that there was a playbill still extant in which either the names or the pieces corresponded. But in this theory, however, little faith can be placed; for at the time the family was at Portsmouth, Dickens was but a child not more than ten or twelve years old, and not likely, therefore, to be taken behind the scenes, or to pick up or observe much. It is certain that the whole description of the Theatre and its company, with the minute and intimate details of stage life, was drawn from this little house at Rochester. But we can go beyond mere speculation.

In one of his retrospections, Boz tells us of a visit he paid to Rochester in the fifties, "scenes among which my *early days* were past." The town he calls Dullborough, which is a little hard on the place. He went to look at the old theatre, and reveals to us how it brought back to him a number of reminiscences, which shows that he was much associated with stage matters when a youth, for he describes Richard III. and Macbeth all "cast" and mounted exactly as Mr. Crummles would have mounted them. "There was Richard in a very uncomfortable wig, and sleeping in war time on a sofa that was much too short for him, and his conscience fearfully troubled his boots." There was the lovely young woman, "who went out gleaning, in a narrow, white muslin apron, with five beautiful bars of five different colours across it. The witches bore an awful resemblance to the Thanes and other inhabitants of Scotland; while the good King Duncan couldn't rest in his grave, but was constantly coming out of it and calling himself somebody else." These are all

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Crummles touches, only he refrained from going again over the old ground. But one point further favours the theory—he recalls his alarm when Richard in his terrific combat was “backing up against the stage box.” He was in the stage box then, and therefore a privileged person at the theatre. His uncle, “Dr. Slammer,” no doubt was thus complimented as being “in Her Majesty’s service.” “Of course,” he goes on, “the town had shrunk fearfully since I was a child there.”

The description of the outlaw drama which Nicholas Nickleby saw on the night of his arrival is exactly in the key of the account of the performance of “Richard III.” just given: also the account of the London manager, who was in the boxes; still more so when Mr. Crummles and all the company *died at him*. And as in Nickleby we have “the Comic Countryman” who so inopportunately caught a bluebottle when Mrs. Crummles was making her great point for the London Manager: so in the account of Dullborough we are told of “the *Funny* Countryman” who sustained the comic, bucolic parts. This alone would show that the Rochester and Portsmouth Theatres were the same, while the beautiful young lady in the white apron performed the same sort of characters that Miss Bravassa, or Miss Snivelicci did.

And in this connection may be supplied a further speculation which is interesting. In *Boz’s* earlier works it is plain that he relies for his most striking effects of character on his own recollections and personal observations. They might be considered passages from his autobiography. I have thought that much in “Nickleby” of Nicholas’s career and Nicholas’s own character was drawn from himself. Nicholas suggests Boz in appearance, in his spirit and vehemence, and in some of his adventures. Some years ago a remarkable letter appeared in the papers, in which Dickens, then a mere youth, made an application to one of the managers, Mr. Webster I think, for a situation in his theatre. He wanted to go on the stage. Was not this like Nicholas? This desire was surely founded on intimate acquaintance with the boards and amateur experience.

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“I had entertained the impression,” he goes on, “that the High Street was as wide as Regent Street—I found it little better than a lane. There was a public clock in it which I had supposed to be the finest clock in the world, whereas it now turned out to be *as inexpressive, moon-faced and weak* a clock as ever I saw.” The Town Hall was a “mean little brick heap, like a demented chapel.”

II.—The Bull

Jingle, it will be recollected, on the party arriving at the Bull, gave that Inn the highest praise, recommending them to stay there—“*good house—nice beds—*” a testimonial that used to be displayed in gold letters at the door, but which, I have seen it stated, has been removed. I have also read the same testimonial in the guides and advertisements. Jingle warned them against another Inn hard by,—“Wright’s—next house—*dear—very dear—half-a-crown* if you look at the waiter, making a charge for dinner, all the same, if you dined out”; a practice, however, not altogether unknown to modern Hotels. It was bold in Boz, thus to publicly disparage Hotels that he did not approve. “Wright’s” could not have relished so public an allusion. What or where was Wright’s—“next house?” There is now—in the same High Street—“The King’s Head,” described as “Family and Commercial, one of the oldest-established in the Kingdom, close to the Cathedral and Castle—home comforts.” This being its position—the Castle on one side, the Cathedral on the other—situated exactly as the Bull was—and therefore “next house,” accurately described its position. Being “one of the oldest-established,” it must have been there at the time of the Pickwickian visit.

At the Bull, they show you “Mr. Pickwick’s room”—as well as Tupman’s and Winkle’s—Boz’s very particular description enables this to be done. Mr. Pickwick’s was, of course, to the front—when, roused by the Boots, he gave the direction of his followers’ bed-room, “next room but two on the right hand.” Winkle’s room was inside Tupman’s—so we are shown a room in the front with another inside of it—and the *third* on the left will, of course, be Mr. Pickwick’s, Q.E.D. The waiters know all these points, and prove them to the bewildered visitors. “You see, sir, there is the very room *where the clothes were stolen.*”

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III.—Jingle’s Love Affairs

Jingle’s elopement with the spinster aunt was ingeniously contrived, but it seemed rather speculative and rash—she might not have had a penny. His only ground for jumping to the conclusion that she *had* a fortune was that, on his saying that “Tupman only wants your money”; “The wretch!” she exclaimed—“Mr. Jingle’s doubts were resolved—she *had* money.” More wonderful, too, were the very easy terms on which he was “bought off”—a hundred and twenty pounds. Her fortune might be estimated at some thousands. He was really master of the situation. The lady was of mature age—her own mistress, Wardle and his attorney could do nothing to stop the business. He certainly might have held out for four or five hundred pounds. Perker’s diplomacy was wretched, and his plea about the age of the old lady mere burlesque. “You are right, my dear sir—she is rather old. The founder of the family came into Kent when Julius Cæsar invaded Britain; only one member of it since who hasn’t lived to eighty-five, and *he* was beheaded by one of the Henrys. The old lady is not seventy-three now, my dear sir.” Which seems like buffooning in a man of business.

Jingle’s course, after he left Rochester, can be traced very readily. With plenty of money in his pocket, he found his way to Ipswich (or Eatanswill), assuming the name of Captain FitzMarshall,

and taking with him, as his confederate, Job Hutley. There he got introduced to Nupkins, the Mayor, who presided at the election, and who had made his money in “the nail and sarsepan business”—that is, as an ironmonger. The few words this functionary uttered on the hustings are of the same pompous character as his later magisterial deliverances.

“Whiffin, *proclaim* silence,’ said the Mayor, with air of *pomp*, &c., where this superciliousness is emphasised. ‘Gentlemen,’ he went on, ‘brother electors of the Borough of Eatanswill, we are met here to-day for the purpose of choosing a representative in the room of our late’—but the noise and interruptions prevented the rest of the speech being heard. Notwithstanding, he characteristically ‘thanked the meeting for the patient attention with which they had heard him throughout,’ a declaration that excited roars of laughter, lasting for a quarter of an hour.”

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This is exactly what one might expect from the self-sufficient Nupkins, who was evidently understood and laughed at by his fellow townsmen. Later, when the confusion and “row” grew fast and furious, our Mayor “issued imperative orders to twelve constables to seize the ringleaders, who might amount in number to two hundred and fifty or thereabouts.” We can recall Nupkins’ dealing with the schoolboys in exactly the same sapient spirit.

Into the family of this worthy Jingle insinuated himself. But would he not be recognised by Mr. Pickwick and his friends? Yes; but we find that he took up his quarters at Bury St. Edmunds, conveniently near, and, assuming that the Pickwickians had departed after the election, thought he might safely exhibit himself at Mrs. Leo Hunter’s party, whence he was tracked back to Bury by Mr. Pickwick. It is certainly fresh evidence of the identity of Eatanswill with Ipswich that Jingle should have appeared in both places as “Captain FitzMarshall.” Once established in the Mayor’s family, the insinuating Jingle devoted himself to the capture of the haughty and ill-natured Henrietta Nupkins, making his way into her good graces, and “cutting out” Sidney Porkenham, her old-established admirer. This was Jingle’s second attempt at matrimony which failed like the first. It may be said, after all, that his behaviour was not so heinous. He was a fortune hunting adventurer—such was his role—which was common enough in those times. The unlucky Leo Hunter meeting, however, spoiled all.

After the trick on Mr. Pickwick at the school, and which was a fair retort, the pair left Bury that very night.

By an odd coincidence, they were taken up the next day by old Weller at Chelmsford—a stage or two from London. He was driving the Ipswich coach, and brought them to that town. It is clear, therefore, that they took this round from Bury in dread of pursuit, and with a view to throw Mr. Pickwick off the scent. The latter gentleman never dreamed that they were so near him, dismissed the whole matter, and returned to town to arrange about his action. By a happy chance he met old Weller, and, within a few days, set off for Ipswich and unmasked Captain FitzMarshall in Nupkins’ own house. After this failure, his course was downward, and we next meet him in the Fleet.

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Job’s story was that Jingle dragged him away in a post-chaise and persuaded the girl at the boarding-school to tell Mr. Pickwick that she knew nothing of the matter. He had also bribed the schoolmistress to tell the same story. He had then deserted her for a better speculation, to wit, Miss Nupkins, to whom he had hurried back.

But for Mr. Pickwick’s unfortunate adventure at the “White Horse,” Jingle would likely enough have captured Henrietta Nupkins. When Sam so opportunely met Job in the Inn yard at Ipswich, he, instead of punishing him as he had so often threatened to do, merely bid him be at the Inn at eight o’clock. Why did he not bring him straight to Mr. Pickwick who was upstairs? Instead, he went up himself, told his master it was “all in trainin’,” and “detailed the plan of action.” Mr. Pickwick was curious, but Sam only said “all in good time.” We never learn what the plan of action was to be. Indeed, what could the pair do to Jingle?

IV.—The Garrison

The military recollections of Rochester and Chatham are amusingly confused, or rather, in defiance of all known regulations. Thus, at the Ball, we find Colonel Bulder as “head of the garrison”—one would think at so important a quarter, where there was a large garrison, a General at least would be in command. Then we may ask the question, why was not Dr. Slammer in uniform—always required in presence of a commander? It was wonderfully bold, too, on Boz’s part to give the *numbers* of the regiments. Hon. Wilmot Snipe of the 97th, who was in full uniform, which Mr. Tupman took for “a fancy dress.” It was, of course, a Highland one. We learn, too, that the other regiment was the 43rd, to which Dr. Payne belonged, and that the 52nd was getting up plays at the local theatre. And why did Boz select these particular numbers?

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The Chatham garrison consisted of “half-a-dozen regiments,” with which a fair display at a Review could be made on “The Lines.” Temporary fortifications had been erected, the citadel was to be attacked and taken—Fort Pitt we may assume—and a mine was to be sprung. Servants were keeping places for the ladies “on the Batteries”—an alarming position it would seem. The Sergeants were running “with vellum books” under their arms, usually left at home on Review-day. The Officers were “running backwards and forwards,” while Colonel Bulder was seen “galloping” (with two p’s) at large, “prancing and curvetting,” that is, making his steed curvet. The operations were, however, not under his command, but directed by the “Commander-in-Chief,” not, of course, of the Army, but, we may presume, the General of the district. His

behaviour was the most extraordinary of all, for, instead of cultivating a solemn reserve and quietude, and standing still, surrounded by his staff, he was seen “backing his horse *among the people*,” and heard shouting “till he was hoarse.” The soldiers wore the old, stiff leather stock, choking them, which was heard of so much in Crimean days. They were also arrayed in *white* trowsers. Boz is here wonderfully accurate, for these garments were always worn after May came round, and this was May.

The catastrophe to the Pickwickians from their having got between the two lines of soldiers, is somewhat perplexing. One line was advancing to the attack, the other firmly awaiting it. They were shouted at to get out of the way. Suddenly the half-dozen regiments had overthrown them. Mr. Pickwick was upset. Winkle received a bloody nose, after performing a compulsory *somerset*; then, at the same moment—wonder of wonders—we were told that the regiments were “half-a-thousand yards off,”—that is about a third of a mile away—all in a second! It is hard to understand why they were so maltreated. The soldiers would, of course, never have met; and in our own time the amenities of a Review and the police would have secured stray civilians from such rough treatment. We do not know whether the evolutions described were accurate—such as “one rank firing over the heads of another and then running away.”

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It was to this exciting spectacle that old Wardle brought a party in that wonderful Barouche of his—which is really phenomenal for its accommodation. When Mr. Pickwick recovered his hat, he found these persons in the carriage:—1, Wardle; 2, a daughter; 3, a second ditto; 4, a sister; 5, Trundle; 6, Tupman; 7, Fat Boy, on the box. The Pickwickians were actually summoned by the hearty Wardle to join. “Room *for you all*—two inside and one on the ox,” where there was one already. All accepted the invitation, making *ten* persons in all who were accommodated in the Barouche! But this does not exhaust its wonders. When lunch time came round, with plates, dishes, bottles, eight persons were squeezed together inside, so no wonder Wardle said, “We must sit close.” How it was done is not to be conceived—two sitting together is the usual allowance for a modern Barouche, but four on one side!—and yet we are told, when the horses were put to, the Barouche “rattled off.”

The boy Dickens had carefully noted the behaviour of the garrison, and described them as “staggering about the streets of Chatham dead drunk,” more especially when we remember that the “following them about, and joking with them, affords a *cheap and innocent amusement for the boy population*—” (*vide Mr. Pickwick’s notes*). The boy, no doubt, often witnessed the incident of the private, “drawing his bayonet, and stabbing the barmaid who had refused to draw him more liquor.” It is characteristic, by the way, of the police in a garrison town, for this fellow appears to have been at large on the next day, as he went down to the Tavern and tried to “square it” with the girl.

And now, is not this a testimony to this strange book, that we should be thus introduced to old Rochester and its doings, and out of the scant materials furnished, can really reconstruct the time and the place, and find out, as if by enquiries, all about Jingle and his connections and the theatre—such is the fruitfulness of the text?

CHAPTER IV. BOZ AND BLACKING.

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One of the remarkable things associated with “Pickwick” is its autobiographical character, as it might be termed, and the amount of the author’s personal experience which is found in passages. Such are his sketches of Rochester and Chatham life during his boyhood, his recollections of Grimaldi’s dissolute son, his own poignant sorrow on the death of Mary Hogarth, and the painful memories of his boyish apprenticeship to an uncongenial trade more than hinted at. The election matters were also particular memories of his own, so was the scene of the ghostly mail coaches. Then there was the hideous recollection of the life in a debtors’ prison, of which he had such sad personal experience, with much more. He recalled the time when he had a miserable lodging in Lant Street, Borough, and Lant Street was for him always a fixed point in his memory, and grew in size and importance. And when he described some wretched creature hiding himself in London purlieus, he chose some miserable place like College-street in Camden Town, whither his own family had retired.

All these things supply a singular vitality and realism, and also a distinct interest for those who are “in the know,” for Boz himself at the time was a dramatic and interesting figure, and this story of his struggle out of a state of squalid misery is truly pathetic.

Readers of Forster’s interesting “Life” will recall the dismal passage in the account given by Dickens to his friend, and his agonising experience when he was employed at the blacking factory. Many at the time thought that this painful episode might have been spared the reader, but the uncompromising biographer would not sacrifice it. On the whole, he was right, as the trial had an important influence on the writer’s character. It will be recollected that he was employed at a place set up in Chandos Street, just out of the Strand, by one of the firm of Warrens, and his duties seemed to consist in pasting the labels on the bottles. Many will still recall the keen rivalry that existed between the famous firms, Warren and Day and Martin, which brought much amusement to the public from the arts of “bold advertisement” with which the war was waged. There were ingenious “Crambos,” such as a cat gazing with well-assumed surprise

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at her face reflected in one of Day and Martin's well-polished shoes. These things made a deep impression on the boy, who saw their grotesque side. They were oddly bound up with his early impressions and sorrows.

Hence, we find in the course of "Pickwick," a few allusions to these blacking rivals and their ways, which might seem mysterious and uncalled for to those not in the secret, but which for himself had the highest significance. When Sam is first introduced at the "White Hart," he is in the very act of cleaning boots, and we have almost an essay on the various species of boots and polishing. We are told minutely that he was engaged in "brushing the dirt off a pair of boots . . . " There were two rows before him, one cleaned, the other dirty. "There were *eleven* pair, and one shoe, as belongs to No. 6 with the wooden leg." "The eleven boots is to be called at half-past eight (an odd consensus in eleven persons), and the shoe at nine." He set to work upon a top-boot.

The landlady then made her appearance in the opposite gallery and flung down a pair of shoes to be cleaned for No. 5, first floor. There is a dramatic action in these calls from the different galleries, which shows that Boz had the stage before him. Sam then chalked the number on the sole. When he found that it was for people of consequence in a private room that the articles were required, he set to work with a will and produced a polish "that would have struck envy to the soul of *the amiable Mr. Warren, for they used Day and Martin's at the 'White Hart.'*" Here will be noted the compliment to his old employer, though it was of a conventional sort.

With this very number "Pickwick" was destined to leap into its amazing popularity, and the advertisement must have been a valuable one. There may have been another reason, for there was to be a "Pickwick advertiser," which was patronised by the firms, and it may have been stipulated as a condition that the author was to give them this "lift." Another patron was Rowland, whose real name was Rouland, of "Maccassar oil" and "Kalydor" celebrity. We have a relic of one of these forgotten nostrums in the familiar "Anti-maccassar" known to every good housewife. To Rowland or Rouland he later made an allusion in the text.

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This method of calling attention to the merits of wares was a French one—a sort of *réclame* introduced by Villemessant in his journal *La Sylphide*. Thus "Pickwick" was quite "up-to-date." After Jingle had gone off to Doctors Commons for his license, Sam renewed his efforts, "burnishing a pair of *painted tops*, worn by a farmer." Then, interrogated by Perker, he described the tenants of the inn by their boots—a pair of "Hessians" in 13, two pair of "halves," with six "tops."

In chapter xxxiv. we have another allusion to blacking. "No man," said Sam, "ever talked in poetry 'cept a beadle on Boxin' Day, *or Warren's blackin'.*" This referred to the rhymes—or verses—with which the firm filled the newspapers in praise of their article. It will be remembered that Mrs. Jarley, in the "Old Curiosity Shop," employed "a poet" to celebrate her waxworks in similar fashion, and who was content with a few shillings for each effort. We may be certain that this was a boyish recollection, and that he had seen this blacking "poet" making his calls in Chandos Street or haggling for his miserable wage. The beadle, also alluded to, was a prominent figure with Boz; but he has disappeared, with his huge cocked hat, scarlet waistcoat, and uniform. He is to be seen in Wilkie's brilliant picture in the National Gallery. It is evident from the passage that he came round on Boxing Day for his *douceur*, reminding his patrons, as the dustmen now do sometimes, by a copy of verses. Sam adds that no one did this sort of thing except the persons mentioned—"and *Rowland's oil*, or some of them low fellows." The perfumer could only have been half pleased with this uncomplimentary form. Still, such as it was, it *was* an advertisement. Boz also makes several allusions to the inventor, Bramah, mentioning Bramah locks and keys with plugs, &c. Old Weller talks of being locked up "in a fireproof chest with a patent *Bramin.*" Bramah's hydraulic press was a scientific novelty then, as were also his "patent safes." Bramah appears to have advertised in "Pickwick." These *réclames* are of a rather elaborate kind, as when Lowten arrived at the office (lii), we are told, he drew "a Bramah key from his pocket, with a small plug therein to keep the dust out." Then "comforting himself with this reflection, Mr. Lowten extricated the plug from the door key; having opened the door, re-plugged and re-pocketed his Bramah."

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NOTE.—The horrors of the Blacking episode were ever present to Dickens' recollection, and, as if under a sort of fascination, he later seemed almost impelled to refer to them. Thus, in *Copperfield*, we find him describing, but under a disguise, the same incident. As when he was sent to Murdstone and Grimby's warehouse, it was still the washing and labelling of bottles—"not *of blacking*," but of wines and spirits. "When the empty bottles ran short, there were labels to be pasted on the full ones, or corks to be fitted to them, &c." But there is also another allusion to the same, but curiously veiled, when he speaks of the carman, Tipp, who "wore a red jacket." Now, to this day Day and Martin's carmen wear red jackets, and Warren's men probably did so; but, at all events, it is clearly an allusion to the costume of the blacking drivers. There are allusions to blacking in *Little Dorrit* and *Bleak House*.

CHAPTER V. SINGLE SPEECH TRUNDLE

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This gentleman, as we know, was the affianced husband of Isabella Wardle, and to the scenes of

their marriage, the festivities, &c., we owe some pleasing incidents. Trundle was a good specimen of the *cypher* or nullity; naturally, he is a figure at Manor Farm, but does nothing, and practically says nothing. He was clearly a neighbouring squire of limited ideas, or plain country gentlemen, that could do no more than love his Isabella. Yet, while Boz describes the “affairs” of Arabella and Winkle, of Emily and Snodgrass, he wholly passes by Trundle and his *inamorata*. We can see what manner of man Trundle was, as he is shown seated in the barouche, at the review, between the two sisters, each with long ringlets and parasols. He is a good-looking young man, with mutton-chop whiskers and black hair, on which his hat is set jauntily. He is described as “a young gentleman apparently enamoured of one of the young ladies in scarfs and pattens.” Wardle introduced him in a rather patronising way. “This is my friend, Mr. Trundle.” When the firing began, there was much agitation among the young ladies, screaming, &c., so that the gentlemen had to support them: Mr. Trundle “was actually obliged to hold one of them up.” But after the lunch was unpacked, the wine uncorked, &c., there came a remarkable development—Trundle actually spoke, made the one single remark that is recorded of him in the whole chronicle! Never before or after did he say a word. He was, in fact, “single speech Trundle.” And what were these words: “Will you permit me to have the pleasure, Sir?” said Mr. Trundle to Mr. Winkle; a proposal to “take wine with him,” as it is called, Winkle had a bottle all to himself on the box seat, which, no doubt, attracted the reticent Trundle. The two gentlemen not only took wine together, but had “a glass round, ladies and all.” But we should note that Trundle phrase, the almost too humble form: “Will you permit me the pleasure, Sir.” It looks as though Trundle were “an ass,” as it is called. The fact remains, however, that Trundle’s single speech was: “Will you permit me to have the pleasure, Sir?”

After a few days’ interval, when Mr. Pickwick and party found their way to Manor Farm, there were games *galore*, and at the “round one,” Isabella and Trundle, we are told, “went partners,” so all was going on well. The Squire had been nearly brought up to the point. It is painful to come to the conclusion, but Isabella’s admirer, though a country gentlemen, was nothing of a sportsman, and rather a poor creature. When Mr. Pickwick and his followers were up early and out at the rook shooting, we find no Trundle. He was lying a-bed, no doubt. Stranger still, when the whole party went in for a day to Muggleton for the cricket match, Trundle was the only one who stayed behind. He remained with the ladies, for a purpose, no doubt; still, ladies don’t like this sort of thing. The evening came. “Isabella and Emily strolled out with Mr. Trundle.” I have an idea that on this very day matters came to a crisis in that quarter. Everything favoured—all the men were away—he may have seized the opportunity to “propose.” At all events, we are significantly told that at the supper “Isabella Wardle devoted herself *exclusively* to Mr. Trundle.” Pointed enough, surely. We may be fortified in this view by finding that on the return of the party, all dead drunk, at one in the morning, on Trundle was specially cast the degrading menial duty of carrying Wardle to bed—his future father-in-law.

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Did Boz dislike this man all this while, or did he feel that he could do nothing with him in the story? It is certain, however, that in the talks at Bury over the Bardell action, the Boarding School adventure, &c., we never hear the sound of Trundle’s voice. He is effaced. He makes no remark on anything.

One of Boz’s most daring pantomime changes, is the sudden arrival of old Wardle at Bury, when Mr. Pickwick was released from the cupboard—and sandwich bags—in Miss Tomkins’ school. The door was unlocked, and there stood Wardle and the silent Trundle. A rather lame account is given of the coincidence. Mr. Pickwick naturally asked, “How did you come here?” “Trundle and I came down here for some good shooting on the first,” &c. Now, here it is evident Wardle good-naturedly saddled himself with the company of the silent man, but he had his reasons. Trundle was now son-in-law *elect*. They were both at the “Angel” at Bury, and for some days here were Mr. Pickwick and his “followers.” There was the exciting notice of action *re* Bardell v. Pickwick. There had nearly been Pott v. Pott and Winkle. And yet, all the time, this Trundle listens, and eats and drinks; but there is no sign of him on the record. He is busy maintaining his character as a cypher.

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Everything, however, points to show the all but contemptuous opinion that was held of this Trundle. Wardle had been there two or three days when Winkle and the others came over from Eatanswill, yet he had never told Mr. Pickwick or Winkle that Trundle was to be married at Christmas, and that they were all to be invited to the wedding. By the oddest of coincidences, Tupman and Snodgrass, getting down from the coach at the “Angel,” were met by Wardle, who at once said, “I have *just been* telling Pickwick that we must have you all down at Christmas. We’re going to have a wedding.” But I doubt if this *be* an oversight. The fact was, no one thought anything of that cypher Trundle, or of his marriage—a matter of no importance to anybody. That this is the true explanation is plain, for Snodgrass, fancying that the wedding was of *his* lady, turned pale. What was old Wardle’s remark? Most significant of Trundle’s *status*. “Don’t be frightened,” he said, “*it’s only* Trundle *there* and Bella.” “Only Trundle *there*,” *i.e.*, only that poor insignificant thing there! No more depreciatory words could be chosen, or put into the mouth of an honest country gentleman. I am certain that old Wardle gave his child reluctantly to this soft sort of fellow—“Only Trundle there!” Then for the shooting party. We hear of Tupman and Winkle even, with their guns, &c., but not a sign of this Trundle, a country gentleman, supposed to enjoy field sports. If Tupman and Winkle had to carry their guns reversed “like privates at a funeral,” was Trundle excepted? We cannot tell, for he is not even named. Or was he of the shooting party at all? It has always seemed astonishing that Winkle should have been allowed, particularly by Mr. Pickwick, to join the *second* shooting party. Everyone seemed to have forgotten his first performance, when he might have shot his friend Tupman dead, and, as it was,

"peppered" him severely. Tupman would naturally have objected to so dangerous a companion. Wardle, at whose home the casualty occurred, merely said, "I beg my friend Winkle's pardon, though; he has had some practice." Was this ironical? I fancy the whole scene had passed out of the author's mind.

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Well, the Christmas season having come round—and certainly Trundle must have been a very feeble creature to allow himself to be "kept over" for so long a time—the whole party assembled at Manor Farm; now there, and on such an occasion at least, Trundle, being one of the two central figures, will certainly assert himself. We shall expect to see and hear him to good effect. Never was there a greater mistake. As the Pickwickians arrived, the whole "house party" were in the lane to greet them; we are told in careless fashion that among them "there were Isabella and *her faithful* Trundle," *i.e.*, the poor insignificant "chap" who was about to enter the family by particular favour. Then Mr. Pickwick was told that they had all been to "inspect the furniture and fittings-up of the new house which the young couple were to tenant." This is very significant, for it throws a certain light on Trundle's situation. It is plain that this house was on Wardle's property, and that Trundle had none of his own. It was, in fact, a poorish match and the young couple were dependent more or less on Wardle. Even the old lady didn't like it, she resented their going to look at the house, and her son, to soothe her, made this significant speech: "Recollect Bella; *come, you must keep her spirits up, poor girl.*" "Poor girl!" "Keep her spirits up!" Why?

On the wedding day, however, Trundle made an effort to assert himself. He was "in high feather and spirits," *i.e.*, awkwardly pretended to be, but, of course, took nobody in. Indeed, we are told he was "a little nervous withal." We may be sure he was, and therefore looking "more of an ass" than ever. For such *must* appear to be a really nervous man in high spirits and going to be married. All the girls were in tears, Wardle himself quite broken down, for they knew what was before the poor child. At the wedding banquet Mr. Pickwick made an admirable, natural speech, which was greeted with tumults of applause, and was reported word for word. Then we are told how Wardle proposed Mr. Pickwick; Mr. Pickwick, the old lady; Snodgrass, Tupman, the poor relations, all had their speeches; but there is not a single word of Trundle, who appears to have been mumchance—no one wanted him. In his speech at the wedding, the amiable Pickwick had, of course, to give the expected conventional praises to Trundle. But how guarded he is! "God bless 'em," he says; "my young friend I believe to be a very excellent and manly fellow." I *believe, i.e.*, he did not *know* it. "Manly," we might question, for in manliness he was deficient. We could hear the rustics below: "Squire Trundle manly! he! he! not he!" But on the bride, Mr. Pickwick was enthusiastic: "I *know* her," he said, "to be a very, very amiable and lovely girl; I admire, love, and esteem her." At the close he prayed that Wardle's daughter "might enjoy all the happiness that even he could desire." Not that he was sure of, but that he could desire. But Trundle, the cypher, no one thought of him, no one cared about his speech. Most likely, in his "nervousness," he mumbled forth some indistinct words which no one could hear, so it was best and most charitable to pass him by altogether in the report. At the dance at night, where he surely would have led off the movements, still not a word of him. And at last, "long before Mr. Pickwick was weary of dancing, the newly-married pair had retired from the room." Mr. Lang fancies that they had gone upstairs; but I imagine they repaired to their new home close by. But then, with that minuteness which never fails Boz, we had been told that they were not to go there till after the Christmas holidays.

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But, after all, one might be inclined to doubt this theory of the young pair remaining at the house. For do we not find that on the next day, which was Christmas day, when there was the going to Church, and the skating and sliding, and Mr. Pickwick's immersion, there is no mention of the happy pair? It looks as though they were at their own home.

After this, many events occurred. Mr. Pickwick was "tried" and "convicted," as old Weller has it; was sent to prison and released. On his return from Birmingham we have some signs of Wardle and his family. That gentleman was sorely disturbed by Emily's "goings on" with Snodgrass, and forecasted another imprudent marriage like Trundle's. He had a suitable match for her in his eye: "a young gentleman down in our neighbourhood," but Arabella's elopement set the fire to the powder, and here it is worth while comparing the marriages of Emily and her sister Isabella as a test of the relative importance of Snodgrass and this Trundle. The one took place in London with great show and pomp, all the family going up specially for it. "A handsome portion was bestowed on Emily," but there is not a word to show that Trundle received a halfpenny.

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Then followed the scenes at Osborne's Hotel in the Adelphi, when all was made up and Snodgrass accepted. And now, at last, we hear something of Trundle. Mrs. T., as we might expect, was in an "interesting way," and had to be informed of what was going on. But it had to be broken to her by Trundle, in right of his office. Good, easy man! We can hear him: "the news will be too much for her" (this is on the record). She would insist on going, and it would be fatal. He would, of course, implore her not to agitate herself in her present state. As a matter of course he was all astray. The news was *not* too much for her. She ordered at once a cap and a new dress, and declared that she *would* go up for the wedding. The horrified Trundle, who had clearly no authority whatever, called in the Doctor to exert *his*, which he did in this way: by leaving it all to herself. Boz emphasizes it, by way of contrast to Trundle, saying that "he was a wise and *discreet fellow.*"

Of course the foolish Trundle was put aside; the lady went and suffered no harm. This proves that Trundle was the *mari de la femme*, with no will of his own.

At Dulwich Church, the bridegroom was met "by the bride, the maids, the Winkles, the Wardles, and Trundles," always to be last and insignificant. In course of time we are told that Mr. Pickwick was much troubled at first by the numerous applications made to him to act as Godfather to the offspring of his friends! These came from Mr. Winkle, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Trundle. Last of course. Poor soul! We can see him, grown elderly, sitting at his own table, smiling or silent, or with an occasional "yes, my dear," "certainly, my dear," "by all means, my dear."

CHAPTER VI. MUGGLETON AND ITS CRICKET

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The situation and real name of Muggleton has always been a hotly debated point; many have been the speculations and many the suggestions as to the original. I was once inclined to adopt Gravesend, on the statement of the author's daughter, that, one day, driving with her father towards Cobham, he said that "it was here that Mr. Pickwick dropped his whip." Cobham would be on the way to Gravesend.

Now what was Muggleton? A large town, with Mayor, Burgesses, and Freemen—an ancient and loyal Borough, much given to petitioning Parliament. It is insinuated that these petitions were guided by Stiggins-like instincts—"a zealous advocacy of Christian principles combined with a devoted attachment to commercial rights. Hence they were against negro slavery abroad and *for* the factory system at home. They were for abolishing Sunday trading in the streets, and for maintaining the sale of church livings." A member of Boz's family has assured me that Maidstone was in the author's mind: it is only some eight miles from Rochester. But "The Bull" waiter informed the Pickwickians that Muggleton was nearly double the distance, or fifteen miles; while Gravesend is about six miles from Rochester—so the evidence of distance does not help us. Where, too, did Mr. Pickwick drop his whip? The Pickwickian enthusiast can ascertain this—an he will—by a little calculation. After leaving "The Bull," the tall quadruped exercised his "manœuvre" of darting to the side of the road, rushing forward for some minutes—*twenty times*—which would cover about an hour. In the etching, there is a picture of the spot—a hedge-lined road. Mr. Pickwick and his friends had to walk the whole way; yet they arrived late in the afternoon. No one could walk from Rochester to Maidstone in that time.

It was natural that Mr. Pickwick should drop his whip—but most unnatural that he should ask Winkle to dismount and pick it up for him; and most unnatural of all that Winkle, in his precarious situation, should consent to dismount. The ordinary course would be that Tupman or Snodgrass should get down. Then, for the great marvel of all, we have Mr. Pickwick, who *would not* get down, or *could not* get down to pick up his whip, getting down to help Mr. Winkle on to his horse! Thus, on the two occasions, the useless or lazy Tupman and Snodgrass kept their seats.

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It has been claimed—by the late Charles Dickens the younger—that Town Malling was Muggleton, and on the ground that it has always had a reputation for good cricket. It is not far from Maidstone. But this is easily disposed of. Muggleton is described as an important corporate town, with a Mayor, etc. Further, the cricketing at Muggleton was of the poorest sort. There was an elderly gentleman playing who could not stop the balls—a slim one was hit on the nose—they were a set of "duffers," in fact. As for Dickens knowing nothing about cricket, as Mr. Lang contends, I can say, that he was always interested in it. I myself have seen him sit the whole day in a marquee, during a match got up by himself at Gads Hill, marking (or "notching") in the most admirable manner. Anything he did or described, he did and described according to the best fashion he could compass.

Wishing, however, to investigate this knotty question thoroughly, I lately communicated with the Town Clerk of Maidstone, Mr. Herbert Monckton, who was good enough to search the Books with reference to certain queries which I furnished. Dickens states of the mysterious and unnamed Borough, that it had its Mayor, Burgesses, and Freemen—which at once excludes Town Malling which the younger Charles Dickens had selected. The Clerk has found that, at the period in question, there were 813 Freemen on the roll. It has always been held to be "an ancient and loyal Borough," but this, of course, most boroughs of its standing would claim to be. Boz speaks of innumerable Petitions to Parliament, and Mr. Monckton tells me that he has found many petitions in the Books—one in 1828 *against* the Licensing Bill, which seems to prove that Maidstone, like Muggleton, "mingled a zealous advocacy of Christian principles with a devoted attachment to commercial rights." Then as to the description: Both Maidstone and Muggleton have an open square for the market: there are also in both places in the square a fire office, linendraper, corn factor, saddler, grocer, shoe-shop, but apparently no distiller. It was curious, certainly, that there should be an Inn with so odd a sign as the Blue Lion in Maidstone—and also a post bearing this sign, in front. Then as to the cricket, the cricket field was in the Meadow, Maidstone, not far from the High Street; while at Muggleton, we are told that Mr. Pickwick's friends "had turned out of the main street and were already within sight of the field of battle."

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And here we may admire the wonderful walking powers that Boz allots to his heroes—Tupman and Pickwick, who were elderly persons and stout withal. Fifteen miles to Muggleton—two miles further to Manor Farm—and all done between eleven o'clock, and a period "late in the afternoon"—say five o'clock. At a later visit came the memorable five-and-twenty-mile walk to

get an appetite for dinner. The truth was, such stretches were as nothing to Boz himself. Walking was his grand pastime and one absolute necessity. He tramped on with an amazing energy and vigour, which, as I know from experience, it was impossible to match. Sometimes he walked the streets for nearly the whole night. This personal element helps to explain many things in "Pickwick" which contains the early life of Boz.

CHAPTER VII. GOSWELL STREET

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A question that has often exercised ingenious folk is, why did Mr. Pickwick choose to live in Goswell Street? rather, why did Boz select such a quarter for him? Of course, at that time, it was really a "genteel" neighbourhood, as anyone can see who walks along the desolate streets and terraces, the forlorn squares and enclosures that are close by, and where the New River runs. Nothing is more depressing than the aspect of these fallen places; but, in Mr. Pickwick's time, they had not been very long erected. Indeed, this offers yet another department which his wonderful Book suggests: that it is the best record of all the changes that have taken place in London. This Goswell Street tenancy shows clearly that the neighbourhood was a desirable one for residents of position. Mr. Pickwick was a City man, and his club met in Huggin Lane, in the City. He generally put up, or, as Bob Sawyer had it, "hung out," at the "George and Vulture," also in the City. One side of Goswell Street, in those days—a road ascending to the old Angel Inn—faced, near the top, a number of the pretentious squares and terraces I have been describing. That interesting old theatre, Sadler's Wells, was in the rear, and the New River passed beneath it or beside it, and, quite uncovered in those days, rippled along on its course from the country.

All the houses were private houses. Some enthusiasts have actually identified Mrs. Bardell's apartments—but without a particle of evidence. Now it has become a busy thoroughfare, with a noisy tramway: nearly all the houses have been turned into shops, and Mr. Pickwick could scarcely recognize his old quarters. The whole region bears a faded air. Amateurs, who love exploring their London, will find entertainment in wandering about Islington and the adjoining districts, experiencing quite a new sensation and hardly realizing that they are so close to Aldersgate. The New River itself, which ends its course here, is a pleasant attraction, with its great basin, and ancient offices by the edge of the water.

Imitating Elia, I once set out from here, and followed its course and its many windings far out into the country, taking up the journey on successive days, going towards its source in Hertfordshire, and a most pleasant, interesting voyage of discovery it was. For it so winds and bends, now passing through fields and demesnes, now skirting towns and villages, that it is just as picturesque as any natural stream. Such being its attractions, Mr. Pickwick was virtually living in the country or in the suburbs, and enjoying the fine, keen, inspiring air which the jaded Londoner from lower districts may, even now, still inhale. There is no Goswell Street now, but Goswell Road—a very noisy, clattering thoroughfare.

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Another remark to be made is this:—how much do we owe to the vivifying power of Boz's descriptions of these old Towns, Inns, and Streets? The ordinary provincial town—unsung and undescribed by him—remains what it is and nothing more. York and Manchester stir no memories, and are unvisited by pilgrims, because *they are not in Pickwick*. Boz seems to have found the true *interpretation* and inner meaning of each place, and has actually preserved the tone and flavour that existed in his own time. This continues even now. As we stroll through Rochester or Ipswich, Bath or Bury, Pickwick and his friends walk with us. And, as if well contented to rest under the spell, these antique towns have made no effort at change, but remain much as they were.

And this prompts the question: *Where did Mrs. Cluppins live?* At the trial we learned that she was a friend and neighbour of Mrs. Bardell's, one of her *commères*. She had "looked in" on the momentous morning, having been out to purchase "kidney pertaties," yet, on their Hampstead junketting, we find her coming with the Raddles, in their cab, all the way from Lant Street, Borough. She was clearly Mrs. Raddle's friend and neighbour. Perhaps she had moved, though this is not likely. The household gods of such, like Elia's, strike a deep root.

In his descriptions of the Bardell party's journey to Hampstead, which ended so disastrously, the art of Boz is shown as usual by supplying the notion of movement—he seems to take us along up the northern heights—we feel the pleasurable anticipations of a party of pleasure for the lower middle class. From the lower end of Goswell Street—where Mr. Pickwick's lodgings must have been, for, in the upper part, there are no houses opposite for Mrs. Raddle to call at—it must have been a long drive for the party. I assume they must have made for Kentish Town, and toiled up Haverstock Hill at a walk, for the coach was heavily laden enough. Pleasant Hampstead! One is always glad to find Boz associating his humour with places that we are deeply interested in. The Hampstead of this hour, though changed enough, may remind us very fairly of Boz's time. It has still the attractions of the old-fashioned, red-brick houses, and terraces, the mixture of green, and the charming, even seductive, heath. "The Spaniards" at Hampstead—Boz calls it "*The Spaniard*"—is scarcely altered from the day of the Bardell visit, and is as picturesque as ever with its Tea Gardens and Bowers. I never pass it without seeming to see Jackson's hackney-coach waiting and the Sheriff's man at the gate taking his drink. The other Inn, also bound up with memories of Boz, "Jack Straw's Castle," also stands, but one reads with alarm on this day of

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There are few Londoners who will not grieve to hear that the well-known inn on the Spaniards Road, "Jack Straw's Castle," famous as the rendezvous of authors, artists, statesmen, and many a celebrity of old days, is going the way of other ancient buildings. The low rooms and quaint interior of the hostel are now being entirely transformed and modernised. The only concession made to the prejudices of the old frequenters of the inn is that the outer face is to be preserved intact. To the passer by, no great change will perhaps be apparent; but within, the charm of the place will have vanished entirely. A spacious saloon bar flooded with glaring light, with modern furniture and appliances, is to take the place of the old rooms, coffee-room, billiard-room, and bar. In fact, it is to become a modern hotel. The change is quite enough to make the shade of Dickens arise. As John Forster has told us, the great novelist loved this old chop-house, and, after a ramble on the Heath, often adjourned here for a good, wholesome dinner.

CHAPTER VIII. MARY HOGARTH

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This young girl—to whom a touching interest attached from her being so prematurely cut off—was a most interesting creature, one of three sisters, daughters of Mr. George Hogarth, a Writer to the Signet, who is a sort of link between Scott and Dickens. For he had acted as the former's man of business in the Ballantyne disputes, and must have prompted Dickens in the article that he wrote on that thorny subject. He was a good musician and a writer in the magazines. We find his work in the old "Monthly Magazine" where Dickens made his *début*; and when Boz was installed as editor of "Bentley's," we find him admitting much of his father-in-law's writing. His "Memoirs of the Opera" are well-known. There is a charming outline sketch of Maclise's, showing the profiles of two of the sisters with Dickens, all three of the most refined and interesting cast—but Boz's face is certainly the handsomest of the three. He must have been a most attractive young man—something of the pattern of his own Nicholas Nickleby.

One of the most interesting features of the episode is the reference the author was constantly making to this bereavement. In the rollicking "Pickwick," any serious introduction of such a topic would have been out of place: though I fancy a little paragraph in the account of the Manor Farm Christmas festivities is connected with it. But about the same time, or rather, some six months later, he was busy with his "Oliver Twist," and it seems certain that Rose Maylie was drawn from this sympathetic creature, for there is a feeling and a passionate grief displayed that could only be caused by the loss of a person that he had known and loved. Here is his description of Rose:—"The younger lady was in the lovely bloom and springtime of womanhood, at that age when, if ever angels be for God's good purposes enthroned in mortal forms, they may be without impiety supposed to abide in such forms as hers. She was not *past seventeen*. Cast in so slight and exquisite a mould; so mild and gentle; so pure and beautiful; that earth seemed not her element, nor its rough creatures her fit companions."

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We may compare with this the touching inscription placed by Dickens on her tomb in Kensal Green: "Young, beautiful and good, God, in His mercy, numbered her among His angels at the early age of seventeen." He had long planned that he should be laid beside her, but on Mrs. Hogarth's death, some five years later, he had to resign his place to her. This was a renewal of the old grief. The epitaph nearly seems the epitome of all that he says of Rose Maylie.

"The very intelligence that shone in her deep blue eye, and was stamped upon her noble head, seemed scarcely of her age, or of the world; and yet the changing expression of sweetness and good humour, the thousand lights that played upon the face and left no shadow there; above all, the smile, the cheerful, happy smile, were for Home, and fireside peace and happiness." She is then described as "playfully putting back her hair, which was simply braided on her forehead; and threw into her beaming look such an expression of affection and artless loveliness that blessed spirits might have smiled to look upon her."

The earnestness, the feeling of sincerity thrown into this description—the tone of reality—leave a conviction that this must have been drawn from a person who had lived and in whom the writer had the deepest interest. Further, it is clearly the description of a person who had passed away: of one who was no longer with him. ^[66] "She was at the theatre with us on Saturday night, well and happy, and expired in my arms a few hours afterwards." So he wrote to Mr. Cox.

At the end, he returns to the subject, and retouches the picture:

"I would show Rose Maylie in all the bloom and grace of early womanhood, shedding on her secluded path in life the soft and gentle light that fell on all who trod it with her and shone into their hearts; I would paint her *the life and joy of the fireside circle*, and the lively summer group; I would follow her through the sultry fields at noon, and hear the low tones of her sweet voice in the moonlit evening walk; I would watch her in all her goodness and charity abroad, and the untiring discharge of domestic duties at home; I would summon before me again those joyous little faces that clustered round her knee; I would recall the tone of that clear laugh, and conjure up that sympathizing

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tear that glistened in the soft, blue eye. These, and a thousand looks and smiles, and turns of thought and speech, I would fain recall them, every one."

Again, it is clear that all this is personal, and written of one that he knew and deeply loved.

In "Nickleby," there is yet another allusion to this sad subject—it is suggested by Kate's grief for Smike:

"It is an exquisite and beautiful thing in our nature that, when the heart is softened and touched by some tranquil happiness or affectionate feeling, the memory of the dead comes over it most powerfully and irresistibly. It would almost seem as though our better thoughts and sympathies were charms in virtue of which the soul is enabled to hold some vague and mysterious intercourse with the spirits of those whom we dearly loved in life. Alas! how often and how long may these patient angels hover above us, watching for the spell which is so seldom uttered, and so soon forgotten."

This is no artificial utterance. He had clearly interrupted himself to indulge in this sad retrospect. He then points a moral from Mrs. Nickleby, who, he says, could not conceive the idea of anyone dwelling on such thoughts in secret. I have always had a notion that this worthy lady's incongruities and rambling methods were suggested by one of his own household, whose imperfection was found to be a complete lack of sympathy with him in all his feelings.

The devotion of Oliver Twist to Rose, it is not fanciful to say, was intended to symbolise his own to Mary. We can recall the passionate, agitated excitement with which Rose's illness is described—the hanging on the doctor's sentence, &c.—a reminiscence certainly, and we have only to look at the sketch by Cruikshank of his friend (given in my "Bozland") to recognise the likeness to Oliver. Oliver's sufferings were his own.

How tremendous the blow of her death must have been to the successful writer may be conceived when he did not scruple to interrupt the book and cast it aside altogether from sheer incapacity to write a line. The June number did not appear. No one can imagine the inconvenience, the loss, the enormous risks that were run by taking this step—the horror and consternation of the publishers and all concerned. It proved how indifferent he had become to his prospects and prosperity when he could hazard such a thing. The first of the month came round, but no "Pickwick." It was a public catastrophe. When he was able to resume his story, he found it necessary to issue an explanation in the form of an address. [68]

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186 Strand,
June 30th, 1837.

The author is desirous to take the opportunity afforded him by the resumption of his work to state, once again, what he thought had been stated sufficiently emphatically before, namely, that its publication was interrupted by a severe domestic affliction of no ordinary kind; that this was the sole cause of the non-appearance of the present number in its usual course; that, hereafter, it will continue to be published with its accustomed regularity. However superfluous this *second notice* may appear to many, it is rendered necessary by various idle speculations and absurdities which have been industriously propagated during the past month and which have reached the author's ears from many quarters, and have grieved him exceedingly. By one set of intimate acquaintances, especially well-informed, he has been killed outright; by another, driven mad; by a third, imprisoned for debt; by a fourth, left per steamer for the United States; by a fifth, rendered incapable of mental exertion for evermore; by all, in short, represented as doing anything but seeking by a few weeks' retirement, the restoration of cheerfulness and peace, of which a sad bereavement has necessarily deprived him.

CHAPTER IX. THE PICKWICK CLUB

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This was a common form of social meeting, and we find in the memoirs of Adolphus and John Taylor and Frederick Reynolds descriptions of the "Keep the Line," "The Finish," and other oddly-named societies. The cheerful glass was the chief object. Mr. Lowten's Club, "The Magpie and Stump," in Clare Market, supplies a specimen of a lower class club. "Veels vithin veels," as Sam would say.

In his speech at Dulwich, at the close of the book, Mr. Pickwick spoke rather pathetically of the closing of his wanderings. "I shall never forget having devoted the greater part of two years to mixing with different varieties and shades of human character, frivolous as my pursuit of novelty may have appeared to many." He spoke of the club also, to which "he had communicated both personally and by letter," acquainting them with his intention of withdrawing from public life to the country. He added that "during our long absence it had suffered much from internal dissensions," and this, with other reasons, had obliged him to dissolve it. This "absence," both as planned and carried out, was merely occasional. Mr. Pickwick and his friends were rarely, and only now and then, absent from town, going away for short spells, save, of course, the enforced absence in the Fleet Prison and the months or weeks (as it may be) in Bath. "The George and

Vulture" was not far from Huggin Lane, so Mr. Pickwick must have been constantly at the Club, or *could* have been had he chosen to go there. All this notion of severance, therefore, was somewhat sentimental.

But the "dissensions" the President spoke of were natural enough. He was the founder and mainstay of the association—probably paid its expenses. The whole object of the institution, it may be suspected, was to exalt the founder. In such a state of things, it was natural that there should be an opposition, or discontented party, headed by "that Blotton." When Blotton was got rid of, his friends would think that he had been badly treated and take advantage of the occasional absences of the chief to foment revolt. Then Blotton was expelled, assuredly unfairly, for he merely took the opposite view on the Cobham stone, and he might have left some who belonged to his faction and who thought he had been harshly dealt with. Mr. Pickwick, in fact, merely returned from his agreeable junketting to have this gentleman expelled. Despotism of this sort always leads to discontent and parties—hence the "dissensions." Mr. Pickwick, from his treatment of Blotton, must have been a Tory of the old Eldon school. Here was his blemish. He had no toleration for others, and had an undue idea of his own position. We can trace the whole thing perfectly. He was a successful man of business—an export merchant apparently—being connected with an agent at Liverpool whom he had "obliged." Round such a man who was good-natured and philanthropic would gather flatterers and toadies; hence the suggestion to found a club with his own name and "button." Of this he could be "Boss," and he was listened to and courted. It was like the devotion of satellites to the late Mr. Gladstone. We can see all this in the picture of the club at the beginning, where, with the exception of the four legitimate Pickwickians, all seem rather of the tradesman class, and are vulgar types enough. In such surroundings, Mr. Pickwick could "rule the roast" and grow despotic and even arrogant.

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Blotton, however, who seems to have been an independent sort of fellow, could not submit to this, was of the Opposition, and, no doubt, a thorn in Mr. Pickwick's side. And here is yet another point of the likeness to the Johnsonian coterie. In "The Club," Hawkins—Sir John of that ilk—was uncongenial—"a detestable fellow," Bozzy calls him—objecting, quarrelling, and, at last, on one occasion was so rude that he had to withdraw. Now, that this offence was rankling is evident, and it explains the fracas which took place at the opening. Blotton looked on Mr. Pickwick's travelling as pure humbug. The idea of his contributing anything useful or instructive in his so-called reports seemed nonsense. Further, was it not something of a job? Pickwick was taking three of his own special "creatures" with him—Winkle, to whom he had been appointed governor; Snodgrass, who was his ward; and Tupman, who was his butt and toady. They were the *gentlemen* of the club. None of the outsiders were chosen. From Blotton's behaviour, too, on the Cobham business, it is clear he thought Mr. Pickwick's scientific researches were also "humbug." A paper by that gentleman had just been read—"The tracing of the source of the ponds at Hampstead" and "Some observations on the theory of tittlebats." There was somewhat too much of this "bossing." The whole report read by the secretary was full of gross flatteries. They had "just heard read with feelings of unmingled satisfaction and unqualified approval," &c., "from which advantages must accrue to the cause of science"—cause of rubbish! Then, it added, obsequiously, something about "the *inestimable* benefits from carrying the speculations of that *learned* man" &c. Mr. Pickwick, in his speech, was certainly self-laudatory and provocative. He talked of his pride in promoting the Tittlebatian theory, and "let *his enemies make the most of it.*" This was marked enough, and no doubt caused looks at Blotton. Then he began to puff his new enterprise at "a service of some danger."

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There were, were there not, upsets of coaches "in all directions," horses bolting—boats overturning, and boilers bursting? Now, Blotton—after all the humbug that had gone before, and particularly after a provocative reference to himself—could not stand this, and, amid the obsequious cries and "cheers," said, boldly, "No!" (A Voice: "No!") That is, signifying there were no such dangers. The fury of the orator on "the Windsor chair," was quite Gladstonian. "No!" he cried; on which the cheers of his followers broke out. "Who was it that cried No?" Then he proceeded to imagine it came from some "vain and disappointed man—he wouldn't say haberdasher."

To the Pickwick Club there was a Vice-President, named Smiggers—Joseph Smiggers, Esq., P.V.P.M.P.C., that is, Perpetual Vice-President and Member of the Pickwick Club. Smiggers was, of course, supposed to be "Pickwick's creature," or he would not have been there. He was a tall, corpulent man, with a soft face—as we see him in his picture. As Mr. Pickwick speaks, it is remarkable that both Vice-President and Secretary—the two officers—have each one arm raised as if in ecstatic rapture—clear proof of their subservience to Pickwick. On Smiggers' right is a "doddering" old fellow of between seventy and eighty—clearly a "nullity"—on his left, another member nearly as old, but with a glimmer of intelligence. Down the side of the table, facing the orator, are some odd faces—one clearly a Jew; one for whom the present Mr. Edward Terry might have sat. Blotton is at the bottom, half turned away in disgust. His neighbour looks at him with wonder, as who should say, "How can you be so insensible?" Odd to say—and significant, too—Blotton has brought into the club his *dog*, a ferocious looking "bull," which sits at his feet under the table. We should say, on the whole, that Blotton could only count on—and that, with but a limited sympathy—the Terry-faced and Jew-faced men—if he *could* count on them. The Secretary was like a clerk—a perky fellow—and had a pen behind his ear; probably in some Bank or Counting House, so strong is habit. One member of the Club alone is invisible—the one beyond Tupman—all that is seen of him is a hand holding a tumbler as if about to drink. The Dodderer is applauding; so are the Jew, Blotton and Tupman; so is the round-faced man, just beyond the invisible one.

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Mr. Pickwick and his three friends being removed or absent, and Blotton expelled, out of the fourteen members there were left but nine, whereof we reckon four or five as Pickwickians and the rest as *Blottonites*.

And how easily can we imagine the acrimonious discussions that went on!

"This 'ere Pickwick, who was always making the club a hend to his own glorification, had gone off on his touring to get more grist for his mill." It was really, a "mutual admiration society," and as for the reports, notes, &c., he was sending back "they 'ad 'ad enough of it." The club didn't meet to be listening to long-winded yarns to be read out by their worthy secretary, but for a glass and social intercourse. As for the "travels and preambulations," what were they more than visits to genteel 'ouses where Pickwick was "showing oft" at their expense? Then where were the "Sportin' transactions?" The whole thing was "rot." Then the Cobham stone business, at which the whole town was laughing, and which their worthy friend Blotton had exposed. Blotton was the only long-headed, creditable man they had. *He* ought to have been their president. But he had been turned out by the "*lick-spittles*" of the society.

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CHAPTER X. ROADSIDE INNS

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I.—The Bell at Berkeley Heath

In the animated journey, from Bristol to Birmingham, the travellers stopped at various posting-houses where the mercurial Sawyer would insist on getting down to lunch, dine, or otherwise refresh—his friends being always ready to comply after a little decent hesitation. It was thus that they drew up at The Bell at Berkeley Heath, which our writer presently sketches. It will be seen there is more of the drink at the Bell than of the Bell itself. It is, indeed, no more than *cœcum nomen*—much as though we read the name at the end of "Bradshaw"—yet, somehow, from the life and movement of the journey, it offers a sort of attraction: it seems familiar, and we have an interest in it. The Bell now "goes on," as the proprietor tells me. There are travellers who come there and drink Boz's health in the snug parlour. It is, in fact, a Pickwickian Inn, and is drawn within the glamour of the legend, and, what a marvel! the thing is done by the magic of those three or four lines. "The Bell," says Mrs. Hooper, "lies back on the main road from Bristol to Gloucester, and is just nineteen miles from Bristol. It is a rambling old house and a good deal dilapidated, and of good age."

With this meagre record it yet offers such Pickwickian interest that, not many months ago, a photograph was taken of it which was engraved for the *Daily Graphic*. There is no Mr. Pickwick's room to be shown, as undoubtedly there *would* be had that gentleman only stayed the night there; but he only lunched and then went forward. There is a mistiness as to whether the Pickwickians sat in the public coffee-room or had a private "settin'-room." It was to a certainty the coffee-room, as they only stayed a short time. So the proprietor, with a safe conscience, might exhibit "the room where Mr. Pickwick lunched." On the face is imbedded a tablet bearing the date 1729, and there is an ancient farmer close by who was born in "The Bell" in the year 1820. If we lend ourselves properly to the delusion, he might recall Mr. Pickwick's chaise drawing up full sixty years ago. "Ay, I mind it well. I were joost then fifteen. A stoutish gent in gaiters—might 'ave been a bishop—and sich a lively young chap as wos with him, full o' spirits, chucking a' the gurls under the chins. And their sarvant! O *he* were one. Sam, he were caa'd—I moind that—Sam Summut. And they caa'd for the best o' everythin', and took away wi' them a lot, Madeary, and wot not," and so on.

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II.—The Greyhound, Dulwich

Mr. Pickwick, as we know, at the close of his wanderings retired to this tranquil and pleasant suburb—then much more retired than it is now. In accordance with his habit of enshrining his own personal sympathies in his writing, Boz was, as it were, conveying that it was such a sequestered spot as he himself would choose under similar conditions. Last year (1898), the interesting old road-side Inn, The Greyhound, was levelled—an Inn to which Mr. Pickwick must have found his way in the dull evening to drink "cold Punch" or preside at the club which he most certainly—if we know him well—must have founded. A wealthy gentleman of social tastes, and with a love for tavern life, would have no difficulty in establishing a new Pickwick Club.

At the Greyhound, nigh a century ago, there was actually a club which entertained Tom Campbell, Mark Lemon, Byron's tutor, and many more. Boz himself, we are told, used to find his way there with Theodore Hook, Moore, and others. Boz, therefore, must have regarded this place with much favour, owing to his own experiences of it—and to have selected it for his hero's tranquil old age shows how high a place it had in his memory. The description is charming and brings this sylvan retreat to which we have walked many a time perfectly before us.

This taste for surrounding himself with persons of lower degree—such as were the rank and file—was curiously enough shared by Mr. Pickwick's predecessor, Dr. Johnson, who, when he found the Literary Club somewhat too much of a republic, and getting "out of hand," established a social meeting at the Essex Head Club—in the street of that name, off the Strand—composed in

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the main of respectable tradesmen, who would listen obsequiously. Thus, it may be repeated, does the same sort of character develop invariably on the same lines, and thus did Mr. Pickwick unconsciously follow in the footsteps of the "great Lexicographer."

III.—Grimaldi the Younger

As I was the first to point out, the powerful "Stroller's Tale" of which Boz himself thought so highly, was founded on the career of the unfortunate son of the great Grimaldi. The story is related by "Dismal Jemmy," the actor, who, in the tale itself, is called Hutley, and it corresponds in all its details with Grimaldi's history. He died in September, 1832, nearly four years before Pickwick was thought of, but Boz had learned the incident long before the Grimaldi MSS. were given him to edit, and I am inclined to think he must have learned them from his friend Harley who was intimate with the Grimaldis. In the memoirs it is stated that Gledinning, a Printer, was sent by the father to his son's dying bed, and he was probably the Hutley of the Stroller's Tale, and, perhaps, the person who brought old Grimaldi the news of his death. We are told in the "Tale" that he had an engagement "at one of the Theatres on the Surrey side of the water," and in the memoirs we find that he was offered "an engagement for the Christmas at the Coburg." There his death is described:—"He rose in bed, drew up his withered limbs—he was acting—he was at the Theatre. He then sang some roaring song. The walls were alive with reptiles, frightful figures flitted to and fro . . . His eyes shone with a lustre frightful to behold, the lips were parched and cracked, the dry, hard skin glowed with a burning heat, and there was an almost unearthly air of wild anxiety in the man's face." Hutley also describes how he had to hold him down in his bed. Compare with this the account in the memoirs—"his body was covered with a fearful inflammation—he died in a state of wild and furious madness, rising from his bed, dressing himself in stage costume to act snatches of the parts, and requiring to be held down to die by strong manual force." This dreadful scene took place at a public house in Pitt Street, out of Tottenham Court Road.

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"The man I speak of," says Boz in the story, "was a low, pantomime actor and an habitual drunkard. In his better days he had been in the receipt of a good salary. His besetting sin gained so fast on him that it was found impossible to employ him in the situations in which he really was useful." In the "memoirs" this is more than supported: "The man who might have earned with ease and comfort from six to seven hundred a year, was reduced to such a dreadful state of destitution and filth . . . In fact, at one time, it was thought he might have succeeded his father."

It is quite plain, therefore, that Boz was recalling this tragic episode. Boz remarks that pantomime actors—clowns and others "either die early or, by unnaturally taxing their bodily energies, lose prematurely their physical powers." This was what occurred to Grimaldi, the father, whose curious decay he was to describe later in the memoirs. It may be added that there is an Alderman Harmer, Hatton Garden, mentioned in the memoirs, with whom Grimaldi *père* had some dealings; and, long after, this name was introduced by Boz into "Our Mutual Friend."

CHAPTER XI. MR. PICKWICK'S PROTOTYPE

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We had a narrow escape of losing our Pickwick and his familiar type. The original notion was to have "a tall, long, thin man," and only for the late Edward Chapman, who providentially thought of the Richmond gentleman, Foster, we should have lost for ever the short, rotund Pickwick that we so love and cherish. A long, thin Pickwick! He could not be amiable, or benevolent, or mild, or genial. But what *could* such a selection mean? Why, that Boz saw an opening for humorous treatment in introducing a purblind, foolish Professor, or scientist—one with spectacles—prying into this and that, taking notes &c. As Winkle was the sportsman, Tupman, the lover, Snodgrass, the poet, so Mr. Pickwick was to be a sort of Pangloss or Dominie Sampson. His curiosity and love of enquiry were to get him into scrapes, just as Mr. Winkle's sham sportsmanship was to get him into embarrassments. In fact, the first appearance in Seymour's plate—the scene with the cabman—shows him as quite a different Pickwick; with a sour, cantankerous face; not in "tights," but in a great coat; he is scarcely recognisable. Seymour was then determined to show him after his own ideal. But when the poor artist destroyed himself the great man was brought up to the fitting type. So undecided were the parties about that type that the author had to leave it altogether an open question—a *tabula rasa*—not announcing that his hero was either tall or short, fat or lean, pale or rosy; all he commits himself to in his opening chapter is that he was bald, that he wore tights and gaiters, and, what is rather singular, *circular spectacles*. I suppose, in contrast to the more elongated glasses.

It might be an interesting question for the "paper of questions," "Why did Mr. Pickwick wear circular spectacles?" Was there any local weakness? The artist never forgot this direction. In the author of the Tittlebatian system, &c., the "circular spectacles" would impart a sort of wise and owl-like stare. It was, of course, due to Chapman, the publisher, and was another of his "happy suggestions."

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This Mr. Foster, of Richmond—fortunately for himself—was not known to be the original of "Pickwick," though many must have been struck by the likeness, both in physique and costume,

to the picture. It is not stated that the features were copied, though, no doubt, Chapman would have vividly described them also; and Seymour was so ready and deft with his pencil that he must have certainly caught the likeness even from the description. We could fancy him rapidly making trial sketches, "Is that near it?" "No, fatter in the cheeks." "Is *that*?" "No, forehead a little higher, more bald," and so on. I myself was at Richmond, having just come from school, about ten years after the appearance of Pickwick—and for aught I know may have seen this Foster promenading it on the Hill. There was no particular interest then in Pickwick—which was somewhat forgotten, the interest being absorbed in the newer and brilliant works which Boz was bringing out. The society there was thoroughly Pickwickian; there were many old-fashioned figures, including the Mr. Jesse at whom the "Ponto" story was directed. We were gay enough. The old Star and Garter was flourishing. There were the Assembly Rooms at the Castle Inn, with "Almack's Balls"; barges coming down on Regatta days, when people danced on the deck and feasted in the cabin. There were private parties and dinners, and the old Theatre—Kean's, with the manager's house adjoining—was still standing on the Green, opening fitfully enough for a few nights, and then closing as fitfully. There I saw "The Green Bushes." Such a little Bandbox as it was! There were the two wooden staircases *outside*, of quaint appearance. Mr. Tupman may have been then alive and walking on the Terrace. He had retired there just twenty years before. He had probably rooms on the Green, near Maid of Honour Row. This little sketch shows clearly that Richmond is very nearly associated with Pickwick. But here comes in another reminiscence of Richmond, for there rises before me, about a dozen years after the appearance of the book, the image of a very Pickwickian figure—bald and "circular," cozy, wearing a white tie and glasses—a favourite gossip with all the ladies—no other indeed than Maria Edgeworth's brother. He was a florid, good-humoured personage, a great talker, knew everybody in the place, and, like Mr. Pickwick, was an old bachelor, and kept an important housekeeper. He was genial and hospitable, would give parties, dinners, and dances. But the likeness in physique was the oddest part.

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As the outside of Foster, of Richmond, supplied Mr. Pickwick's outside and habit as he lived, so his "in'ards," or character, was also turned to profit and not wasted. And here suggests itself a very likely speculation. This image of the Richmond Foster was before him; through the book he thought of the old Beau and the ladies' protests. The amorous element would not do for his hero, for whom he had other work; but while he left the physique to Pickwick he certainly transferred the *character* to one of his leading figures. That this is not fanciful will be seen. Mr. Chapman described Foster as "a fat old Beau": he was very popular, or, it may be, exceedingly well off. And at a place like Richmond he would be very *recherché*. But is it not exactly suggestive of Tupman—this "fat old Beau" devoted to the ladies? ("Because you are too old, sir; and too fat, sir," said his chief.) And on the first opportunity he *did* get into tights, viz., as the brigand. What is more convincing is that at the close Boz sent Tupman back to Richmond whence he came, and where we are carefully assured "he walks constantly on the Terrace during the summer months with a youthful and jaunty air which has rendered him the admiration of the numerous elderly dames of single condition who reside in the vicinity." Seeing Mr. Foster's occupation, I really think that this accounts for the novelist's selection of Richmond.

Mr. Chapman recalled that not even the persuasion of the Richmond ladies could induce Mr. Foster, of Richmond, to forego his "tights" and gaiters—and much amusement was caused by the idiosyncrasy. This persistence, it is clear, was before Boz, who makes Mr. Pickwick abandon his gaiters only at the Ball at Manor Farm, but we are distinctly told "that it was the first time" he did so "within the memory of his oldest friends." Thus we have Foster, of Richmond, brought into actual touch with his double. Thus much for his physique, which, it is admitted, was all that was drawn from Foster. But that friendly manner; that genial, amiable nature which made him think "the whole world akin;" whence did Boz import all that? I believe he found this genial, friendly type in the very man who had suggested Foster, of Richmond, to him. That this is not purely fanciful will be seen from an account of Edward Chapman kindly supplied to me by one of his family.

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"He was a short, stoutish person, very good-humoured, an affectionate family man, unaffected, and fond of the country. But touching his character; the first feature that came into my mind was his extreme justice; in my very earliest years I remember being impressed by it—one *felt* it: all actions and motives were judged with a catholicity and charity that made us trust him implicitly, and I see my sister has the same remembrance. He was naturally of a quiet, easy disposition; not much of a talker, but when he spoke he was always worth listening to. I see also she mentions his sense of humour, when his eyes would light up with a merry twinkle. I never remember hearing him say an unkind word to anyone. It is very pleasant to hear that papa is to be mentioned in connection with Pickwick, and I will gladly tell you all I can regarding my impressions of his character and tastes, &c. We only saw him for a short hour in the evening when he was tired after his day's work and little inclined to talk, but we always had a child-like instinct of his great justice and impartiality—an impression that I retained all through his life.

"Later on, at Tunbridge Wells, where we saw more of him, I learned to admire his vast store of knowledge, as there was hardly a subject that I asked for information on that he did not know a great deal about. Also he had a great love of beauty in nature, and was never so happy as when he had his favourite, shabby old hat on and a long stick, which he had cut himself, in his hand, and poked about the grounds which surrounded our house, inspecting the holly hedge and shrubs he had planted—in fact it used to be a standing joke that he used to measure his holly bushes every day to see how much they had grown in the night. He was perfectly happy in such a life, as it suited his peaceful contented nature.

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"He was a man who never used a rough word to anyone, but his remarks, if he were angry, could sting sharply. He had a fund of quiet humour, like a Scotchman, and his sallies told all the more, as they generally came when least expected and without an effort. Later on, I travelled with my mother and him for several years and benefited greatly through his knowledge and love of art, and his recognition and appreciation of all that was good and worthy of admiration in foreign lands and peoples. He had a soft heart, too, and was always ready to help those who asked for aid."

Next is introduced the prototype of Mr. Pickwick in a few touches:—

"There was an old family friend living at Richmond, named John Foster, *not Forster*, who was quite a character, especially in his personal appearance; it occurred to my father to introduce him to Dickens who had just commenced the Pickwick Papers. Accordingly, they were invited to meet one another at dinner, and, from this copy, Dickens turned out Pickwick.

"The trial in Pickwick was not originally written as it is given to the public. The number was just coming out and in the hands of "the reader" (I believe John Forster was my father's reader at that time, and had been educated for the Bar), when the following occurred: Dickens was going to dine that evening at my father's house; they were waiting for dinner to be announced, when a messenger came in a great hurry (I think it must have been from the reader) to say that Dickens was wrong on a point of law, and that something must be done at once as the number was on the eve of publication, and the printers were waiting. They rang the bell, ordered dinner to be put back, and placed pen and paper before Dickens who set to work at once and re-wrote part of the trial, there and then; it was given to the messenger waiting in the hall, and Dickens sat down to dinner with a comfortable feeling that the publication had been saved in time.

"I have given these anecdotes as we remember hearing them spoken about in our home. I can picture the last one so well, the rapidity with which it was done, the young author, my parents, and the pretty home in which it took place.

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"My father's marriage was a romantic one. Visiting at Hitchin, he fell in love with his next door neighbour, a very pretty little Quakeress, dressed in the Quaker fashion of those days; her father was a very strict Friend, and was made very uneasy at the attentions of this London lover; but Mary was bright and vivacious, and encouraged him, and many were the interviews contrived by the young couple. Their rooms were on the same floor, though in different houses; my father, behind a piece of furniture, bored a hole through the dividing wall, and the lovers slipped notes backwards and forwards by this means. I am not aware that the simple-hearted parents ever found it out.

"But, at last, Mary was persuaded to leave her sheltered home and launch out into the world by his side. They were married in the north of England, from her brother's house; the bridegroom sending from London, the day before the marriage, the dresses the little Quakeress was to robe herself in when she slipped out of her garb. The fit must have been greatly left to chance!

"Being full of tact and of engaging manners, she proved an excellent hostess, and well fitted for the position she held.

"My father died 20th February, 1880, aged 76, and was buried at Hitchin, beside my mother. He had long retired from business, and spent many years abroad on account of my mother's health."

This pleasing sketch quite suggests the account given by Sterne of his father. There is a quaint, old-world air about it—and the traits are really those of Mr. Pickwick in his later development. We could imagine the latter at Dulwich examining and measuring his holly bushes. It would not be too fanciful to suppose that Boz—constantly with him, dining with him, and consulting him on every point—must have been impressed, and influenced too, by those amiable qualities, particularly by that unaffected simplicity and good-will which is also so notable in his hero. So the figure stands thus—first, the long, thin man with Dry-as-dust tastes: then the short, round philanthropist, whose externals were suggested by the Foster, of Richmond, the latter's "internals" being transferred to Tupman. Not only do "Vith and Visdom" go together, but also "Vith" and good humour and benevolence, which Boz felt were necessary adjuncts to such a physique. Where was he to find these? Now, we know how much Boz was inclined to draw from what was before his eyes. It saved him trouble and also set his imagination at work. The Cheeryble Brothers, each a *Pickwick redivivus*, were taken from the Grant Brothers, merchants, at Manchester. And here he had this very exceptional character daily before him, in the person of Edward Chapman. [84]

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CHAPTER XII. THE CALVERLEY EXAMINATION PAPER

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Few things have been more interesting to the Pickwickian, or have done more to elevate Pickwickian study, than this celebrated *jeu d'esprit*. Calverley, or Blayds—his original name—was a brilliant creature, well known for his scholarship, verses, and sayings. He early obtained a fellowship at Cambridge, and was one of the youngest "Dons." Like Dr. Thomson, the celebrated Master, he is felt to be a characteristic and a real personage, even by those little familiar with his work or writings. He was, moreover, an ardent Pickwickian and thoroughly saturated with the

spirit of the immortal book, to appreciate which a first-rate memory, which he possessed, is essential; for the details, allusions, names, suggestions, are so immense that they require to be present together in the mind, and jostle each other out of recollection. In the 'fifties, there were at Cambridge a number of persons interested in the Book, who were fond of quoting it and detecting oddities. It was in the year 1858 or 1859—for, curious to say, the year cannot be fixed—that Calverley conceived the *bizarre* idea of offering a premium for the best answers to a series of searching examination questions, drawn from this classic. It was held at his own rooms at 7 o'clock in the evening, as Sir Walter Besant, one of the candidates, recalls it. There were about a dozen entered, the most formidable of whom were Skeat, the present professor of Anglo-Saxon, a well-known Chaucerian scholar, and Sir Walter Besant aforesaid. The latter describes the scene in very dramatic fashion—the Examiner, in his gown, cap, and hood, gravely walking up and down during the two hours the examination lasted, going through the ceremonial with all the regular solemnity of the Senate House. The candidates, we are told, expected a sort of jocose business, and were little prepared for the “stiffness” of the questions which were of the deep and searching kind they were accustomed to in the case of a Greek Play or a Latin Epic. Almost at once, three-fourths showed by their helpless bewilderment that the thing was beyond them; and the struggle lay between the two well-versed Pickwickians—Besant and Skeat. The latter was known to have his “Pickwick” at his fingers’ ends, and Besant confessed that he had but small hopes of success. Both plodded steadily through the long list of questions. It should be said that the competition was open only to members of Christ Church College, which thus excluded the greatest reputed Pickwickian of them all, John Lemprière Hammond—the name, by the way, of the “creator” of Sam Weller on the stage. Besant went steadily through his list of questions to the end, revised his answers, and got his paper ready for delivery, but Skeat worked on to the very last moment. An evening or two later, as they were going into Hall, Calverley pinned up his report on the board at the door just like one of the usual University reports, and there was read the result:—

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Besant . . . 1st Prize

Skeat . . . 2nd Prize

The authorities were not a little shocked at a liberty which assumed the aspect of a burlesque of their own proceedings, and Calverley was spoken to gently by a Don of the older school. The paper of questions certainly shows what ability may be brought to bear on so trifling a matter; for there is really a power of analysis and a grasp of “inner meaning” that is most remarkable. Sir Walter has very acutely commented on this little “exercise,” and has shown that it reached much higher than a mere jest. It brought out the extraordinary capacities of the book which have exercised so many minds. For “The Pickwick Examination,” he says, “was not altogether a burlesque of a college examination; it was a very real and searching examination in a book which, brimful as it is of merriment, mirth, and wit, is just as intensely human as a book can be. The characters are not puppets in a farce, stuck up only to be knocked down: they are men and women. Page after page, they show their true characters and reveal themselves; they are consistent; even when they are most absurd they are most real; we learn to love them. It is a really serious test paper; no one could answer any of it who had not read and re-read the Pickwick Papers, and acquired, so to speak, a mastery of the subject. No one could do well in the examination who had not gone much further than this and got to know the book almost by heart. It was a most wonderful burlesque of the ordinary College and Senate House examination, considering the subject from every possible point of view. Especially is it rich in the department then dear to Cambridge: the explanation of words, phrases, and idioms.”

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Some of these cruxes, Sir Walter tells us, could not be solved by the examiner, and were laid before Boz himself, with a copy of the questions. Needless to say, Boz was infinitely amused, but, to the general disappointment, could or would give no information. The answer of Browning on a similar appeal is well known—he referred his questioners to the Browning Society, as knowing as much as he did on the point. There is no doubt that this is the true philosophy of the thing: that, once his ideas are in print, the author has no more to do with them or their meaning than anyone else has. The passages must speak for themselves; they are children sent into the world—helpless infants like those Pickwickian “expletives, let loose upon society.” Among these unexplained things were “my Prooshan Blue” and “Old Nobs.” Sir Walter, with real Pickwickian sagacity, points to a true explanation which may be applied in other cases. “Probably it was a phrase *which he had heard in a crowd*, and had never asked himself what it meant,” *i.e.*, it seemed appropriate, and what a person in such a case would use. This is in fact part of that “hallucination” of which G. H. Lewes spoke; the scene came so completely before Boz that the words and phrases suggested themselves to him and could not be denied, and he did not ask them to give any account. This principle, however, does not hinder an amusing display of speculation. Mr. Andrew Lang’s explanation of “My Prooshan Blue” is certainly far fetched. He thinks it refers to a dreamy notion of George IV., who, at one moment, thought of changing the British uniform to the Prussian Blue. Now, this was not known at the time, and came out years later. It had certainly not reached persons of the Weller class. The truth is that most of Sam’s grotesque epithets, *e.g.*, “young Brokiley sprout,” were the arbitrary coinage of a fantastic mind. This, too, as Sir Walter said, “he may have heard in a crowd,” or in the mazes of his own brain. “Old Nobs” is just as reasonable as Hamlet’s “Old Truepenny.” “Are you there, Old Truepenny,” might have been said by Sam to his father, as Hamlet addressed it to *his*.

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I.—Dowler and John Forster

The truculent Dowler figured before in "The Tuggs at Ramsgate"—a very amusing and Pickwickian tale—under the title of Capt. Waters, who exhibits the same simulated ferocity and jealousy of his spouse. Cruickshank's sketch, too, of the Captain is like that of Dowler when throwing up the window in the Crescent. Mrs. Waters is made as attractive as Mrs. Dowler, and Cymon Tuggs, like Winkle, excites the jealousy of the husband.

"Stop him," roared Dowler, "hold him—keep him tight—shut him in till I come down—I'll cut his throat—give me a knife—from ear to ear, Mrs. Craddock, I will." And Captain Waters: "Ah! what do I see? Slaughter, your sabre—unhand me—the villain's life!"

In the same story we have an anticipation of another incident: the shutting up and detection of Pipkin in the cupboard, who is discovered by a pipe being required, just as young Tuggs was by his coughing from the tobacco smoke. Boz was partial to this method of discovery, for, at the close, Snodgrass was thus concealed and shut up at Osborne's Hotel. His detection, through the stupidity of the Fat Boy, is singularly natural and original.

Some of Dowler's dictatorial ways may have been suggested by Boz's friend, the redoubtable John Forster. There is one passage in the Bath chapters where we almost seem to hear our old friend speaking, when he took command of his friends and introduced them, "My friend, Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esquire, know each other." "Bantam; Mr. Pickwick and his friends are strangers. *They must put their names down. Where's the book?*" Then adds: "This is a long call. It's time to go; I shall be here again in an hour. *Come.*" And at the assembly he still continued his patronage and direction of everybody. "Step in the tea-room—take your sixpenn'orth. They lay on hot water and call it tea. Drink it," said Mr. Dowler, *in a loud voice, directing Mr. Pickwick.*" Forster "all over." We have heard him "direct" on many an occasion. When starting from the White Horse Cellars, Dowler, fancying that more passengers were to be squeezed into the coach, said he would be d---d if there were; he'd bring an action against the company, and take a post chaise.

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II.—Thackeray

In Thackeray's "Newcomes," the writer had some reminiscences of a place like Eatanswill, for we are told of the rival newspapers, "The Newcome Independent" and "The Newcome Sentinel," the former being edited by one Potts. These journals assailed each other like their brethren in "Pickwick." "Is there any man in Newcome except, perhaps, our *twaddling old contemporary, the Sentinel,*" &c. Doyle's picture of the election is surely a reminiscence of Phiz's. There is the same fight between the bandsmen—the drum which someone is kicking a hole in, the brass instrument used, placards, flags, and general *mêlée*.

Doyle could sketch Forster admirably. Witness the drawing of the travelling party in a carriage, given by Mr. Kitton in his wonderful collection, "Dickens, by pen and pencil," where he has caught Forster's "magisterial" air to the life. The picture, "F. B.," Fred Bayham in the story, is certainly the figure of Forster (vol. ii., pp. 55 and 116.) F. B. is shown both as a critic and pressman, though he has nothing of J. F.'s domineering ways. Again, the waiter, speaking of Lord Highgate, said he was a *most harbitrary gent*. This refers to the memorable story of Forster being summoned by the cabman who said he did so because "he were such a harbitrary cove." The truth was, Forster knew the distance to a yard, and would tender the cabman his exact fare and no more. Once, dining with Forster at a hotel in the country where he had rooms, we lit our cigars after dinner, on which the waiter remonstrated, saying it was not allowed. Then I knew the meaning of a "Harbitrary Cove." How the irate Forster blew him up, roared at him, and drove him out, terrified! It was, indeed, Dowler threatening the coach proprietor.

Thackeray would of course have known the story; he meant a sort of veiled allusion which had or had not a reference. We have the key to this sort of thing in the strange, uncomplimentary reference to Catherine Hayes, the murderess, but which was at once applied to an interesting and celebrated Irish singer of the same name. The author must have anticipated this, and, perhaps, chuckled over the public ignorance, but the allusion was far-fetched. In the same fashion a dramatist once chose to dub one of his characters by my own rather unusual name, on which he protested that he never dreamt of it, that others bore it; still he, however, was obliged to remove it.

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Again, on p. 55 we have this passage: "I was thirsty, having walked from "Jack Straw's Castle," at Hampstead, where poor Kiteley and I had been taking a chop." This was written in 1855, only a few years after Forster's admirable performance of Kiteley with the other amateurs in "Every man in his humour." "Jack Straw's Castle," too, was a regular haunt of Forster and Dickens. It is as certain as anything can be that this allusion was not an accidental one.

III.—Tupman

Tupman's relations to Mr. Pickwick were somewhat peculiar; he was elderly—about Mr.

Pickwick's age—whereas Winkle and Snodgrass were young fellows under Mr. Pickwick's guardianship. Over them he could exercise despotic authority; which he did, and secured obedience. It was difficult to do this in the case of his contemporary, Tupman, who naturally resented being "sat upon." In the incident of the *Fête* at Mrs. Leo Hunter's, and the Brigand's dress—"the two-inch tail," Mr. Pickwick was rather insulting and injudicious, gibing at and ridiculing his friend on the exhibition of his corpulence, so that Tupman, stung to fury, was about to assault him. Mr. Pickwick had to apologise, but it is clear the insult rankled; and it would appear that Tupman was never afterwards much in the confidence of his leader, and, for that matter, in the confidence of his author. Boz, either consciously or unconsciously, felt this. Tupman, too, never seems to have got over the figure he "cut" in the spinster aunt business, and the loss of general respect.

Still he submitted to be taken about under Mr. Pickwick's patronage, but soon the mutual irritation broke out. The occasion was the latter's putting on speckled stockings for the dance at Manor Farm. "*You* in silk stockings," exclaimed Tupman, jocosely; a most natural, harmless remark, considering that Mr. Pickwick invariably wore his gaiters at evening parties. But the remark was hotly resented, and challenged. "You see nothing extraordinary in the stockings as stockings, I trust, sir?" Of course his friend said "No, certainly not," which was the truth, but Mr. Pickwick put aside the obvious meaning. Mr. Tupman "walked away," wishing to avoid another altercation, afraid to trust himself; and Mr. Pickwick, proud of having once more "put him down," assumed his "customary benign expression." This did not promise well.

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In all the Manor Farm jollity, we hear little or nothing of Tupman, who seems to have been thought a cypher. No doubt he felt that the girls could never look at him without a smile—thinking of the spinster aunt. In the picture of the scene, we find this "old Buck" in the foreground, on one knee, trying to pick up a pocket handkerchief and holding a young lady by the hand. Snodgrass and his lady are behind; Winkle and his Arabella on the other side; Trundle and his lady at the fire. Then who was Tupman's young woman? She is not mentioned in the text, yet is evidently a prominent personage—one of the family. At Ipswich, he was crammed into the sedan chair with his leader—two very stout gentlemen—which could not have increased their good humour, though Tupman assisted him from within to stand up and address the mob. We are told that "all Mr. Tupman's entreaties to have the lid of the vehicle closed" were unattended to. He felt the ridicule of his position—a sedan chair carried along, and a stout man speaking. This must have produced friction. Then there was the sense of injustice in being charged with aiding and abetting his leader, which Mr. Pickwick did not attempt to clear him from. When Mr. Pickwick fell through the ice, Tupman, instead of rendering help, ran off to Manor Farm with the news of the accident.

Then the whole party went down to Bath and, during their stay there, we have not a word of Tupman. He came to see his friend in the Fleet—with the others of course. But now for the remarkable thing. On Mr. Pickwick's happy release and when every one was rejoining, Wardle invited the whole party to a family dinner at the Osborne. There were Snodgrass, Winkle, Perker even, but no Tupman! Winkle and his wife were at the "George and Vulture." Why not send to Tupman as well. No one perhaps thought of him—he had taken no interest in the late exciting adventures, had not been of the least help to anybody—a selfish old bachelor. When Mr. Pickwick had absented himself looking for his Dulwich house, it is pointed out with marked emphasis that certain folk—"among whom was Mr. Tupman"—maliciously suggested that he was busy looking for a wife! Neither Winkle nor Snodgrass started this hypothesis, but Tupman. He, however, was at Dulwich for Winkle's marriage, and had a seat on the Pickwick coach. In later days, we learn that the Snodgrasses settled themselves at Dingley Dell so as to be near the family—the Winkles, at Dulwich, to be near Mr. Pickwick, both showing natural affection. The selfish Tupman, thinking of nobody but himself, settled at Richmond where he showed himself on the Terrace with a youthful and jaunty air, "trying to attract the elderly single ladies of condition." All the others kept in contact with their chief, asking him to be godfather, &c. But we have not a word of Tupman. It is likely, with natures such as his, that he never forgot the insulting remark about his corpulence. That is the way with such vain creatures.

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Boz, I believe, had none of these speculations positively before him, but he was led by the logic of his story. He had to follow his characters and their development; they did not follow him.

IV.—Grummer

This well drawn sketch of an ignorant, self-sufficient constable is admirable. I have little doubt that one of the incidents in which he figures was suggested to *Boz* by a little adventure of Grimaldi's which he found in the mass of papers submitted to him, and which he worked up effectively. A stupid and malicious old constable, known as "Old Lucas," went to arrest the clown on an imaginary charge, as he was among his friends at the theatre. As in the case of Grummer, the friends, like Winkle and Snodgrass, threatened the constable. The magistrate heard the case, sentenced Grimaldi to pay 5s. fine. Old Lucas, in his disappointment, arrested him again. Being attacked by Grimaldi, as Grummer was by Sam, he drew his staff and behaved outrageously. The magistrate then, like Nupkins, had him placed in the dock, and sentenced.

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It has also been stated that Grummer was drawn from Towshend—the celebrated Bow Street Runner again introduced in "Oliver Twist." Towshend was a privileged person, like Grummer, and gave his advice familiarly to the magistrates.

I.—The Wardle Family

Here is a very pleasing and natural group of persons, in whom it is impossible not to take a deep interest. They are like some amiable family that we have known. Old Wardle, as he is called, though he was under fifty, was a widower, and had remained so, quite content with his daughters' attachment. He had his worthy old mother to live with him, to whom he was most dutiful, tolerant, and affectionate. These two points recommend him. There was no better son than Boz himself, so he could appreciate these things. The sketch is interesting as a picture of the patriarchal system that obtained in the country districts, all the family forming one household, as in France. For here we have Wardle, his mother, and his sister, together with his two pleasing daughters, while, later on, his sons-in-law established themselves close by. The "poor relations" seem to have been always there. It is astonishing how Boz, in his short career, could have observed and noticed these things. Wardle's fondness for his daughters is really charming, and displayed without affectation. He connected them with the image of his lost wife. There is no more natural, truly affecting passage than his display of fretfulness when he got some inkling that his second daughter was about to make a rather improvident marriage with young Snodgrass. The first had followed her inclinations in wedding Trundle—a not very good match—but he did not lose her as the pair lived beside him. He thought Emily, however, a pretty girl who ought to do better, and he had his eye on "a young gentleman in the neighbourhood"—and for some four or five months past he had been pressing her to receive his addresses favourably. This was clearly a good match. Not that he would unduly press her, but "if she *could*, for I would never force a young girl's inclinations." He never thought, he says, that the Snodgrass business was serious. But, how natural that, when Arabella, their friend, had become a regular heroine and had gone off with her Winkle, that this should fill Emily's head with similar thoughts, and set the pair on thinking that they were persecuted, &c. What a natural scene is this between father and daughter.

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"My daughter Bella, Emily having gone to bed with a headache after she had read Arabella's letter to me, sat herself down by my side the other evening, and began to talk over this marriage affair. "Well, pa," she says; "what do you think of it?" "Why, my dear," I said; "I suppose it's all very well; I hope it's for the best." I answered in this way because I was sitting before the fire at the time, drinking my grog rather thoughtfully, and I knew my throwing in an undecided word now and then would induce her to continue talking. Both my girls are pictures of their dear mother, and as I grow old I like to sit with only them by me; for their voices and looks carry me back to the happiest period of my life, and make me, for the moment, as young as I used to be then, though not quite so light-hearted. "It's quite a marriage of affection, pa," said Bella, after a short silence. "Yes, my dear," said I; "but such marriages do not always turn out the happiest." "I am sorry to hear you express your opinion against marriages of affection, pa," said Bella, colouring a little. "I was wrong; I ought not to have said so, my dear, either," said I patting her cheek as kindly as a rough old fellow like me could do it, "for your mother's was one and so was yours." "It's not that, I meant, pa," said Bella. "The fact is, pa, I wanted to speak to you about Emily." The long and the short of it is, then, that Bella at last mustered up courage to tell me that Emily was unhappy; that she and your young friend Snodgrass had been in constant correspondence and communication ever since last Christmas; that she had very dutifully made up her mind to run away with him, in laudable imitation of her old friend and schoolfellow.

Another member of this pleasant household was "The Fat Boy." There is nothing humorous or farcical in the mere physical exhibition of a fat person, *quâ* his fat. It was, indeed, the fashion of the day—and on the stage particularly—to assume that fatness was associated with something comic. There are a number of stout persons in *Pickwick*—the hero himself, Tupman, old Weller, and all the coachmen, the turnkeys, Slammer, Wardle, Fat Boy, Nupkin's cook, Grummer, Buzfuz, Mrs. Weller, Mr. Bagman's uncle, and others. Thackeray attempted to work with this element in the case of Jos Sedley, and his fatness had a very close connection with his character. But, in the case of Boz, his aim was much more intellectual and, as it were, refined. For his object was to show what was a fat person's view of this world, as seen through the medium of Fat. The Fat Boy is not a selfish, sensual being by nature—he is really helpless, and the creature of necessity who is forced by his bulk to take a certain *fat* view of everything round him." If we reflect on it we shall see how clearly this is carried out. It is curious that, in the instance of the Fat Boy, Boz should have repeated or duplicated a situation, and yet contrived to impart such varied treatment, but I suspect no one has ever noticed the point. Joe, it will be remembered, witnessed the proceedings in the arbour, when Mr. Tupman declared his passion for the spinster aunt, and the subsequent embracing—to the great embarrassment of the pair. At the close of the story he also intruded on another happy pair—Mr. Snodgrass and his *inamorata*—at a similar delicate moment. Yet in the treatment, how different—"I wants to make yer flesh creep!"—his taking the old lady into confidence; and then he was pronounced by his master, Wardle, to be under some delusion—"let me at him"—&c., so his story and report led him into a scrape. When he intruded on the pair at Osborne's Hotel, and Snodgrass was, later, shut up there, again he was made the scapegoat, and Wardle insisted that he was drunk, &c. So here were the incidents repeating themselves.

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II.—Shooting, Riding, Driving, etc.

Boz declared in one of his Prefaces that he was so ignorant of country sports, that he could not attempt to deal with them in a story. Notwithstanding this protest, he has given us a couple of shooting scenes which show much experience of that form of field sports. There is a tone of sympathy and freshness, a keen enjoyment of going forth in the morning, which proves that he himself had taken part in such things. Rook-shooting was then an enjoyable sport, and Boz was probably thinking of the rooks at Cobham, where he had no doubt hovered round the party when a lad. As we know, Mr. Tupman, who was a mere looker-on, was “peppered” by his friend Winkle, a difficult thing to understand, as Winkle must have been firing high into the trees, and if he hit his friend at all, would have done so with much more severity. The persons who were in serious danger from Mr. Winkle’s gun were the boys in the trees, and we may wonder that one, at least, was not shot dead. But the whole is so pleasantly described as to give one a perfect *envie* to go out and shoot rooks. There are some delightful touches, such as Mr. Pickwick’s alarm about the climbing boys, “for he was not quite certain that the distress in the agricultural interest, might not have compelled the small boys attached to the soil to earn a precarious and hazardous existence by making marks of themselves for inexperienced sportsmen.” And again, “the boy shouted and shook a branch with a nest on it. *Half-a-dozen young rooks in violent conversation flew out to ask what the matter was.*” Does not this bring the whole scene before us.

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The other shooting scene is near Bury St. Edmunds—on Sir Geoffrey Manning’s grounds—on September 1st, 1830, or 1827, whichever Boz pleases, when “many a young partridge who strutted complacently among the stubble with all his finical coxcombrity of youth, and many an older one who watched his levity out of his little, round eye with the contemptuous air of a bird of wisdom and experience, alike unconscious of their approaching doom, basked in the fresh morning air with lively and blithesome feelings, and, a few hours later, were laid low upon the earth.” Here we have the beginning of that delightful fashion of Dickens’s, which he later carried to such perfection, of associating human feelings and associations with the animal creation, and also inanimate objects.

Everything connected with “the shooting” is admirably touched: The old, experienced “shot,” Wardle; the keepers and their boys; the dogs; the sham amateurs; the carrying of the guns “reversed arms, like privates at a funeral.” Mr. Winkle “flashed and blazed and smoked away without producing any material results; at one time expending his charge in mid-air, and at others sending it skimming along so near the surface of the ground as to place the lives of the two dogs on a rather uncertain and precarious tenure. ‘What’s the matter with the dogs’ legs? How *queer* they’re standing!’ whispered Mr. Winkle. ‘Hush, can’t you! Don’t you see they are making a point?’ said Wardle. ‘Making a point?’ said Mr. Winkle, glaring about him, as if he expected to discern some particular beauty in the landscape which the sagacious animals were calling special attention to. ‘What are they pointing at?’ ‘Keep your eyes open,’ said Wardle, not heeding the question in the excitement of the moment. ‘Now then.’” How natural and humorous is all this.

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This was partridge shooting, “old style”—delightful and inspiring, as all have felt who have shared in it. Now we have “drives” on a vast scale; then you would follow the birds from field to field “marking them down.” I myself with an urchin, a dog, and a single-barrelled old gun have thus followed a few precious birds from field to field all the day and secured them at the last. That was true enjoyment.

III.—Horses and Driving in “Pickwick.”

For one who so modestly disclaimed all knowledge of sporting and country tastes, Boz shows a very familiar acquaintance with horses and their ways. He has introduced a number of these animals whose points are all distinctly emphasized: a number of persons are shown to be interested in horses, who exhibit their knowledge of and sympathise with the animals, a knowledge and sympathy which is but a reflection of his own. The cunning hand that could so discriminate between shades of humorous characters would not be at a loss to analyse traits of equine nature. There is the cab horse, said to be forty years old and kept in the shafts for two or three weeks at a time, which is depicted in Seymour’s plate. How excellently drawn are the two Rochester steeds: one “an immense brown horse, displaying great symmetry of bone,” which was to be driven by Mr. Pickwick, and Mr. Winkle’s riding animal, another immense horse “apparently a near relative of the animal in the chaise.” “He don’t shy, does he?” The ostler guaranteed him quiet—“a hinfant in arms might drive him”—“He wouldn’t shy if he met a whole waggon-load of monkeys with their tails burnt off.” A far more original illustration than anything used by the Wellers, whose special form that was. I pass over the details of the driving and the riding which show a perfect knowledge of animals, such as “the tall quadruped.” Nothing is more droll than the description of the loathing with which the party came to regard the animal they were compelled to lead about all day. Then we have the post horses and all connected with them. There is Tom Smart’s “vixenish mare,” quite an intelligent character in her way. The account of the coach drive down to Muggleton shows admirable observation of the ways of the drivers.

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Ben Allen’s aunt had her private fly, painted a sad green colour drawn by a “chubby sort of brown horse.” I pass over the ghostly mailcoach horses that flew through the night in “The Story of the Bagman’s Uncle,” flowing-maned, black horses. There are many post horses figuring in

Mr. Pickwick's journey from Bristol to Birmingham and thence home; horses in the rain and out of it.

Namby's horse was "a bay, a well-looking animal enough, but with something of a flash and dog-fighting air about him." The horses which took the hackney coach to the Fleet jolted along as hackney coaches usually do. "The horses 'went better,' the driver said, 'when they had anything before them.' They must have gone at a most extraordinary pace when there was nothing." Visiting the Fleet with Mrs. Weller and the deputy Shepherd, Mr. Weller drove up from Dorking with the old piebald in his chaise cart, which, after long delay, was brought out for the return journey. "If he stands at livery much longer he'll stand at nothin' as we go back." There is a capital scene at the opening of Chapter XLVI., when the "cabriolet" was drawing up at Mrs. Bardell's, and where so much that is dramatic is "got out" of such a simple incident between the contending directions.

IV.—Mr. Pickwick in Silk Stockings.

How well Boz knew how to touch the chords of human character—a power that certainly needs long experience to work—is shown by the scene at Wardle's dance, where Mr. Pickwick is nettled by Tupman's remarking that he was wearing "pumps" for the first time. "You in silk stockings," said that gentleman. Mr. Pickwick had just called attention to the change which he considered a sort of public event to be admired by all. "See this great man condescending to our frivolous tastes," and his host had noted it in a flattering way. "You mean to dance?" But Tupman did not look at it in this respectful way—he made a joke of it! "You in silk stockings." This was insolent to the grave, great man and philosopher, so he turned sharply on his familiar: "And why not, sir—why not?" This with warmth. The foolish Tupman, still inclined to be jocose, said, "Oh, of course, there is no reason why you shouldn't wear them"—a most awkward speech—as who should say, "This is a free country—a man can wear a night cap in public if he chooses." "I imagine not, sir—I imagine not," said Mr. Pickwick, in a *very peremptory* tone. Mr. Tupman had contemplated a laugh, but he found it was a serious matter, so he looked grave, and said *they were a pretty pattern*. How natural is all this! And still more so his leader's reply. "I hope they are," he said, fixing his eyes upon his friend, "You see nothing extraordinary in the stockings, *as* stockings, I trust, sir." The frightened Tupman said, "Certainly not, Oh, certainly not," and walked away. Mr. Pickwick's face resumed its customary benign expression. This little picture of weakness in an eminent man is characteristic. For observe, when Tupman showed the folly of wearing a "two inch tail" to the brigand's coat, Mr. Pickwick was furious, told him he was too old and too fat; but when someone remarks on *his* silk stockings he gets deeply offended. His vanity is touched, there should have been no remark, or, at least, only of admiration. He was, in fact, one of those flattered and spoiled personages who cannot see any harm in their doing what they reprove in others. Many a really great character is weak in this direction. Observe the disingenuousness of the great man; he knew, perfectly, that Tupman noticed nothing odd in the stockings, "*as* stockings," he meant the oddity of his wearing them at all, and he had said so, plainly. But, ignoring this, the great man chose to assume that he was insolently reflecting on their pattern as outlandish. With his despotic pressure, he forced him to say they were of a "pretty pattern," and thus vindicated his authority.

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V.—Violent Assaults, Shooting, &c

Duelling, imprisonment for debt, intoxication, elopements, are, perhaps, the most striking social incidents in "Pickwick" that have disappeared and become all but antiquarian in their character. Yet another, almost as curious, was the ready recourse to physical force or violence—fistic correction as it might be termed. A gentleman of quiet, restrained habit, like Mr. Pickwick, was prepared, in case of call, either to threaten or execute summary chastisement on anyone who offended him. The police or magistrates seemed not to have been thought of, for the victim would not think of appealing to either—all which seems strange to us nowadays. At the Review even, the soldiers coolly overthrew Mr. Pickwick and his friends who had got in their way. Winkle was maltreated so severely that the blood streamed from his nose; this would not now be tolerated. When Jingle affronted the great man by calling his friend "Tuppy," Mr. Pickwick, we are told, "hurled the inkstand madly forward and followed it up himself." This hurling of things at offenders was a common incident, particularly in quarrels at table, when the decanter was frequently so used, or a glass of wine thrown in the face. After the adventure at the Boarding School, Mr. Pickwick "indented his pillow with a tremendous blow," and announced that, if he met Jingle again, he would "inFLICT personal chastisement on him"; while Sam declared that he would bring "real water" into Job's eyes. Old Lobbs, in the story, was going to throttle Pipkin. Mrs. Potts insisted that the editor of *The Independent* should be horsewhipped. More extraordinary still, old Weller, at a quiet tea-meeting, assaulted the Shepherd, giving him "two or three for himself, and two or three more to hand over to the man with the red nose." Everyone set themselves right in this way and, it is clear, knew how to use their "bunch of fives." Nor were there any summonses or police courts afterwards; the incident was closed. Sam, attempting to rescue his master at Ipswich, knocked down the "specials" right and left, knocking down some for others to lie upon, yet he was only fined two pounds for the first assault and three for the second—now he would have been sent to jail under a severe sentence. Mrs. Raddle insisted that her husband should get up and knock every one of the guests down stairs, while Jack Hopkins offered to go upstairs and "pitch into the landlord." At the Brick Lane meeting, Brother Stiggins, intoxicated, knocked Brother Tadger down the stairs, while old Weller violently assaulted Stiggins. At Bath, Dowler hunted Winkle round the Crescent, threatening to cut his throat; and

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at Bristol, when the terrified Winkle tried to ring the bell, Dowler fancied that he was going to strike him. At Bristol, Ben Allen flourished the poker, threatening his sister's rival, and when Mr. Pickwick sent Sam to capture Winkle, he instructed him to knock him down even, if he resisted; this direction was given with all seriousness. "If he attempts to run away from you, *knock him down*, or lock him up, you have my full authority, Sam." The despotism of this amiable man was truly extraordinary, he ruled his "followers" with a rod of iron. That such should be exercised, or accepted even by the reader, is a note of the time. It was, however, only a logical consequence of the other summary methods.

The altercation between Mr. Pickwick and his other "follower," Tupman, arising out of the "two-inch tail" question, was on the same lines. For the affront of being called fat and old the latter scientifically turned up his cuffs and announced that he would inflict summary chastisement on his leader. Mr. Pickwick met him with a cordial "come on," throwing himself into a pugilistic attitude, supposed by the two bystanders to have been intended as a posture of defence. This seems to have been accepted as a natural incident, though it was deprecated. In the Fleet Prison, when Mr. Pickwick's nightcap was snatched off, he retorted with a smart blow, and again invited everyone, "all of you," to "come on." When the coachmen attended Sam to the Fleet, walking eight abreast, they had to leave behind one of the party "to fight a ticket porter, it being arranged that his friends should call for him as they came back." Even in a moment of agitation—as when Ben Allen learned that his sister had "bolted," his impulse was to rush at Martin the groom and throttle him; the latter, in return, "felling the medical student to the ground." Then we have the extraordinary and realistic combat between Pott and Slurk in the kitchen of the "Saracen's Head," Towcester—the one armed with a shovel, the other with a carpet bag—and old Weller's chastisement of Stiggins. In short, this system of chastisement on the spot, it is clear, was a necessary equipment, and everybody, high and low, was understood to be ready to secure satisfaction for himself by the aid of violence. No doubt this was a consequence of the duel which was, of course, to be had recourse to only as the last resort.

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When the wretched Jingle, and the still more wretched Job met Mr. Pickwick in the Fleet, and the latter, giving money, had said, "Take that, sir," the author adds, "Take what? . . . As the world runs, it ought to have been a sound, hearty cuff, for Mr. Pickwick had been duped, deceived, &c." Thus, Boz thought, as of course, that this was the suitable method of treatment in such cases. "Must we tell the truth?" he goes on; "it was a piece of money." The unconsciousness of all this is very striking.

VI.—Winkle and Snodgrass

It has always seemed a matter of astonishment to me how such a creature as Winkle should have won the fair Arabella. Every act of this man was a deception—he could not help pretence, or, shall we say it boldly, lying. His duel was a series of tricks—his shooting, skating, etc., all a sham. Even when found out as an impostor before all the keepers and others, we find him impudently saying, "I'll tell you what I shall do *to get up my shooting again*." The fellow never had any shooting to get up. But the mere habit of untruth was ingrained in the man. His undignified race, in a dressing-gown, round the Crescent was no doubt concealed from Arabella—she would never have got over that! As a display of cowardice it was only matched by his hypocritical assumption of courage before Dowler when he found he could assume it safely. He deceived his father and Mr. Pickwick as to his marriage, and dropped on his knees to the latter to beg pardon. How mean, too, was his behaviour to Mrs. Pott in the difficulty with her husband. But nothing could shake the interest of the fair Arabella in her lover, even his ignominious and public treatment by Mr. Pickwick at the skating exhibition. How *can* we account for it. But Boz knew the female nature well, and here is the explanation: Winkle had been "out"—had figured in a duel with a real officer in the army. There was no mistake about *that*—gone out, too, in what appeared a chivalrous manner to save the honour of the club. At least it had the appearance of all that (though here was another falsehood). This had been told to all—no doubt by Winkle himself—many times over. Nothing could enable that, it seemed heroic, and covered all other *laches*. Neither did it lose in *his* telling of it.

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The most ridiculous feature surely in the man was his costume—meant to be of a sporting complexion—which he never abandoned: green shooting coat, plaid neckchief, and closely fitting drabs. When he returned from his honeymoon, he was still in this uniform.

We may assume, however, that this points to a custom of the time: that the sportsman was *always* a sportsman. Even at the club meeting, at a poorish room in a tavern, he must carry on the fiction that he has just come back from a day's sporting, for there on the floor, conspicuous, are the fowling piece, game bag, fishing rod, &c.

Snodgrass was another incapable and quite uninteresting—a person whom we would not care to know. He posed as a poet and, to this end, wore, even at the club, "a mysterious blue cloak, with a canine skin collar"; imagine this of a warm evening—May 12—in a stuffy room in Huggin Lane! He must, however, live up to his character, at all hazards.

Snodgrass and his verses, and his perpetual "note book," must have made him a bore of the first water. How could the charming Emily have selected him. He, too, had some of Winkle's craft. He had been entertained cordially and hospitably by old Wardle, and repaid him by stealing his daughter's affections in a very underhand way, actually plotting to run away with her.

There was something rather ignominious in his detection at Osborne's Hotel. He is a very

colourless being. As to his being a Poet, it would seem to be that he merely gave himself out for one and persuaded his friends that he was such. His remarks at the "Peacock" are truly sapient: "Show me the man that says anything against women, as women, and *I boldly declare he is not a man!*" Which is matched by Mr. Winkle's answer to the charge of his being "a serpent": "Prove it," said Mr. Winkle, warmly. It is to be suspected that the marriage with the amiable Emily was not a success. The author throws out a hint to that effect: "Mr Snodgrass, being occasionally abstracted and melancholy, is to this day reputed a great poet among his acquaintance, though we do not find he has ever written anything to encourage the belief." In other words he was carrying on the old Pickwick game of "Humbug." So great an intellect had quite thrown itself away on poor Emily—even his abstraction and melancholy. How natural too that he should "hang on" to his father-in-law "and establish himself close to Dingly Dell"—to "sponge," probably—while he made a sham of farming; for are we not told that he purchased and cultivated a small farm—"more for occupation than profit"—thus again making believe. Poor Emily!

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I lately looked through the swollen pages of the monster London Directory to find how many of the Pickwickian names were in common use. There was not a single Snodgrass, though there was one Winkel, and one "Winkle and Co." in St. Mary Axe. There was one Tupman, a Court dressmaker—no Nupkins, but some twenty Magnuses, and not a single Pickwick. There were, however, some twenty-four Wellers.

CHAPTER XV.—DULWICH

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I.—Mr. Pickwick's Diversions

Mr. Pickwick, as we know, retired to end his days at peaceful Dulwich—placid and tranquil as his own amiable heart. It is as certain as though we had been living there and had seen all that was going on, that he became universally popular, and quite a personage in the place. Everyone was sure to meet him taking his afternoon walk along the rural lanes, or making his way to the Greyhound, where he was often found of an evening—possibly every evening. This Greyhound, an old-fashioned and somewhat antique house, though not mentioned in the story, is linked to it by implication; for to settle at Dulwich and ignore the Greyhound was a thing that could not be. There is a Pickwickian tone—or was, rather, for it is now levelled—about the place, and Boz himself used to frequent it, belonging to a sort of dining club that met down there.

Such a paper as say the *Dulwich Observer* would make much account of a man like Mr. Pickwick; all his movements would be chronicled, and anyone that chooses to bid Sarah or Mary "bring up the file for the year of Mr. Pickwick's residence," must find innumerable entries. Let us supply a few of these imaginative extracts:

MR. PICKWICK AT THE OPENING OF THE DULWICH LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION.

A meeting of this admirable and thriving society—which, as our readers know, was founded by Mr. Pickwick—was held on Saturday, at the Greyhound Inn, where this learned and popular gentleman read a special paper on Ralph Alleyne and his celebrated college at Dulwich. There was a large attendance. Mr. Pickwick stated that he had long been making researches into the Alleyne pedigree, and had made an astonishing discovery—Alleyne, he found, was the family of the Allens! A very dear and intimate friend of his own—a high member of the medical profession—with whom he had spent some of the pleasantest hours of his whole life, and who was now following his practice in India, also bore the name of Allen—Benjamin Allen! It will be said that there was not much in this; there were many Allens about, and, in the world generally (loud laughter); but what will be said when, on carelessly turning over the old rate-books, he came on this startling fact? That at the beginning of the century his old friend's grandfather actually occupied a small house on Tulse Hill, not five minutes' walk from the college (loud applause). He saw, they saw the significance of this. Following up the clue, he next found that this gentleman was a person of literary tastes—and, mark this, often went into town to scientific meetings and to the theatres (loud applause). Further, he had discovered one or two very "oldest inhabitants" (a laugh) who had known this very Benjamin Allen, the grandfather, and who could not recall anything precise about him: but all agreed, and they should further mark this, that he had the air and bearing of a man of theatrical tastes, and that "it was as likely as not"—to use their very words—"that he belonged to the family of Ralph Allen" (applause). The learned gentleman then proceeded to work out his clever theory with much ingenuity, and, at the end, left "not a shadow of a shade of a doubt" in the minds of his hearers in general, and in his own mind in particular, that this Dr. Benjamin Allen—of the East Indies—was the lineal descendant of our own Ralph Allen. We have, however, with regret to add, that this evening did not pass over so harmoniously as it could be desired. As soon as Mr. Pickwick had sat down and discussion was invited—Mr. Pickwick, however, saying that there was really nothing to discuss, as no one knew the facts but himself—a visitor from Town, who had been introduced at his own request by one of the members, stood up, will it be believed, to *attack* Mr. Pickwick and his paper!

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It transpired that this intruder's name was Blotton, a person in the haberdashery line, and that he came from somewhere in the neighbourhood of Huggin Lane. He said that all they had been listening to was simple moonshine. (*No! No!*) But Yes! Yes! Had they ever heard of a river in Monmouth and another in Macedon? There was an Allen some hundred years ago—and a Ben Allen now alive in India. What rubbish was this? ("*Shame*" cries of "*put him out*"). Where was the connection, he asked. Some old dotard or dodderer, they were told, said so. The doddering in the case was not confined to that individual. Here Mr. Pickwick rose, and, with much heat, told the intruder to sit down. He would not hear him; he ought to be ashamed of himself. "Would you believe it," went on Mr. Pickwick, "this is a person who was actually *expelled*—yes, expelled—from a club—the well-known Pickwick Club of which I was the founder. Let him deny it if he dare." Here the individual called out "Bill Stumps! Tell 'em about that." "I will not tell 'em, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, warmly; "they know it too well. It shall be known as long as my name is known and when this person is consigned to the gutter whence he came." "It's all Humbug," said Mr. Blotton, "humbug you were and humbug you ever will be." Here Dr. Pettigrew, our excellent local practitioner, interposed, "Gentlemen, gentlemen," he said; "is this to go on; are we to listen to this low abuse?" A number of persons closing round Blotton succeeded in ejecting him from the room, and this truly painful incident closed.

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VISITORS AT THE DELL.

During the past week, Mr. Pickwick has been entertaining a series of visitors—among others, Mr. Wardle, of Manor Farm, Muggleton, Kent, with Miss Wardle, his sister—the heroine of a most romantic story communicated to us by Mr. Weller, though we are not privileged to lift the veil from this interesting episode. But suffice it to say that it comprised an elopement and exciting chase, in which Mr. Pickwick, with his usual gallantry, took part. The estrangement which necessarily followed between brother and sister has long since been happily healed. Mr. Perker, the eminent London solicitor—Mr. Pickwick's "guide, philosopher and friend"—has also been staying at the Dell.

HUMOROUS ADVENTURE.

Our readers will be entertained by the following droll contretemps which befel our deservedly popular fellow-citizen, as we may call him, Mr. Pickwick. As our readers know, the Annual Charity Dinner took place at the Greyhound, on Tuesday, Mr. Pickwick being in the chair, and making many of his happiest speeches during the course of which he related many curious details about himself and his life. The party did not break up till a late hour—nearly eleven o'clock. A fly—a special one, as usual—had been retained to take Mr. Pickwick home, but as the trusted Hobson, who invariably attends Mr. Pickwick on such occasions, had another engagement, a stranger was procured from Camberwell. Mr. Pickwick was placed in the vehicle not, as he says, without misgivings, and, as he admits, fell fast asleep. He was driven home—as he fancied. On arriving, the coachman had much difficulty in making himself heard. Mr. Pickwick entered the house, still scarcely aroused, and turning into the study, sank into an armchair, and once more fell into a slumber. He was presently aroused, he says, by voices, and found himself surrounded by strange faces and figures in various states of *déshabillé*. The head of the house, the well-known Mr. Gibson, who had been roused from his slumbers, on the maid, Mary Perkes, giving the alarm that robbers were in the house, had rushed down in his trousers only; the man-servant ditto; the young ladies in anything they could find. Mr. Pickwick describes his alarm as he found these faces round him, and, not unnaturally, conceived the idea that robbers had broken into *his* house, and that his was in their power! A humorous imbroglio followed. He instantly rushed to secure the poker, and, flourishing it round his head, cried out repeatedly, "Keep off! every one of you! or I'll brain the first man that comes near me!" Fortunately, the respected man-servant, who had been many years with Mr. Gibson, and had met Mr. Weller, at once recognized Mr. Weller's master, and said: "Why, its Mr. Pickwick! ain't it? Don't you know *this* ain't your own house, sir." The truth then all flashed upon him. Mr. Pickwick relates that he became so tickled with the odd humour of his situation that he fell into his chair in convulsions of laughter, and laughed long and loudly, for many minutes. The more he laughed, the more Mr. Gibson laughed. At last, all was explained, and the amusing scene ended by a room being hastily got ready for Mr. Pickwick (for the cabman had gone away). No one was more amused, or indeed, more pleased, at these "mistakes of a night" than Mr. Gibson, who always tells the story with infinite drollery. Mr. Pickwick takes all the blame on himself, declaring, as he says his old friend Winkle used to say: "*It wasn't the wine, but the salmon.*"

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ATTEMPTED ROBBERY AT MR. PICKWICK'S HOUSE.

Last night, we are sorry to learn, a very daring attempt was made to rob the mansion of our much esteemed resident, Mr. Pickwick. The Dell, as our readers know, is a substantial dwelling-house, standing in its own grounds, and comparatively unprotected. The family, consists of the owner, his housekeeper, Mrs. Purdy, and his faithful servant, Mr. Samuel Weller, whose pleasant humour is well-known, and who is

deservedly popular in Dulwich. Nothing was noticed until about two o'clock in the morning, when, as Mr. Weller has informed us, he was awakened by a low, grinding sound, which, in his quaint style, he says reminded him "a fellow in *quad* a-filing his irons." With much promptitude he rose and, loosening the dog, proceeded in the direction of the sounds; the villains, however, became alarmed, and Mr. Weller was just in time to see them, as he says, "a-cuttin' their lucky" over the garden wall. Much sympathy is expressed for the worthy and deservedly esteemed Mr. Pickwick, and for the outrage done to his feelings.

FETE AT MR. PICKWICK'S.

On Thursday last, this amiable and always benevolent gentleman, who, it is known, takes the deepest interest in the stage, invited all the brethren of the college to a dinner, after which, he threw open his grounds to all his acquaintances, indeed, to all Dulwich. The banquet was of a sumptuous character, and was provided from the Greyhound. After the usual loyal toasts, the warden proposed Mr. Pickwick's health in appropriate terms, to which that gentleman responded in an admirable speech, in which he reviewed some portions of his life. After stating how dear and near to his affection was the college and all that was concerned with it, he entered into some various details of Ralph Alleyne, who, as we all know, was an actor and connected with actors. "I have already, by means of my researches, shown how strangely related he was to myself, being of the same family with an eminent physician in India, Mr. Benjamin Allen. (Cheers.) I, myself, have known actors—one who was known to his brethren as 'dismal Jemmy'—(loud laughter)—from, I suppose, the caste of characters he was always assuming. Dismal Jemmy, however, had to leave the country—(laughter)—I will not say why." (Roars of laughter.) Another actor whom he had known was one of the most remarkable men he had ever met, for talent and resources—would that he had confined his talent to its legitimate sphere, namely, on the *boards*—but, unfortunately, he had chosen to exert it at his, Mr. Pickwick's, expense. (Loud laughter.) This performer tried to live by his wits, as it is called, and he, Mr. Pickwick, had encountered him, and his wits, too and nearly always with success. Mr. Pickwick then humorously described some of his adventures with this person, causing roars of laughter by a description of a night in the garden of a Boarding School, into which he had been entrapped on the pretext that the actor was about to run away with one of the young ladies. In the most comic fashion, he related how he had been captured by the whole school, headed by its principal, and locked up in a cupboard, and was only released by his faithful man, Sam, whom, personally, some of them knew—(loud applause.) Well, after frustrating the knavish tricks of this actor, he at last found him in a debtors' prison in the most abject misery and destitution, and he was happy to tell them, that the man was completely reformed, and getting an honest livelihood in one of our colonies. Such was his experience of the actors' profession.

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MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE AT IPSWICH.

An interesting event, in which our esteemed fellow-citizen, Mr. Pickwick, has taken a deep interest, took place at the historic town of Ipswich, when Mr. Sidney Porckenham, eldest son of --- Porckenham, Esq., led to the altar at St. Clement's Church, Henrietta, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of --- Nupkins, Esq., late Mayor of that city. Among the guests were J. Grigg, Esq., Mrs. and the Misses Grigg, Mr. and Mrs. Slummin Towken and Mr. Slummin Towken, jun, --- Jinks, Esq., and many more. Mr. Pickwick had intended to be present and had already promised to stay with Mr. Nupkins, but was prevented by illness. His present to the bride, a costly one and in exquisite taste, was purchased at Micklethwaite's, High Street, Camberwell, where it was exhibited and excited universal admiration. It consisted of a watch and curb chain of the finest workmanship, for Mr. Pickwick placed no limit on Micklethwaite. We understand that at a recent dinner at Mr. Humberstone, our esteemed rector's, Mr. Pickwick, after alluding to Miss Nupkins and the coming marriage, literally convulsed the party by relating his famous adventure at the Great White Horse, which he tells in the raciest style, and how it led to his being led off prisoner, and brought before his friend, Mr. Nupkins, then Mayor of Ipswich. At the close he became a little pensive. "Ah! poor Peter Magnus! and Miss W---, sorry! I'm sorry, very." Our Rector has often "chaffed" this worthy gentleman on his midnight adventure, saying, waggishly, "there was more in it than met the eye." We have seen Mr. Pickwick smile, and he would say, "well, sir, she was a fine woman, a very fine woman, and I'm not going to kiss and tell."

MR. PICKWICK AT DULWICH POLICE COURT.

Thomas Bardell, aged 19, was charged before His Worship, with extorting money under false pretences from Mr. Pickwick. It appears from the gentleman's evidence, which he gave with great fulness, that, many years ago, a woman of the name of Bardell, a lodging-house keeper, brought an unfounded action against Mr. Pickwick, and obtained damages which Mr. Pickwick refused to pay, preferring to go to the Fleet Prison. This person had a son, then a mere child, who was the prisoner. A week ago, Mr. Pickwick received a piteous letter, signed Tommy Bardell, saying that his mother was dying, and in the deepest distress, all their furniture sold, or pawned. After making some

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inquiries, and finding that there was a woman in distress at the place, Mr. Pickwick sent the prisoner two sovereigns. Within a fortnight he received a second application, saying that the unhappy woman's bed was being taken away, &c.; he sent another sovereign. When he received a third application he thought it high time to put it into the hands of his man, Sam Weller, who made enquiries and found out there was no mother, Mrs. Bardell being long, long since dead. His worship committed him to jail for six months as a vagabond, but, at Mr. Pickwick's request, reduced his sentence to two months.

II.—Mr. Pickwick's Funeral.

The funeral *cortège* left the Dell at ten o'clock, and was one of the most striking displays of public feeling that Dulwich has seen for many years. And not only was Dulwich thus affected, but in Camberwell all the numerous shops were closed, and the inhabitants turned out in crowds. The procession comprised many mourning coaches containing all Mr. Pickwick's oldest friends. He had survived all his relations. Among the mourners were Mr. Wardle, of Dingley Dell, with his son-in-law, --- Trundle, Esq.; Mr. Tupman, who travelled specially from Richmond; Messrs. Winkle and Snodgrass, who had been his inseparable companions in his famous tours; and --- Perker, Esq., who was the deceased's legal adviser and confidential friend. An interesting incident was the appearance among the mourners of an elderly gentleman, Mr. Peter Magnus, between whom and Mr. Pickwick, as we learn from his faithful servant, there had for many years been a cloud or misunderstanding on account of some lady whose marriage with Mr. Magnus Mr. Pickwick had unwittingly frustrated. This injury, if injury there was, Mr. Magnus had buried in the grave, and had rushed to Dulwich to lend his heartfelt sympathy. Such things go far to reconcile one to human nature, if such reconciliation be incumbent. A deputation from the Dulwich Literary and Scientific Association, of which Mr. Pickwick was Perpetual President, walked in the procession. Passing the well-known Greyhound Inn, one of Mr. Pickwick's favourite haunts, it was noticed the blinds were drawn down.

We copy from the *Eatanswill Gazette* the following admirable tribute to Mr. Pickwick's merit, from the vigorous pen, as we understand, of its Editor, Mr. Pott:—"Not only in Dulwich, but in Eatanswill, is there mourning, to-day. We have lost Pickwick—Pickwick the true and the Blue. For Blue he was, to the very core and marrow of his bones, and it was we ourselves, who first permeated him with real Blue principles. Many a time and oft has he sat at our feet, drinking in with rapture, almost, the stray scraps of immortal doctrine with which we favoured him. Is it not an open secret that, but for Pickwick's exertions—exertions which laid the foundations of the disease which ultimately carried him off—our late admirable member, the Honourable Samuel Slumkey, would not have been returned? The *Gazette*, it is true, first burst open the breach, in which Pickwick threw himself, waving his flag on high, and led us on to victory. Of course, our verminous contemporary, the *Independent*, will scoff, and wipe its shoes on the illustrious dead. Of course, the mangey creature—ceasing the while from its perennial self-scratching—will hoot something derogatory. Let it sneer, yelp aloud in its impotent hog-like manner; let it root with its filthy snout among the heaps of garbage where it loves to make its unclean haunt in unspeakable Buffery. 'Twill not serve—the noisome fumes will stifle it."

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We regret to say that these prognostications of Mr. Pott's were but too soon, and too fatally realised, for in almost the next issue of the *Independent*, we find a scandalous and indecent attack on our late beloved Mr. Pickwick. Shocking as it is, we cannot forbear, in duty to the deceased gentleman, presenting it to our readers—

"POTT'S PICKWICK."

"Our emasculated contemporary, not content with debauching Eatanswill politics, must go far afield and drag from his grave an obscure and feeble being whom he claims to make one of his besmirched heroes. But Potts' praise, as we have learned long since, is no more than daubing its object with dirt. Why, this very Pickwick whom he belauds—can it be forgotten how Eatanswill shook its sides with laughter at the figure he made our besotted contemporary cut? Who will forget Mr. W---le, his creature, whom Pickwick introduced into the Potts' household and the resulting scandal, how Mr. W---le, aforesaid, fled from the house, leaving the belated Ariadne in tears? Does Pott forget who it was put his finger on this spot and, for the fair fame of Eatanswill, clamoured for its extinction? Who forgets our warnings and their fulfilment? The arrival of the Lieutenant; the menaced proceedings in a certain court; the departure of the fair but frail culprit. And yet Pott with an ineffable effrontery that would do credit to a fishwife in and from Billingsgate, clamours about this Pickwick and his virtues, and drops his maudlin tears upon his coffin! Why was he not there to give his hand to Mr. Lothario W---le, who, we understand, was also present? By the way, we have received the following lines from a valued correspondent:—

Your tears you may sprinkle
O W---le, O W---le,
With more of this same kind of rot.

The lady so gay
Could not say you nay,
Merely bidding you 'Go to Pot.'

Our hide-bound contemporary, will not, of course, see the point—"

We are grieved to say, that the indecent Eatanswill controversy over the lamented Mr. Pickwick still goes on. More strictly speaking, however, he has dropped out of sight owing to the inflamed passions which have been roused between the editors. Our sympathies are, we need not say, with Mr. Pott, still we wish he would somewhat temper his language, out of respect for the dead. Here is his crushing retort—

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"FILTH ON THE COFFIN."

"We have seen at some historic funeral, say of some personage obnoxious to the mob, dead dogs, cats, rats, and rotten eggs, hurled from a safe distance at the passing coffin. This is what our fast decomposing and wholly noisome contemporary is now doing. Shall we say it? How beastly, how congenial to the man's feelings! Paugh! Decency; propriety; sense of restraint; all unknown terms in his Malay tongue—for this Swift's yahoo. But we know what rankles. Has our contemporary in mind a chastisement that was inflicted on him in the kitchen of a certain inn, and in the presence of Pickwick himself—has he forgotten the fire irons—or, to speak accurately, *the* fire irons. That bruise, we dare swear, is still raw. But there are pole-cats who cannot divest themselves of their odour, do what they will, and this festering mass of decaying garbage, which goes by the name of *The Independent*, and which is unaccountably overlooked by the night men in their rounds, is fast breeding a pestilence in the pure air of Eatanswill." This lamentable controversy still continues.

STRANGE INCIDENT.

We noticed among the company at Mr. Pickwick's funeral a gentleman of unobtrusive exterior, who seemed to be vainly seeking his place, and to whom our representative offered his services. It turned out that his name was Trundle, and that he was one of the appointed pall-bearers, but that he had been unaccountably overlooked, and his place taken by someone else. Mr. Trundle made no complaint, but our representative thought it his duty to mention the circumstance to Mr. Wardle, who, it appears, is his father-in-law, but who only smiled, good-humouredly saying "O, Trundle, to be sure. No one minds him and *he* won't mind." But no further attention was paid to the matter. Mr. Trundle, our representative adds, was a man of modest and retiring ways, and did not seem in the least put out by the mistake.

Footnotes:

[1] Some years ago, as it is stated in Murray's Guide Book, most of the old gabled houses disappeared. They are shown in "Phiz's" picturesque sketch.

[66] "Oliver Twist" was begun in January, 1837, and Rose Maylie introduced about July or August. Mary Hogarth died on May 7th.

[68] Mr. Wright lately possessed a most interesting copy, presented number by number to Mary Hogarth by the author, up to No. 14, with this inscription: "From hers affectionately, Charles Dickens." The succeeding numbers were given to her schoolfellow, Miss Walker. Mr. Wright also possessed the letter announcing her death. It runs: "Sunday night, 8th May, 1837. We are in deep and sincere distress. Miss Hogarth, after accompanying Mrs. Dickens and myself to the theatre last night, was taken seriously ill, and, despite our best endeavours to save her, expired in my arms." It is curious to notice that this phrase should recur in *Nickleby*, it running, "My darling lad, who was taken ill last night, I thought would have expired in my arms."

[84] In a presentation copy of "Pickwick," given to Edward Chapman, November 14th, 1839, he calls him and Hall "the best of booksellers, past, present, or to come, and my trusty friends."

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PICKWICKIAN STUDIES ***

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